JULY 1935 sm • REDBOOK MAGAZINE • VOL 65 No 3

REDBOOK

JULY 25c
30c IN CANADA

AZINE

This issue's
COMPLETE
BOOK-LENGTH
NOVEL
"BRILLIANT MARRIAGE"
by **URSULA PARROTT**

NRA CODE

★ ALL-STAR NUMBER

★ P. G. WODEHOUSE
★ RAFAEL SABATINI
★ FRANZ WERFEL
★ BOOTH TARKINGTON
★ EDDIE CANTOR
★ CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, JR.

THE FOUNDING OF MARYLAND—Calvert raises the standard of the Baltimores at St. Mary's, March 27, 1634.

Again Calvert raises a Standard

CALVERT is a more congenial whiskey, with the heritage of a distinguished name and a reputation for excellence that has existed for generations. Spend an evening with CALVERT and you'll spend the morrow without regret. The Calvert-Maryland Distilling Co., inc. Distillery: Relay, Md. Executive Offices: Chanin Bldg., New York.

Try CALVERT'S *SPECIAL RESERVE* and CALVERT'S *SPECIAL* . . . distinguished whiskies . . . triumphs of an exclusive blending process. *Be glad tomorrow you said "Calvert" today.*

Clear heads call for **Calvert**

BLENDED AND BOTTLED-IN-BOND WHISKIES

LORD CALVERT BOTTLED-IN-BOND RYE or BOURBON WHISKEY . . . 100 proof, bottled-in-bond under Canadian Gov't. Supervision. For special occasions.

"BARBAROUS!" *Says* GOOD HOUSEKEEPING BEAUTY EDITOR

"INTELLIGENT!" *Says* YOUR OWN DENTIST

IT ISN'T BEING DONE, BUT IT'S *One Way* TO PREVENT "PINK TOOTH BRUSH"

"IT'S worse than a blunder, it's a social crime," exclaimed the Director of the new Good Housekeeping Beauty Clinic. "That girl," she went on, "is headed for social suicide."

But dentists looked at it differently.

"An excellent picture," was their general comment. "It's a graphic illustration of a point we dentists are always seeking to drive home. If all of us gave our teeth and gums more exercise on coarse, raw foods, many of our dental ills would disappear."

Time and again dental science has crusaded against our modern menus. Coarse foods are banned from our tables for the soft and savory dishes that rob our gums of work and health. Gums grow lazy...sensitive...tender! It's no wonder that "pink tooth brush" is such a common warning.

DON'T NEGLECT "PINK TOOTH BRUSH"!

For unheeded, neglected—"pink tooth brush" may mean serious trouble—even gingivitis, pyorrhea or Vincent's disease.

Follow your dentist's advice. Brush your teeth regularly with Ipana Tooth Paste. Then, each time, rub a little extra Ipana into your gums. For Ipana and massage help restore your gums to healthy firmness. Do this regularly and the chances are you'll never be bothered with "pink tooth brush."

WHY WAIT FOR THE TRIAL TUBE?

Use the coupon below, if you like. But a trial tube can be, at best, only an introduction. Why not buy a full-size tube of Ipana and get a full month of scientific dental care and a quick start toward firmer gums and brighter teeth.

• • •

IPANA
TOOTH PASTE

IPANA and Massage mean Sparkling Teeth and Healthy Gums

BRISTOL-MYERS CO., Dept. G-75
73 West Street, New York, N. Y.

NRA CODE

Kindly send me a trial tube of IPANA TOOTH PASTE. Enclosed is a 3¢ stamp to cover partly the cost of packing and mailing.

*Name*_____

*Street*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____

JULY
VOL. 65

REDBOOK
MAGAZINE

1935
No. 3

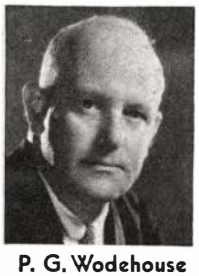
EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*
Associate Editors, DONALD KENNICOTT *and* VOLDEMAR VETLUGUIN • SID L. HYDEMAN, *Art Editor*

Next Month

"The Luck of the Bodkins"

a new side-splitting novel

by P. G. WODEHOUSE



P. G. Wodehouse

THERE'S only one Wodehouse. His imitators come and go, but the Old Master remains, firmly entrenched in the hearts of millions of his readers. Wherever English is spoken, you will find men, women (and children too) howling with delight over this or that bit of Wodehousiana. Jeeves the Incomparable. Bodkin the Perseverant. Gertrude the Heartless. Is there anyone who does not know them? So get ready for a spasm of laughter. "The Luck of the Bodkins" is Wodehouse at his best. Reading time (per installment), 52 minutes. Laughing and screaming time (per page), two hours. Our editor—who read "The Luck of the Bodkins" in one sitting—had to be shown his personal bank balance before we could bring him back to normalcy.

●

Two years ago this coming month, the editors of Redbook reached a momentous decision—to add to each issue of their magazine a complete book-length novel (50,000 words). Their friends smiled; their enemies sneered. "It can't be done," proclaimed the consensus. Well, it was done, done with the help of Hugh Walpole, Dashiell Hammett, Ursula Parrott, Sir Philip Gibbs, Warwick Deeping, Ben Ames Williams, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., Octavus Roy Cohen, Agatha Christie, Charles L. Clifford, Vicki Baum and other internationally known authors whose complete book-length novels have appeared in Redbook within the last twenty-four months. About to celebrate the Second Anniversary of our "$2.00 value for 25c" policy, we will publish in our next issue "We'll Never Be Any Younger," a complete book-length novel (50,000 words) by ELMER DAVIS. Remember his "Bachelor Girl"?

●

Likewise in our August issue: Short stories, articles and special features by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN, MARY HASTINGS BRADLEY, JAMES GOULD COZZENS, LOUIS SOBOL, WILLIAM HARD, ELISABETH SANXAY HOLDING, F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, ROGER BURLINGAME and many others; a continued novel by CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, Jr.

●

Tomorrow's exciting literary events are in today's Redbook

REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH

A COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL—50,000 WORDS

TWO CONTINUED NOVELS

EIGHT SHORT STORIES

THREE SPECIAL FEATURES

FOUR ARTICLES

IN TUNE WITH OUR TIMES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER DESIGN . . . . *CHARLES E. CHAMBERS*

The short stories and serial novels printed herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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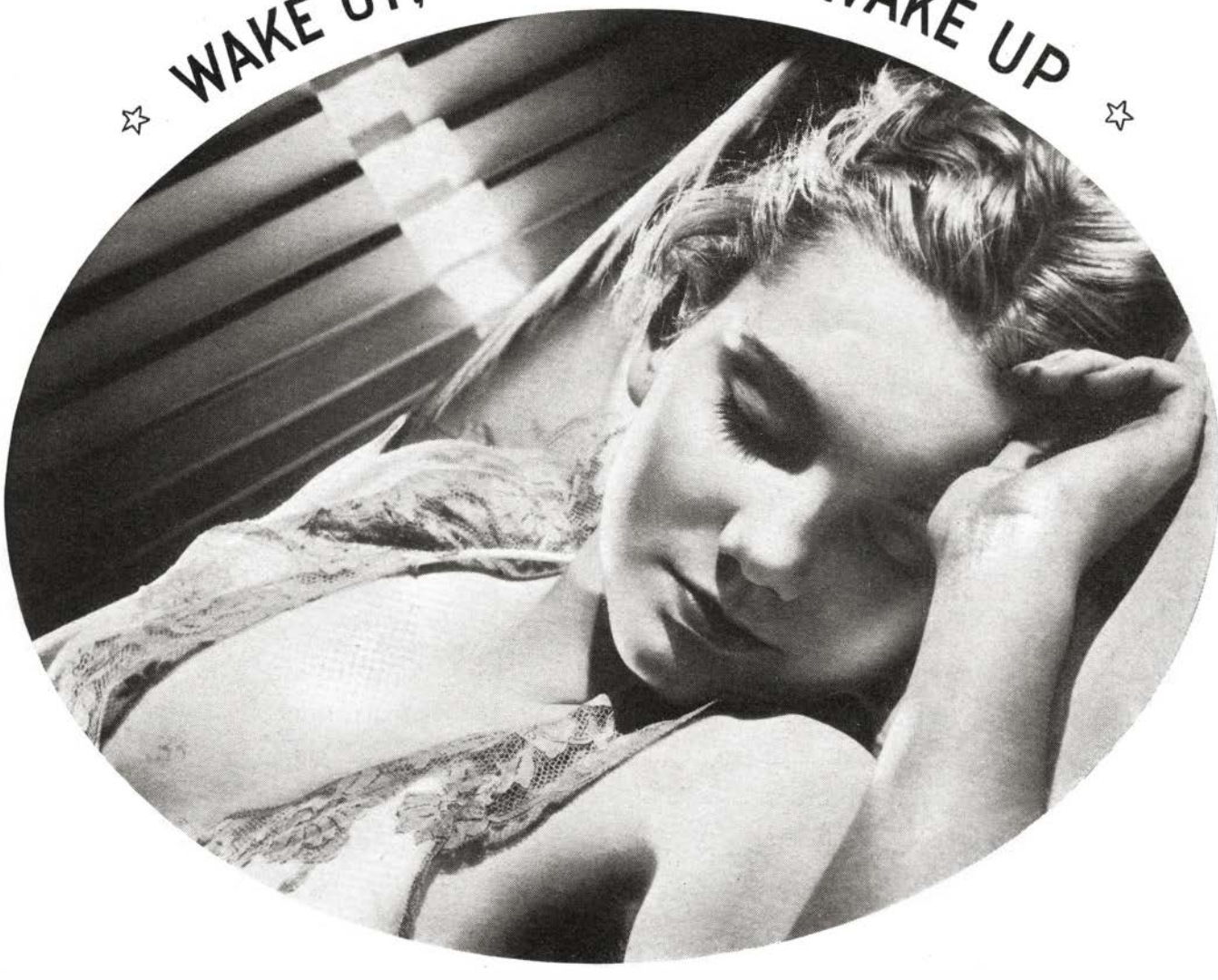
The Redbook School and Camp Directory will be found on pages 107 through 116.



TODAY *IS YOUR* WONDERFUL DAY

A CANTER with that nice Princeton boy over the Westchester hills, green and misty . . . luncheon at the Ritz with Paul and Frank and Leila . . . to the matinee with Jud . . . then in Charlie's plane to New Haven and that wonderful party where your partner will be a real prince . . . What a lucky girl you are to be so popular! What's that you say . . . . it's not all luck? A little forethought and common sense mixed in, you maintain . . . How right you are, little Miss Charming.

* * *

A girl may be pretty and witty and appealing, but unless her breath is beyond reproach she gets nowhere. After all, halitosis (unpleasant breath) is the unforgivable social fault. The sought-after woman . . . the popular man . . . realizes it, and takes sensible precaution against offending others. It's all so easy . . . just a little Listerine morning and night and before engagements. That is your assurance that your breath is sweet, wholesome and agreeable. Listerine attacks fermentation, a major cause of odors in the mouth, then overcomes the odors themselves.

Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

P. S. Do not make the mistake of assuming that you never have halitosis. Due to processes of fermentation that go on even in normal mouths, halitosis visits everyone at some time or other. *The insidious thing about it is that you never know when.*

BEFORE EVERY SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT USE LISTERINE . . . DEODORIZES LONGER

REDBOOK'S COMMON SENSE EDITORIAL

EVERY MAN A KING

BY BRUCE BARTON

IN the chaos that followed the Civil War the Southern states were overrun with smooth-talking persuasive racketeers. The word had gone abroad among the negroes that wealth was to be divided; every colored brother was to receive from the benevolent Government "forty acres and a mule."

The racketeers carried gayly painted little wooden stakes, and sold four of them to each colored brother for whatever amount of cash he could raise. With these four markers, they told him, he could stake out any forty acres he might fancy. Henceforth the forty would be his. The mule would come later from Washington.

It was a sad awakening when the colored folks discovered that the Government could make them free, but could *not* make them rich.

Every period of economic disorder breeds its own crop of promisers. The depression of 1893 brought Bryan, whom the American people almost accepted, and then, to their own benefit, rejected. Today we have the idealist who offers two hundred a month to all of us after sixty; we have the self-made economist who would somehow finangle the currency so that there shall be an abundance for all; and we have free-handed statesmen who promise to make "every man a king."

These are more intelligent and, on the whole, more sincere than the carpet-baggers with their painted stakes; but the underlying philosophy is the same. Government is to do for us what we have been unable to do for ourselves; we are all to be made comfortable, free from worry, economically secure, at the expense of somebody else.

I oppose these promisers, not because I am unsympathetic to their objectives. Goodness knows, it would be a happier country if everybody suddenly could be made happy and rich. I oppose them because all history proves that great gains never come quickly, and that the ultimate bill for the broken promises of a false prophet falls most heavily on those who can least afford to pay.

The hard fact is that self-government involves the obligation of self-support. All Washington can do is to make the rules of the game fair, and keep opportunity reasonably free. Once conditions begin to improve,—and they *are* improving,—the common sense of the American people resumes its normal distrust of political panaceas. The old self-confidence comes back; men throw away their crutches and set forth to attain that degree of kingship which individual ability and application can achieve.

In the school advertising pages directly preceding the complete novel you will find a list of summer camps and residential schools and professional schools and colleges, which we commend to you.

IN TUNE WITH OUR TIMES

FLOATING TO FAME

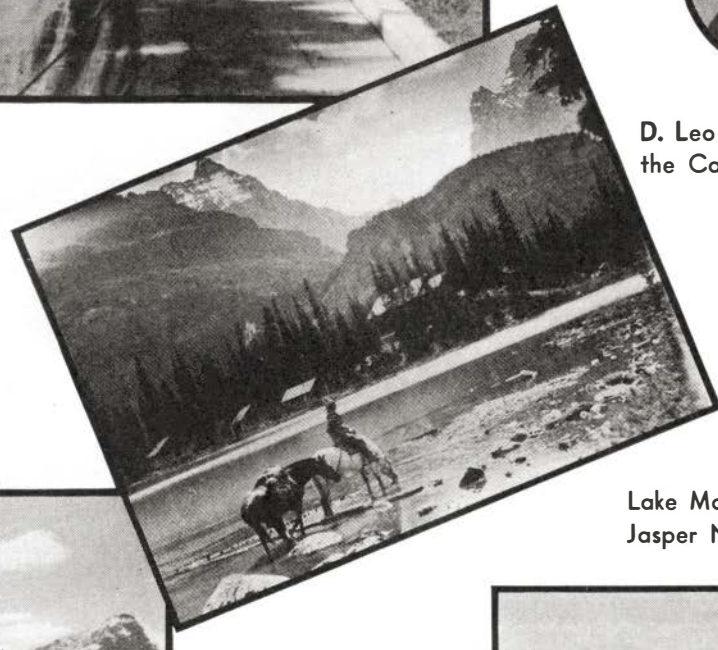
Because she had won a poster contest, Jean Parker's picture appeared on a Pasadena float, publicizing the Olympic games. Then this girl from Deer Lodge, Montana, was sought out by MGM and cast with Jackie Cooper in "Divorce in the Family." As a direct result, she was immediately made the *Grand Duchess Tatiana* in "Rasputin." Recently seen in "Sequoia," she will soon appear in the leading rôle of "Murder in the Fleet." She wants to play *Peter Pan*, for that is her favorite rôle; and she dreams of this sometimes as she rides her bicycle (yes!) to work.

CANADA

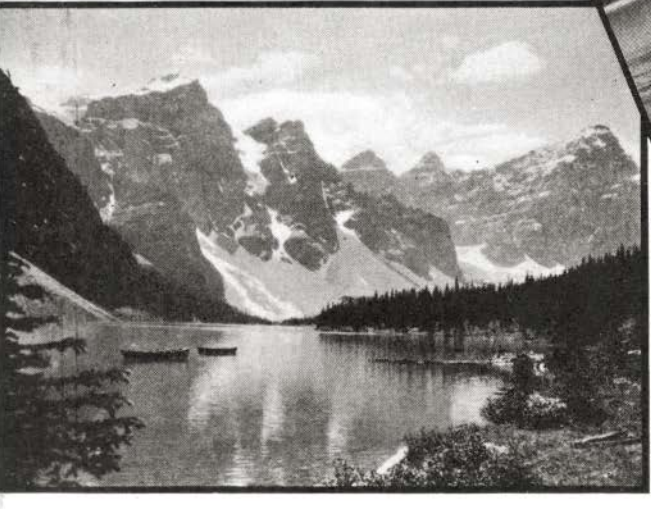
By Irvin

The old St. Louis Gate, City of Quebec, in Quebec, Canada.

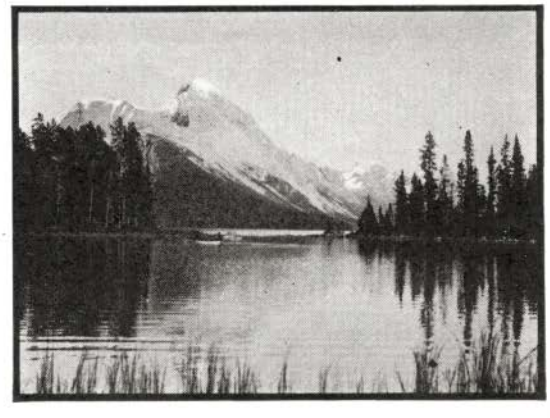
D. Leo Dolan, the director of the Canadian Travel Bureau.



Below—Moraine Lake, in the Valley of Ten Peaks. Right—Lake O'Hara in the shadow of the everlasting mountains.



Lake Maligne and Mt. Samson, Jasper National Park, Alberta.



CANADA, taking it by and large—and looking at the map, you'll see it is powerfully large—is the one unspoiled national playground left, north of Mexico, on this hemisphere.

True, we have some areas which still are unvexed by the so-called developmental improvements of this so-called civilization of ours; but to reach them, the average American must travel for hundreds or thousands of weary miles, and then maybe change cars. Across the line in Canada, you have only to step out of the back door, as it were, and there you are.

Start north from Montreal, or start in almost any direction from Quebec, and presently the paved road has turned into a game-trail, and within a few hours you are deep in wilderness which still and yet is as it was when the Supreme Architect builded it, bearing the marks of the Divine handicraft in every lichened boulder and every brawling trout-stream and every silvern lake.

There, almost anywhere, you may invite the peace which passes understanding; there enjoy woodland glories which are unsullied, and so beautiful as to pass the powers of human description. I know, because I have done it.

In New Brunswick I have cast a feathered fly on pools of water so incredibly lovely that even a confirmed fisherman must stop from fishing to drink in the essences of the unsullied virginal gorgeousness that surrounds him.

In the Ontario tall timber I have heard the bull moose bellow intimately through the windows of our camp, and caught the drumming of the cock-grouse on every dim flower-edged path winding onward into primeval infinity.

CALLING

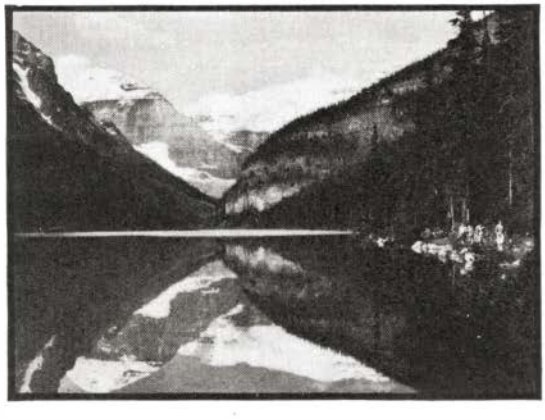
S. Cobb

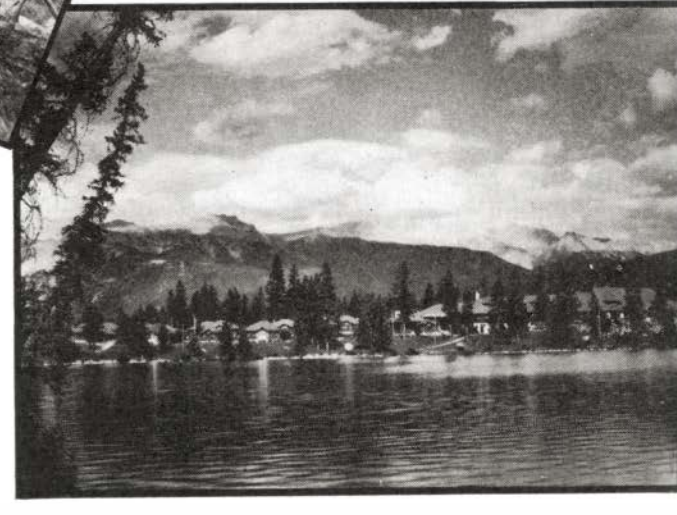
The Hon. Dr. R. J. Manion, M.P., Minister of Railways and Canals.

Banff Springs Hotel, castle-like in its vast mountain setting.

Below—Jasper Park Lodge, Alberta. Left—Campers near White Sands River, in the Lake Nipigon district, Ontario.

Snowy peaks mirrored in Alberta's deep and silent Lake Louise.





Photos Courtesy of
Canadian National Railways
Canadian Pacific Railway

In the West, I have taken off my hat to the Canadian Rockies, which somehow are more majestic, more overpowering—and more undisturbed by prying puny mankind—than here in the States; and in Jasper Park I have flung my bed-roll down on the deep everlasting moss upon the shores of Lake Maligne, one mile above sea-level, one mile below the glaciered rim-rock of the mighty mountains which wall it in; it is the last great scenic marvel of the New World to be discovered, and on all counts one of the most awe-inspiring and spirit-lifting of them all.

Yet I only ventured along the verges of this incredible domain of Nature. On beyond where I went are thousands of perfect lakes which no white man's eyes yet have seen, countless miles of leaping rapids that only the fishes know, great snow-topped peaks unnamed and unmapped, millions on millions of acres tenanted only by the wild things; cataracts and ice-fields and fastnesses declaring the bountifulness of God, glades and meadows and estuaries testifying to the perfection of the Celestial Scheme.

If you would hunt or explore, angle or loaf, tramp or just sit, motor or hike, paddle or pole, take a tip from one who has tried them all, and wrung pleasure from every waking moment while thus employed, and pick Canada for your vacationing.

And if in these few lines I have sounded like a press-agent blurbing his blurb, don't blame me. Blame the intoxicating effects of a combination of pure air, pure skies, pure beauty, pure solitude and pure liberty.

Ilse Hoffman

THE FACE IS FAMILIAR?

But you don't remember names! It's not your fault this time. For in myriads of magazine advertisements she has been for four years America's most ubiquitous face and figure. She is the model for the campaigns of one of our most prominent brands of cigarettes. She has posed in the latest from Paris for the country's most fashionable shops, for our smartest fashion magazines. One seldom, if ever, discovers the identity of the mystery-girl of advertising. So—we raise the curtain and introduce her to you! Ladies and gentlemen: Miss Betty Wyman of New York.

THE DOLLIE OF THE FOLIES BERGÈRES

Pach Bros.

She is the leading child actress of France, the Mitzi Green of French Moviedom. But she crossed the big pond with the Folies Bergères de Paris, wowed them all in Chicago at the World's Fair, and stole the show in New York at the French Casino. For since she is right on top of the list of acrobatic dancers, little Olympe Bradna gives her audience what might be known as Acrobatic Heart.

Keystone and Wide World

NO CHANCE FOR THE DAVIS CUP?

By John R. Tunis

THIS will be a great tennis season, great because uncertain. There aren't any Tildens in the amateur ranks today—no, nor any Cochets either, but good players in every country so evenly matched that anything can happen. And probably will! Everyone assumes England will keep the Davis Cup in 1935. I am not so sure of it.

Our "white hopes" are: Sidney B. Wood (1) second ranking American, described by Tilden as "the only amateur in the world capable of first-class tennis." Yes, Bill; and if Sidney can hit his peak more than twice in one season, the Cup will be ours. For the New Yorker is the only American with a game to beat Crawford of Australia and Perry of England. Next, Wilmer Allison (2) who realized his ambition to be our Number One player last summer. Almost-but-not-quite describes him; for he's the hard-luck player of the United States: there has always been some one—Tilden in 1930, Borotra in 1932, Austin in 1933 and Perry last year—to keep him from victory. However, he's a magnificent fighter, so don't count him out. Frank Parker, fourth in the American ranking, is young in age, but a veteran in experience; he might be the hero of the year, but says he intends to play tennis as a game, not a profession, and can't leave school to go abroad. Interesting if true. Then there are two youngsters, Gene Mako and Donald Budge, both Californians. They compose a doubles team which will make you forget Lott and Stoefen before footballs are kicked again.

But *the* Match of 1935, the contest every tennis fan has been waiting for, is the battle between champion and ex-champion, Miss Jacobs (3) and Mrs. Moody. This match would fill the Rose Bowl; it will be the most exciting thing in tennis since a girl named Helen Wills fought Suzanne Lenglen to a standstill at Cannes in 1926. Today she finds herself in Suzanne's rôle, challenged by a younger woman. Speaking of younger women, Mrs. Marshall Fabyan (4) and Miss Carolin Babcock are the two best in this country—the former, who was Miss Palfrey, from the East, the latter from the West.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THIS BIG PLYMOUTH IS A *Low-priced Car!*

(*Above*) BEAUTY WORKED IN STEEL! That handsome body is all-steel.

(*Left*) A MIRACLE IN COMFORT! Back seat rides as smoothly as the front.

Look at "All Three" and you'll see Plymouth leads in size . . . in beauty

MEASURE THEM with your eye, or use a tape-line. You'll find Plymouth is the biggest of "All Three" leading low-priced cars. It has the room and comfort every family wants . . . the beauty every one desires.

Weight has been re-distributed . . . as introduced by the famous "Airflow" cars. Seats and engine are moved forward. This makes the back seat ride like the front . . . no bumps or bouncing.

It also gives more room . . . wider seats, lower floors, bigger doors. Every one is talking about Plymouth's luxurious Floating Ride!

It's big and powerful but handles so easily that driving's fun. And, because of new cooling and new ignition, you actually use 12% to 20% less gas and oil.

But above all, note this: Plymouth is far and away the world's safest low-priced car . . . the only one of "All Three" with genuine hydraulic brakes and all-steel body! Yet Plymouth is one of today's lowest-priced cars!

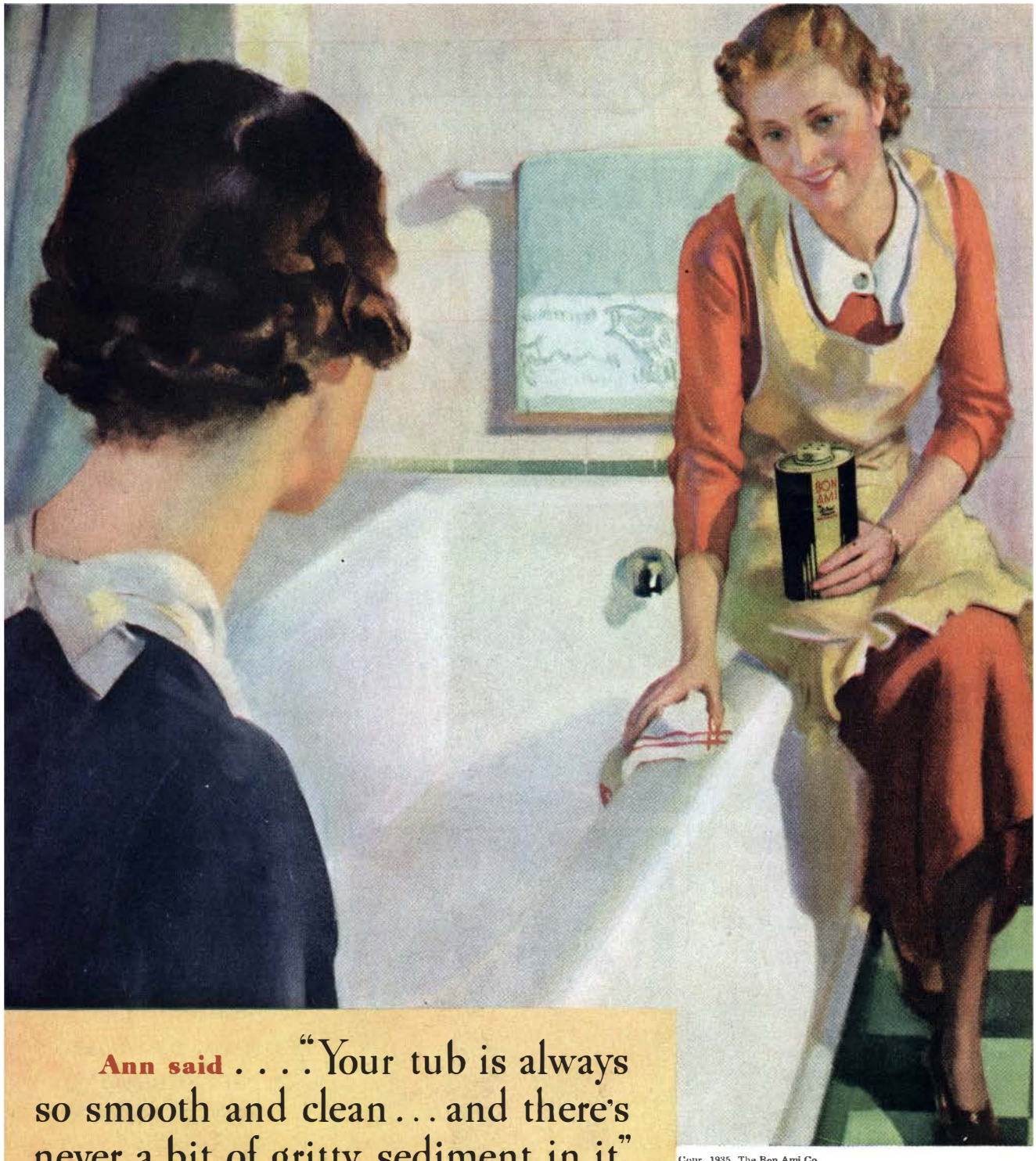
See your Chrysler, Dodge or De Soto dealer. Ask him to let you take this big, new Plymouth out on the road . . . and ask about the official Chrysler Motors Commercial Credit Plan that makes it so easy and convenient to own one.

Only Plymouth gives you All Four:

1. GENUINE HYDRAULIC BRAKES
2. SAFETY-STEEL BODY
3. WEIGHT RE-DISTRIBUTION
4. 12% TO 20% LESS GAS & OIL

REAL ECONOMY—new cooling and new ignition save 12% to 20% on gas and oil!

PLYMOUTH *Now only* **$510** AND UP LIST AT FACTORY DETROIT



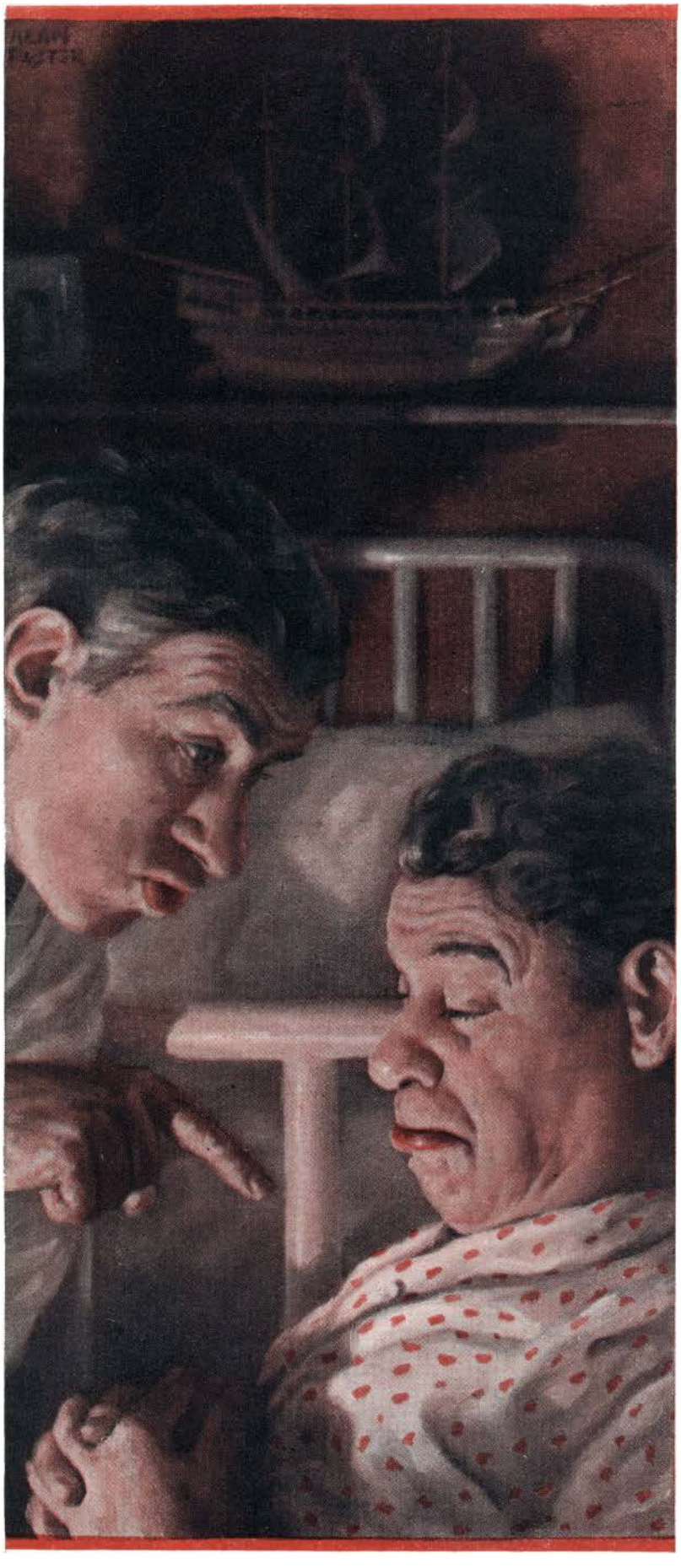
Ann said . . . . "Your tub is always so smooth and clean . . . and there's never a bit of gritty sediment in it"

and I said . . . . "Yes, Bon Ami washes away completely . . . . and doesn't it leave a lovely polish!"

Bon Ami

"hasn't scratched yet"

If you are using some other cleanser on your bathtub, make this little test. Try one package of Bon Ami—and see how much cleaner *and more lustrous* your tub will look. Notice how Bon Ami *polishes as it cleans* . . . leaving the surface undulled and glistening smooth. Watch how quickly and easily Bon Ami washes away—with no gritty sediment left behind. And you'll enjoy working with Bon Ami. All women do, because it's so white and odorless . . . so gritless—yet so quick and thorough!



He called me a puffick failure. . . . "I aint neither no failure!" I says. I was mad, yet by this time I'd got so sleepy I couldn't hold but one eye partly open.

Hoop-Te-Do!

by

Booth Tarkington

Illustrated by Alan Foster

Women hate bachelors—single women and married women and widows too . . . They all hate bachelors.

IN the morning, on the veranda of my small cottage at Cobble Reef, I'd been trying to read a heavy book, and making little progress. The cottage is on a crest of rock, and the surf below was loud and distracting; but beating more sharply upon my consciousness was another sound—the high-pitched voice of a denunciatory woman nagging somebody interminably. She was not within my view, yet the shrill noise of her seemed to come from the premises of my neighbor Captain Ambrose Valentine, retired, upon the roof of whose shack my windows looked down, and after lunch, when the neighborhood was again quiet, I had enough curiosity to descend to his cluttered little yard and make inquiries. Seated, whittling, among weeds and the remains of a totally collapsed buckboard, he replied; and the rest of this narrative would best be heard in his own plaintive voice:

All that uproar and catterwilling 't went on all morning and that you might heard a little part of it, why, it was due to that there Sarah Bazz. Come right in my house and commenced, and never stopped. All because Bazz, her husband, told her he was out with me Saturday night when he never got home, and if I'd a once told her the truth that I never see no Bazz no Saturday night, why, it would made an enemy of him and cost me dear—like him poisoning my chickens or something—so I didn't dare to and simply had to suffer till a coupla her children come and got her to go home and cook dinner.

On the other hands, it's happened to me before now and only a sample of how this world treats a bachelor. Take if a bachelor goes to a church supper, don't they all expect him to buy everything on account of him supposed to have no family to support? Yes, and take if there's sick people or even a corpse to be set up with, don't they pick on a bachelor to do it? As if he didn't need no sleep same as anybody else!

Women hate bachelors—single women and women that got their own spouses, and women that have lost 'em, too, widows-like; they all hate bachelors, and the elderlier a bachelor gets, the worst they hate him. It

"Guess Captain pretty near forgot me!" she says, all hoop-te-do and laughing. "Looks like I would have to train him better."

don't help him none to hold strictly aloop from 'em; they'll hate him just as bad as if you had a good deal to do with 'em.

Preachers don't like bachelors neither, you can see why, and the Guvment hates 'em, slams taxes on 'em; and on a railroad if a bachelor hires a bunk to sleep in, they charge him just as much as if he was married and had a wife with him. Even little children got an instinct against bachelors, on account of the philosophy being that the more bachelors, why, likely, the less children. What's worse yet, why, bachelors'll hang together some maybe, if they got to; but they don't get no injoyment out of it—it's just the need for shelter—and, with only one or two exceptions like me, they rather be around where there's women that revile 'em behind their backs.

PRACKLY the hull human kingdom treats a bachelor like he was outside the bale; but the ones that do the worst to him, it's the married men.

When one of them that's married gets caught or anything, he's too cowardly to tell his wife some other married man was in it, too, on account the women would compare their notes together and get the other man in trouble he maybe was escaping and make an enemy of him; but nobody don't mind if a bachelor's their enemy. Right here in Cobble Reef there aint been a married man in the last eighteen years got drunk he didn't tell his wife he was out with me.

I've had married men heap their burdens and falsifyings on me that the highest repatation I ever built up would get smears. This Bazz case this morning wouldn't be nothing, moored alongside some I've underwent. Take the case of when I first retired from the tug-boat calling, for instance, and went to live up Lemport way at Cosy's Island. I thought Cosy's Island was going to be a bower of rest after my toils on the deep, because for one thing Cosy's Island aint no island; it's a beautiful little city with a splendid sardine canning factory, and White's and Goltz's Salt Codfish comes from there, too, that you can eat all over the United States.

I'd saved a sum of some money; so I up and chartered the half of a double cottage belonged to some good 'quaintances of mine near the sardine wharf and took light jobs as a caulker sometimes. So there I was at last, thinks I, after all my storms, come to nice anchorage in an elegant haven.

My 'quaintances in Cosy's Island, both male and female, had incouraged me to come and live among 'em, saying oh, Captain this! and oh, Captain that! and how high they'd 'steem me if I would settle down there to be their fellow-countryman. So now I was cheap by jowl with 'em in my half a cottage, and right away I was a sought-for popular man. There wouldn't be a day I couldn't had a meal at some family's expense, and all bright smiles and, "Pass Captain the stew first; let Grandma wait!"

Fair words! Fair words every one of 'em holler, not a thing below the water line, and all because I was a bachelor more less over thirty or forty year old. That's the way. All hoop-te-do and oh, what an addition he is! So's a bachelor can hear 'em saying it, and all the time they hate him worse'n roaches; but take and hide and conceal their true sediments towards him until they find out he aint going to let 'em do every last thing they want to to him, and got a mind of his own and won't behave like nobody's fool just on their sakes. So then they show their true worth like so much poison.

The ones that made the most over me was this Mrs. Orene Willis and Ernie Willis, her husband, that she owned this double cottage I was in the one side of, and they lived in the other half of. Ernie Willis I'd knowed many's the year; he'd sailed mate under me on the *W. H. Holker* in the New England Dredging Corporation before he settled ashore at Cosy's Island and married this Mrs. Orene Willis that was his wife now, and, while and all as to brains he never set low in the water account of cargo, my big mistake was letting him worm around into my trustingness as a faithful friend.

This Mrs. Orene Willis, she done worming into my confidence, too, being an experienced married woman and had been married before Ernie, with a husband that run away; but she had propaty, so I thought no harm to act more less kittenish with her to maybe aid getting the rent for my half reduced down some day.

Right at the start the biggest compatition over me come from across the street; a young couple named Medger that had a widow-lady aunt living on 'em they says was going on thirty-seven or -eight but uppards of fifty-five or -six, true rating. Awful heavy tonnage, too, and there was big gossip about her eating, that she would eat amounts nobody ever see before nor since.

This young Mr. and Mrs. Medger, they claimed to be giving me a supper party; but when I got there, it was only them and this big-eating aunt, and they kep' hinting behind their hand at her to go lighter during table, and thinking they was covering it up; but I heard them, and anyways, after she made a couple efforts to not, she give 'way to her instincts and went to eating right before me just like Mrs. Orene Willis, Ernie's wife, had told me private beforehand she would.

This young Mrs. Medger kep' pointing to some pictures on the wall and a couple ornaments they had on the mantelpiece and talking about 'em to abstract my attention; but you might as well invited somebody to the circus and then ask him not to look at the bareback riding and elephants when they was right before his eyes.

After supper Mr. and Mrs. Medger says they had to go to a business meeting of the Jolly Dozen, only members allowed, and went off and left me alone with her in their setting-room. Then she was still swallering at something to get it down; but she says she will tell my fortune with a pack of cards and commenced shuffling 'em. But I says, "Don't lay 'em out on my account." and let on like something must disagreed with me bad, and says I better start quick and run for a drug-store. By this means I got away and never come back, and so the Medgers was the first that turned tail, working against me and showing theirselves in their true light as scandalmonkers against a bachelor they couldn't discumber theirselves of their big aunt on.

THERE was still plenty after me; and I could afford to laugh at the scandalmonking them Medgers started round on me that I was a skimflint and would accept all treats without making no return. "Return?" I says to Mrs. Orene Willis when she told me what they was circulating on me. "Return? Would I marry their big aunt for a piece of ham, some hominy and potatoes and one slice of lemon pie just to keep them from saying I wouldn't make no return? What do they expect of a man?" I says; and yet I was wasting my breath because plenty people expect that much of a bachelor time and again, and are ready to turn tail and prackly devour him when he shows too much backbone to do it.

Orene says not mind how them Medgers was talking because there was plenty better fish in the sea than their aunt, and she knowed one that already thought the world and all of me; but I would haf to guess who it was. I says no, I was settled into a bachelor and didn't care about guessing; I just desired a pleasant time in a general sociable way, as kind to one as I was to another. She says wait, the day would come when I would change my mind; but she wouldn't say now who she meant. Then, a couple evenings later, Ernie and Orene give a liver and onions party in their half on my honor, and I got the idea she meant a black-haired, switch-around young lady that was there by the name of Charlotta Prout.

This here Miss Charlotta Prout had a dark swartish complexion with great big Spanish eyes and teeth glittering like china when she yelled and laughed. I judged her to run about a hundred and fifty pounds, but all good plump lines and swishing her form every which way to get them noted, and if you was standing by her she would be whooping at somebody else but kind of rest herself against you like she didn't hardly know it wasn't the wall. Hearty-like, too, giving you pushes when you and her was laughing and joking, or whacking you on the back maybe, or even wanting to bet a box of candy she wasn't ticklish.

So of course she right away made a good deal over me and set by me during while there was music to commence with, because it seems a Mrs. R. H. Carter that was there always brought her sither; so this Mrs. R. H. Carter got out her notes and played on it fairly good a while, and her and a gentleman from Ipswich by the name of Mr. Frank Smith with a comb and paper give kind of a duet. Then nothing would do but the Captain must sing. So I give 'em the "Warrior Bold" and "We Never Speak as We Pass By," and Miss Charlotta Prout carried on so hoop-te-do over it, how I couldn't stop now and all such, I had to try again and sung all I could recklect of "The Star Spangled Banner."

Miss Charlotta Prout kep' on egging me to recklect some more of it and go on, and I see Mrs. Orene Willis casting me knowing glances over the shoulder, so I give a good guess and was sure this here Charlotta was the one she meant already thought the world and all of me. So of course then I commenced holding off from Miss Charlotta Prout, not insulting her but just tacking off in order nobody would think I was letting myself get unsettled as a bachelor on account of her sakes.

Then something happened I didn't take no special note of at the time; but it come to bear on the case afterwards. Come the refreshments got over, we was playing games and pastimes, and Miss Charlotta Prout says we must play the game of Lapland, which was the gentlemen set in the middle the room in chairs with an empty chair beside each of 'em, and this Mrs. R. H. Carter set to one side playing her sither, while the ladies circle round the gentlemen and the extra chairs, and then all of a sudden, poom! Mrs. R. H. Carter would stop the sither and the ladies would scramble to set down in the extra chairs; but there's one chair too few, so one lady would haf to set on whatever gentleman's lap she was in front of when the music stopped.

Well, all hoop-te-do, and then the music stopped, and the lady that got caught was this Miss Charlotta Prout. She was mostly in front of me; but I wished to keep on tacking off, so I set in such a way as she could not set down on me, and so she had to slide over next and set on Ernie Willis, instead.

It seemed like a big success because everybody hollered and joked, and Charlotta acted like she was all dismayed and that Ernie wouldn't let her get up and screamed, and then the music commenced again, and this time I was the gentleman got caught and it was Mrs. Orene Willis set down in my lap, and I let her, thinking no harm there. I entered in the spirit of it, too, and tickled Orene in her sides, same as Ernie done Miss Charlotta Prout, and everybody happy and hollering and I didn't think nothing of anything, and after the party was over went home next door just feeling it'd been a general sociable evening, as kind to the one as the other and nobody the worse.

I slept nice, all peaceful dreams; but the next morning being a Sunday, Ernie come in my half while I was cleaning up breakfast

and give me a surprise. He looked all soured up, and, what was less to be excused, he commenced picking on me.

"Thought you was my good old shipmate," he says. "Thought you would stand by a man; but look what you went and done last night!"

"Last night? Me?" I asked him. "When last night? Tell me that!"

"First time the music stopped," he says, using an accusing voice. "Charlotta was going to set down on your lap, but you had your knee all humped up so, why, she couldn't and had to set down on me; so her and I had to make the best of it. What did you want to go and hump up your knee against her for?"

"Listen!" I says. "Your own wife was casting me arched glances over Miss Charlotta Prout, and I can't afford to have no one suspicioning I would ever give way to the altar. Look at the Medgers and that big aunt of theirs!" I says. "The same kind of talk might got started on me over this Miss Charlotta Prout if I wasn't careful."

"LISTEN," Ernie says. "Be a shipmate! Be a shipmate!" He went on and says his wife kep' him awake hours and hours account of Charlotta setting on him, and it was far from the first time this Mrs. Orene Willis had got upset over him and Miss Charlotta Prout. "Excepting the house is in Orene's name," he says, in a low voice on account the pa'tition would sometimes let sounds through, "I would gone away long ago," he says, "and passed out of Orene's life some place she'd never find me." If it wasn't for Orene owning all her propaty herself, he says, he would go away right today under a new name, because by not letting Charlotta set on me I'd got Orene all started up again and who could tell when she would ever quit?

"But look here, Ernie!" I says. "This here Miss Charlotta Prout was acting pretty excited over me right out in the open. I had to stop her, didn't I?"

"No, you didn't," he says, and he give kind of a stupid smile. "It's me she likes," he says. Then he says he will confide in me, and the upshoot o' the hull matter was, he says Charlotta was just letting on to make over me to throw a screen in people's eyes and account of Mrs. Orene Willis having been jealous over her before. He says Mrs. Orene Willis was always trying to get somebody to marry this Miss Charlotta Prout so Charlotta would quit running after him. "She's wild over me," he says, and give that kind of a stupid smile again. "Charlotta Prout, I mean," he says. "She wouldn't look at no other man but me if there was a million of 'em, all handsome and captains in the Navy instead of just ex-tugboat," he says. "So look what you done," he says. "Got everything all stirred up just after it'd commenced to summer down. You got me in it," he says. "You got to get me out of it."

"Get you out of it?" I asked him. "My soul! Get you out of it!"

"Why, certainly," he says, and he started rambling on in a long riggarmarony about favors he claimed he'd done me when we was shipmates, and one special time he dwelled on, claiming he saved my repatation once in Boston harbor, and going on and dwelling on all thus and so he claimed he knowed about me from old times. So it commenced coming over me if I didn't do everything he asked me he would go spreading all this and that to my dirtament all over Cosy's Island. Then he says, "You can do it easy," he says.

"Do what easy?" I asked him.

"Make love to Charlotta," he says.

"Listen!" I told him. "Listen!"

"It aint going to hurt you," he says. "Why, you can injoy it," he says. "Wouldn't it be a pleasure to set up to a fine active young lady like Charlotta and have her behave crazy over you without no danger in it? I'll tell her to," he says. "If I tell her to, she will," he says. "She won't like it much," he says; "but she done it last night because I told her to and you couldn't hardly noted it wasn't real," he says. "If I tell her to keep on, she'll even do that," he says.

"Listen!" I told him. "You don't know women," I told him. "The way she acted over me last night was gennawine."

Ernie laughed. "No, it wasn't; it was all a screen just the same as it'll be this afternoon."

"This afternoon?" I asked him. "A screen this afternoon?"

"Why, certainly," he told me. "You go and get Charlotta and bring her to our house to pay your party-call together, and the four of us'll set around and talk and then go somewheres for supper and then to a movie. You can hold Charlotta's hand a little and have Orene see it; I'll let you do that much. We'll get up kind of a quartet," he says. "The four of us'll commence and get to going everywheres together, and all the time you got to play

your part of being all wild in love with Charlotta, and in a couple months or so Orene'll be summered down again."

"A couple months?" I says. "Listen here!"

But he wouldn't pay no 'tention. "I'll go telephone Charlotta from the drug-store you're coming around for her this afternoon," he says. "And I'll order her to keep on letting on she likes you. You get kind of fighting to hold her hand whenever Orene's looking," he says. "Are you a true shipmate, or ought this community to know about all them old troubles around Boston harbor?" he says.

Well, the upshoot of it was, I didn't want to be charged no true shipmate and would take pleasure to hold her hand all right if no serious bond expected. So I went around for Miss Charlotta Prout at her aunt's boarding-house that afternoon, and she was waiting for me. "Ernie telephone to you, did he?" I asked her when we come out the gate. "He told you the fix he's in, didn't he?"

"Well," she says, "he told me you'd be around for me." Then she kind of laughed and went on, "Ernie told me he hoped I and you wouldn't mind Orene and everybody noting you and me seem to kind of taken to each other," she says.

She spoke kind of bashful, so it looked to me maybe she felt more gennawine over me than Ernie says and maybe I better hold off from her, after all—excepting when maybe Ernie would be looking or egging me to play the part of a lover. So I just commenced talking about it looking more less like a thickening up sou'west and maybe rain tomorrow and so on, till we got to Ernie's and went in.

Well, so when Orene see Charlotta, she was all false smiles and "Glad you come," like women do when they're all salty with spite but there's company. "My, what a perfect fit!" she says, meaning Charlotta's clothes. "Shows it all, don't it?" she says, like if everything jolly but with biting below decks. Then she took hold my arm. "You set here on the davenport with me, Captain," she says. "Ernie and Charlotta can take them two chairs over there that's so close together." She give a couple titters. "Maybe they'd p'fer to use only one chair like the way they done last night when she sat on him."

"Listen!" Ernie says. "Aint I told you ten thousand times it wasn't only a game, and didn't you go and set on the Captain yourself during it?"

She didn't pay no 'tention. "You set here with me, Captain," she says.

Ernie was standing aft of her and he motioned me not to; but she already had my arm awful affectionate and commenced pulling, so I had to go and set down with her on the davenport like she says.

"You was certainly the life of the party last night, Captain," she told me right out. "I felt terrible when you'd went home and I see I wasn't going to lay eyes on you again until some time today. I bet you didn't lay awake missing nobody though yourself, Captain, did you?"

IT seems right away my brains got the feeling of being more less confused. Here last night she was all arched glances at me over Charlotta Prout; but now making me set by herself on the davenport and saying things right before her husband that would make anybody red. She was one them cacklish-voiced women, Orene, thin and holler-eyed, but all knotty and awful strong. Still and all, no matter if they're kind of homely now and then, you got to take the good with the bad in this world, and, her being married, why, if she felt that way, it was safe to come back at her as good as she sent.

"Yes, I did," I says. "I missed somebody terrible all the long night."

"Who?" she asked me. "Who?"

"You," I says. "You, only I expect Ernie'd be mad if I told you how much."

"No, I wouldn't," Ernie says. "We heard you going to sleep right after you went home," he says, "through the pa'tition," he says.

I come right back. "I do my missing in my dreams," I says. "I missed Orene," I says, "in all I had," I says.

So it seems Ernie and Charlotta hadn't set down yet, but was standing up looking at us. "Listen!" Ernie says. "I was just thinking of telling you all a good funny story about something the Captain done once in Boston harbor when if it hadn't been for me—"

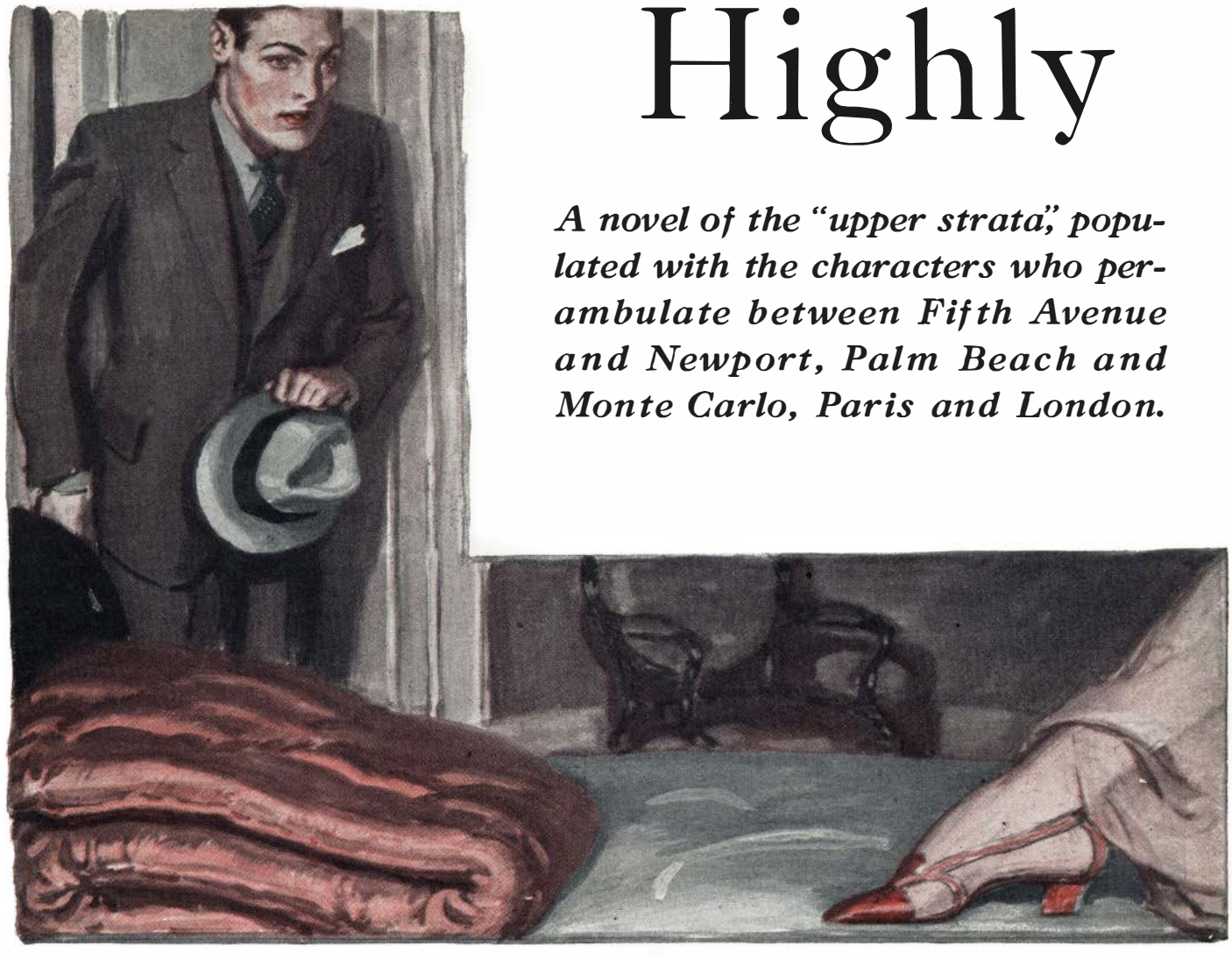
"Listen!" I says, wishing to stop him before he got to going all over them old times again.

"Listen!"

"Well, then," he says, "aint you forgot

(Please turn to page 78)

I set in such a way she could not set down on me, and she had to slide over and set on Ernie Willis instead.



Highly

A novel of the "upper strata," populated with the characters who perambulate between Fifth Avenue and Newport, Palm Beach and Monte Carlo, Paris and London.

The Story So Far:

ONCE more they became news. Once more the photographs of Lou Tennington and Bob Whaldren were slapped across the front pages of the tabloids. And once more the detailed story of their childhood and upbringing was rehearsed for the edification of hard-chewing straphangers.

"OIL HEIRESS BENDS KNEE BEFORE BRITISH SOVEREIGNS," proclaimed the two-column blast on the left.

"SCION OF COPPER ARRESTED FOR PICKETING A CLOAK-AND-SUIT SHOP," shrieked the two-column streamer on the right.

Bob had hated to be a Whaldren, spending two months of the year at his divorced father's gloomy Santa Barbara mansion, the rest of the year at school or with his mother and stepfather Count de Bonn—who was not a count at all, really, but none the less a likable and worldly-wise fellow. A headstrong boy, suffering from attacks of sincerity and "class sickness," Bob would rather have been plain Jones or Smith; and even at college this peculiarity made him easy prey for the newspaper reporters. Why did his father say that he would rather see him in a padded cell than on the same platform with Upton Sinclair? Why did Mrs. Tennington threaten to forbid him her house if he continued to associate with "long-haired malcontents?" And why did Lou, bright as she was, stamp her foot and bite her lip when Bob told her that he hoped they would live to see the Soviet established in America?

"Am offered nomination for Congress on the Communist ticket," he cabled to the Count six weeks before his graduation. "Expect to begin campaign right after I get my diploma." And without even waiting until he received the diploma, he began his campaign by taking on the cause of the striking garment-workers, getting himself arrested—and into the headlines of all the newspapers.

Lou Tennington was in a rage. It was bad enough to spend a year pulling wires to achieve presentation at the British court, to spend thirty seconds curtsying before the throne, and then—on entering an immense hall where the refreshments are being served, to hear a young Guardsman ask that impossible Croxley girl:

"I say, have you heard the latest sensation? The fiancé of one of your American presentees, a queer chap by the name of Whaldren, has just been arrested in New York for picketing a clothing establishment."

Promptly Lou cabled Bob's mother: "Feel acutely humiliated. Seriously consider breaking engagement. Am going home to confront Bob with ultimatum. He must choose between me and his disgusting friends. —Lou."

Immediately she carried out her threat; and drove straight from the *Europa's* dock to the cheap room in the Bronx to which wealthy and "highly eligible" Bob Whaldren had descended.

"Now I know what is the matter with you," she said to him. "You are a cheap exhibitionist. You love the front page much more than you do your starving workers. There's nothing you wouldn't do for the sake of landing on the front page. I suspected it before. I know it now. People claim that Bob Whaldren's a fool. I say Bob Whaldren isn't a fool; but speaking about fools, one must not overlook the existence of Bob Whaldren. I don't envy your future wife, because each time some one mentions the word *fool* in her presence some one else will be sure to ask her: 'And by the way, Mrs. Whaldren, how's your husband?' Well, comrade, I won't detain you any longer. I'm through with you, through forever!" *(The story continues in detail:)*

MRS. TENNINGTON was going to give a dinner, her first formal dinner of the Newport season and her first attempt at resuming the campaign interrupted by what Charley Merrydom described in his column as "The Debacle of Buckingham Palace."

Although she opened her white-and-green villa on Bellevue Avenue immediately after her return from Europe, she knew Newport sufficiently well to realize that the longer she stayed in seclusion, the greater the success of her first dinner would be. She remained in seclusion for three weeks. Charley Merrydom himself was already beginning to concentrate on a more recent scandal when an invitation marked "Hasta Vista, Bellevue Avenue, Newport," reached his desk in New York.

Eligible

by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.

who wrote "Farewell to Fifth Avenue"

Illustrated by
R. F. Schabelitz

"This—this happens to be my room!" Bob stuttered. "There surely must be a mistake somewhere. You're taking me for some one else!"

"If you happen to be in Newport, one week from tomorrow, do come and dine with us. Nothing elaborate, you understand. Just a few friends whom we haven't seen for ages, Mrs. Landimore and her charming nephew among them."

Charley Merrydom whistled. Mrs. Tennington's generalship, he admitted readily, was not a thing to be sneezed at. The Landimores were broke, of course—had been broke for generations, ever since their great-great-grandfather decided that it was below the dignity of a blue-blooded Bostonian to compete with a bunch of Dutch upstarts; but the Landimores were still the Landimores, possessors of one of the finest names in America.

"Why," said Merrydom, and the immensity of his thought made him jump up and rush toward his files, "the Landimores were gentlemen even in the days when no one had heard of the Romanoffs and the Windsors. . . . If Lou's mother manages to lasso Nelson Landimore, she can write her own social ticket, both here and in England. Fancy any Long Island mug refusing to accept Nelson's mother-in-law! The fellow may be a parasite and a cheap welsher and a booze-fighter and everything else they say about him, but damn it all, he *is* Nelson Landimore, a direct descendant of the old gentleman on the *Mayflower*."

After a hasty glance at a bunch of newspaper clippings dealing with Nelson Landimore and disclosing the facts known to every diligent reader of social pages, Charley Merrydom tore up the copy he was about to send to the printers, sat down and wrote a column which he expected would cause sleepless nights and heartbreaks to many an ambitious society mother.

"Mesdames and mademoiselles: Prepare yourselves for a shock. Fortify yourselves with an additional cup of *café-au-lait* before you continue to read your hard-working correspondent's newsy column. For you are about to lose your favorite bachelor, America's most eligible dancing partner and week-end guest. . . . . You suspect the worst? You are not mistaken. . . . It breaks my heart too, but I swore years ago that I would tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. . . . Mesdames and mademoiselles, I beg leave to announce that Nelson Landimore, yes, I do mean *the* Nelson Landimore of Boston, Mass., is about to bid farewell to his bachelorhood. . . . Who is the lucky girl? Three

"Shut up now, all of you," ordered Lou. "I'm looking for facts. I'm not amused by your profanity."

guesses, mesdames and mademoiselles. . . . Who among you possesses a sufficient amount of beauty, charm, wit and pre-Roosevelt dollars to capture the heart of our tall handsome Bostonian with many ancestors? You hesitate? You are loath to admit it? Be good sports, mesdames and mademoiselles, and say: 'The best girl has won. Congratulations, Lou Tennington!'

"What will Nelson's aunt say when she hears the great news? Won't the old lady object to this match because of the never-to-be-

forgotten debacle of Buckingham Palace? *Tss!* Strictly between you and me—not only does the old lady know all about it, but she has accepted Mrs. Tennington's invitation to dine in the latter's house in Newport, one week from tomorrow. . . . It so happens, mesdames and mademoiselles, that the Landimores are—may they forgive me this most uncouth expression—that the Landimores are frightfully short of cash, and that the Tenningtons came unscathed through 1929-1935, thanks to the wisdom and the extraordinary foresight of the late Mr. Charles P. Tennington."

His daily task done, Charley Merrydom decided to get in touch with the gentleman whose engagement he had just announced. Not that he expected Nelson Landimore to confirm what he himself knew to be an obvious lie, but merely for the sake of ascertaining whether "America's most eligible dancing partner" had really accepted Mrs. Tennington's invitation.

He began by calling up Boston.

"Mr. Landimore is not in town. This is his secretary speaking," said the voice on the other end of the long-distance wire, a voice which Charley recognized at once as that of Nelson's aunt. "If you care to leave a message—"

"No, thanks. There's no message. Do you happen to know where he's staying in Newport?"

"Mr. Landimore is not in Newport," said the dignified voice. "If you must know, he's in New York, attending to some important business with his bankers. If you care to leave your name—"

Charley hung up unceremoniously.

"Attending to some important business with his bankers!" He repeated, imitating Mrs. Landimore's voice. "Well, I think I know who his New York bankers are. It's either Tony's or Pascali's. More likely it's Tony's. He hung around Pascali's long enough to wear out his welcome."

A minute later he was talking to the head-waiter at Tony's.

"It's Charles Merrydom speaking, Giuseppe. Is Nelson Landimore there? He isn't—are you sure? Oh, I see. . . . You helped him out yourself. How long ago? . . . Couple of hours. . . . Was he very drunk?. . . . Drunk as a fool, eh? You don't say so! Well, he must have been really drunk if he tried to sock you. . . . I know exactly how you feel, Giuseppe. And now look, how would you like to make ten dollars? No, I don't want you to sock anyone. All I want is the address he gave to the taxi-driver. . . . What? Repeat it once more. . . . I don't believe it, Giuseppe. . . . It's impossible, I'm telling you. You must be mistaken. . . . Wait a moment, Giuseppe. . . . Please, don't get mad. . . . I know you never lie; I know that you're a law-abiding American citizen operating under a paid-for license and serving only the best brands of liquors, but please, please, Giuseppe, repeat that address once more."

The corpulent columnist listened to the shrill sounds of Giuseppe's high-pitched voice as one would listen to an operatic star, with bated breath, afraid to miss a syllable. He put down the receiver slowly. Then he sat down and wiped the perspiration off his forehead. For a moment he toyed with the idea of rewriting his copy once more, but the risk involved was too great, too great even for Charley Merrydom. What if Giuseppe had lied, and Nelson Landimore had not told the taxi-driver to take him to the Bronx address of Bob Whaldren? Why in the name of Huey P. Long, Charley asked himself, would Nelson Landimore want to bother with Bob Whaldren? What could there be in common between those two? One was a drunkard, a fortune-hunter and a ne'er-do-well; the other a nut and an exhibitionist. Bob Whaldren had nothing that Nelson Landimore could possibly wish; and as for Nelson— Ye gods! Unless— But no, even a rotter of Nelson Landimore's type would think twice before daring to question a man about his former fiancée.

"I've got to investigate this thing," mumbled Merrydom, "investigate it first and write it up afterwards."

This did not sound like the Charley Merrydom of yore, like the man who never hesitated to predict the exact date of divorces, marriages and blessed events; and he felt disgusted with himself. He was either losing his grip, or there was more "meat" in that Tennington-Whaldren-Landimore affair then even he could chew in one sitting. He looked at his typewriter apologizingly, then grabbed his hat and made for the door. He hated the Bronx, having spent there the first twenty years of his life; but he could not resist the Call of Duty.

"WOULD you mind terribly, Mother, if I don't attend your gorgeous dinner-party?"

"Why, Lou!"

It was as if some one had asked Mrs. Tennington whether a marriage-ceremony could be performed without a bride.

"Don't shout at me, Mother. I'm sick and tired of your fits."

"I'm not shouting at you, my child; but there's a limit even to *my* patience." Mrs. Tennington pushed aside the silver tray with the place-cards, and gave her daughter a look of thorough disapproval. "Here I am, working like a slave, straining my mind and endangering my health, all of it for your sake, for the sake of saving what's left of your reputation—and what do I get as my reward? Nothing but ingratitude. Ingratitude and sneers! Would I mind if you don't attend my party? Would I mind! Now really, really, Lou. . . . You forget that you're talking to your mother, not to Bob Whaldren."

"How many times have I asked you, Mother, not to mention that name in my presence?"

"And how many times have I asked you to stop thinking about him?"

"Who's thinking about him?"

"Stop pretending . . . You're not fooling me, not for a second. You imagine that I'm a silly middle-aged woman, that I notice nothing. . . . Well, it may surprise you to discover how many things I do notice. All sorts of things, including that outrageous bolshevik newspaper which you're reading every morning."

"Peeping through the key-hole, eh?"

THE sarcasm of Lou's remark failed to disguise her embarrassment. The blood rushed to her face, and her hands trembled. Anything would have been better than to be caught by her mother in the act of reading Bob's newspaper.

"I won't stoop to answering that last remark of yours," said Mrs. Tennington, unable to suppress a malicious smile; "but let me tell you one thing, young lady: I do not have to peep through key-holes to know the exact reason of your unwillingness to attend tonight's party. You're afraid to face people: that's the trouble with you. You're a heroine when it comes to being rude to your mother, but you're a coward when it comes to braving other people's judgment. You've lost your nerve. You're ashamed of yourself. You know it, and you suspect that these people,"—Mrs. Tennington pointed in the direction of the place-cards,—"know it too."

"How perfectly pre-war, and how perfectly silly!" laughed Lou, though none too gayly. "I may be ashamed of your guests, of those cheap hangers-on from Boston and Washington, but I'm certainly not ashamed of myself. . . . What have I done to be ashamed of?"

"Plenty, my dear. You've made a fool out of yourself. A fool out of yourself, and an innocent victim out of your mother . . . As for your daring to insult these people, these thoroughly respectable, well-bred people,"—Mrs. Tennington looked at her place-cards with undisguised awe.—"well, let's be charitable and blame it on your inferiority complex."

"My inferiority complex!"

"Yes, your inferiority complex. In your heart you know that after what happened in London you don't deserve to associate with people like Nelson Landimore and his aunt."

Lou laughed. This time she was really amused.

"Have you ever met Nelson Landimore, Mother?"

"No, but I am well acquainted with the history of his family."

"And I, Mother, am well acquainted with the reformed speakeasies out of which he has been thrown for making rows and refusing to pay his bills."

"It's youth in him," said Mrs. Tennington sententiously.

"There's another word for it: dishonesty. Nelson Landimore is my idea of a gilt-edged louse."

"And, I suppose, Bob Whaldren is your idea of a snow-white angel?"

"Always trying to win on a foul, aren't you?"

"I've had enough of it," announced Mrs. Tennington. She pressed the button by her side. "Ask Miss Hendrick to come in," she ordered the butler. "You will excuse me, my child, but Miss Hendrick and I have a great deal of work to do."

Lou sighed. She loathed the very name of Miss Hendrick, a raw-boned spinster with dyed black hair, engaged by Mrs. Tennington because of her supposedly flawless knowledge of seating-arrangements.

"I sha'n't bother you any more, Mother," she said, answering the toothful smile of Miss Hendrick with a wave of the hand. "I guess it will take you easily the rest of the afternoon to decide who should be seated on your right, the doddering ex-governor, or that Spirit of Smallpox from the State Department. See you later. As a special favor to me, Miss Hendrick, do try to seat at least ten people between me and Nelson Landimore. In fact, I'd rather eat in the kitchen, if you don't mind."

The two elder women exchanged understanding glances. The thing for them to do was to continue as they had started, using the well-tested and ever-reliable *(Please turn to page 94)*

The Open Door

Wherein an unscrupulous swordsman discovers to his utter dismay that a cane is sometimes mightier than a sword...

by Rafael Sabatini

Illustrated by Maurice Bower

"THE open door," says the Castilian proverb, "will tempt a saint!"—which is only the Spanish way of saying that opportunity makes the thief.

It is not pretended that Florimond de Souverain de la Galette was a saint, or that only exceptional temptation would lead him to seize an opportunity of profit, whatever the moral considerations involved. Nor did the discerning suppose that he had any right to that too high-sounding name of his, or that it was anything more than one of the theatrical properties with which he sought to create the romantic background which he conceived proper to his profession. It was of a piece with his favorite description of himself:

"I live by the sword."

This being translated into vulgar terms meant no more than that he was a fencing-master. The sword by which he lived was buttoned and padded at the point; otherwise he would not have lived by it long. For he was an indifferent performer, really; and if he drove even a precarious trade in the exercise of his art, this was because a great vogue of swordsmanship had been created in the declining lusters of the Eighteenth Century by the *"Art des Armes,"* the revolutionary and widely read treatise on fencing by that great Parisian master Guillaume Danet.

Those were days in which the name of Guillaume Danet was on every lip. His methods were discussed wherever gentlemen assembled, and fantastic tales were told of his wizardry with the blade.

It was Florimond's pretense that he had studied under Danet. The truth was that he had learned what swordsmanship he knew in a third-rate Paris fencing-school, where, in addition to sweeping the floor and furbishing the foils, it had been his function to instruct beginners in the various guards. He had read Guillaume Danet's famous treatise assiduously; and having scraped together a few louis, the little rascal had gone off to Rheims to set up as a master-at-arms, appropriating some of the luster of the great name of Danet by unblushingly proclaiming himself the favorite pupil of that celebrated master.

That magical name accomplished all that Florimond could have hoped, but only until the young gentlemen of the neighborhood who had flocked so eagerly to his academy discovered the falsehood of his pretensions to teach an art of which he had learned little more than the rudiments. After that, his only pupils were a few aspiring younger members of the *bourgeoisie,* and Florimond's fortunes were touching their very nadir when he perceived that open door which is said to tempt the saint. He made the discovery, by purest chance, at the inn of the Sucking Calf—Le Veau Qui Tête—where it was his evening habit to sit over a game of écarté with Philibert the notary, Desjardins the wine-merchant, and Fleury the apothecary.

Into that hostelry, on an evening of spring, came a gaudy, overdressed young man in yellow and silver, with cheap lace at throat and wrist, and a ribbon wherever he could put one—who had just descended from the Paris stagecoach.

He was the son of a mercer in the Rue St. Antoine, and he had lately inherited from his father a modest fortune with which he was setting out upon his travels, proposing upon a quite inadequate education to play in the world the careless glittering rôle of a man of fashion. With his cheap finery he had put on the insolent airs which he had observed in men of the class of which he desired to be accounted a member.

The sword by which he lived was buttoned at the point; otherwise he would not have lived by it long.

There may have been a dozen patrons in the common room of the Sucking Calf, when he swaggered in—calling for the best supper, the best wine, the best room and the best of anything else the house could supply. In the hush produced by his loud tones, Florimond turned to look him over with an eye of increasing scorn. For Florimond, who for a time at least had rubbed shoulders with members of the lesser nobility, knew a gentleman when he saw one.

The day had been a lean one; the cards this evening were not going well for him; and the moment's inattention caused by the noisy advent of this pinchbeck gallant betrayed him into a disadvantageous discard. It was enough, undoubtedly, to sour his humor.

The newcomer, who had announced his name as Dumasque, conceived it in his rôle that no pretty woman should be overlooked; and little Pâquotte of the Sucking Calf, with her merry eyes, red lips, plump bosom and tip-tilted nose, suddenly found the young gentleman's arm round her waist and his finger under her chin.

"My dear, I vow to heaven that you're too dainty a pullet for a provincial inn. I vow to heaven you'd adorn the Palais Royal. You'd find your fortune there at Février's." With princely condescension he added: "I vow to heaven you shall wait on me, little one." And in the best manner, as he supposed, of the Palais-Royal rake, he placed a kiss, scarcely to be described as chaste, upon her fresh young lips.

Whether his spuriousness deceived her or not, and whatever may have been her feelings, Pâquotte knew her duties too well to make a fuss. With a laugh she slipped from his detaining arm and moved off to prepare a table. Monsieur Dumasque was following, when Florimond's unkindly comment, on a note of mimicry, arrested him.

"I vow to heaven we are to be edified by this canary. He talks of the Palais Royal, of Février's. I vow to heaven he will have been a waiter there."

The words were bad enough, but carried to every corner of the room by Florimond's thin piercing voice, they aroused a general laugh.

Monsieur Dumasque stood arrested by the brutal shattering of his proud persuasion that he was dazzling these provincials. He lost his head.

A dark flush on his lumpy countenance, he turned back to the card-players' table. He wore a sword, and leaning his hand upon the hilt, he thrust it up behind him like the angry tail of a roaring captain. And his tone matched the attitude in truculence. He ransacked his wits for words that should sear and scorch. But failing to discover them in the little time at his disposal, he contented himself with being haughtily direct.

"Did you talk at me, sir?"

Florimond put down his cards, and swung round on his chair. His glance took in this haughty challenger, from the curls of his cheap wig to the buckles (of gilded brass) on his shoes; and Florimond's thin mouth tightened with malice.

"Now that I behold you better, I perceive how little that was worth while."

The intransigence of the phrase should have warned Dumasque that here was a man who, for all his slight build and the rusty black of his garments, might be dangerous. But like the fool he was, he allowed himself to be swept forward by his gust of passion. He slapped Florimond's face.

"Let that teach you to mend your manners."

CONSTERNATION was followed by hubbub. Florimond knocked over his chair in his haste to rise, and his three friends rose with him to restrain him. In what he did, however, he was as restrained as he was deadly.

"The lesson calls, I think, for payment. Desjardins, do me the honor to arrange a meeting for eight o'clock tomorrow morning in the Pré-aux-Chêvres. The length of my blade is twenty-five inches." He bowed with cold formality. "Not to embarrass you, monsieur, I will withdraw."

He departed with stiff dignity, leaving consternation in the

bosom of the Parisian, who found himself so abruptly with a duel on his hands. Reminding himself, however, that he had to deal with a benighted provincial, for whom rudiments of swordsmanship which he possessed should be enough, Dumasque recovered his confidence, and sustained the ruffler's part.

"I vow to heaven, sirs, that your friend is in a hurry to get himself killed."

Florimond's three associates regarded him with disconcerting pity. Then Desjardins, the wine-merchant, answered him.

"If he doesn't kill you, sir, you will owe it either to his kindness of heart or to his fear of the consequences. The law is not lenient with a fencing-master even when he has been provoked."

"A what?"

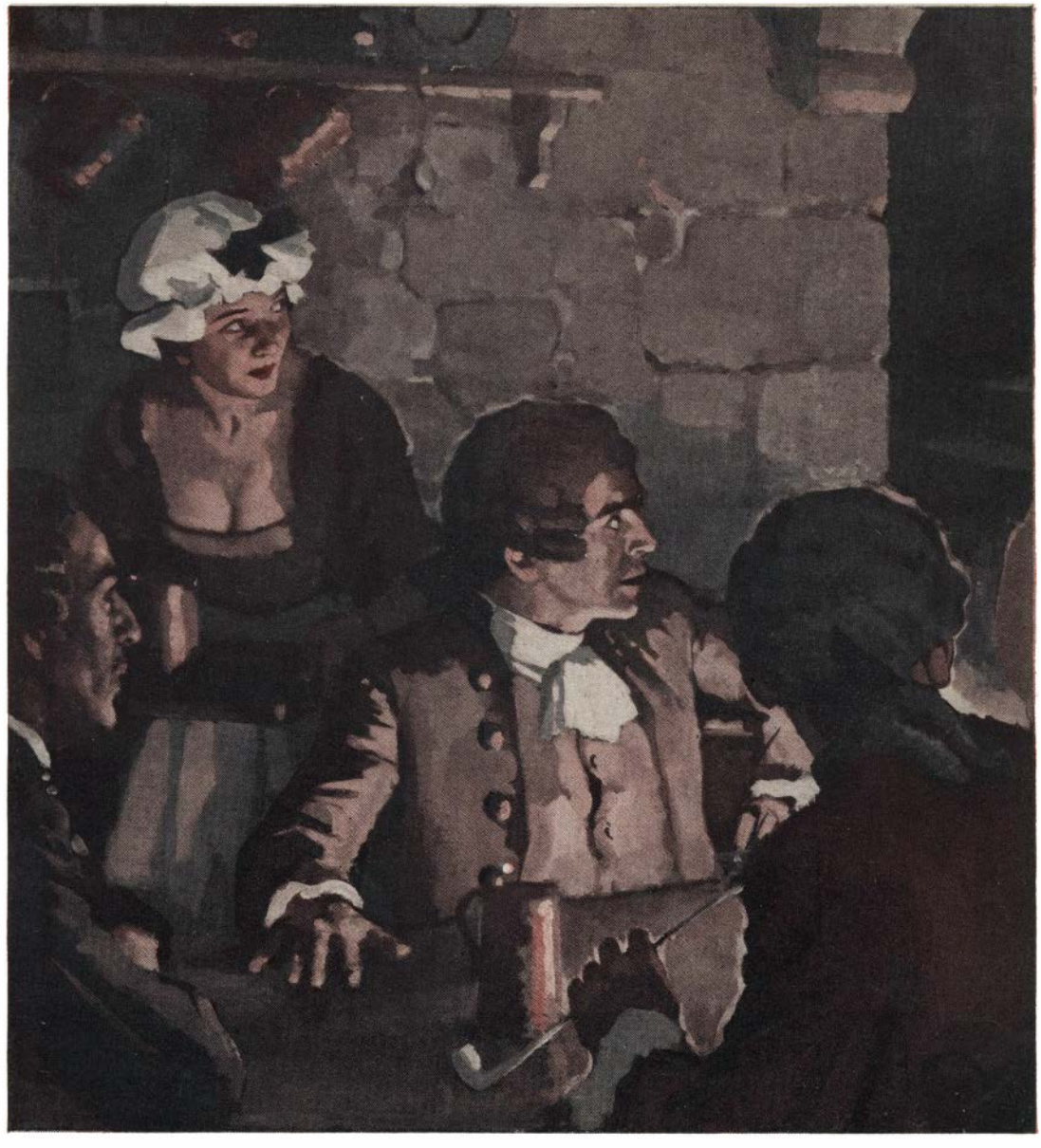
The three men sighed as one. Desjardins shook his big head.

"Ah! You would not know, of course. A fatal ignorance, young sir. The gentleman you have so unpardonably struck is Monsieur Florimond de Souverain de la Galette, master-at-arms of the King's Academy."

Dumasque suddenly felt that the dinner eaten at Epernay had disagreed with him. He stared wide-eyed and pallid, the jauntiness gone out of him like air from a pricked balloon.

"A fencing-master! But—sacred name! One does not fight a fencing-master."

"It is not prudent," the lean apothecary agreed. "But then, neither is it prudent to slap a fencing-master's face."



"Landlord, I am seeking here a rascally fencing-master who is a disgrace to his call-

Desjardins, however, showed himself brisk and practical. "I trust, sir, that you have a friend to make the necessary arrangements with me."

"But—but—" Monsieur Dumasque broke down, and finally demanded: "Where does he live, this Monsieur de la Galette?"

It was a boy from the inn who conducted him on foot to the shabby house behind the Cathedral where Florimond had his being and his academy.

Florimond's greeting was not encouraging. His scowl was forbidding.

"Monsieur, this is most irregular."

Dumasque stammered in a nervous flurry. "M-m-monsieur, in ordinary circumstances— But these circumstances are—quite extraordinary. I did not know that you were a fencing-master."

"Ah! I am to wear a placard on my breast, for the warning of impertinent cockerels?"

But no insult could inflame anew the young Parisian. "It is impossible that I should meet you."

"Of course, if you prefer that I cane you in the streets—"

"Monsieur, I have come to apologize."

"Apologize?" Florimond laughed; and to Dumasque it was the most dreadful sound that he had ever heard. "But where do you come from, then? From Egypt, or Persia, or perhaps China? For all that I know, it may be possible in some of these places to slap a gentleman's face and avoid the consequences by an apology. But in France we arrange it differently, as you may have heard. For even in the Palais Royal these things are understood."

The young man abashed himself in intercessions. Florimond, with no other end in view but completely to humble this upstart, would not yet be mollified.

"You fetched the blood to my cheek just now. I shall fetch yours to your shirt in the morning. Then we shall be quits, and honor will be satisfied."

Dumasque was in despair. He thought of flight. But his baggage was at the inn—which, moreover, was a post-house. Surreptitious departure would be impossible. His wandering, fearful eyes observed that the furniture of Florimond's room was shabby, that Florimond, while spruce to the casual glance, was threadbare to a close inspection. And so he reached the inspiration that was, in the sequel, to make a rogue of Florimond.

"If I were to offer compensation for the injury, monsieur?"

"Compensation?" Florimond's eye was terrible.

"You live by the sword. You give lessons for money. Why should you not satisfy your honor by—by—" He halted foolishly.

"By what, monsieur?"

Dumasque took a flying leap at his goal. "By ten louis."

"Leave my house, sir!" roared the incorruptible Florimond.

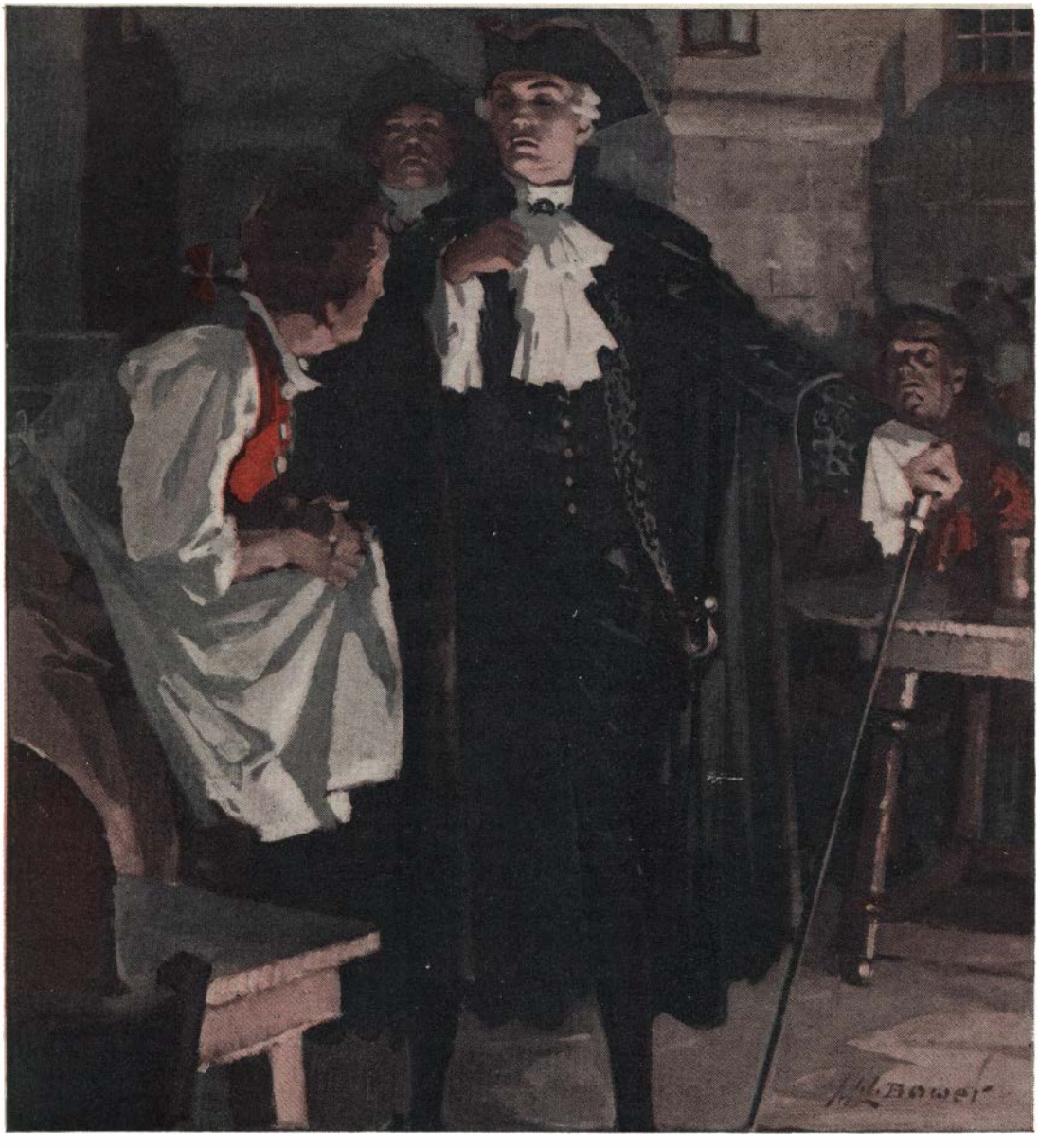
"Fifteen louis," gasped Dumasque, putting up his hands as a shield against the other's wrath.

But the fierceness had gone out of the fencing-master's eyes. His lips twitched.

"Fifteen louis! Bah! Name of a name, it costs more than that to smack my face, young sir."

"Twenty then," cried Dumasque more hopefully.

Florimond stood chin in hand, suddenly thoughtful. Here was a queer, unexpected shaping of events. Twenty louis was as much



ing, who goes by the name of Florimond." It was Florimond himself who answered.

as he now could earn in a year. For half the sum he would gladly allow himself to be slapped on both cheeks and any other part of his body that might tempt an assailant. He cleared his throat.

"You understand, of course, that in these matters there can be no question of compensation. But a fine, now: that might be different. By mulcting you in twenty louis, I might consider that I had sufficiently punished your temerity. Yes, all things considered, I think I might."

Dumasque lost not an instant, lest Florimond should change his mind. He whipped out a fat purse, bled himself and departed.

FROM that hour Florimond was a changed man. An unsuspected source of easy profit had suddenly revealed itself. It was the open door that tempts even the saint. Florimond strangled a conscience that had never been robust, and crossed the threshold.

Three times in the month that followed he gave such provocation to travelers resting at the Sucking Calf that on each occasion a challenge resulted. True, the meetings provoked never followed. If Florimond, hitherto so gentle and unobtrusive, had suddenly, to the dismay of his three card-playing friends, become truculent and aggressive, at least, to their consolation, he was always to be mollified by a visit from his intended opponent. Sometimes the visit was suggested by Desjardins. Of the nature of the mollification which Florimond exacted, his honest friends had no suspicion. From the fact that he now spent money more freely, they simply assumed that the affairs of his academy were improving. Nor did these good, dull men draw any inference from the circumstance that his clothes assumed a character of extreme bourgeois simplicity, and that he abandoned the wearing of a sword, which in the past had been an integral part of his apparel.

Their suspicions might have been aroused if Florimond's victims had walked less readily into his snare. Shrewd in his judgment of likely subjects, he spread his net only for the obviously self-sufficient numskull, and he never forced the pace, always leaving it for the victim to commit the extreme provocation.

Subjects such as these were, after all, by no means common. It is certain that at no time did the average run higher than one a fortnight, and with this Florimond was at first abundantly content. Greed, however, increased with prosperity, and fostered by the ease with which it could be satisfied, he grew less cautious.

Yet all went smoothly for him until one autumn evening, when a moon-faced, quiet-mannered man, in the plainest of tie-wigs, his sober brown suit almost suggesting a plain livery, descended from a post-chaise at the Sucking Calf, and mildly ordered himself supper, a bottle of wine and a bed for the night.

From his table in the usual corner Florimond observed him narrowly, and judged him a timid simpleton of the merchant class, yet a man of substance, since he traveled in a chaise and not by the stage. He was an ideal victim, save that his unobtrusiveness opened no avenue of approach.

Demure and self-effacing, he ate his supper; and Florimond began to fear that at any moment now he might call for his candle, and so escape. Some departure from the ordinary technique became necessary.

Florimond loaded a pipe, rose and crossed the room to the fire, in quest of a light.

The stranger, having supped, had slewed his chair round and was sitting at his ease, a little unbuttoned and somnolent, his legs stretched before him. Florimond trod upon the fellow's foot; after that he stood glaring into the moon-face that was raised in a plaintive stare. Thus for a long moment. Then:

"I am waiting, monsieur," said Florimond.

"Faith! So am I," said moon-face. "You hurt my foot, monsieur."

"Let it teach you not to sprawl as if the inn belonged to you."

The man sat up. "There was plenty of room to pass, monsieur," he protested, but so mildly plaintive as merely to advertise his timidity.

Florimond had recourse to stronger measures. "You are, it seems, not only a clumsy lout, but also a mannerless one. I might have pitched into the fire; yet you have not even the grace to offer your excuses."

"You—you are amazingly uncivil," the other remonstrated. The round face grew pink, and a wrinkle appeared at the base of the nose.

"If you don't like my tone, you have your remedy, monsieur," snapped Florimond.

Rounder grew the eyes in that bland *(Please turn to page 105)*

What the Country

I HAVE an idea that's worth billions. It will make millions overnight. It's the surest money-making scheme you've ever seen. I'll present it to Congress as soon as somebody lends me the fare to Washington.

World affairs aren't new to me. Didn't I predict the 1929 crash, and lose my shirt to prove I knew what I was talking about? Everybody knows I started the whole N.R.A. business, which I may even cut out one of these days. It took me almost fifteen minutes to convince the five members of the Supreme Court that they should uphold Roosevelt on the gold question. (I had promised F. D. I would get the boys to see it our way.) And now I again feel that my country needs me, and again I answer the call—at plenty a word!

What the country needs most at this time is money—you remember, the thing you used to give the grocer and the butcher . . . . Oh, come, come! You know—the thing your wife keeps asking you for, and you keep stalling about. Well, there's one way for the Government to get it—and that is through taxes. . . . More taxes? Yes.

Right now taxes are unpopular, and so people find excuses not to pay them. We have an inheritance tax, and people have stopped dying—just for spite!

My plan is to make taxes popular. You will pay a tax only on things you either want to do or have to do. And what do people want most? You've guessed it—LOVE. So there will be a tax on love!

Every parked car will be watched by a detective who will collect for every kiss, hug or squeeze—at rates fixed by a special committee on necking. The parked cars alone could easily pay for our whole navy. And of course our whole navy could easily be accommodated in these parked cars. In a pinch, we could even squeeze in the army. Need I tell you that the army and navy are always ready to answer the call to arms?

Kisses will be divided into categories. Just a peck on the cheek is five cents; a plain kiss, ten cents; a kiss where you do all the work, twenty-five cents; and for a dollar, you just hang on!

To make sure that the tax is levied fairly, every couple will wear a thermometer on their lips—so the inspector could tell how hot they kissed. The charge will be a dollar for every degree above normal. Any person found with an ice-bag, trying to bring down the temperature, will be charged with misrepresentation. The boys will wear speedometers on their arm to show how far they went around the girls' waists.

Parlors will be equipped to record all admiring ardors. The lights in cozy corners will be marked in scandal-power. The speed of a girl's car will be measured in males per hour. And if you're caught breaking a date, you'll be arrested for evading the tax. Of course, you will get a discount for bribing the chaperon—and that will be one time when hush-money speaks!

Of course there will be exemptions. If a man is caught petting his own wife, by mistake or not, he doesn't pay anything. If the kissing is done on the roof, or in a penthouse, the Government won't take a cent—because that's on the house.

The last day of each month, every male and female will have to send in an exact report of all kisses received and given out. To say you don't remember or didn't pay any attention is no excuse—wasn't it going on right under your nose?

Everything you hear about will be taxed: Schnozzle her symmetry, I'll pay for my eyes, Greta Garbo

Needs Most

by Eddie Cantor

Caricatures by Sam Berman

I'm sorry to say it, but the underworld will welcome my idea too, because it will give them one more law to break. You will see gangsters turn into *hug-runners,* and couples who will want to escape the tax will be saying the password to Tony, and do their loving behind the closed doors of a *kiss-easy.*

This new tax will apply to almost anything. Instead of the present amusement tax in the movies, there will be a sliding scale rate. At a Jean Harlow or Claudette Colbert picture, the men will pay an extra quarter, but the women will only pay the admission price. For a Clark Gable or Bing Crosby picture, men won't pay any tax. Of course, if the theater is featuring the new Public Enemy Number Zero, Rubinoff and his violin, in person, they will pay you twenty cents to come in.

As you pay for your ticket, the girl at the box-office will ask what you came to see. If it's the feature picture, you pay the regular tax. If it's the comedy or the news-reel, you pay only a fraction of the tax. Imagine a man at a Marlene Dietrich picture saying he only came to see the shorts! Couples who occupy seats in the last row will pay only the love-tax, because they don't care what's going on on the screen, anyway.

How'm I doing, folks? Am I getting the Government out of the red, or not? Singers on the radio will have to pay too. Before a baritone can sing "Old Man River," the State of Mississippi gets a ten-per-cent tax. If he sings "Crying for the Carolines," North and South Carolina split the tax. There is no tax on "California, Here I Come," because that State wants all the publicity it can get. The States will be making so much money out of this tax that prizes will be offered for lyrics to rhyme with Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

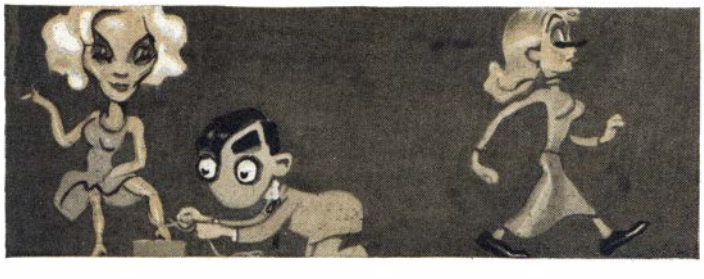
For singing "Winter Wonderland," "June in January" or "Blue Moon," the tax will go to the U.S. Weather Bureau. The American Medical Association will give the heart specialists the tax collected on "Be Still, My Heart." The lung specialists will get the money from "With Every Breath I Take," and the optometrists will retire on "With My Eyes Wide Open." The veterinary doctors will get rich on "I Get a Kick Out of You."

The Foreign Relations Department will collect the tax on "The Continental" and "The Isle of Capri." The Secret Service Bureau will get its share from "Tiny Little Fingerprints" and "Dancing with My Shadow." The N.R.A. will get an overtime tax from "Night and Day" and "All Through the Night."

EVERYTHING you hear about will be taxed. The Empire State Building and the new Washington Bridge will pay for their size. And so will Schnozzle Durante pay for his nose; Marlene Dietrich for her symmetry; Greta Garbo for her feet; I'll pay for my eyes; and Mae West will have to pay too.

Oh, yes, telephones will be taxed. If you have a party line, you will pay for entertainment, gossip, or news—depending on what you use it for. But if you get a wrong number, the phone company will pay you. Every pay station will have a special tax slot where you will have to deposit a dime every time you kid the operator, and a quarter every time you say: "Guess who this is!"

Slang will have to be paid for. If you can't afford it, you'll have to say: "Indehiscent shelled fruits dedicated to the second person singular!" But if you can spare a quarter in taxes, you say: "Nuts to you!" You'll have to *(Please turn to page 117)*



Durante will pay for his nose, Marlene Dietrich for will pay for her feet; Mae West will have to pay too.

So Clyde

I THINK very well of God. At least, of whatever One it is Who will sometimes take hold with His gentle, unseen hands upon nothing, cupping and turning and shaping it until it takes form. He is not always about, not even when He is desperately needed; but sometimes He stops by, a wandering craftsman, and fashions most curious things—a vessel to bear water to a parched mouth, a still space in the midst of pain, a sweet memory where everything good has long been forgotten. Whatever His gift, it is more than it would have occurred to you to ask for, and what no one else could have brought.

It must have been He who gave Clyde to Min Dailey. That is, Who planted the seed in her heart. Min herself, alone, gave birth to Clyde, on Tower Hill one night in the fall, with that blinding hurt of flesh and spirit which every mother knows, and the incredible moment of utter bliss and beauty in the end. Nor was it a matter for shock to her that she found her newborn child to be a man. God, or whatever One does these things, had known well which seed to choose for the planting. . . .

During the years when I lived as a boy in Deepside, Min was one of the characters of the village. Her father's name was painted on the sign nailed above her door—ALBERT DAILEY, GROCERIES AND HARDWARE—but Albert liked best to sit in one of the row of chairs under the window and be ready to exchange as many words as possible with anyone who happened along. He was an old man, frail, querulous, half-blind; the weather was never right for him, nor the times, nor the local government. It was Min who waited on us when we went in to buy.

"Oh, hello!" she would say, jumping up from her chair behind the counter and thrusting a bit of sewing out of sight. "My goodness! Who would have thought to see you! Well, how are you? Good as you look?"

She was tall and thin, with narrow shoulders and wide hips. All her joints were prominent, her knuckles, ankles, elbows; her shoulders bulged at the points as if she had them stuffed a bit, like a man's coat. Her face was older than thirty-two or -three; and yet in a way ageless, as if the years tramped rudely across but left no definite mark on her, nor ever would; her cheeks must always have been broad, hard, too red, her eyes small, black and leaping, her hair heavy and without luster, seeming to hang there asleep. She was in no way beautiful.

But she was not ugly enough to be a freak. If she had looked as she did, and behaved differently, no one would have noticed her. She might have hidden behind her homeliness and never revealed that she knew it was a prison, as other women have. But this was not like Min.

"Hey, everybody!" she would shout, bursting in all abeam upon a church supper. Her dresses were always aflutter with scallops and ruffles on these occasions; in a close, warm room she reeked of perfume. "I guess you thought I'd never get here, didn't you? Well, I *was* kept late. My business is picking up, as they say. Mostly picking up after Pa. . . . Move over, Mr. Pease, and I'll set down aside of you. Don't be scart, even if I am an old maid; I won't bite you. . . . Well, here I am. My, the victuals look awful good. I'll take some beans. You got to pie already, Benny Strout? You had any of mine? It's apple. It's good. I can cook as good as any of them. . . . What are them boys making such a piece of work about over there? Are they laughing at me?"

Illustrated by
John Fulton

"Don't you dare!" she cried. "I wish you'd go back to your wife and children, where you belong." Being Douglas Paul, he went away.

Was Born

The years tramped rudely across Min Dailey but left no definite mark on her, nor ever would.

by

Gladys Hasty Carroll

who wrote
"A Few Foolish Ones"

Here she might spring up from her chair, big, menacing.

"You can stop it! You can stop it, I say! You're always at it. I'm sick of it. Nothing funny about me. I'm *sick* of it, I tell you. Your mothers ought to—your mothers ought to see after you. If I was your mother—"

If Min Dailey were our mother! Old Min Dailey, our *mother!* We ached with wanting to abandon ourselves to the humor of it, as we should have, freely, in any other place, trusting to our legs to carry us beyond the reach of Min's loosed fury. But the church women were kind to her, as kind as they knew how to be. They lectured her upon her loudness, sometimes, telling her ladies did not behave so, and worried her by praying she be helped to control her temper; but they learned how to soothe her, too, and prevented us from doing our worst. It was in other places than the church that she could sometimes, often very easily, be reduced to tears. It was in the grandstand at a ball-game that she was heckled until when a ball fell into her lap, she rose from her hunched smoldering and threw the weapon with accurate aim and murderous intent at Shorty Drew's head.

These things did not happen to her among the church women; and this was the reason why she was willing to wash the dishes after their suppers, change beds and scrub stained linen for the sick poor, grit her teeth and tear her nails and rub her knees thin over jobs no other member of the Ladies' Aid cared to undertake. She clung to these people out of gratitude, and for the sake of their protection, not suspecting that the One whom they were always importuning for favors would come to her, unasked, one night and bring deliverance.

It was said she reached out with her hands and her smile for every man who entered the store, touching him whenever she could make excuse, talking until even the most polite must be rude to save his dignity from her. This was true.

It was said she had in so many words invited every elder of the church to come and stay with her in her rooms over the store. This was not true. It was women who befriended Min; men had no patience with her, and none needed so much excuse as such an invitation to insist that she leave the church. Whatever she might have liked to be, she was not "bad."

It was said the sewing she was so often

found with by a customer went to swell the contents of an old green box which stood in the back of the store—that this was Min's hope-chest. But as long as I lived in Deepside, nobody knew whether it was or not, for it never stood open. The night four of us jimmied a window and scrambled in to turn it out, hoping to decorate the Square with Min Dailey's bridal nightgowns and lengths of lace and bits of linen, to celebrate a hockey victory, we found the chest fastened with a lock beyond all our skill of breakage.

Min Dailey was no fool; nor was she insensitive, as I have shown. She not only understood the full significance of what the cruel young were doing, but she knew quite well the warmest feeling anyone had for her was one of patronage. Now, looking at a crucifix, I invariably think of Min. Then, at nine and twelve and fifteen, I did my full share of spitting and dragging on of thorns. Yet she lived, and met every new encounter with a friendly hail, a spring forward, a sudden flaming up of hope and confidence.

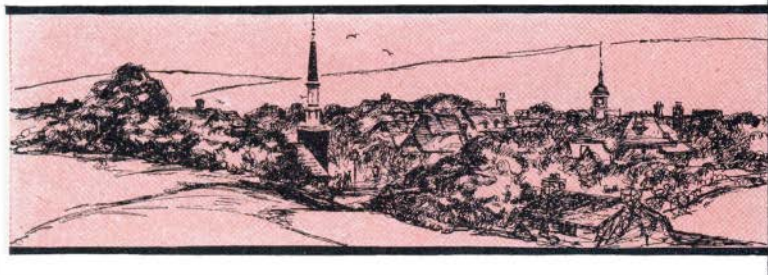
"Oh, hello!" she would say. "What can I do for you? I live in a house by the side of the road, you know. How are you anyway, Bub? Good as you look?"

It must have been so that she met Douglas Paul when he came to Deepside. Douglas Paul was a man who did radio repair work, a war veteran, about forty years old, perhaps, a lean fellow with slightly stooped shoulders, a long, silent face, quiet, full blue eyes, and a scar on his chin. Nobody knew where he had been before, except to the war, nor why he had come to Deepside instead of to some other town. Probably there was no reason, or perhaps he had had enough of the other towns. He did not talk much; there seemed to be no need of it in his work. He came, hired the cupboardlike shop next to Dailey's store, placed his bench in the one window, and began repairing radios.

He slept in the room above his store, as Min and her father lived in the rooms over theirs, and took his meals at the lunch-room down the street. In the evenings he sat on one of Albert Dailey's chairs, pulling hard at his pipe, looking at the sky, saying little or nothing to the old man, and not appearing to listen to his grumbling chatter. Of course Min sat near too, whenever she was not busy. He drew her like a magnet. Other men noticed it, and chuckled, wondering how long it would be before Douglas Paul would see fit to move his shop to a more congenial neighborhood.

But he stayed on all through the summer and fall; and when it grew too cold for sitting outdoors, he took his pipe in beside the rosy stove of the grocery-store; it was not possible to keep his cubbyhole warm enough for anything but work. Every evening when the Daileys came down from their supper, the radio repair man was sitting there on a bench, his legs crossed, the thick soles of his shoes resting on the grate, his head lounging forward, his collar unbuttoned and turned in.

"Seems like it used to," the old man said bitterly, grudging himself the pleasure of company. "I used to have somebody or other in night after night when I first kept store. Lots of times four or five. It's



just since Min's growed up, nobody's come around to set. She scares 'em off. She flies at 'em so. She can't let anybody rest."

"There, Father," Min told him cheerfully, "you aint happy unless you're finding fault with something. It might as well be me. I don't seem to bother Mr. Paul, anyway. You aint so easy scared, are you, Mr. Paul? I don't believe that chair's very easy for you. You'd better take this rocker. Here, we had some apple pie for supper; I brought you down a piece. And a cup of coffee. I don't make bad apple pie, do I?"

"Good enough," Douglas Paul answered, remaining on the bench, but taking the pie in both hands and eating it down in great bites. He gulped coffee from the mug now and then, lifting it from beside him with his thumb thrust through the handle, and his fingers long and brown against the white earthenware.

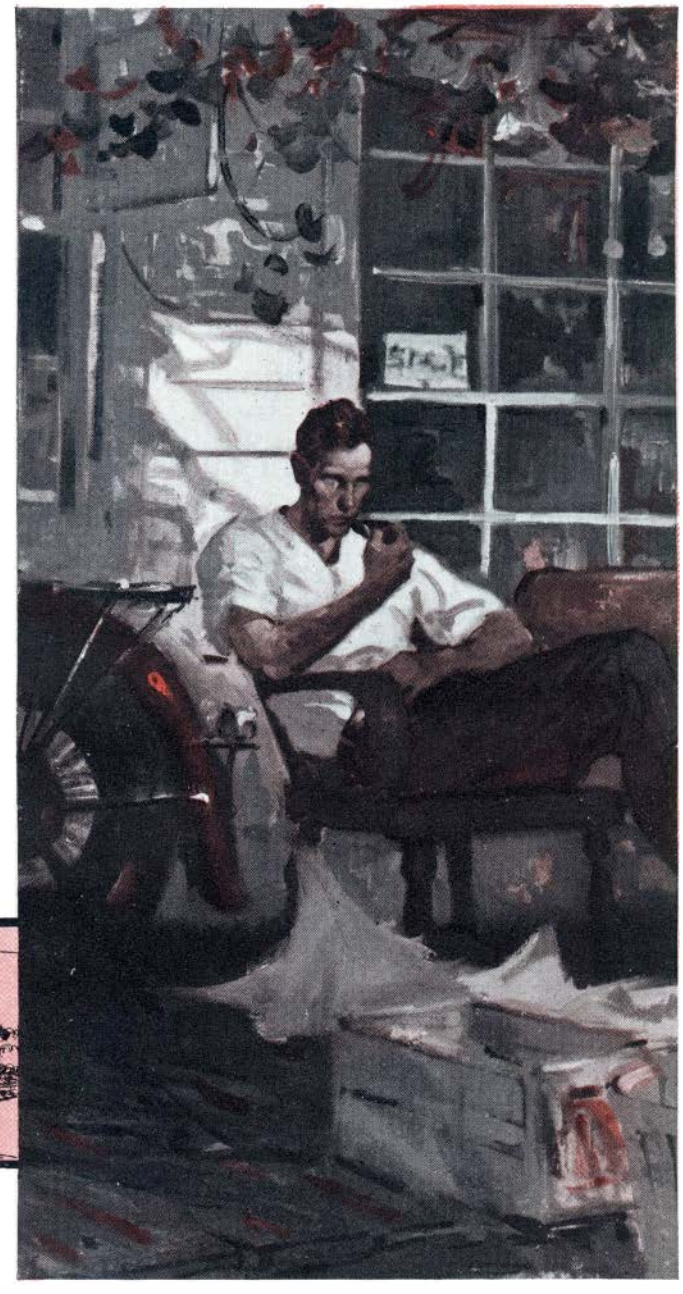
Min stood watching with radiant face, her hands on her hips. He did not lift his head, but sat eating and drinking what she had brought. At the point of his turned-in collar a few crisp hairs grew.

"Good coffee, too," he sometimes added evenly, passing the cup to her, slapping his pockets in search of his pipe.

After this he smoked until an early bedtime. Whether Min or her father talked, he only sat there smoking; if they asked him a question, there was an instant's silence, as if his mind looked over its shoulder, and he answered "Yes," or "No," or "Well—" in his toneless voice.

It was not much, but it was more than Min had ever had. More than the cruel young of the village could allow her. It occurred now to the girls of Deepside to take their turn at the torture.

"What do you think, has Min Dailey got a man at last?"



they asked one another. "Has he swallowed her, hook, line and sinker?"

"Such a sweet man, too," they said. "Really, you know, Douglas Paul is a perfectly nice man."

"And scarce they are in this town. He isn't so terribly old, either. Did you hear he was publicly commended by the Secretary of War when he got his discharge from the army?"

"Well, it's no use any of us going out for him anyway," another laughed. "Min's in on the ground floor, weaving her fatal web of fascination."

"It isn't fair to him, though," Fanny Bridges said. "It's leaving him stuck."

"Christian Endeavor is going to give a play," my sister

announced at supper one night. "All the trouble is getting men to take part. We think we'll ask that Douglas Paul to try out—the radio repair man. He ought to associate with some church. Don't you think so, Mother?"

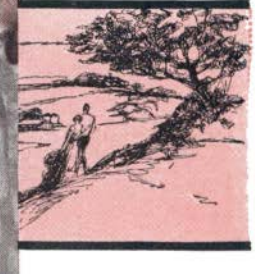
Mother said yes, certainly; we were expressly directed to go into the byways and hedges; she was glad to see Christian Endeavor awake to its responsibilities.

Once persuaded to join the little group in the vestry, Douglas Paul proved himself a natural comedian; the type of grave-eyed, lean-jawed man, cadaverous, who can upon demand play the clown and be the funnier because of the complete reversal. He took the comedy part in the play, became the auctioneer at box parties and ice-cream socials, and within a month was teaching a class of small boys in the Sunday school. Friendly, respectful young girls can do these things to a lonely man. Min, full of pride and noisy delight, beamed on him from a distance at all his appearances; but she saw far less of him at close range now. Often they walked up to the church together; but when the evening was over, however long she waited, he did not come. There was money to be taken care of, or borrowed furniture to be returned. . . . Douglas Paul, active again after many years of blinking in a tomb, worked soberly, faithfully, absorbed in this new demand on him.

It may have been his age. It may have been his reputation as a hero, the scar on his chin, his success on the stage, or his steady reliability, the way he listened to a girl quietly, and after she had finished, did what she asked. Whatever it was, Fanny Bridges, small, with fair hair, and eyes like blue-painted clothespin heads, found herself in love with him before Thanksgiving. And it was the same in the case of Dorris Evanston, a tall girl with a grim, crimson mouth. The two eyed each other for a week or two. Then the day after Douglas took Fanny with him to return a farmer's radio, and break off branches of yellow leaves along the roadside, a little story started, like a new brook after a rain, through the church.

Douglas Paul, it was said, had come from Concord, New Hampshire, to Deepside. Before Concord, he had lived in Tiverton, Rhode Island, and before that somewhere in Illinois. In Illinois he had grown up, and he had a wife there, and five children. Since the war he had never returned home to see them, and they had no idea where he was. The wife advertised sometimes in the Boston papers, saying: "All is forgiven. Please come home. No questions asked. Children need you." His real name, it was added with significant looks, was not Douglas Paul, but something quite different.

It occurred to the girls to take their turn at the torture. "What do you think, has Min Dailey got a man at last?" they asked one another.



"Oh, is it *true?*" Fanny begged, feverishly. "Is it true, do you think?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," Dorris told her. "One thing I do know—*I'm* glad *I* never went out with him. If he's *that* kind—"

"Well, of course we have to admit he's been very tight-lipped ever since he came here," said my sister Jane with relish, swinging in the hammock between our maple trees.

"But I can't believe it's true," faltered Fanny. She looked frightened and bewildered, hurrying out of the yard. It was from her, later, that we heard enough to understand what happened.

Douglas Paul stopped at her house *(Please turn to page 64)*

Uncle Fred Flits By

The inimitable creator of the most cockeyed characters in modern history writes a story which is guaranteed to split your sides and disgrace you before your eavesdropping neighbors.

by P. G. Wodehouse

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

IN order that they might enjoy their after-luncheon coffee in peace, the Crumpet had taken the guest whom he was entertaining at the Drones Club to the smaller and less frequented of the two smoking-rooms. In the other, he explained, though the conversation always touched an exceptionally high level of brilliance, there was apt to be a good deal of sugar thrown about.

The guest said he understood.

"Young blood, eh?"

"That's right. Young blood."

"And animal spirits."

"And animal, as you say, spirits," agreed the Crumpet. "We get a fairish amount of those here."

"The complaint, however, is not, I observe, universal."

"Eh?"

The other drew his host's attention to the doorway, where a young man in form-fitting tweed had just appeared. The aspect of this young man was haggard. His eyes glared wildly, and he sucked at an empty cigarette-holder. If he had a mind, there was something on it. When the Crumpet called to him to come and join the party, he merely shook his head in a distraught sort of way and disappeared, looking like a character out of a Greek tragedy pursued by the Furies.

"We've had words—me and her father. I called him a perishing old—"

The Crumpet sighed.

"Poor old Pongo!"

"Pongo?"

"That was Pongo Twistleton. He's all broken up about his Uncle Fred."

"Dead?"

"No such luck! Coming up to London again tomorrow. Pongo had a wire this morning."

"And that upsets him?"

"Naturally. After what happened last time."

"What was that?"

"Ah!" said the Crumpet.

"What happened last time?"

"You may well ask."

"I do ask."

"Ah!" said the Crumpet.

Poor old Pongo (said the Crumpet) has often discussed his Uncle Fred with me; and if there weren't tears in his eyes when he did so, I don't know a tear in the eye when I see one. In round numbers, the Earl of Ickenham, of Ickenham Hall, Ickenham, Hants, lives in the country most of the year; but from time to time he has a nasty way of slipping his collar and getting loose and descending upon Pongo at his flat in the Albany. And every time he does so, the unhappy young blighter is subjected to some soul-testing experience. Because the trouble with this uncle is that, though sixty if a day, he becomes, on arriving in the metropolis, as young as he feels—which is, apparently, a youngish twenty-two. I don't know if you happen to know what the word *excesses* means, but those are what Pongo's Uncle Fred from the country, when in London, invariably commits.

It wouldn't matter so much, mind you, if he would confine his activities to the club premises. We're pretty broad-minded here; and if you stop short of smashing the piano, there isn't much that you can do at the Drones that will cause the raised eyebrow and the sharp intake of breath. The snag is that he will insist on lugging Pongo out into the open, and there, right in the public eye, proceeding to step high, wide and plentiful.

So when, on the occasion to which I allude, he stood pink and genial on Pongo's hearthrug, bulging with Pongo's lunch and wreathed in the smoke of one of Pongo's cigars, and said, "And now, my boy, for a pleasant and instructive afternoon," you will readily understand why the unfortunate young clam gazed at him as he would have gazed at two-penn'orth of dynamite, had he discovered it lighting up in his presence.

"A what?" he said, giving at the knees a bit, and paling beneath the tan.

"A pleasant and instructive afternoon," repeated Lord Ickenham, rolling the words round his tongue. "I propose that you place yourself in my hands and leave the program entirely to me."

Now, owing to Pongo's circumstances being such as to necessitate his getting into the aged relative's ribs at intervals and shaking him down for an occasional much-needed tenner or what not, he isn't in a position to use the iron hand with the old buster; but at these words he displayed a manly firmness.

"You aren't going to get me to the dog races again."

"No, no."

"You remember what happened last June."

"Quite," said Lord Ickenham. "Quite. Though I still think a wiser magistrate would have been content with a mere reprimand."

"And I won't—"

"Certainly not. Nothing of that kind at all. What I propose to do this afternoon is to take you to visit the home of your ancestors."

Pongo did not get this.

"I thought Ickenham was the home of my ancestors."

"It is one of the homes of your ancestors. They also resided rather nearer the heart of things, at a place called Mitching Hill."

"Down in the suburbs, do you mean?"

"The neighborhood is now suburban, true. It is many years since the meadows where I sported as a child were sold and cut up into building lots. But when I was a boy, Mitching Hill was open country. It was a vast, rolling estate belonging to your great-uncle Marmaduke, a man with whiskers of a nature which you with your pure mind would hardly credit; and I have long felt a sentimental urge to see what the hell the old place looks like now. Perfectly foul, I expect. Still, I think we should make the pious pilgrimage."

Pongo absolutely-ed heartily. He was all for the scheme. A great weight seemed to have rolled off his mind. The way he

"Julia!" he cried. "Wilby!" the girl yipped. . . . She flung herself into the blighter's arms and clung there like the ivy on the old garden wall. Pongo resented her gluing herself to another in this manner.

looked at it was that even an uncle within a short jump of the loony-bin couldn't very well get into much trouble in a suburb. I mean, you know what suburbs are. They don't, as it were, offer the scope. One follows his reasoning, of course.

"Fine!" he said. "Splendid! Topping!"

"Then put on your hat and rompers, my boy," said Lord Ickenham, "and let us be off. I fancy one gets there by omnibuses and things."

Well, Pongo hadn't expected much in the way of mental uplift from the sight of Mitching Hill, and he didn't get it. Alighting from the bus, he tells me, you found yourself in the middle of rows and rows of semi-detached villas, all looking exactly alike, and you went on, and you came to more semi-detached villas, and those all looked exactly alike too.

Nevertheless he did not repine. It was one of those early spring days which suddenly change to midwinter, and he had come out without his overcoat, and it looked like rain, and he hadn't an umbrella; but despite this, his mood was one of sober ecstasy. The hours were passing, and his uncle had not yet made a goat of himself. At the dog races the other had been in the hands of the constabulary in the first ten minutes.

It began to seem to Pongo that with any luck he might be able to keep the old blister pottering harmlessly about till nightfall, when he could shoot a bit of dinner into him and put him to bed. And as Lord Ickenham had specifically stated that his wife, Pongo's Aunt Jane, had expressed her intention of scalping him with a blunt knife if he wasn't back at the Hall by lunch-time on the morrow, it really looked as if he might get through this visit without perpetrating a single major outrage on the public weal. It is rather interesting to note that as he thought this, Pongo smiled, because it was the last time he smiled that day.

All this time, I should mention, Lord Ickenham had been stopping at intervals like a pointing dog, and saying that it must have been just about here that he plugged the gardener in the trousers-seat with his bow and arrow, and that over there he had been sick after his first cigar; and he now paused in front of a villa which for some unknown reason called itself the Cedars. His face was tender and wistful.

"On this very spot, if I am not mistaken," he said, heaving a bit of a sigh, "on this very spot, fifty years ago come Lammas Eve, I— Oh, blast it!"

THE concluding remark had been caused by the fact that the rain, which had held off until now, suddenly began to buzz down like a shower bath. With no further words they leaped onto the porch of the villa, and there took shelter, exchanging glances with a gray parrot which hung in a cage in the window.

Not that you could really call it shelter. They were protected from above, all right, but the moisture was now falling with a sort of swivel action, whipping in through the sides of the porch and tickling them up properly. And it was just after Pongo had turned up his collar and was huddling against the door, that the door gave way. From the fact that a female of general-help aspect was standing there, he gathered that his uncle must have rung the bell.

This female wore a long mackintosh, and Lord Ickenham beamed upon her with a fairish amount of suavity.

"Good afternoon," he said.

The female said good afternoon.

"The Cedars?"

The female said yes, it was the Cedars.

"Are the old folks at home?"

The female said there was nobody at home.

"Ah? Well, never mind. I have come," said Lord Ickenham, edging in, "to clip the parrot's claws. My assistant, Mr. Walkinshaw, who applies the anesthetic," he added, indicating Pongo with a gesture.

"Are you from the bird-shop?"

"A very happy guess."

"Nobody told me you were coming."

"They keep things from you, do they?" said Lord Ickenham sympathetically. "Too bad."

Continuing to edge, he had got into the parlor by now, Pongo following in a sort of dream, and the female following Pongo.

"Well, I suppose it's all right," she said. "I was just going out. It's my afternoon."

"Go out," said Lord Ickenham cordially. "By all means go out. We will leave everything in order."

And presently the female, though still a bit on the dubious side, pushed off, and Lord Ickenham lit the gas fire and drew a chair up.

"So here we are, my boy," he said. "A little tact, a little address, and here we are, snug and cozy and not catching our deaths of cold. You'll never go far wrong if you leave things to me."

"But dash it, we can't stop here," said Pongo.

Lord Ickenham raised his eyebrows.

"Not stop here? Are you suggesting that we go out into that crimson rain? My dear lad, you are not aware of the grave issues involved. This morning, as I was leaving home, I had a rather painful disagreement with your aunt. She said the weather was treacherous, and wished me to take my woolly muffler. I replied that the weather was not treacherous, and that I would be dashed if I took my woolly muffler. Eventually, by the exercise of an iron will, I had my way; and I ask you, my dear boy, to envisage what will happen if I return with a cold in the head. I shall sink to the level of a fifth-class power. Next time I came to London, it would be with a liver pad and a respirator. No! I shall remain here, toasting my toes at this really excellent fire. I had no idea that a gas fire radiated such warmth. I feel all of a glow."

So did Pongo. His brow was wet with honest sweat. He is reading for the Bar, and while he would be the first to admit that he hasn't yet got a complete toehold on the law of Great Britain, he had a sort of notion that oiling into a perfect stranger's semi-detached villa, on the pretext of pruning the parrot, was a tort or misdemeanor, if not actual barratry or soccage in fief or something like that.

Lord Ickenham kissed her on both cheeks and the tip of her nose, Pongo looking on in a discontented manner.

APART from the legal aspect of the matter, there was the embarrassment of the thing. Nobody is more of a whale on correctness and not doing what's not done than Pongo; and the situation in which he now found himself caused him to chew the lower lip and, as I say, perspire a goodish deal.

"But suppose the blighter who owns this ghastly house comes back?" he asked. "Talking about envisaging things, try that one over on your pianola."

And sure enough, as he spoke, the front door-bell rang.

"There!" said Pongo.

"Don't say 'There!' my boy," said Lord Ickenham reprovingly. "It's the sort of thing your aunt says. I see no reason for alarm. Obviously this is some casual caller. A rate-payer would have used his latchkey. Glance cautiously out of the window and see if you can see anybody."

"It's a pink chap," said Pongo, having done so.

"How pink?"

"Pretty pink."

"Well, there you are, then! It can't be the big chief. The sort of fellows who own houses like this are pale and sallow, owing to working in offices all day. Go and see what he wants."

"You go and see what he wants."

"We'll both go and see what he wants," said Lord Ickenham.

So they went and opened the front door; and there, as Pongo had said, was a pink chap. A small young pink chap, a bit moist about the shoulder-blades.

"Pardon me," said this pink chap. "Is Mr. Roddis in?"

"No," said Pongo.

"Yes," said Lord Ickenham. "Don't be silly, Douglas; of course I'm in. I am Mr. Roddis," he said to the pink chap. "This, such as he is, is my son Douglas. And you?"

"Name of Robinson."

"What about it?"

"My name's Robinson."

"Oh, *your* name's Robinson? Now we've got it straight. Delighted to meet you, Mr. Robinson. Come right in and take your boots off."

They all trickled back to the parlor, Lord Ickenham pointing out objects of interest by the wayside to the chap, Pongo gulping for air a bit, and trying to get himself abreast of this new twist in the scenario. His heart was becoming more and more bowed down with weight of woe. He hadn't liked being Mr. Walkinshaw, the anesthetist, and he didn't like it any better being Roddis, Junior. It was only too plain to him by now that his uncle had got it thoroughly up his nose and had settled down to one of his big afternoons; and he was asking himself, as he had so often asked himself before, what would the harvest be.

Arrived in the parlor, the pink chap proceeded to stand on one leg and look coy. "Is Julia here?" he asked—simpering a bit, Pongo says.

"Is she?" said Lord Ickenham, turning to Pongo.

"No," said Pongo.

"No," said Lord Ickenham.

"She wired me she was coming here today."

"Ah, then we shall have a bridge four."

The pink chap stood on the other leg.

"I don't suppose you've ever met Julia. Bit of trouble in the family, she gave me to understand."

"It is often the way."

"The Julia I mean is your niece Julia Parker. Or rather, your wife's niece Julia Parker."

"Any niece of my wife's is a niece of mine," said Lord Ickenham heartily. "We share and share alike."

"Julia and I want to get married."

"Well, go ahead."

"But they won't let us."

"Who won't?"

"Her mother and father. And Uncle Charley Parker and Uncle

Henry Parker and the rest of them. They don't think I'm good enough."

"The morality of the modern young man is notoriously lax."

"Class enough, I mean. They're a haughty lot."

"What makes them haughty? Are they earls?"

"No, they aren't earls."

"Then why the devil," said Lord Ickenham warmly, "are they haughty? Only earls have a right to be haughty. Earls are hot stuff. When you get an earl, you've got something."

"Besides, we've had words—me and her father. One thing led to another, and in the end I called him a perishing old— Coo!" said the pink chap, breaking off suddenly.

He had been standing by the window, and he now leaped lissomely into the middle of the room, causing Pongo, whose nervous system was by this time definitely down among the wines and spirits and who hadn't been expecting this adagio stuff, to bite his tongue with some severity.

"They're on the doorstep! Julia and her mother and father. I didn't know *they* were coming."

"You do not wish to meet them?"

"No, I don't!"

"Then duck behind the settee, Mr. Robinson," said Lord Ickenham; and the pink chap, weighing the advice and finding it good, did so. And as he disappeared, the door-bell rang.

Once more Lord Ickenham led Pongo out into the hall.

"I say!" said Pongo, and a close observer might have noted that he was quivering like an aspen.

"Say on, my dear boy."

"I mean to say, what?"

"What?"

"You aren't going to let these bounders in, are you?"

"Certainly," said Lord Ickenham. "We Roddises keep open house. And as they are presumably aware that Mr. Roddis has no son, I think we had better return to the old lay-out. You are the local vet., my boy, come to minister to my parrot. When I return, I should like to find you by the cage, staring at the bird in a scientific manner. Tap your teeth from time to time with a pencil and try to smell of iodoform. It will help to add conviction."

So Pongo shifted back to the parrot's cage and stared so earnestly that it was only when a voice said "Well!" that he became aware that there was anybody else in the room. Turning, he perceived that Hampshire's leading curse had come back, bringing the gang.

It consisted of a stern, thin middle-aged woman, a middle-aged man and a girl.

You can generally accept Pongo's estimate of girls; and when he says that this one was a pippin, one knows that he uses the term in its most exact sense. She was about nineteen, he thinks, and she wore a black béret, a dark green leather coat, a loudish plaid skirt, silk stockings and high-heeled shoes. Her eyes were large and lustrous, and her face like a dewy rosebud at daybreak on a June morning. So Pongo tells me. Not that I suppose he has ever seen a rosebud at daybreak on a June morning, because it's generally as much as you can do to lug him out of bed in time for nine-thirty breakfast. Still, one gets the idea.

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know who I am, I'll be bound. I'm Laura's sister Connie. This is Claude, my husband. And this is my daughter Julia. Is Laura in?"

"I regret to say, no," said Lord Ickenham.

The woman was looking at him as if he didn't come up to her specifications.

"I thought you were younger," she said.

"Younger than what?" said Lord Ickenham.

"Younger than you are."

"You can't be younger than you are, worse luck," said Lord Ickenham. "Still, one does one's best, and I am bound to say that of recent years I have made a pretty good go of it."

The woman caught sight of Pongo, and he didn't seem to please her, either.

"Who's that?"

"The local vet., clustering round my parrot."

"I can't talk in front of him."

"It is quite all right," Lord Ickenham assured her. "The poor fellow is stone deaf."

And with an imperious gesture at Pongo, as much as to bid him stare less at girls and more at parrots, he got the company seated.

"Now then," he said.

There was silence for a moment, then a sort of muffled sob, which Pongo thinks proceeded from the girl. He couldn't see, of course, because his back was turned, and he was looking at the parrot, which looked back at him—most offensively, he says, as parrots will, using one eye only for the purpose.

The woman came into action again.

"Although," she said, "Laura never did me the honor of inviting me to her wedding, for which reason I have not communicated with her for five years, necessity compels me to cross her threshold now. There comes a time when differences must be forgotten, and relatives must stand shoulder to shoulder."

"I see what you mean," said Lord Ickenham. "Like the boys of the old brigade."

"What I say is, let bygones be bygones. I would not have intruded upon you, but needs must. I disregard the past and appeal to your sense of pity."

THE thing began to look to Pongo like a touch, and he is convinced the parrot thought so too, for it winked and made a rather rude noise at the back of its throat. But both were wrong. The woman went on:

"I want you and Laura to take Julia into your home for a week or two, until I can make other arrangements for her. Julia is studying the piano, and she sits for her examination in two weeks' time, so until then she must remain in London. The trouble is, she has fallen in love. Or thinks she has."

"I know I have," said Julia.

Her voice was so attractive that Pongo was compelled to slew round and take another look at her. Her eyes, he says, were shining like twin stars, and there was a sort of Soul's Awakening expression on her face; and what the dickens there was about a pink chap like the pink chap, who even as pink chaps go, wasn't much of a pink chap, to make her look like that, was frankly, Pongo says, more than he could understand. The thing baffled him. He sought in vain for a solution.

"Yesterday, Claude and I arrived in London from our Bexhill home to give Julia a pleasant surprise. We stayed, naturally, at the boarding-house where she has been living for the past weeks. And what do you think we discovered?"

"Bugs?"

"Not bugs. A letter—from a young man! I found, to my horror, that a young man of whom I knew nothing was arranging to marry my daughter. I sent for him immediately, and found him quite impossible. He jellies eels."

"Does what?" asked Lord Ickenham.

"He is an assistant at a jellied-eel shop."

"But surely," said Lord Ickenham, "that speaks well for him. The capacity to jelly an eel seems to me to argue intelligence of a high order. It isn't everybody who can do it, by any means. I know if some one came to me and said, 'Jelly this eel!' I should be nonplused. And so, or I am very much mistaken, would this Brains Trust in America, of which we read so much in the papers."

The woman did not seem to see eye to eye.

"Tchah!" she said, or it may have been "Bah!" "What do you suppose my husband's brother Charley Parker would say if I allowed his niece to marry a man who jellies eels?"

"Ah!" said Claude, who, before we go any further, was a tall, drooping bird with a red soup-strainer mustache.

"Or my husband's brother Henry Parker."

"Ah!" said Claude. "Or Cousin Alf Robbins, for that matter."

"Exactly. Cousin Alfred would die of shame."

The girl Julia hiccoughed violently, *(Please turn to page 86)*

by **Stephen Vincent Benét**

who wrote "John Brown's Body"

Illustrated by Arthur William Brown

We'll Never

NED COLTON, lacing up a tennis shoe, looked at his wife as she moved about the big luxurious room, and thought that it was ridiculous that they had a child of seven. She looked much too young for that, even now when she was tired. It was all right for him, because he was nearly thirty; and when you were thirty you could quite decently have a child of seven. But he was four years older than Nancy—they'd been married when she was eighteen.

"Babes in the woods," he thought. "Well, they all said so. They all said we were crazy. And they must have done a lot of head-shaking, since. Even when I was the best left half-back in the bond business, and we were going to retire at thirty-five. But the swell thing was, they couldn't do a thing about it. Not a thing! Only, I wonder if I'd have the guts, now. . . . Yes, I would."

He repeated, "Yes, I would," once more in his mind, to reassure himself. But even as he did so, he knew it didn't sound right; it sounded defiant. Well, that was all right too. He needed some rest, that was all. They told you at school, long ago, that life was like playing a game; but it wasn't like playing a game. If you got too groggy, in a game, the coach or the trainer noticed it finally and sent in a substitute whether you liked it or not. But you couldn't send in a substitute for yourself, unfortunately. Not even if you were out on your feet. It was like the last half of that last Army game, when the steam was out of your legs and the whole team came slowly out of the huddle. When all you could do was watch for the passes and pray to bat them down.

All the same, they'd be all right, with a little rest—they'd click again. And Patsy would be all right too, in the Bronx apartment—it had a cross-draft, and she was sensible, for seven. They could have brought her; but then Nancy wouldn't have had any rest—and Nancy had been so tired, she'd gone to sleep in the car. Mrs. Simpson was very sensible and careful, and nothing ever happened to little girls in New York. They never fell out of windows or under trucks—it only happened in the newspapers, or when you were too tired. And it was only three days—three days with your old friend Tom Amherst, at Bright Acres—and they'd telephone Mrs. Simpson every day. How long was it since he and Nancy had ridden in a car like Tom Amherst's—a car with one of those snooty baritone horns? Four years, he guessed, at least.

He stood up, regarding his flannels.

"Thank God," he said, "they still fit! And you can't even see the moth-hole. You did a grand job, beautiful."

"Mrs. Colton's magic cleanser is the toast of the town." said the young woman, blithely. "—Oh, pooch, have you seen the bathroom? I'd forgotten there were bathrooms like that. Three kinds of bath-salts, and I'm going to wallow in all of them. And throw towels all over the floor for somebody else to pick up."

"You'll be awfully clean," he said, smiling.

"I mean to be. I want to have my hands smell nice again. They've been smelling of hats and dishwater and the subway. You must have noticed, Mr. Colton, and been repelled. And tomorrow, I'll have breakfast in bed—breakfast in bed! And not be saying to anyone, 'The little French model suits moddom's face like a trivet.' Oh, isn't it grand to be here!"

"It's pretty swell," he said, holding her lightly.

"It's life-saving. Bless old Tom and his millions! Well, go get your filthy exercise." Her eyes flickered for a moment. "I left Mrs. Simpson the menus," she said. "She'll be sure to stick to them, won't she? You remember that awful Barnard girl who gave Patsy the salami?"

"Oh, Simpson's the Rock of Gibraltar," he said, patting her shoulder. "You know that, beautiful. And you know what we promised each other: This is going to be a complete rest."

"Oh, I know," she said, with a long breath. "It's just that I'm tired. You don't notice it till you get out in the country. Except I never think of Bright Acres as being country. You feel as if even the birds were called Parker and Strudwick, and never spoke unless you spoke to them first. And I love it. I hope we have the gold plates at dinner—the ones Tom calls Amherst's Folly. I hope his Aunt Ettie comes to dinner in her diamonds."

"Go take your bath," he said, kissing her. "You're delirious."

"I am. And it's heavenly. And we've got three whole days of it." She disappeared into the bathroom. "Did you know people still had towels the size of tents?" she called.

Ned Colton took another slow look at the room before going

"Tomorrow I'll have breakfast in bed!" said Ned's wife. "And not be saying to anyone: 'The little French model suits moddom's face like a trivet.' Oh, isn't it grand to be here!"

Be Rich!

Even in those queer days when pigs had wings and every college boy expected to retire with a million at thirty-five, Ned Colton lacked that certain mysterious something which is the key to riches.

downstairs. It was, he calculated, as large as most of their apartment. It would be fun to take all the rooms in the apartment, including the rusty-tiled bathroom and the dingy kitchenette, and pile them into this one, as furniture is piled for moving. And then set a match to the whole thing! Yes, that would be fun. He breathed deeply. He never used to have thoughts like that about rooms. But the last years had been—the last years.

All the same, Nancy was right. It was fun, being out at Bright Acres again. Not Tom's fault either, really, that it hadn't happened before—just his own damnfool pride, he supposed. It didn't matter, in college, whether you were Thomas Amherst IV of Bright Acres, or Ned Colton of Dallsburg, as long as you were both in the Leaf Club. And it didn't matter afterward, in the queer days when pigs had wings, and Ned Colton was going to retire, with a million, at thirty-five. But when you were out of a job, and your wife was selling hats at Delphine's, it was different. You had to have engagements then, when Tom Amherst phoned. Because it would be so easy to say—so fatally easy: "Old man, I'm rather in a hole—"

When you were bust, you could borrow from the busted, but not from the rich—not even if they'd been your friends. That was, somehow, a rule. Or you got to be like Chuck Ferrill, and people gave you five dollars so you'd go away.

He didn't blame Tom for not finding out more about it, when the pinch had been worst. That was another thing about people who'd always had money: If you were a friend of theirs, they couldn't imagine your not having it too. Oh, they'd give you all sorts of credit you didn't really deserve for economizing, and living in a walk-up apartment, and having a baby when you wanted a baby. But they couldn't imagine your pawning your overcoat because you needed the cash, not for a joke or a story. And then, if they were decent, like Tom Amherst, they didn't want to offend your pride. You talked vaguely about the new business, and they were satisfied. He remembered, a year ago, when they'd met Tom downtown and taken him to the movies, though it meant queer food for the next week. But that was all right—you'd rather have it that way.

WALKING down the carpeted staircase in the smooth peace of Bright Acres, Ned breathed deeply. Everything was going to be all right now. There was a new business; and they were here for three days' rest. They'd started on a shoestring, he and Louis Stein, but they were making it. By the first of next year Nancy could give up her job. He'd met Louis in Van Cortlandt Park, on a bleak day, a small cheerful voluble man with a torn sweater instead of an overcoat. Louis had six ideas in a minute, and only one in a thousand was good. But together they were Colton and Stein; and next year, maybe, they'd buy up that bankrupt small factory in Connecticut. Then there'd be the mortgage on that, but they'd be started. He wondered, looking around him as he strolled out on the terrace, what Louis would make of Bright Acres. You could never tell about Louis—he might be impressed, or not.

Tom Amherst came out—tall, dark, handsome, tennis rackets under his arm. "He knows just who he is now—he wasn't quite sure at college," thought Ned Colton suddenly, and wondered at the thought. But there was an air of easy fastidious power about the tall figure—power that mocked itself, and yet knew the mockery could do no damage.

"All set?" said Tom Amherst cheerfully. "Where's Nancy?"

"She's taking a bath—or a series of baths," said Ned Colton. "She likes your gilded halls. They're full of hot water."

"I should have put you on the other side of the house," said Tom Amherst. "Aunt Ettie had a sunken bathtub with mirrors around it. It looks," he said solemnly, "like something out of the Fall of Rome. I used to sail boats in it."

"She'll be down for tea," said Ned Colton. "Nancy, I mean."

"Tea?" said Tom Amherst with a formidable scowl.

"If there isn't, we'll leave," said Ned Colton firmly. "We thought this was the Splendide. The Cook's man said so."

"I am ver' much afraid," said Tom Amherst formally, "that Monsieur 'as made a mistake. We do not serve tea at the hotel of the Universe and Switzerland. Jus' the leetle cocktail Americain, and"—his lean face crinkled alarmingly into a leer—"some dirty postcards for the ladies."

"Oh, you darn' fool!" said Ned Colton. "I'm glad to see you!"

They walked together down to the court, where Tom Amherst seemed mildly surprised to find two youngsters in white flannels rallying. "Sorry to interrupt your game," he called from a distance, "but this is a private court."

One of the youngsters, Ned Colton noticed with a grin, stopped rallying automatically and looked embarrassed. The other merely said: "Shut up, Tom! You know you asked us over."

"My fourth cousin, George Kincaid," said Tom Amherst. "Hence the family rudeness. And Mr. Hollister—Spike Hollister, one of our better-known members of the Leaf. Hockey, I think,"

he added thoughtfully, in a loud clear voice, and once again young Hollister looked embarrassed. "All right, Colton, shall we take them on?"

The doubles were hard and swift; but Ned Colton noticed, with envy, that Tom Amherst hardly sweated. He himself was out of condition—he hadn't realized how much. But his timing came back to him in the middle of the second set, and he was glad of that. He knew, from experience, that Tom Amherst hated to lose, though he never said anything about it.

Then they went back to the terrace for drinks, and Nancy was there. Already she looked less tired. Ned Colton was glad of the drink—the tennis had taken it out of him more than he thought.

Cars drove up constantly, and more people drifted out on the terrace, as they always did at Bright Acres, on Saturday afternoons. There were some that Ned Colton had known in the old incredible days, and some that he had not known. But they were all the same kind of people—the men with good muscles and well-kept bodies, the women looking younger than their years. They talked a patter; the catchwords had changed from the catchwords Ned Colton knew, but in a little while he would pick it up again. He found himself telling an amusing story about Louis Stein to a sunburnt girl with red lips, and saw, across the terrace, Nancy in the center of a group. She was Nancy-at-a-party again. He hadn't seen Nancy-at-a-party for quite a while.

Their eyes met, and he smiled the one-cornered smile that meant: "Hello, beautiful. It's a crowd, but you're the best." They'd done that so often, at so many parties.

The sunburnt girl was saying it was ages since she'd seen them, and how was the darling baby. He said the darling baby was seven years old, and she screamed politely and said she was awful about children, and it must have been ages. So don't tell her he'd turned into a Brain-Truster or something, because she couldn't bear it. There was something very funny about being a Brain-Truster, for everybody laughed.

"Well," said the sunburnt girl, suddenly sobering, "it's all very well to make jokes about. But it's the first time Mother hasn't been to Europe in *years*."

"The Severances are practically down to their last yacht," said Tom Amherst smoothly, and everybody laughed again. Somebody said Tom Amherst ought to go into politics, and he told them, amusingly, why he didn't. But a short, horsy man who seemed to have some personal grievance against the farmers of the Middle West,—Ned Colton wondered why, for he seemed extremely remote from them,—insisted on asking Tom Amherst what he meant to do when the revolution came.

"Oh, Bright Acres is completely wired—for revolutions and television," said Tom Amherst. It wasn't what he said, thought Ned Colton, but the elaborate power that flowed from him. It reassured the other people, even the horsy man. If a revolution ever came to Bright Acres, Parker or Strudwick would simply tell it to go away.

The horsy man departed in a Bugatti. The crowd thinned.

"And now that's that," said Tom Amherst finally. "We can all take baths before dinner. Except Nancy, who doesn't need one."

"But I'm going to," said Nancy. He looked at her for a second.

"Nice Nancy," he said then, lightly, and his hand passed over her hand.

"Nice Tom," said Nancy, her eyes glowing. "And heaven to be here."

Much later Ned Colton lay in bed and watched Nancy brushing her hair. It had been a good dinner and a good evening. And the strangeness was wearing off. Only now and then, looking around him, had he felt out of place—as out of place as, well, Louis Stein. As if he didn't belong, had never belonged. It wasn't anything they did. It was just a little, he thought, as the people must have felt who came back from the war. Not that he'd been in a war. But the same sensation—to come back, from devastation to a certain life, and find it still going on. Still, he'd only made one mistake—when the woman in green had been telling him, very seriously, of the enormous difficulties of keeping up two gardens with only two gardeners. He had thought of Louis Stein, walking in his torn sweater, and laughed. But then they'd got on the yacht-races, so that was all right.

"Oh!" said Nancy, stretching her arms. "A bed, a bed! And I'm never going to wake up. I'm afraid I was born for luxury, darling. Did you notice the Cole girl's dress?"

"Was it special?"

"I could have eaten it. Vionnet! What a host Tom is! He does arrange things, but it's worth it. Why do you suppose he never married? Not but what he's a wary citizen. But there must be somebody somewhere, even for an Amherst."

"Even for an Amherst," said Ned Colton, "there's a moon and June. Even for an Amherst, there's a crooning tune. Even for an—"

She bent and kissed him. "Mad," she said, "And highballs, too!" But her voice was kind. She turned off the light. "I wonder if we'll ever—oh, just for Patsy," she said. "A place like this would be so grand for a child."

"Investment, say, two million. At a conservative estimate," said Ned Colton in a light bitter voice. He heard her draw her breath for a moment, sharply. Then he heard her punch her pillow. Then he went to sleep.

He woke at dawn, shivering; for in a nightmare he had been walking through Van Cortlandt Park without an overcoat while Tom Amherst drove slowly past in a car with a baritone horn. Every time he tried to cross the driveway, Tom would swerve a little and stop him. And that was too much of a joke, for Nancy and Patsy were on the other side, and he was trying to get to them. Once Tom threw him a bag of

peanuts from the car and said: "Here, my good man. You can take those to Louis Stein." Then the car stopped, and Nancy and Patsy got into it from the other side, and they drove off with Tom, while Ned Colton's legs wouldn't work. It was a ridiculous nightmare, like all nightmares.

He rose noiselessly and went to the window. The first gray light was beginning to drift over Bright Acres—he could see all the way down to the swimming-pool. They hadn't even used the swimming-pool yesterday, but they probably would today. There had been sixteen people to dinner, and more coming in afterward; but when he and Nancy went downstairs, there would be clean ashtrays everywhere, and fresh cigarettes in the boxes of wood and silver and glass and jade. And every room would look immaculate and unused.

He turned and looked at Nancy—she was sleeping soundly, with a tiny smile on her face. It wasn't that she was greedy—he knew no one less greedy. But this was the sort of house she should have had. . . . He stole back to bed, and after a while got to sleep again. But when he woke, he was unrefreshed.

Curiously enough, he and Nancy did not see much of each other that day. There were people in the house, or they went to other people's houses. They swam; they played games; they sat in the sun with long drinks. It was all very easy and pleasant—an enchanted circle of easy, pleasant-voiced people who talked the same language and laughed at the same patter, even when the patter was shaken, now and then, by queer little bursts of anger and fear—the anger and fear of children with many toys who cannot bear it when the nurse takes one toy away.

Ned Colton noticed, clearly, that Nancy-at-a-party was being a great success. Every now and then people would tell him about her. But he did not look at her with the private smile that said, "Hello, beautiful," for there was no need. Once he heard himself boasting about being a member of the Leaf, and once he told young Hollister, in full detail, about the three touchdowns he had made against Harvard. He heard himself doing it, and somehow he couldn't stop, though young Hollister was respectful enough. After that, he watched himself, and when his voice began to sound loud in his ears, he did not take another drink for a while. And when Tom Amherst looked at him, he always smiled. The only difficult thing was going back to the room with Nancy, for she would want to talk about the day. But she didn't seem to want to; and while she was brushing her hair, he fell asleep.

He was up before she waked, the next day, and went down to the pool for an early swim. It cleared his head, and he felt better. Then he called up the Bronx apartment and talked to his daughter. She said his voice sounded funny, and he said it was his Long Island voice. Then it was time to play tennis with Tom Amherst, for the day had been carefully planned, and this was the only time they would have for tennis.

After that, the three of them went around Bright Acres on what Tom called "the inevitable Cook's tour." Tom was very amusing, but you saw everything, nevertheless. They laughed a good deal, all three of them, though Ned Colton was careful to to leave his wife and his friend as much together as possible, and every now and then, to lose himself while they went on. He had no defense for doing this, it merely seemed inevitable—inevitable as his own increasing fatigue. Once he thought he heard Nancy say, "But Tom, how could I?" faintly, as he rejoined them, though he tried very hard not to hear.

He interested himself, calculating exactly when the proper moment would come. Things always went on schedule with Tom Amherst; there would, undoubtedly, be a schedule for this. Ned Colton had been sure of it, ever since he had seen Tom and Nancy walk out on the terrace last night. When he found himself, with Tom Amherst, in the smaller library, an hour before dinner, he almost smiled. Nancy, he imagined, was taking a bath—so it would be a very good time.

"It doesn't matter," said Nancy. "I've packed us, anyway. We've just time to catch the eight-five."

"Well, old man, it's been quite a reunion," said Amherst, squirting soda deftly in glasses. "Heavy for you, light for me—right? . . . . I hate to have it break up."

"So do we," said Ned Colton. "But I'll have to polish up my forehand before I play you singles again."

"Oh, you're just out of practise," said Tom Amherst. "Extraordinary," he continued thoughtfully, "what happens to athletes after college. If they don't keep it up, they slump worse than ordinary mortals." He looked at his glass. "Tell me, Ned," he digressed, "you are getting on all right?"

"Oh, Stein and Colton are booming," said Ned Colton. "And you?"

Tom Amherst looked slightly surprised. "Why, they're jumping the taxes on us, a good deal," he said. "And naturally, the estate's shrunk. In fact, for a while, this spring, I thought of closing Bright Acres and going to live in England for a year or so. But as soon as you close a place, the moths get in it."

"Yes," said Ned Colton. "The moths get in it." He pushed his glass aside, untasted. "Look here, Tom," he said in a dull voice: "what made you ask us out for this week-end, anyway?"

For an instant Amherst looked affronted. Then his face cleared.

"Old man," he said, "I ought to have realized before how things were going for you. I could kick myself for not realizing. But—you know—just after the crash, I dropped you a note and told you to phone the office if anything—"

"I remember," said Ned Colton. "But you were out West."

"Yes, I had to go," said Amherst. "But that's all under the bridge now." He sipped at his glass. "And, well, one does have—responsibilities," he said modestly. "Aunt Ettie and all—Lord, even Miss Plunkett was off her head! *(Please turn to page 76)*

Small Blonde

Illustrated by Carl Mueller

by Eric Hatch

who wrote "Fly by Night"

He did for her what no other man had done for any woman since '29—he sacrificed his job for her.

LINNET PELLINGTON was small and she was blonde and she was beautiful; and she was so mad she could hardly see. She turned off Broadway into Forty-seventh Street with a great swirling and flipping of skirts about her calves, for there was a wintry wind blowing, and it seemed as angry and stormy as she. Presently she turned into a basement entrance and pushed vigorously on a tiny button hidden in the wall. A moment later the door before her opened, and Martinelli, the restaurant-owner, greeted her cheerily. Her rage subsided for a second; Martinelli was an old friend. She went inside and smiled at him.

"One on the house, Marty," she said. "I'm fired."

Martinelli bowed. "Of course!"

She shot him a quick look, full of hurt pride.

"What do you mean, 'Of course'? Why should I be fired? I've got everything the girl that's taking my place hasn't got—except a boy friend who stands in with that yap who owns the show! That makes two of us this week it's happened to!"

Martinelli took her arm and led her down a long, narrow hallway. He liked Linnet immensely, liked the intensity of her rages and her joys—teapot tempests in a bright, bright teapot.

"I meant," he said as they walked, "that of course it was on the house." Then he lowered his voice. "Have you got enough to hang on till the next job?"

She shook her head.

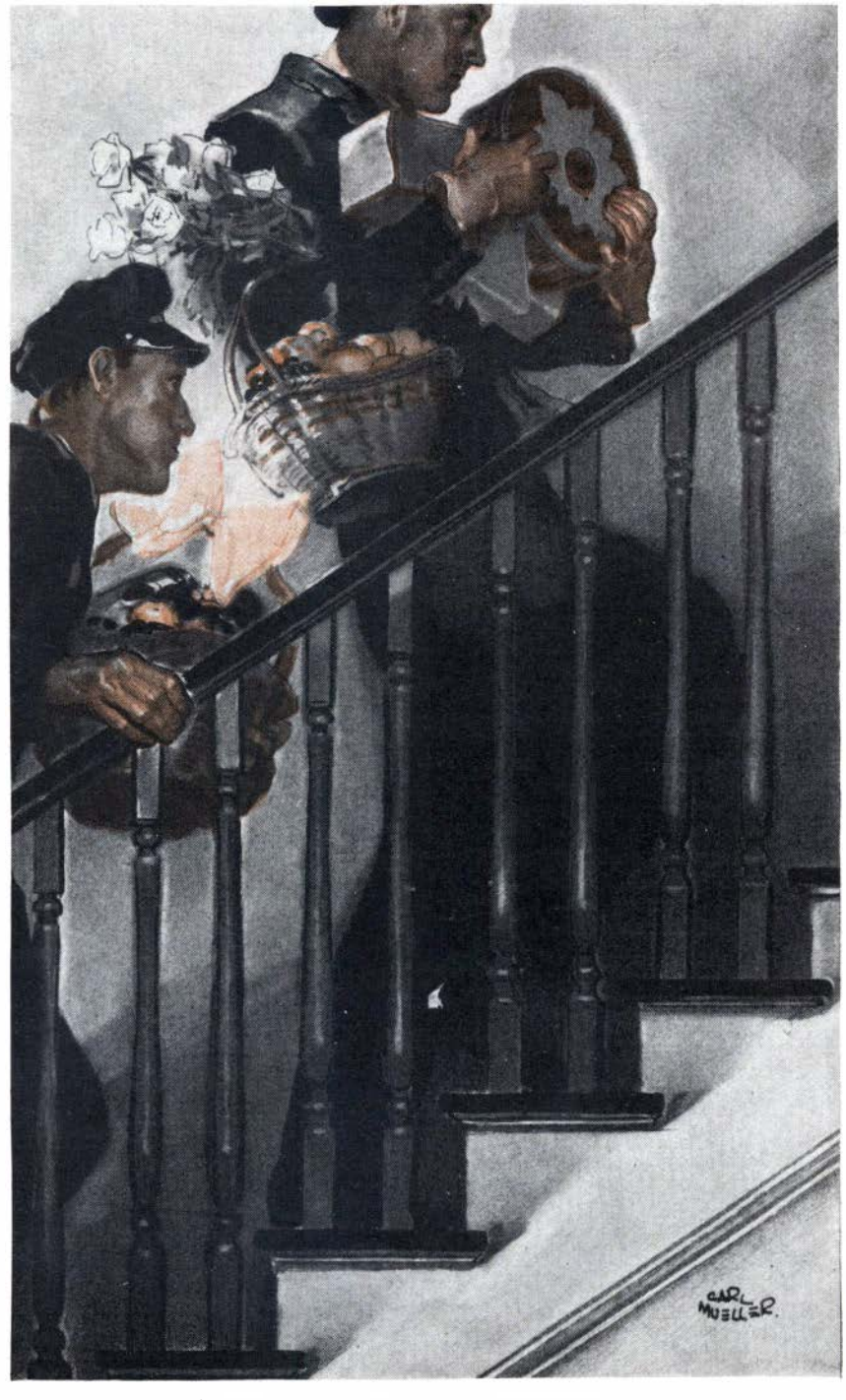
"Certainly not," she said. "What do you think I am, a hoarder—on forty dollars a week?"

He laughed now. People nearly always laughed when Linnet said things angrily. Her smallness made her rage seem futile, like a cat trying to stamp its feet. He said: "You can eat here when you need it."

"Thanks." She was touched. "You're a good guy, Marty."

The way she looked up at him was ample reward. He pushed open a door at the end of the hall and bowed her into the main room. It was half Parisian café, half kitchen. There were nooks and alcoves with little tables and chairs, and great steaming caldrons of soups on a range at one end. There was a high-capped chef by the range, and copper kettles burnished like mirrors hanging on the walls. Martinelli ushered her to a table near the stove. She sighed, a long sigh, the sigh of youth that has come to a place in its path where some one has stupidly forgotten to spread the rose-petals that belong there. Then she slipped out of her coat.

"I suppose," she said, "I ought to get a boy friend."



The janitor, impressed by the quantity and obvious quality of the merchandise, led the way upstairs.

The girls hinted things—elected her, tacitly, to the gold-miners' union to which so many of them belonged.

"No," said Martinelli. "You ought to get a husband."

"Whose? Besides, I don't like husbands; you know that."

Martinelli laughed again and said: "I'll brew you a *grog chaud*. It will look better then. It always does."

While he was gone, Linnet gazed about her. The room was empty of other patrons except for a lone man sitting in a corner. It was that doldrums-hour in the Forties when people have not yet come back from the movies and theaters. She looked at this other client of Martinelli's quite hard, because he was the only thing there to look at. Their eyes met, and he looked away.

She had already decided, the way women do, that he was pretty badly bingled; so she was surprised when he looked away. Most men didn't when they were like that. He seemed, she thought, sort of a long drink of water—longer than anyone should be. Definitely, he was young. His brown hair was tidily brushed, and he looked expensive. She wondered, idly, what he did for a living, and decided he probably didn't do anything. Then Martinelli came back with a steaming glass, and she gave it her attention the while she told him just how the firing operation had taken place. All of which the long drink of water apparently listened to, fascinated. The next time Martinelli had occasion to leave the room, he unwound his lower limbs from a table-leg and came over to Linnet's corner. He walked surely, but with undue caution. When he reached her table, without so much as a by-your-leave, he coiled himself around a chair.

"I couldn't help overhearing," he said. His voice was very deep, and he spoke the way he had walked, very slowly and cautiously, as though he were as afraid of tripping over his words, as he had evidently been of tripping over cracks in the floor. "I couldn't help hearing, and I wanted to say I'm sorry." He took a deep breath and then said again: "Sorry."

Linnet had a curious feeling that he meant it, and wasn't just trying to pick her up. His gray eyes looked steadily into hers as he spoke. They were friendly, doglike eyes.

"Thanks," she said, "for being sorry. Are you in show business?"

He smiled. "Not exactly."

"You're lucky. It smells."

"I'm sorry it smells—for your sake," he said. "I—" Suddenly he stopped, caught himself in mid-hiccough and then bowed. "I beg your pardon," he added. "I was afraid I'd do that."

She giggled. For a second, engrossed by this odd, cautious young man, she had forgotten her woe.

"I know," she said. "And you were afraid you'd fall when you walked over here, weren't you?"

A hurt expression came into his eyes.

"You know," he said, "I actually believe you think I've had too much to drink."

"I think you've had a little too much, yes. But I don't really mind. I'm really glad to have you to talk to. I was feeling sort of low."

"Sorry," said the young man. "So sorry." He looked very sad, as though his sorriness about it all was bearing him down frightfully. Then suddenly he brightened. "What can I do for you?"

Linnet laughed. When she laughed, the immediate part of the world she occupied became a brighter place. She had that kind of laugh.

"Who are you anyhow, Tall Man?"

His answer came quickly.

"I'm the tall man who sits at tables when other people are at theaters."

"I like you, Tall Man-who-sits-at-tables-when-other-people-are-at-theaters. What do people call you?"

"Name of—name of—" He paused as though he were either having difficulty remembering his own name, or trying to think of another that might do better. "I'm Roger Covert." He bowed again. "People call me lots of things," he added; and then: "You're Linnet."

"Linnet Pellington, show girl, lately with 'Girls and Music,' now, as we say in the *Billboard*, at liberty."

"Must do *something* about it," said Roger Covert. "It's all wrong."

"What's all wrong?"

"You not having money or job. Matter of fact, it's absurd."

Linnet, naturally, was a hundred per cent in agreement with this point of view. A cozy silence fell between them. She sipped her *grog chaud*, and he frowned down at her. His eyes, that had been clear and open, grew clouded, so that he looked more like a dog than ever—a dog who's buried a swell bone and can't for the life of him remember where he buried it. The silence lasted for quite a little time; but presently, speaking even more slowly and carefully than before, because this was such an important speech, he said: "I've given this matter thought—great thought. Matter of fact, I was giving it great thought before I joined you. I think you're the most beautiful girl I've ever seen. You're like a canary. People ought to want you around all the time just in case you might sing for them or something. I do. Will you marry me?"

Linnet stared at him for a long time before she answered, not because she was considering the proposal, but because girls, even small canary girls, ought to take a long time to answer such questions. It is expected of them.

MARTINELLI came into the kitchen, saw their expressions and paused. He'd seen so many people in his place sit looking that way. He sighed, and thinking of his youth, beat a retreat. Presently Linnet smiled.

"Of course I won't marry you," she said. But strangely enough, she said it softly, as though what he'd said, because of the way he'd said it, had gone deep down in her and brushed against her heart, making it warm.

Like Martinelli, Roger sighed, but he didn't think about his youth. He thought about Linnet.

"Of course," he said, "I didn't think you would."

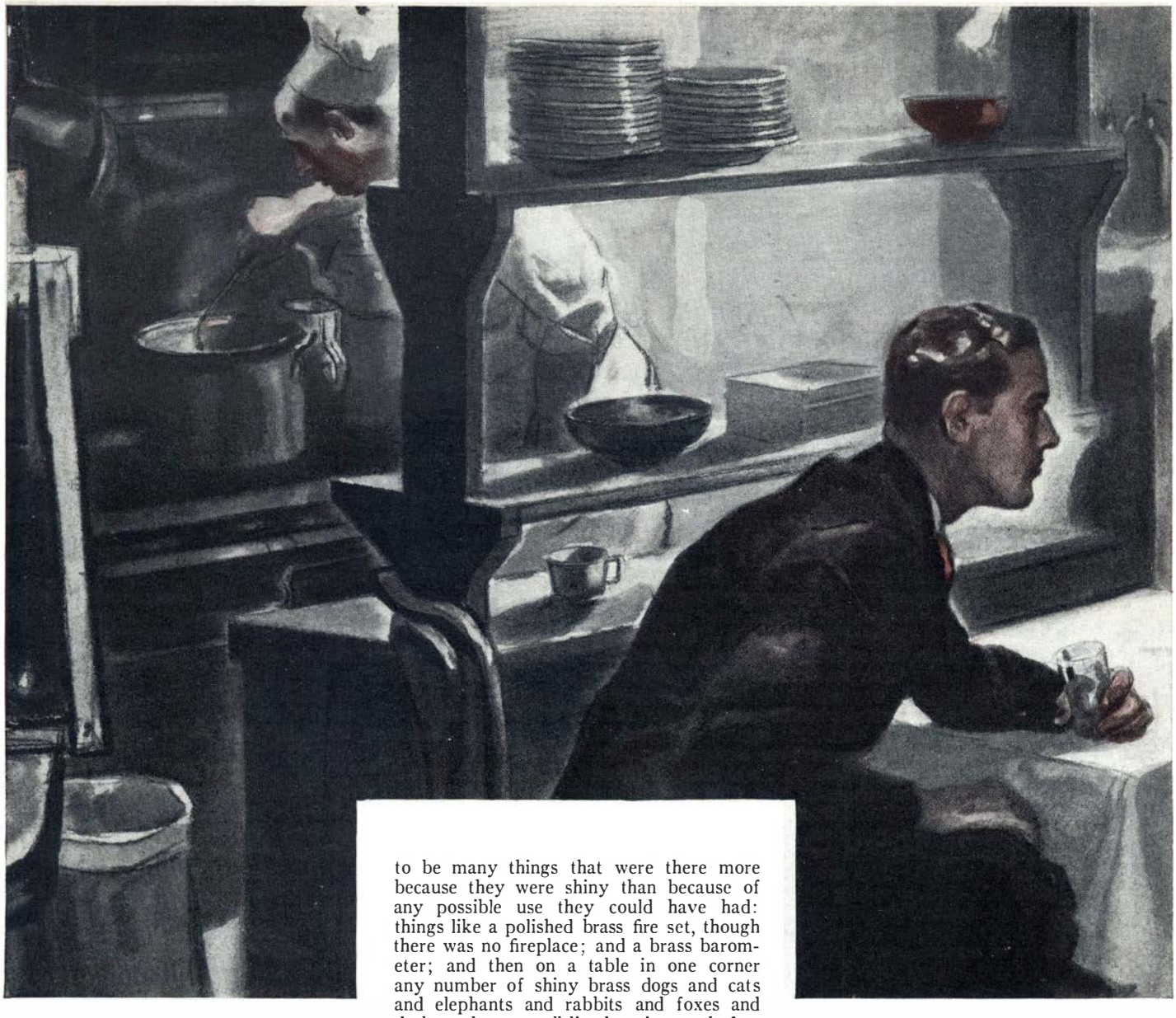
And then he remembered where he'd buried the bone.

Linnet left, a few minutes later, and he saw her to the door. Then he sought out Martinelli, bought a bottle of whisky and began to talk. . .

It was after midnight when Roger Covert arrived at the brownstone house on West Twelfth Street where Linnet had the room she called her apartment. His condition, so far as stability was concerned, had not greatly improved; yet as he climbed from the taxi, there was about him a considerable determination. He addressed the driver.

"You will help me get this stuff up."

"Oke."



She had already decided he looked what he did for a living, and decid-

A moment later things began appearing from the tonneau: great baskets of fruit, a big tin gift-box of fine bacons, a ham and several assorted quail; boxes of candy, then a whole armful of American Beauty roses. They carried them across the sidewalk and plumped them down in the vestibule. Covert rang the bell over Linnet's name. He rang it for a long time, but nothing happened, so he pushed the one over "Janitor." When after a minute or so this individual cautiously opened the door, Roger drew himself to his full, absurd height and said: "Miss Pellington will be home in a few moments; will you let me into her apartment with these things for her? Or shall I wait here?"

The janitor, impressed by the quantity and obvious quality of the merchandise, led the way up a flight of stairs, opened the door of the apartment, switched on the light and was rewarded. Roger paid off the taxi man and stood alone with his bundles.

"The canary's cage," he said, and looked about him. "Nice."

Linnet's "apartment" was nice. It was exactly like Linnet. It was small, and everything in it was small. and everything in it was bright and shiny. There seemed to be many things that were there more because they were shiny than because of any possible use they could have had: things like a polished brass fire set, though there was no fireplace; and a brass barometer; and then on a table in one corner any number of shiny brass dogs and cats and elephants and rabbits and foxes and ducks and a cow, all lined up in parade formation, marching endlessly around the shiny mahogany table-top. The windows had chintz curtains. They were small windows, and the chintzes were bright and gay.

"Of course," said Roger, "I was perfectly right. She's lovely."

For a little time now he busied himself arranging the gifts in what seemed the most attractive manner. He ranged the baskets in a row on each side of the door so they made a sort of Pathway-of-Plenty leading to the center table. On this he piled the boxes of candy so they completely hid the *pièce-de-résistance*—that box of solid, nourishing bacons, hams and quail. The roses he stuck into such vases, tall glasses and what-not as he could find. When he had done, the place looked like the reception-room of a prima donna after her hundredth farewell performance. He was tired, but he was satisfied. He sat down on a chintz-covered armchair to wait.

He waited for almost an hour, thinking about her and thinking of the excitement and fun getting the things for her had been, and then he found he was thinking about the bed at the other end of the room. No matter how hard he tried not to look at it, the thing kept shoving itself into his range of vision. He wasn't thinking of it gallantly as the couch that cushioned his lady's fair form when she slept, but purely and simply as a bed—a bed in which a young man who had been active for many hours, who had eaten and drunk far too much, might rest a weary body for just the least bit of shut-eye. A young man who of course would awaken at the slightest sound of a key turning in a lock. . . .

Linnet Pellington came home at ten the next morning. She had slept well and cozily at the flat of two other girls in what had until that night been her show. Having been nicely brought up, and having spent the night out, however innocently. she went up the stairs softly, and still more softly turned her key in its lock. When she got inside the door, she stopped stock-still and began to cry.

"Oh, Marty!" She sniffled it. for she was very moved. "How—how awfully decent and thoughtful of you!"

Then she saw, lying on a chair by the end of her couch, a pair of feet. They were large feet, and were obviously on the chair because their owner was in the bed, and

badly bingled. She wondered, idly, ed he probably didn't do anything.

was much, much too long for it. Linnet stopped crying and peered around the end of the door. She was partly amused, partly annoyed, partly touched and partly resentful of the display of wealth. One basket of fruit, yes, or even two; but this whole army, this emptying of the horn of plenty into her tiny flat—it seemed to say to her: "Look, you poor thing, I've all the money in the world. This is just a hint of what I *could* do for you."

She went to the center table and unearthed the box of solids. It struck her that this particular box was either a very thoughtful gift or a very insulting one. Her eyes roved from it to the giant, or ogre, on her bed, and her brow puckered in thought. He didn't look at all like a man who would display his riches to impress a girl. He hadn't boasted of them, either, at Martinelli's—hadn't tried to dazzle her with yachts and Palm Beaches and Newports. Maybe it was all right, this profusion of gifts. Maybe he just didn't have much taste. Maybe, on the other hand, certain bits of the ensemble that was Linnet were arguing with certain other bits of it. Her pride was injured; but her vanity, heart and stomach were touched.

Linnet being young, the vanity and the heart and the stomach won. She went to the closet, took out a dress, tiptoed to the bathroom and quickly changed. Then she found a piece of paper and a stub of pencil and scribbled: *"Tall Man, thank you and I'm lunching at the Astor at one, if you feel like splurging some more. L. P."* Then she added: *"Sorry about the couch being so short."*

After this she gathered some of the roses, and tactfully laying them in the curve of his arm and setting the note against them, she tiptoed out of the apartment.

Linnet was excited, although she'd meant not to be, when she saw him hunting for her in the hotel's crowded lobby. . . .

The luncheon did something. It established a definite relationship between them; for they met now, not as strangers in a restaurant, but as a lady who has received a proposal and refused, and a gentleman who has proposed and been refused, and hopes for better luck next time. By the end of the meal Roger had placed himself on what might be called the waiting-list; heart on sleeve, eyes glassy with devotion, the complete, unpretty personification of the courting male. Linnet loved it, but there was just one phase in which he veered from tradition. He refused absolutely to talk about himself. When, at the end of the meal (which was a swell meal), she asked him point-blank what he did for a living, his eyes lost their love-glaze and looked arch, and he said: "I'd rather not say anything about that—just now. It might—spoil things. Let's pretend I don't do anything except go around proposing to you."

She thought he was trying to apologize to her for living in idleness on his money. She liked him for it. They stayed at the luncheon-table till after three o'clock, and then went for a walk.

After this, for a week, they were together every day. Sometimes they lunched; sometimes they dined. The companionship meant a lot to Linnet, because with the exception of that one subject, Roger turned out to be quite amusing. He talked to her about all kinds of things. He seemed to have been to a great many places, to know by name at least a great many celebrated people. Because she found she liked him, she treated him like a dog. Of course she gave him the respect one instinctively gives a big dog, but she kicked him around for all that, let him run errands for her, do the hundred and one irksome things men seem to love doing for small blondes. Yet she cried, when at the end of the week her supply of bacons and hams and quail was exhausted, and she found one morning arrayed about her door another box and two more huge *(Please turn to page 66)*

Guilty

by Franz Werfel

Illustrated by
David Robinson

The Story Thus Far:

"THROW your body back! Sit up straight! Cover your saddle!" This from my father to me, his thirteen-year-old son, whom he had taken, for the first time, to a local amusement park in our town in Germany, in celebration of my birthday. I was riding a wooden horse in the merry-go-round.

Again the voice of my father, who was an army officer:

"Thighs against the saddle and toes pointed outward."

When I got off my wooden horse, I was sad and beaten, as if I had undergone an examination at the military school I attended.

We came to a booth where some of the holiday crowd were throwing balls at targets dressed like soldiers. My father growled: "Come on, Carl, let me see if you have a steady hand and will some day have the right to wear His Majesty's uniform."

I missed—missed repeatedly.

"Jackass! You're disgracing me! Throw this and hit, or else—"

I felt another ball in my hand.

I stiffened every muscle, and shrieking wildly, hurled the ball with such force that I lost my balance and fell to the ground. . . .

When I recovered from my brief unconsciousness, people were pressing about in amused excitement. Glancing sideways, I could see my father pressing a blood-stained handkerchief to his nose.

In one fearful moment I realized everything: I had not hit that officer target; I had hit my own father! I collapsed in a delirium of dreams and feverish cries, from which I did not return to life until three months later. . . .

Thirteen years passed. I had served my period as a sub-lieutenant on the Eastern frontier, and I was now a full lieutenant, stationed in a garrison in Galicia. Nobody has ever been so lonely. The one happy moment of my day was when in the evening I sat down at the dilapidated boarding-house piano. At this time I did not know that music was my natural calling. . . .

My poor mother was dead. My father had risen high in his profession—had become a general officer of distinction. He had married again.

Now it happened that I became involved in a highly unpleasant affair. Weak and easily persuaded, I had gone security for a debt of honor contracted by a comrade. This man, an intriguer and a coward, decamped before the time came, and very soon had himself transferred. The day of payment came, but I was unable to pay and without a friend who could have helped me. In addition, the fourteen-year-old daughter of a farmer had died in childbed without revealing the name of her seducer. The chief suspicion in this business fell on me, who had never touched a card or a woman in my life.

One day the military postman delivered a letter from my father:

I will not permit a name which has been honorably distinguished for generations in the royal and imperial army to be brought into disgrace by you. His Majesty's Military Supreme Court has demanded all the papers and evidence in this irresponsible scandal, of which you are the chief culprit, and will personally decide the question. You will leave your present post, proceed here, and report to me within forty-eight hours.

I obeyed this command. At the end of my journey I finally was ushered into my father's august presence. After a cold and formal greeting, he went to the desk, took out an official telegram, and said: "Fortunately for you, it has turned out that you are not guilty in this matter. A telegram from the Colonel to that effect has just come in. Be that as it may, however, an officer and a gentleman avoids getting his name involved in unsavory matters. . . . Now, I am doing everything humanly possible for you, but your behavior is bad. You will never get anywhere in the active field service. Your superior officers consider you intelligent. I have taken steps accordingly, and have entered you for the War College. You can begin your courses tomorrow, and you ought to consider yourself very lucky."

In the great city I felt lonely and morose; and after three months I fell into strange company: I had made the acquaintance of a queer deaf accountant named Seebär in the hotel where I lived; and one night he took me to an old inn on the outskirts of the city where a picturesque group of rebels against the social order were assembled. An old man with a magnificent head came toward me and said:

"Fellow-man, fellow-mortal, lay down your arms!"

I threw my sword into a corner.

The old man seized my hand.

"Will you join the brethren?"

"I will," I heard myself say, as the others approached. These pure, fanatical faces filled my heart with reverential joy. . . .

For a time I was employed only as a propagandist, to win to our cause as many soldiers as possible. Then one night word came to our gathering that the Czar was to visit our city on a certain date. Plans were at once made to destroy him. And finally I was chosen to strike the blow. . .

Now at last Sinaïda really accepted me, though I had not spoken of my love for her—Sinaïda the lovely fragile Russian woman of whom the whole company seemed somewhat in awe, and who bore the burden of a tragic failure: she had attempted to as-

sassinate a grand duke, but a child—his little daughter, riding beside him—had been killed instead. . . .

On the eve of my attempt, however, soldiers raided the cellar where we were assembled. I sauntered up to the bushy-bearded officer in command of the raiders.

"Major, you have no right to arrest anyone here."

Growing purple in the face, the major snapped:

"Who are you?"

"Lieutenant Duschek. And these people are under my protection."

"Protection! Protection be damned! What are you doing here? Who are you to talk?"

I thrust my face slowly closer to his and stared into his astonished eyes:

"That's none of your business."

The major stormed:

"I'll degrade you. I'll strip you of your sword. Take him away! Take him away, you fools!"

Two of the men came a few steps reluctantly toward me. Then a shot resounded, hissed close to the major's head. Immediately one of the soldiers drew his large service pistol. The bullet whistled only a short distance. Did Sinaïda stagger?

Throwing away my sword, I hurled myself at the major. How good it felt to clutch that throat! Then a club came down on my head, and I lost consciousness.

The following day, after the doctor's visit, I was taken before the judge-advocate at the military court. From his questions I could see that he had no notion of the projected attempt on the Czar's life.

Three charges developed, however:

"1. Associating with treasonable and dangerous individuals, both native and alien. 2. Insubordination. 3. Using personal violence toward a superior officer." *(The story continues in detail:)*

Now he was no longer an officer, but a naked old man, stumbling in front of me. Suddenly he fell panting on his knee. In his upraised hands I could read the prayer: "Be quick about it."

The echo of marching feet across the Atlantic makes us read this great novel by the author of "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" with bated breath and dire forebodings.

IN the early morning of the next day (it was May 30th) I had an idea that I should soon stand in my father's presence. I polished my buttons till they shone, brushed my boots and expended great care on my tunic. I had a great sense of peace. I was still very much determined to "tell the truth," that truth whose meaning was not very definite, even to myself.

However, I was full of hope. This time my father would have to understand me; of this I was certain. I felt that my whole being was transfigured by a strange dignity, against which even he would be powerless.

His stiff-kneed Excellency, my father, now seemed to me very young and inexperienced. To be always sitting around in offices, riding at the head of one's men, reviewing troops, defiling to the right, nonchalantly raising one's bent forefinger to one's cap, scolding one's inferiors, always making way for one's superiors, clinking one's spurs, clicking one's heels and smoking cigarettes—can that be called living?

I, on the other hand, had walked at the tail of the procession, had lived with the stragglers and hangers-on, had known the face and step of Sinaïda, had come through catastrophes. I was ages older than my father, this survivor of a primitive time, this perfect specimen of the professional soldier, a bubble blown by military regulations.

An officer came to fetch me.

"Get ready, Lieutenant. We have to go to the commandant's office, by order of His Excellency your father."

Despite my feeling of superiority, I grew wildly alarmed. The word "order" almost poisoned me. I had the bitter taste of childhood in my mouth. I had to pull myself together. I should have liked to be in chains. Instead of that, soldiers saluted me at every turn, their backs stiffened with fear.

We arrived and got out of the cab. I walked with long slow steps, as if I were going to be struck about the knees with a lash. My companion looked at me out of the corner of his eye, as though I were mad.

The building was a whirl of activity. Fear-driven non-com-

missioned officers rushed about, hurried through the long corridors, and knocked at huge doors with vainly subservient fingers. Officers scolded as usual; and tired sentries, with empty stomachs, marched up and down in the courtyards. I felt that it was my duty to call everyone to me, for reconciliation was my purpose. After I had left this place nobody filled with hatred would obey hateful orders, nobody would be daily humiliated.

"Why don't you salute?" said the officer, nudging me. I had failed to notice a major who passed by.

"That will also stop," I replied.

The officer stared at me in horror, and then turned hopelessly away.

We had to wait a long time. For three days I had eaten almost nothing. My body felt immaterial, as if suspended in air, so ethereal that I was happy. I remembered Beschitzer's statement: "All fear is an error." I repeated this sentence over and over, for somewhere in the very depths of my being there remained a trace of lurking uneasiness. However, I was ready, come what might. I am not boasting when I say that I felt the fate of mankind depended on this hour. Suddenly my mind became excessively clear.

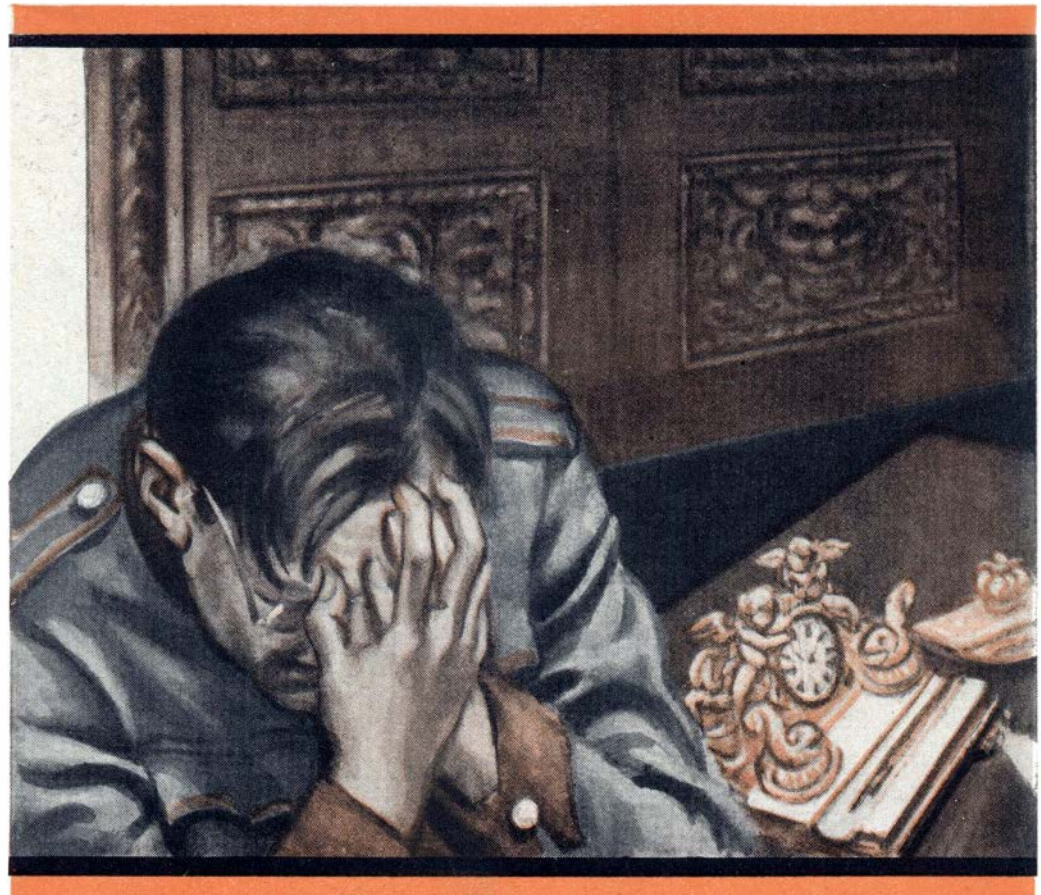
The adjutant came, greeted me curtly, and addressed a few words to my companion, who went away; then I found myself standing in my father's room.

He was sitting at his writing-table and seemed to be working. Two staff officers had taken their places behind him, and briefly answered the questions which he continually asked them. I folded my hands behind my back, as scholars do, dropped my head, and tried to walk slowly up and down. The adjutant held me tightly by the arm and indicated a place near the door.

"No, stand here, please," he said between his teeth.

"Don't be so fussy," I thought I heard myself saying; but I did not speak.

With an elaborate gesture the General crushed his cigarette and stood up. He was slightly bronzed, despite the purple apoplectic spots on his face, and looked as if he had slept badly. The hand which held his riding-crop trembled.



With all my strength I shouted: "I spit on His Majesty's Army!" The General

I purposely put one foot in front of the other and failed to salute. The General stood waiting in front of me, and then, blinking angrily, gave it up. He planted his hand on his hip:

"Lieutenant Duschek, you are a disgrace to the army!"

I thought of other things, of Sinaïda. My mouth was open, and I almost felt I was smiling.

"Stop laughing! Stop laughing!"

The voice that spoke was hollow and almost out of control. I saw how the hand with the riding-crop was shaking. The General was breathing heavily. His mustache was brilliantly dyed, but his hair was not so neat as usual.

"Lieutenant Duschek," said the same remarkably uncertain voice, "answer the following questions:

"Have you been associating with subversive elements?"

"These subversive elements are holy men. I have associated with them."

The General gulped several times. Now his other hand was trembling. He turned around, and the two gold collars tiptoed nearer. Finally he recovered from my answer. Again this wholly unaccustomed voice:

"So, you don't deny it. All right. Continue. Did you, in a state of—intoxication, defy the orders of Major Krkonosch, a superior officer? Answer, yes or no!"

"In a state of absolute sobriety I protected from a ruffianly attack people who were worthy of protection. The leader of this attack may have been Major Krkonosch, or somebody else. He was unknown to me."

The General tapped madly with his foot, and stared at his fingernails. When he looked up again, he looked like a man who is deathly sick.

"Very well, you don't deny that, either. Now, one more question: Do you admit committing an act of physical violence against a superior officer, the aforementioned Major Krkonosch?"

"Yes, I did it in a moment of extreme exasperation, because this person's attack led to shooting, in which, perhaps, blood was shed—the blood of my companions."

"Lieutenant Duschek, you have now admitted three grave offenses against His Majesty's Army."

I drew myself up. Now I would utter my great "truth."

"Father!" I ejaculated with a supreme effort.

The General took one step backward. This word had completely upset his composure. He glared at me:

"What does that mean?"

Now I had to overcome my increasing hate. Why couldn't he send those two jackasses away? I tried again:

"Father!"

Suddenly the General became quite cold and calm. The riding-crop no longer trembled.

"In His Majesty's Army there are no family grades, only official ones."

His Majesty's Army! *His Majesty's Army!* The words crawled like a thousand worms through my soul. Now I understood him! Now he was back in his favorite rôle. Now he was the stiff Roman and Spartan, a rôle he had acted so conveniently all his life. Hate consumed me more and more. However, for the third time I said, now very gently:

"Father!"

Now he had regained the upper hand. The fright of a few minutes ago had vanished from his face, which had resumed its old mask. Deliberately, and from a distance as remote as the polar star, he growled in his indistinct military fashion:

"Lieutenant Duschek, I command you in the name of His Majesty's Army to refrain from such expressions."

As usual I was crushed and conquered. Everything seemed to close in on me. I gazed into a darkness shot through with whirling yellow circles.

With all my strength I shouted:

"I spit on His Majesty's Army!"

The General stumbled backward. The two majors held him up. He could not breathe, and uttered a meaningless cry. Suddenly he rushed at me. I no longer saw the face of a cold-blooded, self-controlled military commander, but the grief-stricken face of a wounded father. I saw more. I saw—

At that moment the blow of his riding-crop caught me full on the cheek, close under my eye.

Senseless with pain, the first thing I did was to raise my hand to my face. Gradually, as the blood began to flow freely from the torn and bruised tissue, the unbearably biting pain turned into a more bearable burning and glowing. My senses returned, and my fury knew no limits.

uttered a meaningless cry. His riding-crop caught me close under my eye.

The General had dropped his riding-crop. He was gasping and clutching both fists against his heart. He looked as if he had seized with a cramp. I observed this, became completely calm, and pressing my handkerchief to my cheek, I left the room and the building, unhindered by anybody. As I marched along the street, as though I were on parade, I thought:

"I hope nobody can see the mark of shame on my face. Not that it really matters! Now, for the first time in my life, I am really going to be an officer, a real officer. I must have satisfaction. I shall fight a duel with him, even if the whole world thinks it crazy. My face, my cheek is burning. Is what I propose the right thing? I don't know. But I must be calm and clearly make up my mind."

These last words stupidly persisted in my memory: "be calm and clearly make up my mind." The pain persisted. I could not think. I found myself on the road that runs by the river. I was far out in the country, almost in the vicinity of that fateful house—the house of the Russians. I must have wandered half-conscious for an hour or more. How did I get here?

"Be calm and clearly make up your mind," I said to myself. I returned to the city, and not fearing arrest, I went to my hotel.

"Has anyone inquired for me?"

"No, Lieutenant. There has been no call all day, and no letter."

"Lieutenant! Lieutenant!" the porter cried. "You have forgotten your sword. You may easily get into trouble."

"I know, I know. That's all right."

I pressed the handkerchief to my cheek.

"Listen, porter; could you get me a suit of civilian clothes immediately? It must be here in half an hour at the latest."

That could be done. All I had to do was to go to my room and have a little patience.

WHY I wanted civilian clothes I could not tell exactly; but this seemed to be my first effort at "initiative." I looked in the mirror. My cheek was swollen, and the multi-colored bruise left by the whip was visible under my eye. In a fit of rage I threw against the glass the alum crystal I was using, making a large hole in it, from which a hundred rays radiated in all directions.

Finally, the porter brought the borrowed suit. It fitted quite well. For a moment I forgot everything and turned around, looking at myself. I was pleased with myself. Only with the shirt-collar was there any difficulty, as it were much too low and too wide for my long neck. I put a muffler around my neck, therefore, and went into the street to look for a department store, where I could buy a proper collar. No need to get excited. What I wanted could easily be found.

I entered a shop and asked:

"Have you any very high starched collars?"

"Here is the 'Kainz' brand. A turned-down, stiff collar. Very smart."

"No. It's too low."

"Well, here's another kind, the 'Dandy,' with wide wings. These are greatly in demand."

"The kind of collar I want has to be very much higher."

"Higher? Well, what about this, the 'Globe-trotter.' A beautiful collar. Extremely fashionable."

But it would not do. Suddenly I noticed an advertisement on the wall. An elderly, laughing gentleman was holding a stud delicately between two fingers and pointing to it with the other hand. His neck was buried in a gigantic collar, which reached up to his ears and was very low cut in front.

I pointed to the advertisement.

"Look, that's the kind of collar I am looking for."

The girl laughed.

"Men wore collars like that a hundred years ago. Those are what we call 'parricides.'"

From that moment a certain dull sense of caution came over me, as if I now realized what I had to do. Before I left the shop, having bought some kind of collar, I asked for a crêpe band, which I put around my arm. Why I did this, I could not say. I only know that I felt pain and homesickness at my heart. I returned to the hotel and finished dressing. Then I asked after Mr. Seebär.

They told me he had been absent for two days, but had appeared at the hotel for a moment that morning, and had immediately gone off to work.

I went into a restaurant to get something to eat, but scarcely had I swallowed a couple of spoonfuls of soup, when I became ill and had to go out. That was not the way to set about it. God was strict, and demanded an oath of fasting until I had accomplished my purpose.

I wandered about the streets again. It was not yet time. When I met a higher officer, I raised my hand to salute, and had to fumble in confusion with the brim of *(Please turn to page 68)*

The Varnable Mystery

WHEN the deputy sheriff's car stopped beneath his window with its whimper of maladjusted brakes, Lincoln Corey was in that delightful borderland where, had he wished, he could have let go and sunk like a stone in a warm, dark pool.

He had chosen to remain half-awake a little longer, to prolong the pleasure of his senses. For after two months of it, the charm of an upper New England crossroads village had lost none of its freshness. He was still congratulating himself on having abandoned a starry career on the right hand of the almighty New York district attorney; on having put behind him the grime and grinding uproar, the kotowing to tinhorn politicians who sat in high places. He had exchanged these harsh irritants for the life of postmaster and storekeeper of Cannon Hill. One tabloid had meatily tag-lined that exchange: "Dick Goes Hick." And one stately newspaper had editorially mourned the loss, to the forces of righteousness, of "a clever detective still on the sunny side of thirty-five, well-known in American police circles for the brilliant deductions he has made in celebrated murder cases from the most trifling of clues." But the dick, having gone hick, so elected to remain.

"Link!"—a hoarse, urgent whisper. Like a schoolboy who shouldn't have been out so late, or was up to something. "Hey, Link!"

The Cannon Hill storekeeper rolled over and looked out the window. Beyond the lank man by the road was beauty: the hayfield he stood against was powdered with diamond chips, sparkling and shimmering, an illusion composed of dew and the wan light of the moon in its third quarter.

The deputy sheriff beckoned with fist and crooked elbow. "Varnable just bumped himself off!"

Link Corey sleepily said: "Who?"

"Varnable! Abner Varnable! Shot himself to death!"

"What time is it?"

"Goin' on one."

Link tried drowsily to remember: Abner Varnable, an austere New Englander—seventy-odd—suffering acutely from hay-fever brought on by the goldenrod crop—a perennial affliction. Further effort produced a large clapboard house, dismal in its setting of Norway pines. The face of a girl young and beautiful, with haunting, miserable eyes—Mr. Varnable's daughter Alice. Miss Varnable, slim, delicate, trudged the mile and a half each way on the dusty Amatuck Road for groceries, unless she arrived in state in the 1913 Cadillac which some one kept polished to the luster of a crown jewel.

A silent girl. Alice Varnable laid coins or limp bills on the counter as if they came out of a teapot hoard. Or she bought stamps at the post-office window in a corner of the store, licked and affixed them to creamy proud envelopes with her father's name richly engraved in black on the flaps, and dropped these into the brass slot, sometimes as many as twenty at a time. The envelopes were always addressed on a typewriter. Running a fourth-class post office and receiving as his compensation a percentage of the face value of stamp-cancellations, Link was grateful for the Varnables' patronage. The girl's rigid economies, taken with the arrogant stationery, fanned the spark of his curiosity. But Miss Varnable was that aloof, self-possessed type so discouraging to friendliness. He had never seen her smile, and he guessed that she cherished romantic ideas about herself.

"SHOT himself with his own gun," the deputy sheriff said. "Alice just phoned me. I thought you might want to snoop around."

"What did she say?"

"That's all. He's up there in front of his typewriter with a gun in his hand and a bullet in his head. But they're a queer bunch."

Bill Judson came closer to the window, tilting his head back until the moon lighted the mastiff-like furrows in his heavy, sun-baked face. "Wish you'd come along, Link. You're a sight better at this sort of thing than I am. And I aint so sure he bumped himself off."

Link knew that Bill Judson was slyly dangling bait created out of the very moonbeams. The bed was warm and cozy, sheets and blankets forming a delicious cocoon. But his imagination had been haunted by that girl's eyes.

"I'll be right down, Jud." . . .

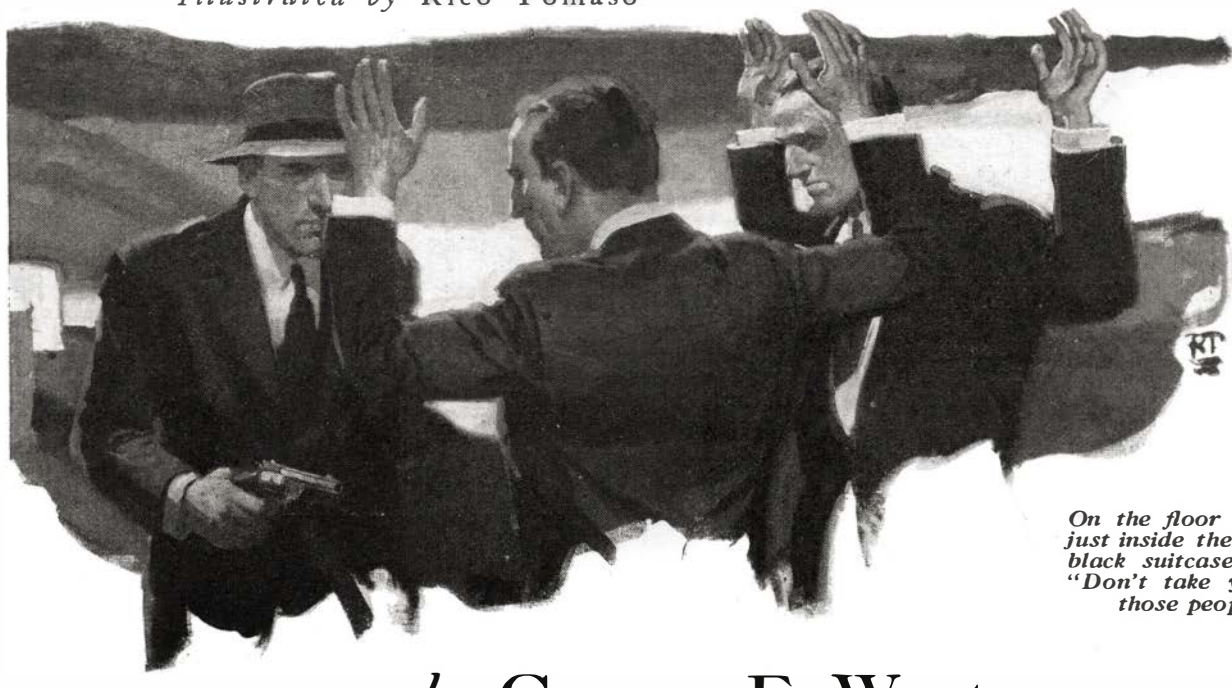
Seated beside Judson in the car, Corey asked: "Did she give any reason?"

"Nope. Too hysterical to answer questions."

The car charged across the bridge and went bounding up the Amatuck Road. Bill Judson pieced together a crazy-quilt of information, some of it familiar. Link knew, of course, that the Varnables were one of the oldest and largest families in New England. What Link had not known, among other things, was that Abner Varnable had been writing a book about it: a stupendous history of the clan. This must explain that voluminous correspondence.

Varnable and his daughter were the last twigs on a brilliant branch of this family tree, with its roots deep in the rocky New England soil. They had once been the wealthiest branch, but

Illustrated by Rico Tomaso



On the floor of the vault, just inside the door, was a black suitcase. Link said: "Don't take your eyes off those people, Jud."

by George F. Worts

who wrote "The Phantom President"

Abner Varnable had frittered it all away. Bill Judson wished he knew how they managed to live.

There was a stepson, Noah Enderby, the son of Abner Varnable's first wife. Now close to forty, he had not done a lick of work since leaving college. There was also a secretary, a Frank Waldron, distantly related, a fourth or fifth cousin on the Enderby side.

"They say Frank is sweet on Alice. He's been Abner's secretary goin' on ten years, helpin' him write that book."

"Have they a cook?"

"Nope. Alice does all the housework."

"How can he afford a secretary and not a cook? That girl isn't strong enough for heavy housework."

"I guess Frank figgers on gettin' his back pay when the book comes out. Every Varnable will buy a copy."

Link recalled Frank Waldron: a fair man of thirty-two or -three who occasionally came into the village with Alice. And it occurred to him that Noah Enderby must be the tall, dark man with such chilling eyes who condescendingly bought chewing-gum.

"Then there isn't a Mrs. Varnable."

"There were three, all told. The first two died. The third disappeared about five years ago. There was talk about her and a New York doctor who had a summer place back of Lime Ridge. Dayton, or Drayton, or Dalton. They used to take long walks, and he left town about the same time she disappeared. Nobody blamed her much. She was thirty years younger, and Varnable drove her to it, with his queer ways. He never let her eat meat. He made her wear white shoes, summer and winter, and white stockin's and a white hat. He didn't let her out of Cannon Hill in fifteen years, not even to the Danbury fair.

"I remember the way she used to sit in church all through service with one hand over her eyes. She was smaller and prettier than Alice, and she had the same look in her eyes—sort o' dreamy and a million miles away. His queerest stunt was makin' her 'tend the family graveyard—keep the grass trimmed and the flowers weeded. It's a wonder she didn't run out on him sooner."

The deputy sheriff shifted to low gear and turned the car into the steep driveway which ran in from the Amatuck Road to the large gloomy house under the pines. Drive and lawn were brownly matted with needles. They scented the air. This house had been a landmark when red-coated mercenaries had paused to gulp chilled water from an oaken bucket in the yard in their shameless flight from the Minute Men. It was said that one of the Hessians had left behind a coat which had been hanging ever since on a wooden peg in the attic.

Windows were orange lozenges of light. Bill Judson hammered on the front door. It was opened presently by the tall, dark man whom Link had guessed must be Noah Enderby. He was chewing gum.

With his hand on the knob, he blocked their entrance. His jaws moved slowly. Bill Judson said: "I guess you know Link Corey, Noah. He runs the store, but he used to be a New York detective."

Noah Enderby studied Link with cold topaz eyes and moved his jaws slowly four times. "We don't need a detective."

Bill Judson seemed to grow taller.

"Maybe you don't know I can deputize whenever I want to."

Noah Enderby insolently studied Link and said: "All right. Come in. But maybe you'll hear about this, Judson."

FROM the entrance hall Link could see nothing very remarkable. It was an old house, with no evidences of restoration. The bare, wide-planked floors, of oak scuffed smooth as satin, all sloped downward toward the central stone chimney.

Alice Varnable and Frank Waldron were dim figures seen in the orange light of one kerosene lamp, the dead man's secretary standing with his back to the scrubbed fireplace, the girl huddled in a chair with a handkerchief to her mouth.

Red-rimmed eyes lifted. They opened widely on Link Corey with surprise and fright. He wondered why, and glanced at the secretary. Frank Waldron looked haggard and flustered. Blond and blue-eyed, he had the sensitive skin that colors easily.

They all seemed hostile. People generally did, not knowing what skeletons you would find in their closets.

The girl drew in her breath in a series of convulsive jerks.

Bill Judson, with arms folded on chest, had an air at once mysterious and important.

"Alice," he announced, "I brought Link along to help me."

Noah Enderby said: "We don't need a detective. My father committed suicide."

"What happened, Frank?" the deputy sheriff asked, ignoring him.

The secretary's eyes shifted evasively. Pinkness rushed into his skin. He stammered: "Mr.—Mr. Varnable was in his s-study. Alice tried to get in to say good-night to him. The door was locked. Noah and I broke it down, and found him—s-sitting at his desk. Dead!"

"What time was this?" Bill Judson asked gruffly.

"A little after twelve."

Link asked: "Did any one hear the shot?" *(Please turn to page 89)*

Going Their Own Ways

From the security of his hard-won harbor, a man of thirty-five envies those youngsters in love whose hearts are still black with anger, with distrust, with jealousy . . .

by Alec Waugh

who wrote "The Balliols"

A TELEPHONE bell was ringing as Richard Ryan turned the key in the front door of his comfortably dimensioned house in Portland Square. He had only had to climb a short flight of seven steps—but he was heavier than even a successful stockbroker had any right to be at thirty-five. It was winter, and he was wearing a heavy coat. His reply at the telephone was consequently low and breathless. The voice at the other end of the line was masculine, hoarse and eager.

"Is that you?" it asked.

"This is Mr. Ryan."

"Oh." There was a pause; then, less eagerly: "I wanted to speak to Mrs. Ryan."

"I'm afraid she's dressing. Can I take a message?"

"No, thanks very much. It doesn't matter. It's not important. I'll ring up some other time."

Ryan raised his eyebrows as he laid the receiver back. He thought: "That's the kind of thing that would have made me see red three years ago."

He walked slowly up the stairs, paused before the mirror at its head to satisfy himself that the wave of thick brown hair was smooth above the high-domed forehead, that the knot of the pearl-gray tie was correctly centered in the stiff white double collar, that the little "guardee" mustache that he affected was twisted back to an angle of appropriate jocularity; then tapped on his wife's bedroom door.

"Come in."

She had just bathed, and was sitting before the mirror polishing her nails. She was wearing a dressing-jacket, satin, pale blue, lace-fringed; as she turned toward him, her small boyish head with its cluster of small tight curls was reflected in the three-sided mirror in profile and quarter profile. In profile you were aware chiefly of the delicate modeling of the mouth, of the slightly tip-tilted nose. But in half and quarter profile it was the eyes you saw: large, long-lashed, hazel with a glint of green. The main center light had been switched off. In the twilit room the bright color of the dressing-table under its soft and hidden lighting was a living pool of beauty. Ryan paused in the doorway, gazing.

"There are times," he said, "when I'd give my soul to be a painter."

She smiled, patting the chair beside her.

"Come and talk to me. You haven't got to change yet. What happened at the board meeting?"

He told her. She listened attentively as she drew the long curved pad across her nails; commenting, asking a question now and then.

"It sounds as though it had been a trying day."

"In a way, it has."

"Poor sweet!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't suppose yours was any easier. What did you decide about Irene?"

"I'm getting rid of her."

"I expect you are wise."

"I couldn't keep her on after that scene she made. But Williams is the trouble, really."

They discussed the problem, amicably, casually, as they were in the habit of discussing their problems during this particular half-hour of the day. It was the one time they really saw each other. In the morning he breakfasted alone. All day he was at his office. They entertained or were invited out practically every evening. At dinner parties husband and wife are never allowed to sit next each other. By the time they had got back home, they were too tired for anything more than a few drowsy sentences. There were the week-ends, of course; but they usually went away for the week-ends. And in their friends' houses they were forced to

Illustrated by Gwen Tucker

It was Hilda who made things easy by going to the host's left. "I insist on sitting here, and I insist on having this nice young man on the other side of me."

continue the rôle of guests. The half-hour before he went to change was really the only time in the day when they saw each other.

It was the happiest hour of his day, now. It was strange that it should be so, he thought, as he lay later in his bath. It hadn't always been. How he had dreaded, in the old days before they had learned to be sensible, those endless diatribes about cooks and maids and nurses to which, when he had come back tired from the office, he had been forced to listen. The moment he came in at the door, it had begun: Edith had done this; Irene had done that; Williams was intolerable; Nannie was possessive about the baby. She had not listened when he tried to tell her about the office, about the board meeting, about a lunch with a fellow-director. It was as though she resented his having any bothers; as though she were launching her domestic difficulties like an armada, as though she were saying: "You think you've had a difficult time. You think you bear all the brunt of our marriage. But let me tell you what I've had to put up with here."

The first half-hour of his return had been the worst half-hour of the day. It left him irritated, nervous, fatigued, in a state of irritability that only a strong drink could soothe. He could never have believed that a time would come when this would be his happiest, his most soothing hour: when their discussion of servants and agendas would be like the friendly uncontentious exchange of views that club-members will make over a glass of sherry; that it would be she who would be asking him about his office, with his giving her the cue for a recitation of below-stairs quarrels.

They had certainly learned the way to run a marriage. . . .

She was telephoning as he came down into the hall. She was arranging some meeting or other for the following afternoon. But he listened with no more curiosity than he would have, on coming down the stairway of his club, to the head-porter's dictation of a telegram. Instead his eyes took in appreciatively the slim graceful line of her back, the heavy folds of the black satin skirt, the gray-blue of the squirrel coat, the high fox fur collar. She *was* lovely; at her very loveliest now in the full summer of her beauty: far lovelier than the nineteen-year-old débutante he had married. She finished her conversation as he came down into the hall.

"We're a little late," she reminded him. "We'd better hurry."

"Let's see the new frock first."

She smiled. "It's nice to have a husband who notices what one wears."

WITH both hands she pulled open the fur coat and stood under the candelabra. The refracted lights sparkled upon silver lamé. It was a tunic more than anything: high-collared, gathered at the throat in a wide, loose-knotted bow, its sleeves tight-fitted from the elbow, low-buttoned at the wrist. It was an informal kind of thing: very much the right kind of dress for the particular occasion. They were dining at a house where entertainment was lavish but informal: the kind of house where it was better to be underdressed, where a display of bare shoulders would have seemed ostentatious. Hilda would be the best and the most expensively dressed woman in the room. But she would not be the first woman that a stranger coming into the room would notice. That was how it should be, thought Ryan; that she should be the woman, not who was looked at first, but looked at longest.

Her unfailing sense of background was one of the things that he admired most in her.

"Im lucky to have a wife like you," he said.

She smiled; passed her arm through his, held it against her with a fond and friendly pressure.

"You make me very happy."

And indeed she did look happy.

"I *am* looking forward to this evening," she said. "It'll be fun."

Which was another of the things about her that made life with her so pleasant. She was always looking forward to things, always ready to enjoy things.

"By the way," she added, as they walked down the steps toward the taxi, "the Mackesons asked us on to a party afterward. I said I'd come along if I could, but that I was afraid you'd probably be too tired."

"Will it be amusing?"

"It might be. One can always come away if one doesn't like it."

They knew each other well enough to talk in shorthand. No stranger would ever have guessed that in that short dialogue she had asked permission to go to the Mackesons alone, and that permission had been granted her.

"OH, another thing," she said, as the taxi bore them southward towards Hill Street: "Didn't you say that you wanted to get to know Martin Studleigh?"

"I said he could be useful."

"He's a very great personal friend of Martha Manrap. I've discovered. I thought it would be worth while asking her in to a party or two: getting to be friends with her, then suggesting some kind of evening in which it would be easy for her to ask him to make a fourth."

"But you don't want to be bothered with Martha Manrap."

"She won't be all that bother. And if it's for a purpose—Anyhow, I've asked her to dine with us on Thursday."

"That's decent of you."

"Silly. One's got to do something for one's husband sometimes."

She had said "sometimes." But it wasn't sometimes. She was always doing things like that: thinking of ways to help him, ready to entertain people who might be useful. She was a real wife to him.

It was with a proper sense of his good fortune that on their arrival he watched her pause to finger her curls before the mirror.

"There are times when I feel very proud to be your husband."

She smiled; and her smile, in its turn, was a certain taking of him in, a recognition and appreciation of the things he stood for.

"We don't make a bad team," she said....

A moment later the door of the drawing-room had been flung open, the maid was announcing "Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ryan," and a fuzzy-haired, ramshackle little woman had jumped to her feet with, "Ah, darlings, there you are," had seized each by the hand, had led Hilda to one part of the room, himself to the other, had rattled off a series of introductions, had rushed over to a table to collect cocktail glasses. The party had begun—which meant, since husbands and wives are never allowed to be together, that they would hardly exchange another word throughout the evening.

Even so, what Hilda had said about their being a team had held good. It was the kind of impromptu, haphazard party where the hostess is never quite certain whether she has invited ten, eleven or a dozen guests: the kind of party where the sexes are never evenly balanced, where there is no stage-management; the party where success depends as much on the guests as on the host. As he saw how the talk in Hilda's corner of the room was centering around her, he had the feeling that it was she, far more than the hostess, who was making the party go.

And afterward, when the last guests had arrived, when the exodus to the dining-room had led to the inevitable discovery that no place-names had been set out, and no one knew where he was to sit, it was Hilda who made things easy by going straight up to the chair on the host's left. "I insist on sitting here, and I insist on having this nice young man on the other side of me." And when at last the shuffling of chairs was over, when they were all seated, it was he who set talk moving by introducing to the table in general the kind of topic that would lead very soon to a splitting-up of the conversation into a set of duologues.

Yes, they were a team, all right. So good a team that it was hard now to believe there ever had been a time four years ago when they glowered at one another across the dinner-tables of their friends. The change from it had come so simply, too: without explanation, without discussion, without any passage of words, during the year when their second child was born. Their first child, born at the end of the first year of marriage, had been so much a part of their life together, or rather, their life together had been so new and so important, that it was their relations to one another that had mattered then. Their second child, on the other hand, had come in the fourth year of marriage, like an armistice to long-waged hostility. It was almost as though each said: "At last we can stop fighting with one another."

The change in Hilda was extraordinary. Retreating into a brooding calm, she had appeared to forget his existence altogether; or rather, had ceased to regard his existence as a part of hers, displaying instead a friendly, affectionate but indifferent concern for him. Where before she had resented any happiness that had not come to him through her, she now was anxious that he should have amusement. She insisted on his arranging parties among men. She never remarked on the number of glasses of port that he had drunk. She encouraged him to accept invitations when she was no longer capable of late evenings. "And don't bother about getting back in time to say good night to me. Enjoy yourself." She used to ask him questions about his business with the detached friendliness of an old associate. She never fussed him with questions as to what he was doing, where he had been, and in what company.

Occasionally, however, her eyes would rest upon him in a strange pensive stare, as though she were asking questions of herself, not of him. And it was with that same pensive stare, as though she were looking at some distant and mental picture, that later, when the child was weaned, she had said: "Dick, I need a holiday. I'd like to go away somewhere for a long time—for two months, say." When she returned in the same mood of detached friendliness, it was as though a silent pact had been formed between them not to return to their old hostilities—to be friendly to one another, to help and not hinder one another; to go their own ways, in fact.

It had been a great success. Four years ago he wouldn't have believed it possible that they could make each other as happy as they did now.

When the men came up from the dining-room, he walked straight across to Hilda.

"Having a good time?" he asked.

She smiled, rested her hand on his and pressed it.

"I don't think I'm going to the party of the Mackesons," he said.

"No? Well, I think I shall. Just to see what it's like."

"Have a good time there."

She patted his hand. He turned away, looking for somebody to talk to. Across the room was the girl next whom he had sat at dinner. She was pretty and amusing. He moved across to her. For a moment she did not notice him. She was staring across the room, a rapt expression on her face. He turned to see at whom she was looking. On the other side of the room was standing the man next whom Hilda had sat at dinner. They had been married for six months. There was in their faces a look that said: "Nothing in this room matters except ourselves. Nothing in this room exists except ourselves. They're shadows, these other people—friendly, indifferent shadows." The look sent an odd twinge to Ryan's heart. He had forgotten there were such looks, that there were such feelings. It was touching. Then she had turned away. As she saw him, he half expected to see in her eyes the same expression of re-focusing that you notice in people's eyes when they walk out of the sun into the shadow. There wasn't, though. She smiled in a friendly fashion and patted a cushion at her side.

"I wanted to ask you if you knew about hotels in the south of Spain," she said.

TALK flowed easily. The evening passed. Half-past ten came—eleven, a quarter-past. No one moved. It was clearly the kind of party that was destined to linger on till one. Then Hilda rose. "I don't want to be a nuisance, but

will some one ring up a taxi?" As the host hurried from the room, Hilda came across to Ryan. "I don't suppose I shall see you tonight, and I'll want to sleep on late tomorrow. Will it be a nuisance if I ring you up tomorrow?"

He thought a moment. His morning was very full.

"You couldn't lunch with me, I suppose?"

"No, I'm afraid I couldn't manage that."

"Oh, well, then, in that case—" He hesitated. He hated being rung up on a personal matter at his office. Hilda knew that. She was very good about not bothering him. "Look here, if there's anything really important, will you telegraph? Then I can ring," he said.

"Right. Not that I suppose there will be."

She smiled, affectionately. How easily we manage things nowadays, he thought. What a pleasant thing marriage can be when one's learned sense. . . .

But his host was returning from the telephone.

"I'm terribly sorry," he was saying. "It's a rainy night. It's just theater time. I've tried half a dozen ranks. I can't get an answer from any of them."

"Oh."

For the first time that evening a frown came into Hilda's face: an impatient, fretful frown.

"It'll be better in a quarter of an hour," her host went on. "Would it do if I tried then?"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't. I really ought to have gone a quarter of an hour ago."

RYAN noticed the impatience of her frown with surprise. After all, there was no hurry about getting to the Mackesons. He knew better, however, than to point that out.

"Well, in that case, I suppose I'd better try again."

Her host drew away reluctantly. He was rescued, however, by the young man next whom Hilda had been sitting.

"Why bother? I've a car here. I can run you over there easily."

"Can you? Oh, that *is* kind of you. It's only the other side of the Park. It won't take ten minutes."

The relief on Hilda's face was startlingly manifest. But there was a sudden look of displeasure on the young bride's face. Quite clearly she did not like the idea of her husband driving alone with an attractive woman.

Ryan smiled as he remembered how such a frown would have come into Hilda's face four years ago had he offered to take a woman home.

He was to smile more than once through *(Please turn to page 85)*

They had certainly learned the way to run a marriage, thought Ryan. . . . "I'm lucky to have a wife like you," he said.

Goofy and

Not unlike that pro- caught a lion by the broadcasting mag- terrified by what they

by **Reeve**

Cartoons by

THE scene is the resplendent lobby of Radio City—modern art in marble and bronze and subtle lights. Trig, alert pages, uniformed like Graustarkian lieutenants, shepherd the flocks of human sheep: worshipful humanity struggling to brighten the humdrum of their lives by a glimpse of glamour—by seeing their favorite radio stars, and maybe, miracle of miracles, getting a handshake and an autograph too!

Or the scene could also be the dingy areaway at the stage-door of any of the Broadway theaters recently converted into broadcasting studios. For the gallery gods of radio want to see the show as well as hear it. Visitors to New York nowadays see Radio City or one of Columbia's radio theaters long before they get around to the Statue of Liberty or the pinnacle of the Empire State Building. The first thing they do is make tracks for their favorite broadcast—if, by hook or crook, they can wangle a ticket.

Getting a star out of a broadcast and into his waiting car almost requires a police escort. The "first night" of a new radio program brings out jewels and ermine, and toasts to success in vintage champagne. Fat-pursed, fat-paunched older gentlemen, more amorous than glamorous, have a new phrase in their seductive vocabularies—"Little girl, would you like to go on the air?" Even the stage-door Johnny has been re-born in this new theater world.

Like all new things, this new theater is —new. Painfully new, crude, and raw, in spite of the fact that it often brings great artists to the microphone. It is in about the same era as were motion pictures when you thrilled to the "Perils of Pauline." Its dramatics, especially, are in that stage. Most of its commercial announcements have the delicacy and finesse of a sledge-hammer. With the exception of a few good gag-men and two dramatists, its writers are vastly inferior to those writing plays, motion pictures or magazine fiction. The most successful program on the air pays its writer twelve hundred dollars a week—and it is the most successful program on the air. You would think that this would provide an excellent example to many of the gentlemen responsible for many of the mediocre programs. You'd think so, but it doesn't. Don't ask me why. Instead, they have conferences, shift the bassoon closer to the microphone, change production-men, have some more conferences, and wonder why nothing much happens. "Alice in Wonderland" is a critique of pure reason in comparison. It's just all too mixed-up and goofy and wonderful, and—you figure it out; I can't.

Let's examine this new theater—its customs, its methods, its finances, its personalities. How much does a radio show cost? Who writes the material? What's it all about?

First of all, as long as there's been a show business, there's always had to be an "angel"—somebody to put up the money. In the old days of the stage the rich button-manufacturer might have been enamored of a lady of the footlights and would attempt to finance her to stardom. But with the new theater of the air there comes a totally new type of "angel." In radio parlance he is known as the sponsor. More often than not, he is a bewildered gentleman still wondering what it's all about. Mr. Smith made shoes. And Mr. Brown made lip-sticks. Mr. Smith was particularly concerned in the cost of Argentine hides. He knew all about shoes; naught about shows.

Suddenly Mr. Smith woke up one morning and found himself in the clamor and glamour of show business. And so did Mr. Brown. Suddenly they found themselves paying from twenty-five hundred to twenty-five thousand dollars a week to amuse the

Wonderful!

verbial man who tail, most of the nates are somewhat hold in their hands.

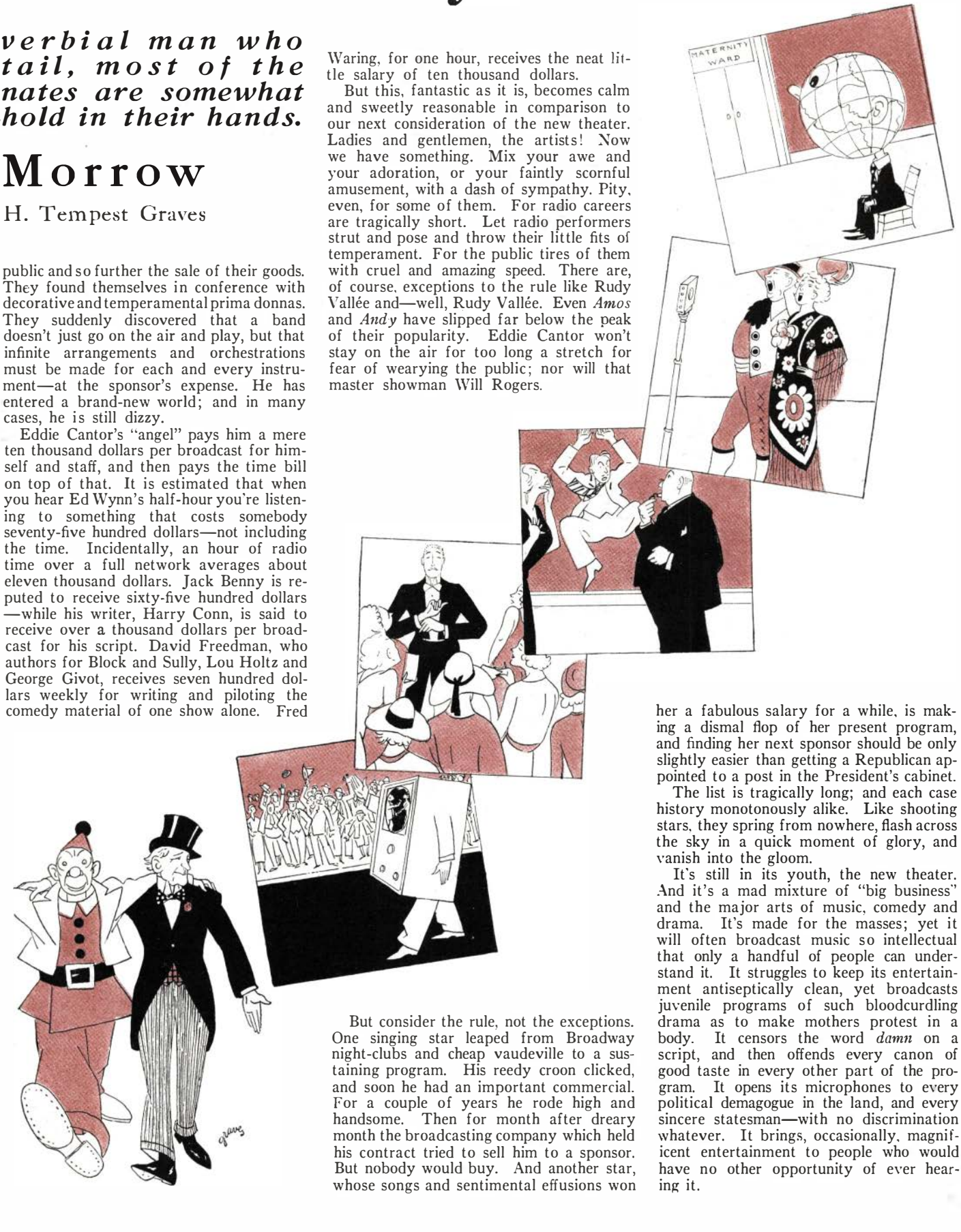
Morrow

H. Tempest Graves

public and so further the sale of their goods. They found themselves in conference with decorative and temperamental prima donnas. They suddenly discovered that a band doesn't just go on the air and play, but that infinite arrangements and orchestrations must be made for each and every instrument—at the sponsor's expense. He has entered a brand-new world; and in many cases, he is still dizzy.

Eddie Cantor's "angel" pays him a mere ten thousand dollars per broadcast for himself and staff, and then pays the time bill on top of that. It is estimated that when you hear Ed Wynn's half-hour you're listening to something that costs somebody seventy-five hundred dollars—not including the time. Incidentally, an hour of radio time over a full network averages about eleven thousand dollars. Jack Benny is reputed to receive sixty-five hundred dollars—while his writer, Harry Conn, is said to receive over a thousand dollars per broadcast for his script. David Freedman, who authors for Block and Sully, Lou Holtz and George Givot, receives seven hundred dollars weekly for writing and piloting the comedy material of one show alone. Fred Waring, for one hour, receives the neat little salary of ten thousand dollars.

But this, fantastic as it is, becomes calm and sweetly reasonable in comparison to our next consideration of the new theater. Ladies and gentlemen, the artists! Now we have something. Mix your awe and your adoration, or your faintly scornful amusement, with a dash of sympathy. Pity, even, for some of them. For radio careers are tragically short. Let radio performers strut and pose and throw their little fits of temperament. For the public tires of them with cruel and amazing speed. There are, of course, exceptions to the rule like Rudy Vallée and—well, Rudy Vallée. Even *Amos* and *Andy* have slipped far below the peak of their popularity. Eddie Cantor won't stay on the air for too long a stretch for fear of wearying the public; nor will that master showman Will Rogers.



But consider the rule, not the exceptions. One singing star leaped from Broadway night-clubs and cheap vaudeville to a sustaining program. His reedy croon clicked, and soon he had an important commercial. For a couple of years he rode high and handsome. Then for month after dreary month the broadcasting company which held his contract tried to sell him to a sponsor. But nobody would buy. And another star, whose songs and sentimental effusions won her a fabulous salary for a while, is making a dismal flop of her present program, and finding her next sponsor should be only slightly easier than getting a Republican appointed to a post in the President's cabinet.

The list is tragically long; and each case history monotonously alike. Like shooting stars, they spring from nowhere, flash across the sky in a quick moment of glory, and vanish into the gloom.

It's still in its youth, the new theater. And it's a mad mixture of "big business" and the major arts of music, comedy and drama. It's made for the masses; yet it will often broadcast music so intellectual that only a handful of people can understand it. It struggles to keep its entertainment antiseptically clean, yet broadcasts juvenile programs of such bloodcurdling drama as to make mothers protest in a body. It censors the word *damn* on a script, and then offends every canon of good taste in every other part of the program. It opens its microphones to every political demagogue in the land, and every sincere statesman—with no discrimination whatever. It brings, occasionally, magnificent entertainment to people who would have no other opportunity of ever hearing it.

The Key to CINCINNATI

by HENRY F. PRINGLE

© M. P. Watson, from Ewing Galloway

IT must have been well toward morning when the whistle of a river steamer sounded through the night. The home of my host lay high above the winding Ohio River on one of the seven hills which constitute, it may be said in passing, the only similarity between Cincinnati and ancient Rome. The whistle woke me, and I looked from the window toward the bend of the river. The moon was still in the sky, and in its gleam I saw the steamboat pushing its quota of coal barges. A soft spring breeze carried the flat *thump-thump* of an old-fashioned paddle-wheel at the stern. The coal was being floated down from Pittsburgh to feed the furnaces of the factories which rim Cincinnati.

That whistle in the night, the stern-wheeler and the coal-scows, seemed, as I looked out, to be a symbol of the metropolis which once was the mightiest in America's new West. Commerce and manufacturing—even in the dim past of one hundred years ago, these were the lifeblood of Cincinnati. Even then it was an urban community. Near-by Columbus, Ohio's State capital, was then and still is—comparatively speaking—a rural community. The farmers came there to trade, and they left their mark. But Cincinnati—christened "Queen City of the West" by the poet Longfellow, to the eternal gratification of her Chamber of Commerce—was an industrial city. Men went there to live, not merely to market. They came to sweat, to work with machines. The Ohio River brought them their raw materials and then carried away the things that they made.

But that steamboat-whistle, if a symbol, was certainly no more than that. Next day I was taken to lunch at the club where congregate the city's business leaders. I asked one of them what would happen if the Ohio were suddenly to run dry.

"Nothing at all," he answered. "Oh, yes—we'd be hard up for a water-supply. The river, you see, is used for that. But as far as transportation is concerned, it is vital no longer. The railroads could take care of us. For the most part, they do now."

He quoted statistics on tonnage to prove his point. They were convincing, and dull. So I had to search further for the key to the Queen City of the West. I found it, rather remarkably, on a Sunday morning in Eden Park. This is on one of Cincinnati's seven hills; it is literally true that there are seven. Not far off are some of the city's swankier houses, and the park itself is a pleasant stretch of green, not very extensive, where are located an art museum, some greenhouses and a band-stand for summer night concerts. Eden Park is high, like the houses where dwell the prosperous folk of the town. It is several hundred feet above the river, and on that Sunday morning the air was fresh and clean. But a half-hour's walk in a westerly direction, toward the heart of the business section, brings you into an atmosphere which is laden, even on Sunday, with smoke and coal-dust. Your eyes smart; your throat is irritated. You are in what is called the Basin.

The key to Cincinnati lies, I suspect, in this contrast. A day will come when the Basin is wholly occupied, as it should be, by factories and commercial institutions. But right now something over one-fifth of the population is housed there. Thousands of Cincinnatians suffer from the ills of poverty and bad environment. A paradox confronts you after you have been in town but a day or two; you hear it discussed, frankly and at length, throughout your stay. For Cincinnati, despite the depression, is still fairly prosperous. She did not really feel the slump until 1932. Her public debt is very low; her credit is so excellent that her bonds sell at a premium and are difficult to buy. Her tax-rate will be lower this year than last. Her city government is a model of non-partisan efficiency because, a decade ago, the people voted to throw out the bosses of both parties. At this point it is only fair to point out that Cincinnati is, at last, thoroughly alive to the menace of her slums, and has started, with a forthright courage which other cities might well copy, to end them. But why has it taken so long? Why have affluence and stark poverty dwelt so long together?

One answer is that this is true of every American city. It isn't the complete answer; and it is, obviously, begging the question. I asked a prominent social worker to explain the paradox, and he answered through a parable.

"Once upon a time—about thirty years ago—a new industry was being born in America," he said. "It was the automobile industry. Cincinnati had a chance to establish it here. But we refused. We

said that the automobile was a crazy newfangled contraption, and was only a fad. So the industry went to Detroit."

This was interesting, but it was hardly an answer. My informant explained further: He said that he wasn't at all certain that even now a good many Cincinnatians were not just as glad that Detroit was the motor metropolis. Detroit, he insisted, had been vastly harder hit by the slump. The business men of the Queen City, he continued, were fundamentally conservative. They did not like sudden ups and downs. Their idea of a good industrial graph was a straight line, with no deep valleys or mountain peaks. Thirty-five or fifty years ago the city had been controlled by five or six men. They bought real estate and waited for a rise. They ran the banks. They were cautious and slow.

"Our banks had no trouble in the panic of 1893," my friend said. "They had no trouble in 1907. For that matter, we have had no serious financial difficulties during 1929 to 1934. Only one bank has failed, and this had no connection with the depression. Another bank took it over, and the depositors got eighty-five cents on the dollar."

"How can you criticize that?"

"I don't really," he said. "My point is that our banks never made dangerous loans, so of course they couldn't fail. Your Cincinnati banker never takes a chance, any kind of chance. It's typical of the town. On the whole, we disapprove of being in debt. Why, I know of a church on the outskirts of the city—I won't mention the name—which put up a new structure in 1928. They spent $175,000; now they're having trouble in meeting the payments. Everyone says it serves them right for getting into debt."

Half a million people live in Cincinnati; and regarding them, it appears, a generalization or two may be offered. They are appalled at the idea of owing much money. They are thrifty—and of that thrift a story may be told: Two or three years ago a girl was about to be graduated from the University of Cincinnati. She was intelligent, beautiful and charming, but she was something of a mystery. Only one or two of her fellow-students had ever been invited to her home. The truth was that she came from the slum area in the Basin. Her family had been living in a tenement, with geese and poultry wandering through the kitchen. It was assumed that she was very poor. But the girl told her classmates that this was not the case at all, that her father had a considerable sum of money in the bank. So, finally, she persuaded him to move, and to the amazement of her friends, he bought a twenty-five-thousand-dollar house on one of the Cincinnati hills.

This is the second of a series of articles dealing with those of our cities which have refused to bow to Gloom and are now leading the rest of the country in recovery.

Cincinnati is essentially conservative, and dislikes sudden ups and downs; her idea of a good industrial graph is a straight line, with no deep valleys or mountain peaks.

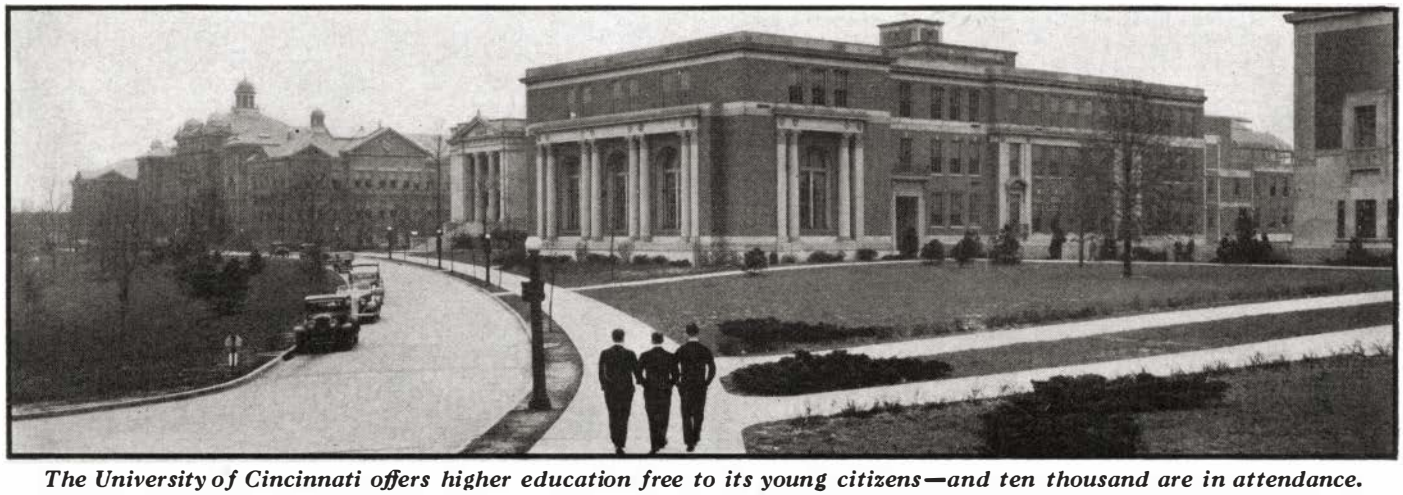
Aquatic birds in Cincinnati's fine Zoölogical Gardens.

It would be absurd to draw the conclusion that this is typical, that many of the tenement dwellers have hidden fortunes. It is, though, true that an average Cincinnatian of the older generation believes that a house should be lived in almost to the day when it falls down. These people see no innate virtue in new things. They are suspicious, to an extent, of growth. Unlike the residents of most cities, who boast about population gains, Cincinnatians seem to find quiet satisfaction in the degree to which their city's size remains relatively static. There is a touch of smugness to their complete lack of concern over the fact that Cincinnati, in 1840, was the sixth largest city in the country, and only seventeenth today. On the other hand,—again the paradox.—they have their own pride in the city. They are intelligent and progressive, but they exhibit these qualities in their own individual way.

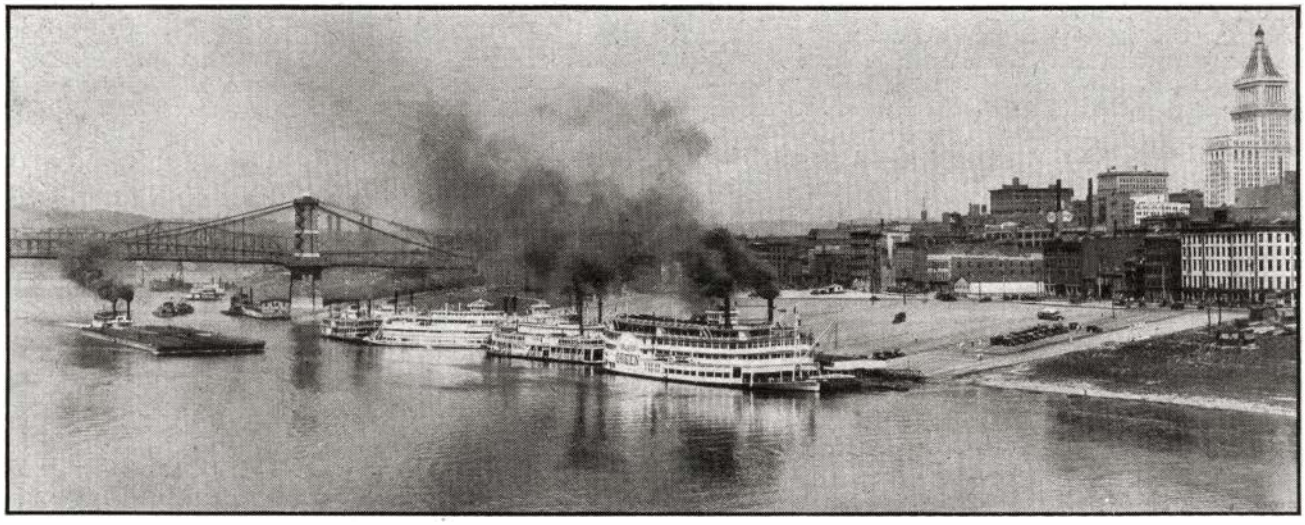
So, despite their distaste for change, they adopted the city manager form of government when this was still radical. So too, although they do not like to spend money, they have a social welfare program which is one of the costliest in the country, and which is emulated all over the world. Many a city has experimented with the community-chest plan for a unified money-raising campaign and has failed. Cincinnati has had a community chest for twenty years. The paradox will be less puzzling, perhaps, if we go back and look briefly at the history of the town.

BY the end of the Eighteenth Century a number of attempts had been made to colonize the northern bank of the Ohio River at that point between the outlets of two smaller streams, the Little Miami and the Great Miami rivers. It was an alluring spot. The hills were green; the meadows were fertile. The first settlement was called Losantiville. The Indians were hostile, however, and it was almost 1800 before some degree of permanence had been achieved. Meanwhile grants of land in the vicinity had been made to members of the Military Order of the Cincinnati, an

Photos by Ewing Galloway



The University of Cincinnati offers higher education free to its young citizens—and ten thousand are in attendance.

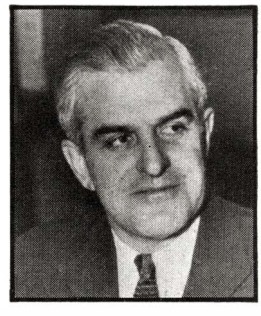


The Ohio River brought them their raw materials and carried away the things they made.

organization of Revolutionary War officers, and the town's name was changed to Cincinnati. A garrison of soldiers was assigned to protect the citizens. By 1814 the city had grown to such an extent that a university was started.

The point of this historical note is that the early Cincinnatians endured no very great hardships. They boarded flat-boats at Pittsburgh and floated down the river until the hills above the town came into view. And they found, when they arrived, that life was good, that it was not too difficult to make a living. America's expansion did not halt with the Ohio River. It continued westward, but few among these first settlers followed the adventurers who pushed on toward St. Louis, toward Independence Landing on the Missouri, through Kansas and Nebraska into the Far West and the dangerous horizons.

They had, it would seem, that same distaste for change which marks their descendants today. They were content to build their city at the bend of the Ohio, to raise their families, to profit slowly but surely. A few years before 1840, when Cincinnati had already become a Western metropolis, the first of a distinguished family emigrated there. I think his story may well be sketched; it throws some light on the type of men who made the city what it is. His name was Alphonso Taft, and one of his sons was to be President of the United States. Another was to be an important and wealthy business leader in Cincinnati. Two of his grandsons are civic leaders in the city today.



Fred K. Hoehler, Safety Director of Cincinnati.

Alphonso Taft had been raised in Vermont and had studied law at Yale. In 1837, convinced that New England did not offer adequate opportunities, he was looking for some place to practice. Fifteen months later he started on a tour of possible cities. It has been my privilege to examine the private letters, never published, which Alphonso Taft wrote on that journey. In October, 1838, he reported a visit to New York—and the city was not to his taste. He had been repelled by the character of the New York bar. The attorneys he had met were selfish and mercenary. In New York, he wrote, "money is the all in all." So he went on to Philadelphia, which was not quite as bad. A fortnight later he described his arrival in Cincinnati. It was a fine city with—"or so they say," he added cautiously—forty thousand people as compared with fourteen thousand only twenty years before. Its lawyers were men of honor. Of course, and this is the moral which applies to Cincinnati of 1935, it would not be possible for a young lawyer to earn as much in this Western town as in the East. Cincinnati, concluded Alphonso Taft, was a middle-class town.

"I believe they have but very few men at this bar of much talent," he said.

To an extent, at all events, Cincinnati was built by those who desired substance and permanence rather than speculation or sudden gain. The city had charm, even in the early days. The scornful Charles Dickens, otherwise so hostile toward the crude United States, was to give it his approval. The streets were broad and lined with trees. From the river, the church spires were the most prominent architectural feature. To visitors were pointed out, also, the buildings of the University of Cincinnati, the Medical College, one or two theaters and some fine residences already looking down from the heights. Life came from the river. Thirty or forty steamers would tie up daily at the public landing. Cincinnati's market was the pre-war South. No other city west of the Allegheny Mountains could reach that empire so easily.

The people of Cincinnati accepted with proper gratitude the bounties which came to them naturally—the bounty, for instance, of their generous river. But it was not in their nature to experiment. In 1850—as many years later when the automobile came—Cincinnati did not grasp the significance of the railroad. As the railroads grew, the river traffic began to ebb. Soon Cincinnati discovered that she was off the main line. St. Louis and Chicago forged ahead while the Queen City of the West became so in name only. Then the Civil War wrecked the South, and with this market lost, the city went through several decades of relative poverty. It did not suffer much, for the people had saved. Finally prosperity returned, but the mold of Cincinnati had been cast. She was to know other depressions, but never the depths of unreasoning panic. She was to have booms, but not, even in 1929, the wild, inflationary ones which leave only desolation behind.

An industrial city. Men went there to work.

That is the city of today. There are various reasons why Cincinnati was a long time feeling the depression. A technical one is that the products of her factories are almost equally divided between consumers' and capital goods. That is: she makes paints and varnishes; she makes soap at her enormous modern plants; but she makes coal-mining machinery too. She contributes heavily to the so-called "heavy industries." It is necessary to go a little deeper. A young man at the Chamber of Commerce told me frankly,

The railroads have developed till Cincinnati could be independent of the Ohio River.

for instance, that the city's quota of unemployed was now about comparable to those of other cities. He offered a statistic or two on the losses which had befallen the city. In 1929, he said, wages and salaries had totaled about two hundred and forty million dollars, and this, at a rough estimate, was now off by thirty-five per cent. He thought that normal profits from commercial institutions and industry had been about eighty million dollars annually in the piping days of the boom. These had been cut at least as much.

"And yet Cincinnati is relatively well off?" I asked.

"Relatively. One reason, I think, is that we had few men getting the big commission-salaries, which stopped, of course, when business slowed down. We had few promoters, few stock salesmen, almost no customers' men. By the way, I'd like to have watched one of those slick New York customers' men try to sell phony stocks to some of our maiden lady plutocrats out on Grandin Road!"

In short, he continued, the waves of the Coolidge-Hoover boom had not done more than wash on the shores of the Queen City. He told me more. He said that the city had boasted but a single night-club, aside from hotel dance-floors. In the Prohibition era there had been no spangled speak-easies. People did their drinking at home, or if they felt unusually devilish, went to "home-brew parlors," which were shabby and drab. For that matter, he said, Cincinnati had rather few restaurants. Dining out was considered extravagant. Dining, like drinking, was normally done at home.

Clarence A. Dykstra, City Manager of Cincinnati.

I suspect there are additional reasons, basic ones, which account for the town's stability. People own their homes, for instance. Cincinnati is one of the largest centers in the country for building-and-loan mortgages; and these, at the moment, total one hundred and eighty million dollars. Elsewhere the companies which issue these mortgages have been blowing up rather regularly since 1929, but not a single one of the 173 companies in Cincinnati has failed. Another cause, less tangible but surely important, is a capacity of the people for the cultural aspects of life. I know that cynics will laugh at the notion that a taste for music and art has any relation to economic security. Perhaps they are right. It is essential to any understanding of Cincinnati, however, to know that her university—which is a municipal institution with free tuition—has an attendance of ten thousand young men and women. For decades, now, Cincinnati has been offering higher education to all who want it. Statistics are not available, but I venture to say that her proportion of college graduates is higher than in any other American city.

It is significant, too, that Cincinnati has had a symphony orchestra for half a century. Theodore Thomas, whose influence in American musical development places him among the immortals, was once its conductor. Leopold Stokowski of the Philadelphia Orchestra—he was less theatrical and less famous, then—was another. On a night when I was in Cincinnati there was a symphony concert at the Music Hall. The auditorium was well filled. But of particular interest was the program offered by Mr. Eugene Goossens, who is now the conductor. I am no judge of music. Even I could see, however, that this was not the conventional orchestral program adapted to the taste of radio audiences and phonograph listeners. It included, for instance, a work so rarely played as Beethoven's "Rondino for Eight Wind Instruments." Symphony orchestras are, of course, a very costly luxury for any city. Even New York is hard pressed to support the Philharmonic. There are some pessimists who say that the Cincinnati symphony cannot survive for more than a year or two longer.

Perhaps they are right. To the casual visitor, it seems unthinkable. The town, unbothered by a losing fight to remain as large as other cities, has a fierce pride in her reputation as a center for art and music. The boosters of Kansas City or Chicago point with pride to their tall buildings and swarming business areas. They boast about their parks and boulevards. Almost the only boasting I heard in Cincinnati, save for natural self-satisfaction in the non-partisan city government, was over the orchestra. The Cincinnatians are delighted if you say that Mr. Goossens has an orchestra which is second to none you have heard. I am quite sure that the Rotary Club (I assume that there *is* one in town, though I must confess that it was never mentioned) will go into action and have a "Boost Music Week" if there is any real danger that the Cincinnati symphony might suspend.

The central business section, at Fountain Square.

The city is almost as proud of her pictures and her art institutions. Cincinnati's pre-ëminence in art and music is partly due to the benefactions of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Taft. The former was a half-brother of William Howard Taft. The latter was a daughter of David Sinton, who made a fortune by shrewd, careful, and typical Queen City investments. Mr. and Mrs. Taft gave vast sums, over many years, to the orchestra. In their wills they left millions to the Cincinnati

Institute of Fine Arts. Their house, now the Taft Museum, has an extraordinarily fine collection of paintings by Rembrandt, Hals, Gainsborough, Reynolds and other masters, and also a magnificent collection of Chinese porcelains. But one or two benefactors—even with their millions—do not in themselves create a love for art. That love must be innate in the people. In Cincinnati the love has flourished for many years. It was nurtured by an influx of Germans in the middle of the last century. Out of the four hundred and fifty-one thousand residents there are one hundred thousand whose parents were born abroad, and of these sixty per cent were German. The city was fortunate, too, in the Jews who came there to live at about the same time. No doubt these Germans and Jews have added to the conservatism which so definitely marks Cincinnati. But their ears have been attuned to audible beauty. Their eyes have been open to visual beauty.

Next Month

The Recluse of Sea Island

by

GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

A portrait of Eugene O'Neill by the only man who really knows America's greatest playwright.

AND yet—and yet the fact remains that all this is still but preliminary in the search for the key to Cincinnati. Cities, like people, are a mixture of good and bad. Debit the town, if you like, with a caution which stands in the path of progress. You must credit her with a stubborn determination, when at last the true situation dawns, to go forward with a program of reform. Her Charter Movement has been written about *ad infinitum* and need not detain us long. Ten years ago Cincinnati grew weary of political corruption, and now the government is non-partisan. I could not learn, for instance, whether the genial chief executive, Mayor Russell Wilson, is a Democrat or a Republican. Nobody seems to know, and certainly nobody cares. So with City Manager C. A. Dykstra. A story or two about the city government will make things clear.

"Suppose," I asked a newspaper man who was showing me around, "you get a traffic ticket. Whom do you see?"

"You see the judge," he answered sourly, "and you pay your fine."

This was confirmed by the Rev. Frank H. Nelson of Christ Church. Dr. Nelson is one of the best-loved men in Cincinnati; he went there from New York almost forty years ago, and he has been active in good works ever since. His church is in the downtown congested area, and it had been a custom on the part of the old régime to give Dr. Nelson special automobile tags which permitted him to park his car where he pleased. Some years ago he called on City Manager C. C. Sherrill, the predecessor of Mr. Dykstra. He said that he would appreciate additional tags for some of his church workers.

"What kind of tags?" asked Colonel Sherrill. Dr. Nelson explained.

"That is quite impossible," said the city manager. "We do not tolerate that kind of thing any more, even for you. You will turn in the tags at once."

Dr. Nelson admits frankly that he was, at first, rather indignant. So were other citizens, denied favors of long standing. They soon found, however, that the benefits far outnumbered the disadvantages.

Another story is about a contractor who visited his Cincinnati banker. A large city contract was soon to be awarded. Upon whom should he call to get assistance in preparing his bid? The banker said that it was unnecessary to see anyone.

The contractor laughed heartily and flipped the ash from his expensive cigar. "Sure, sure, I know. I know you people are full of virtue, now. That's O.K. But whom do I *see?*"

"You don't see *anyone,*" insisted the banker. "Just put in your bid. If you're low man, you win. If you're not, you lose."

Ultimately the contractor discovered that such was actually the case. He found, as did others anxious to do business with the city, that it was no longer necessary to have certain undisclosed items hidden in his calculations,—five hundred dollars for this official and two hundred dollars for that one,—and that bids could be lower for their absence.

A final story is about Fred K. Hoehler, the Safety Director of the city, and in command of the police and fire departments as well as of other agencies which relate to public welfare. I found him to be a youngish gentleman with graying hair, who had once been a social worker. It was a relief to discover—for this is the rock on which many a reform administration has foundered—that he was a tolerant official who knows that mankind is weak and given to sin. Mr. Hoehler does not worry about minor sinning. If a group of gay young dogs wish to have a stag party at some hotel, he does not care—unless, of course, they start to wreck the joint in their enthusiasm. He declines to grow too excited when it is reported that bookmakers are operating in town, and that bets are actually being made on the ponies.

But Fred Hoehler, I am confident, will countenance no link between these flashy gentlemen and his police. I think it is quite possible that Cincinnati has her houses of vice. No doubt a taxi-driver could locate one, if asked. But I am quite sure that the average policeman does not get a weekly dole of twenty-five to fifty dollars from these wretched places. I do not think the officers of the department have hidden bank-accounts, or in the too-familiar manner, wonderful tin boxes.

Gangsters do not find Cincinnati a healthy place; and this, obviously, is because the racketeer is helpless without political allies. One summer evening not long ago a pair of nattily dressed gentlemen called on Safety Director Hoehler at his home. They were friendly, but grieved. They said that their activities, vaguely related to "protection" for business men, were being hampered by the police. They asked that this be stopped. Mr. Hoehler, according to reports of the incident, looked at them calmly, and then at a taxi which stood at the curb.

"Did you come here in that?" he asked. They said that they had.

"Well, get into it again and go away, if you don't mind," he told them. "I don't care what politicians you know. Your game doesn't work here. Good night."

Very much astonished, the mobsters got into the cab and started back toward their hotel. Meanwhile Mr. Hoehler had directed that a police radio car intercept them. This was done. The bluecoats instructed the cab driver to escort his fares to the outskirts of town, to a point where an outbound bus could be boarded. They followed in the patrol car.

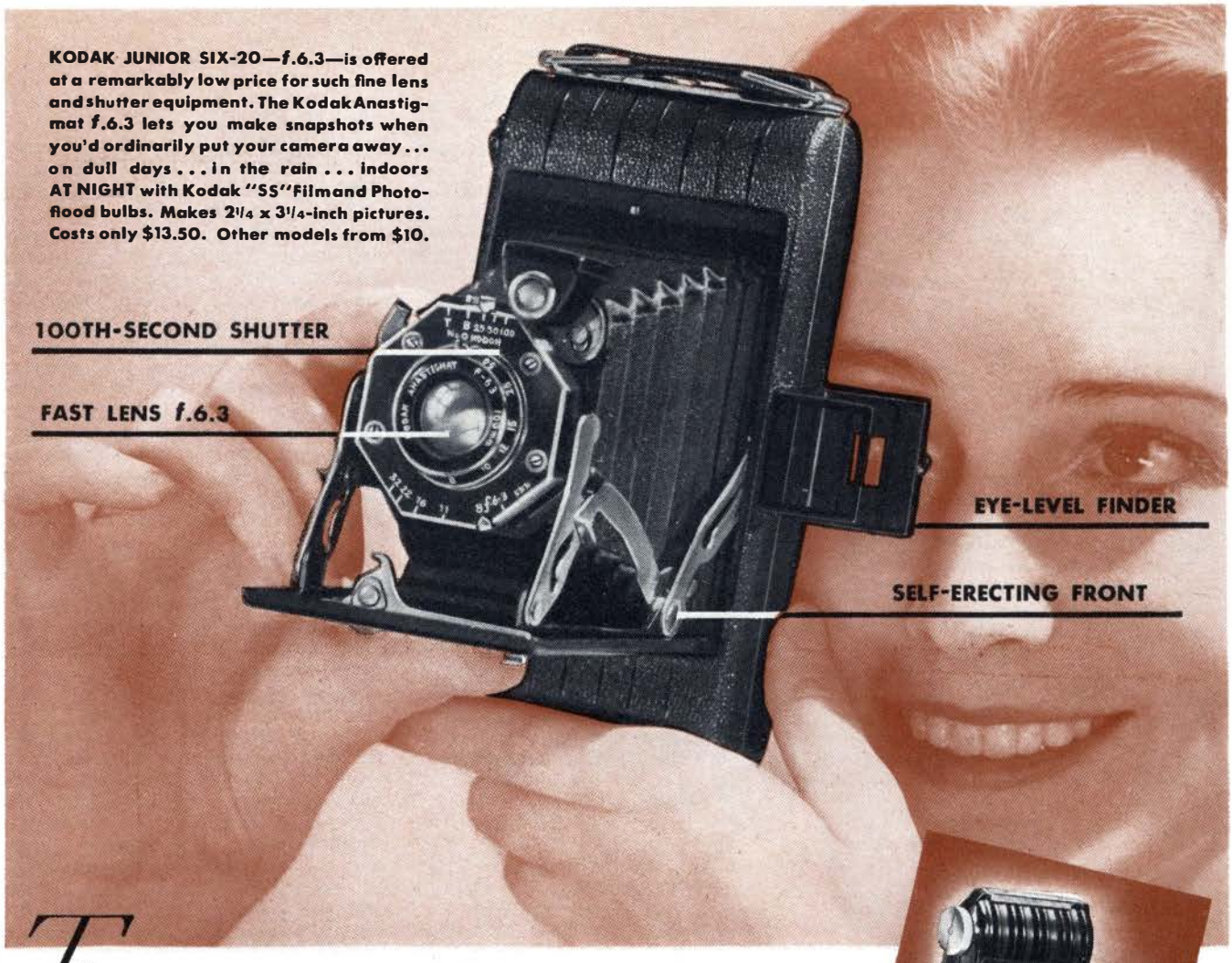
"We'll send your bags after you," they called as the bus pulled out with the gangsters. "Don't come back to Cincinnati."

And they never did.

But the most interesting single angle of Cincinnati's story has nothing to do with music or art, industry or the police. Come with me to the offices of the Public Health Federation in the building occupied by the Community Chest. There, among many other busy and expert gentlemen, you will find Bleeker Marquette, executive secretary of the Federation, and his assistant, Dr. Floyd P. Allen. The former is a baldish, thin man of middle-age with a quiet intensity in his voice. The latter has curly hair with a few streaks of gray. He is a physician. But he works with statistical tables and an engineer's slide-rule instead of with stethoscope and scalpel. Mr. Marquette and Dr. Allen have been piecing together an astonishing tale. They are not yet finished. But enough has been done to tell part of the story, which concerns the Basin, that low-lying part of the city where disease stalks and the death-rate is high.

I HAVE already referred to the Basin and its poverty. Almost five years ago an investigation in Cincinnati showed: first, that the city had a higher general death-rate for whites than any other major American municipality in which comparable studies had been made; second, that the death-rate for negroes was higher than in any other city save New Orleans. Not much publicity was given to these unhappy discoveries, but word of them spread rapidly among the civic leaders in Cincinnati. Immediately various excuses were put forth. It was pointed out that the city had a very high percentage of non-resident deaths. This was because her many fine hospitals and other institutions attracted the sick and ailing from all parts of Ohio, and a certain proportion of them were too far gone to be cured. It was further suggested that Cincinnati's age-level, due to her slackening population-increase, was higher than in other cities. Old people die more rapidly than do younger ones.

These factors were easily proved. Most cities would promptly have accepted them as an adequate reason for the high death-rate and would have devoted their attention to a new boulevard or a new City Hall. But Cincinnati, in her *(Please turn to page 104)*



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Check the new convenience features against your old camera. And the looks. Then, besides, there are new values that aren't apparent to the eye—better lenses and shutters than you could ever before buy at the price.

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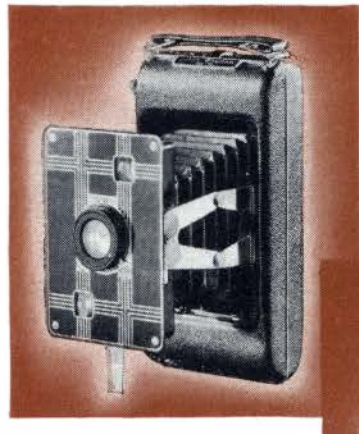
JIFFY KODAK V. P. *(above)* gives you the latest creation of Eastman designers . . . a smart, small camera that gets good pictures. V. P. stands for "vest pocket"—and it really fits. Opens for action at the touch of a button. Eye-level finder. Takes 1⅝ x 2½-inch pictures. Costs $5.



JIFFY KODAK *(above)*—It works so fast it had to be called "Jiffy." Touch a button—"Pop"—it opens. Touch another—"Click"—it gets the picture. There's extra smartness in its etched metal front and leather-like finish. For 2¼ x 3¼-inch pictures, $8. For 2½ x 4¼-inch pictures, $9.

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SO CLYDE WAS BORN

(Continued from page 33)

that night and asked her to walk up Tower Hill, behind the stores, with him. It was a place where lovers went; there were ledges to sit on, and groves of little firs in which to hide. Fanny, suddenly cool and quiet, was not sure she wished to go; then, relenting, she went along, holding aloof from him, saying nothing.

Up on the Hill, looking down on the lights of the village at their feet, he tried to kiss Fanny, and she struck him.

"Don't you dare!" she cried. "You've done enough. You've—you've spoiled my life; that's what you've done, Douglas Paul—or whatever your name is! Go away. Go right down off the Hill. I wish I wouldn't ever see you again as long as I live. I wish you'd go back to your—your wife and children, where you belong!"

Being Douglas Paul, he went away.

Outside his shop he walked up and down, then pushed open the door into the grocery, seeing Min's light was on. She looked up from her sewing.

"Well, Mr. Paul! Who'd have thought to see you this time of night? What is it—you hungry?"

He had only thrust his head in, and was not listening.

"Say, you'd better go up on the Hill," he told her. "I left Fanny Bridges up there. Over at this end where the ledge juts out. I don't know but she's sick. She was talking strange."

Min sat and looked at him. So he was taking Fanny Bridges on the Hill. It was a place where Min had never been after dark. The Hill was for lovers.

"You'd better go along," he urged her.

The new little story had not escaped Min. Slowly she rose, folding her sewing.

"You'd better come in and shut the door," she said. "It's getting pretty cold lately. What was this strange talk Fan Bridges had over?"

"Something or other," Douglas Paul said in bewilderment. "I don't know exactly. Sounded like she thought I had a wife and children."

"Yes," Min answered bitterly. "That's what everybody thinks. There's some gossip going around the church to that effect. Is it true? Have you got a wife and five young ones out in Illinois?"

DOUGLAS PAUL stared at her.

"God help me," he said, "no—I never was married."

"No; well, I didn't suppose so," Min told him. "But some of them that looked to be such fine friends to you started the yarn; and now every man jack of the rest is going to believe it. That don't surprise you, does it? You didn't suppose them little young girls like Fanny Bridges cared anything about you but what they could get out of you, did you?"

There was a silence, and then Douglas Paul said: "You'd better go up. She hadn't ought to be alone up there."

"Oh, I'll go," Min answered darkly. "I'll go up, all right. And I'll tell her what I think of her goings-on. But it won't do any good. Only thing, if it will open your eyes to what she is—"

She shrugged into a big double-breasted coat and went out into the dark, her step heavy like a man's, crunching the frozen grass. Through the field and up the hill her feet found their way surely, for she had traveled this steep path to school, as a child, and gone sliding here on Saturdays. But she had never been here at night before, and even now she came alone. The little fir trees pointed their green fingers. Here was a woman who had no lover. . . .

Fanny Bridges sat up from lying flat on the moonlit ledge. Her face was silvered, her body a child's body, round and soft under her leather jacket and plaid skirt. She was frightened. Min could hear her choked breath. She tried to crawl away among the junipers. Min tramped on doggedly into the light.

"Oh—oh, it's Min Dailey!"

Fanny scarcely sounded reassured.

"Yes," Min said, looming grim above her, "it's Min Dailey. Douglas Paul sent me up here to see after you. What's the matter with you, anyway? What've you been saying to him? Can't you treat a decent man decent? What's the reason men can't take to any woman except the kind that's willing to knife them in the back? A tormented wretch like Dorris Evanston wouldn't flick an eyelash about making up a lie, to serve her purposes; and you'd as quick believe it as not. That's *the kind you are.*"

Fanny sat quivering. This was a new Min Dailey. This was a sudden straw to which to cling. In a swift movement she was on her feet, standing wind-whipped and white with cold and moonlight.

"You don't believe it, then?" she asked.

It was not a voice to be expected of Fanny or of any girl.

"It's all I need," came from Fanny's mouth. "I'm not that kind, Min Dailey. It's just—I'm not so old as you are. I haven't—been—been through what you have."

The words fathered the realization of what she meant. Something in her met the soul of Min, and saw how bruised it was. She was no longer one of the Deepside young. Min's eyes fell. It was the first time understanding had ever come to her, and she found it almost too much to bear.

"But I've been through enough. All day, and here tonight," the voice was going on. "I *didn't* believe it. You can say it till you die, but it'll never be true, Min Dailey. I did *not* believe it. Only, everybody else did. Everybody I knew. Mother does. I don't know how I'll dare go home tonight, after coming out with him. . . . You know how it will be. I can't stand by him, now, and stay at home. We couldn't live here. It wouldn't ever be right for us. We're *marked.* . . . But I *will* stand by him if you'll say you don't believe it, either. That's all I need. That's how much I care about him."

She pulled out a blue ribbon from under her dress.

"He gave me this little ring on here," she said. "He gave it to me the day we went into the country. That was a lovely day. . . . I'd been wondering if I should wear it; and tonight I meant to give it back to him. I thought I had to. . . . But if you'll swear you don't believe it about him, I'll put the ring on my finger before I go back down the Hill!"

They stood there together in the wind and moonlight, and it was Min's hour. It did not seem long to Fanny, only a few breaths, a minute's hesitation; but for Min it was the time of being shut away interminably from everything and everyone but herself, of fighting and rending and casting out all that had troubled her so long, .of coming back from a great distance, quietly, sweetly, peacefully, and finding to her surprise that she had brought something new and beautiful with her.

She said, with difficulty: "I swear it with a will. Douglas Paul himself told me it was a lie. I guess that's proof enough. Put your ring on your finger. You've got you a good man."

YES, Fanny had him. He was gone from Min, for good and all. But it did not matter, for who was Douglas Paul? Only the radio repair man, forty and gaunt, who had sat beside her stove in the evenings.

"I'll tell you, Fanny," she said. Her words were coming surely now, exultant and strong, but quiet. She drew strength and calm from this new thing which lay beside her. "I'll tell you something you ought to know: I wasn't always the kind of woman I've been lately. Once before I was twenty I spent a summer with my aunt out in Montana. And out there I got engaged to a man. . . . He was twenty-two—twenty-two and a half. Tall and square-shouldered and a nice one to look at.

"I might have married him. Clyde, his name was—Clyde Harrison. Minnie Harrison, my name might have been. We used to ride and talk together just like you and Douglas Paul. We had great times. . . . I can see him now, the way he wore his collars turned in.

"But they had a story going about him, too. I don't doubt it started from some jealous one, just like Dorris Evanston. There always is that kind. And they made me believe it, so I give him up. I come home without marrying him—and that winter out there he died.

"That's what happened to me. And I guess you don't want to be another Min Dailey, do you? . . . We had the house in mind we meant to buy. Why, I've got that green chest down at the store full of stuff I was making to keep house with. . . . I had my ring on a ribbon around my neck, too, but I took it off and give it back to him—so all I've got left is the ribbon.

"So you see what happened to me. I guess it'll make you have a little more courage. That's foolish, thinking you can't stay in Deepside with him if you want to. You can stare 'em all down, so in six months they won't even remember it. You'll make out—"

Her words wandered now, her mind remaining with difficulty on Fanny. She did not hear what Fanny said, nor see her motion clearly when she snatched out her ring and put it on her finger. When Fanny went running ahead down the hill to Douglas Paul, Min lingered. This was

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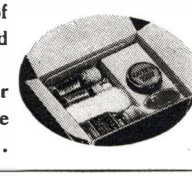

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what she wanted, for Fanny to go, and the wind to die down, and the moon to drop behind the trees; she wanted to be alone in her incredible peace with this small, beautiful thing she had created—this Clyde Harrison that never was, but always would be twenty-two and a half, tall and broad and good to see, with the collar of his shirt turned in. Sitting on the ledge in the cold, Min reached down absently, fingering the creased blue ribbon Fanny had left on a bush, and finally tying it about her own brown neck.

THE next spring Fanny Bridges was married to Douglas Paul, and they went to Illinois on their wedding-trip to visit his relatives. Nobody believed the foolish story any longer; Dorris Evanston had a new man now, a Government surveyor who wore a uniform.

The only change was in Min. Here nothing was as it had been. Already she was ceasing to be a village character, for she had become very quiet, pleasant and proud, safe and cheerful and gentle like a widow who has been left an ample legacy of love and worldly goods, so that she need ask nothing of anyone as long as she lives. Gradually the character of her church work changed. She waited on tables oftener than she washed dishes; and she was welcome to sew with the best of women; it was said that the chest of linens she gave Fanny Bridges for a wedding-gift had the finest stitches ever set in Deepside. . . .

Last summer I found Min getting old, a tall, very neat woman with white hair and a pleasant mouth, always wearing plain dark blue or black, with a little white about her neck. "To lie against the ribbon," I thought. Or didn't she take the blue ribbon? But Fanny and Douglas had never found it, though they went back to look. Old Albert is dead, and Min's grocery-store is modern and spotless, with glass cases for all her wares. Deepside boys call her Miss Dailey; and when they go in she says, friendly but reserved: "What can I do for you?" She no longer talks of living in a house by the side of the road. She lives at home up a little lane; roses climb over her gate; her lamp is lighted, but her shades are properly drawn.

I think very well of God.

SMALL BLONDE

(Continued from page 45)

baskets of fruit—and she was furious at herself for crying.

They didn't lunch that day. He telephoned in the afternoon and said he was tied up, but that he'd be around after supper and might have something pretty important to tell her, so she'd better be in. Linnet found the day singularly dull and uninviting. That also made her furious with herself, so much so that she stopped in at the old theater during the matinée to chat with the girls and make faces at the manager if she could arrange to bump into him. She knew so well why the day seemed dull and empty—and pretended she didn't.

THINGS happened at the theater that afternoon. She did not enjoy her chat with the girls. Linnet had known all about show business for years—enough about it to keep her skirts out of its mud. The girls had hinted things, given her subtle congratulations—elected her, tacitly, to the gold-miners' union to which so many of them belonged. It had turned the warmth in her heart to a flame of rage. . . .

She waited restlessly for Roger Covert. Took a deep breath as she heard him clump up the stairs and knock on the door, stepped forward to open it—and then stood very straight and still with her eyes half closed in anger.

He poured himself into the room. There was a great bunch of roses in his arms. He thrust them at her excitedly.

"Linnet!"

The fact that he didn't even realize she was glaring at him doubled the candlepower of her glare. He held out his long arms.

"Linnet! I've arranged everything! You're all fixed!" He took a step toward her, laughed happily, put his arms around her before she realized what he was doing, and lifted her into the air. "Oh, Linnet, you've simply got to marry me now! By golly, you just can't do without me. Whoops!"

Then she bit him—on the neck. He put her down, stepped back and swung one of his hands up to the wound. She drew herself to her full five feet and glared so hard that her other glares seemed like love-light in comparison.

"You're a rotter! Yes, you're sly, and you're a rotter. You bought the show so I'd get my job back! I know; the girls told me! And you thought you could buy me too! You and your rotten money and your rotten boxes of bacon and—and— Nobody can buy me, see? *Get out!*"

Because she was very near the breaking-point, and because Roger simply stood staring at her with wide hurt eyes looking like a St. Bernard that's had its coat clipped in winter, she got out herself—stormed down the stairs and disappeared into the darkness of the street. For a long time after she left, he stood staring at the door. Presently he sighed and sank into the chintz armchair. . . .

Linnet Pellington turned off Broadway into Forty-seventh Street with a great whirling of skirts. For all her blondeness and her beauty and her littleness, she was so mad she could scarcely see. She was mad at Roger Covert, the way women can be mad only at people they love. It makes the madness so much worse when you're mad at somebody you're fond of.

She pushed the bell at Martinelli's as though she were mad even at it. She was mad at everything. When Martinelli opened the door, she lit into him too.

"Nice kind of people you have coming here! That Covert guy thought he could buy me. What do you know about that?"

Martinelli looked surprised.

"He told me I'd have to marry him because I couldn't get along without him, by golly! He bought 'Girls and Music' so I could have my job back! Him and his money! Yah!"

Martinelli looked down at her. There was an odd expression of amusement around his mouth, but his eyes were serious.

"No," he said, "Roger Covert didn't buy 'Girls and Music.'" He laughed. "No, Roger didn't buy it. Another guy bought it—for the girl that was fired the same time you were."

Linnet's anger gave place to surprise. It left her so quickly that she felt suddenly all empty inside. There was nothing now to take the place of this great rage that had filled her small being.

"And lay off that being-sore stuff," said Martinelli. "There're a couple of guys in back you're supposed to meet. I don't think they'd go for it."

Linnet, bewildered, let him lead her to the kitchen café. There were just two men there, and the cook. Once more it was the doldrums hour at Martinelli's. She looked at the men, and thought she recognized their faces. Then Martinelli was introducing her.

"Miss Pellington, Mr. Doss and Mr. Hartzhorn—of Sapphire Pictures."

"Oh."

She sat down. The two men looked at her, mentally undressed her, mentally dressed her in a variety of costumes, mentally saw her making love, dancing, singing, crying, laughing, and mentally saw Sapphire Pictures making quite a little money out of her. Then they looked at one another, and Hartzhorn, the older of the two, nodded.

"Oke," he said to Doss. "We'll sign her for three months and see what comes, yes?"

"Yes," said Doss—which was his business.

Hartzhorn waved a small sheaf of newspaper clippings, and smiled in what he felt was a gallant way.

"MISS PELLINGTON," he said, "now that I've seen you, I don't blame that newspaper guy, even if he did lose his job for it."

"Who?" said Linnet. "For what?"

"Roger Covert," said Hartzhorn, "for this."

He handed her the clippings. There were seven of them. They represented the week's output of "Star Gazer," the photoplay critic of the *Daily Express*. They were devoted almost exclusively to one Linnet Pellington—"The Mystery Girl." One gathered from these articles that she wasn't really Linnet Pellington at all, but was the daughter of at least three or four of New York's richest men. Star Gazer didn't tell you this. He let you guess it. He did tell you, and at considerable length, a decidedly zippy story about the events leading up to her throwing her father's money and her mother's social supremacy in their faces, and striking out for herself under an assumed name. One felt that this girl was fine and clean and fighting to keep herself from being smirched by the decadence that is society.

Then, after working up this rousing interest in her personality, Star Gazer went on to tell of the really remarkable success she was making of her stage ca-

"Doctor, how do Skin Faults first Begin?"

AN INTELLIGENT QUESTION AUTHORITATIVELY ANSWERED—

1 What causes Lines?

Lines result when the *under* tissues grow thin and wasted, and the outer skin does not change correspondingly. It falls into tiny creases—the lines you see. To help this, nutrition of the under tissues must be stimulated.

2 Are Blackheads just Dirt?

Blackheads are due to clogged pores. Most often, this clogging comes from *within the skin.* Overactive glands give off a thickish substance that clogs the pores. The tip dries. Darkens. Collects dirt. Proper cleansing will remove the blackhead. Rousing treatment of the under tissues will prevent further clogging.

3 What makes Blemishes come?

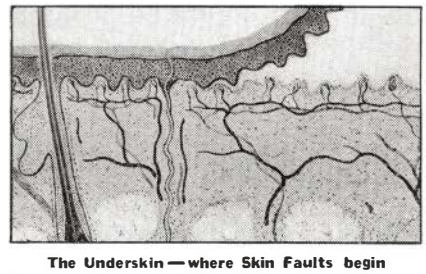
"Blemishes" are the final stage of blackheads. They form when the clogging accumulation in the pores presses on the surrounding *under* tissues and causes inflammation. They are avoided by removing the blackheads that cause them. When blemishes are many and persistent, a physician should be consulted.

4 Can Coarse Pores be reduced?

Pores are naturally smaller in some skins than in others. They become enlarged through being clogged and stretched by secretions from *within the skin.* They can be reduced by removing the clogging matter and keeping the skin free from further clogging.

5 When do Tissues start to Sag?

Sagging is rarely noticeable before 30 to 35. Then the rounded contour is lost—notably in neck, chin and cheek line, and under the eyes. Here the skin sags, due to loss of tone in the fibres *underneath* the skin, to fatty degeneration of the muscles, diminished circulation, failing nutrition of the underskin. To avoid sagging, keep the under tissues toned.



The Underskin—where Skin Faults begin

If you could see through the epidermis into your underskin, you would discover an amazing network of tiny blood vessels, cells, nerves, fat and muscle tissues, oil and sweat glands! On these depends the beauty of your outer skin. When they grow sluggish, look out for blackheads, coarseness, blemishes, lines—wrinkles!

Mrs. Richard Gedney says: "Pond's Cold Cream leaves my skin fresh, smooth. I am never bothered with blackheads or blemishes."

MRS. GEORGE BOLLING LEE of VIRGINIA

beautiful and distinguished wife of the grandson of the illustrious General Robert E. Lee, says: "Pond's Cold Cream completely erases lines, keeps my contour firm. I use it every night. It seems to lift dust and grime right out of my pores."

Keep *Under Skin* Active

to keep Skin faults away

YOU SEE, from the authoritative answers given above, skin faults practically all begin in your *underskin.*

No matter what the fault, its important needs are keeping the *under* tissues vigorous and the skin *clean.*

Through these two means, Pond's Cold Cream has cherished the beauty of the most fastidious women in the world. For Pond's actually softens lines. Wards off blemishes, blackheads. Makes coarse pores less conspicuous. Firms aging tissues. Softens drying skin. It does these things by means of its deep-skin cleansing and its invigorating effect on the *under* layers of the skin.

EVERY NIGHT, cleanse deep with Pond's Cold Cream. Its specially processed light oils sink deep, flush away every particle of dust, make-up, skin impurities. Cleanse a second time, patting the cream in briskly to rouse the circulation, stimulate the oil glands, invigorate the newly cleansed tissues.

IN THE MORNING—during the daytime, freshen with Pond's. You will be rewarded with the satiny texture that holds make-up evenly—the radiance of a skin kept clean and invigorated to its depths!

Try this a few days. The coupon, with 10¢, brings you enough for 9 treatments. Pond's Cold Cream is pure, germ-free.

Mail this Coupon **— for Generous Package**

POND'S, Dept. G108, Clinton, Conn.

I enclose 10¢ (to cover postage and packing) for special tube of Pond's Cold Cream, enough for 9 treatments, with generous samples of 2 other Pond's Creams and 5 different shades of Pond's Face Powder.

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reer, and stated flatly that one of the great picture companies, who knew who she really was, was secretly trying to sign her up before the others found her. The last three articles ran full-length pictures of her, captioned respectively. "Is Linnet Pellington the Vanderbilt heiress?" "Is Linnet Pellington the débutante niece of the Rockefellers?" "Is Linnet Pellington Joan Astor?"

As Linnet read, the type blurred before her eyes. She knew enough to realize that in these days it is easier to lay down your life for a girl than to sacrifice your job for her. Roger Covert had done this—for her. . . . When she looked up, Martinelli had joined them.

"Has he really lost his job, Marty—because of this?"

Doss answered.

"Sure," he said. "No newspaper'll stand for one of its staff plugging a girl to that extent. He lost it today. It's tough, these times."

Linnet stiffened. Certain things didn't quite gee. She looked at Martinelli.

"But all that stuff he sent me—boxes of all kinds of things, and baskets of fruit and flowers and things. It isn't tough for him; he's got money."

Martinelli smiled and shook his head.

"No," he said. "He's got nerve. He told me himself, he used to go down and pretend to be seeing somebody off to Europe, and swipe the stuff out of staterooms." He laughed again. "He said he had the hell of a time finding anything that would really be nourishing."

"Oh," said Linnet. She felt suddenly even smaller than she was. "Where—where is he, Marty? I've got to find him."

"So do I," said Hartzhorn. "I have an idea that guy could run our publicity department."

"Yes," said Doss.

Hartzhorn grinned. "Maybe you two like to come out to the Coast together, yes?"

He looked very sexy when he said this; yet Linnet, knowing how he meant it, could have kissed him. . . .

But it was a long time before Linnet found Roger Covert. She and Martinelli searched the town but located not even a trace of him until, wearily and more lonely than she'd ever believed she could be, Linnet climbed the shabby stair and opened the door of her room, and saw a chair pulled up by the foot of the couch.

"Oh, I love you so!" she said.

The feet that were occupying the chair wiggled appreciatively in their sleep.

GUILTY

(Continued from page 49)

my hat. At last, at last! Some clock struck five.

What a distinguished neighborhood my father lived in! And I? The devil take it! In my entire life I had only twice been able to buy books and music. (Good heavens! I still owed the lending library money.) And I had never had a really square meal, either. Even as a child, at the military school, I arose hungry from the table at Sunday dinner at home. How I wanted to ask for another helping! Perhaps my mother would not have refused me, but I was too shy, too cravenly shy.

For half an hour I walked up and down in front of the house, which was one of the finest in the entire embassy quarter. Then I went to the porter's lodge.

"Is madam at home?"

THE man in fashionable livery, with side whiskers, slowly placed his spectacles on his newspaper, and replied with dignity:

"Her Excellency went away this morning."

"Is my father also not at home?"

The old lackey at first looked puzzled; then he quickly jumped up, smiled deferentially, and stammered:

"I beg your pardon, sir. I didn't quite recognize you at first. I hope you will excuse me, sir. His Excellency has gone out driving, and will not be back until this evening sometime. Of course, sir. Please, step this way."

I walked up the wide steps.

The General's orderly opened the door.

"I want to wait for my father. Show me inside."

With a look of blank astonishment, he left me alone in a large room. In the middle stood a billiard-table, covered with a green linen cloth. By the window was a baby grand piano. Beside the piano in a stand were piles of piano selections from operettas and the music of current hits. My stepmother's! I felt a grimace on my face.

The next room, of which the door was open, was a small smoking-room. From there an entrance with curtains on each side led into my father's bedroom, which was already prepared for the night. I noticed that the sheets of the bed were turned down, so clearly could this room be seen from the billiard-room.

I waited for quite a while; then I shouted to the servant:

"Listen. I can't wait any longer. Tell him I called, and that I shall return tomorrow."

I walked into the anteroom. The orderly followed me. How, I wondered, could I get rid of him? Then it occurred to me to tie my shoelaces tighter. While doing this, I said over my shoulder:

"You can go on with what you were doing."

He disappeared.

I at once tiptoed into the billiard-room, where I looked around for a hiding-place. I felt along the wall for a concealed door or closet; and as I did so, I somehow struck against a whatnot with my outstretched hand. The nail came loose, and with a terrific crash the whole thing and everything on it fell to the ground.

I listened tensely. One second, two seconds. One minute, two, five minutes. . . . Nothing stirred. Nobody had heard the noise. I realized at once that the kitchen and servants' quarters must be far away, perhaps on another floor.

I began to put the whatnot out of the way to one side, and to put back the things on it. Two billiard-balls had rolled under the furniture; but the third, the red one, I was holding in my hand, shuddering curiously. I could not then understand why. Now I know. There were also framed and unframed photographs lying on the floor, a lot of unknown people on parade, in full dress clothes and evening clothes, challenging faces, that looked at me in contempt.

But there was one photograph: a cadet of not more than thirteen years, leaning his right hand on a balustrade, as if commanded to do so, and raising his terrified face sideways. I received a mystical shock. Was that boy still alive? Would he never die, be buried and forgotten? Why could I not get that child corpse out of my blood? I tore up the photograph, my heart almost breaking. This man, my father, could not refrain from setting up this trophy of victory in his own room.

Good heavens! There was something else! It was one of the dumb-bells with which I had to exercise in those days during the holidays. How heavy it was! I remembered hundreds of hours' exercise, and pressed the cold metal to my breast, a witness of the fear and anxiety which had never left me. To think that I should find it here after all these years! This was no mere accident.

"It remained hidden all this time. But now, in this hour, the old dumb-bell comes to meet me, seeks me out, and tempts me, whispers that thought to me, that I must say no, warns me—and I understand only too well."

For a moment I hesitated. Should I misunderstand it? Is this piece of iron, by any chance, pleading for my father, who had dragged it around with him for years, who has not stowed it away in the lumber-room, nor thrown it on the rubbish heap, where it might be removed to a smelting oven and turned into another form? Is this dumb-bell grateful to my father for his protection?

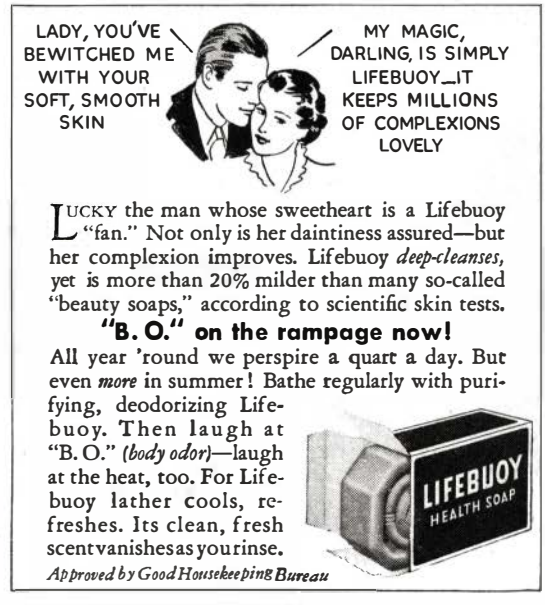
Why, then, did he keep it, and after so many wanderings, bring it here and give it house room in this official residence? Why? It could not be ordinary carelessness. Never! Not one dull spot on a brass button escapes his eye. Was it tenderness, an unconscious memory of the little boy who was once his son? I held the iron end of the dumb-bell to my ear, but it remained silent. The answer was sufficient for me, however; I understood it.

It had to be. I tested the firmness of the two ends, to see if they were strongly attached to the handle. It was as firm as if cast in one piece. I put it in my pocket.

MEANWHILE it had grown dark. The street lamps were lighting up. The windows threw squares of light on the floor and the furniture. I decided to creep under the billiard-table, where I was better hidden. With my penknife I cut a hole in the linen cover, like the peep-hole in a theater curtain. Now I could plainly see what was happening in this room and the next.

Why, I do not know, but all of a sudden I had a mad desire to give myself away, to play the piano loudly, and so divinely that the immense harmonies would destroy all that was ugly. Only

MEN LIKE TO GOSSIP, TOO



JOE WHISKERS GETS THE "LOW-DOWN" ON SHAVING

with difficulty could I keep still. There were huge drops of cold sweat on my forehead, I was making such an effort to overcome this desire.

Now I noticed for the first time the regular *tick-tock* of a large clock in the room.

I clasped my fingers around the dumb-bell. The clock struck eight. . . .

It struck half past eight, then nine. The hum of the city outside grew softer. What was I actually doing here? I did not know. I did not know anything.

THEN away in the distance I heard a key rattling. I buried my face in my hands. That is the way it used to be, long ago! When I was six years old and even younger. The key rattled exactly like that. I could hear it deep in my dreams. Then footsteps resounded, coming nearer and nearer, and I nearly fainted from fear; I could feel a soft light under my closed eyes, and then some one bent over me—long ago!

But now, my cheek burned like fire. "Like fire!" I uttered the words aloud, as if I still hoped to betray myself. I could hear steps and voices in the anteroom. Two people were talking. One was giving orders, the other repeating them. The door opened, and my father entered, followed by his orderly.

"So he was here?"

"Beg your pardon?"

"I say: was my son here?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"How did he look?"

"Well, he—I'm very sorry, Your Excellency, but I don't know."

"Look at people more carefully the next time."

"Very good, Your Excellency."

"Did you prepare my lozenges?"

"They're on the night-table, Your Excellency."

"And the hot-water bottle?"

"I'll bring it at once, Your Excellency."

"When was he here?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"When was Carl—when was my son here, I said."

"Oh, about half-past five; and he left about a quarter to seven."

"Did he leave any message?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. The gentleman said he'd call again tomorrow."

"The gentleman? The gentleman? What gentleman? You mean Lieutenant Duschek."

"Your Excellency, I beg to report that the Lieutenant was not in uniform."

"What! Not in uniform? In civilian clothes during an inquiry? Preposterous!"

Clanking his spurs, the General walked up and down. The words "lozenges" and "hot-water bottle" almost moved me. But that "Preposterous!" in his revoltingly insolent tone, made me furious. Then the servant came with the hot-water bottle. The General coughed.

"Didn't Lieutenant Duschek look rather—rather ill?"

"Yes indeed, Your Excellency. He was slightly wounded."

"Where did he wait?"

"In this room."

"Is that so?"

The General paused, rattled his spurs noisily, and then said, as if concluding a frequently discussed matter:

"Tell Lieutenant Duschek tomorrow that I do not receive here officially, that I do not receive here at all. Do you understand?"

"Very good, Your Excellency."

This last sentence made me beside myself with rage. He had hit me and flogged me, and here he was, still playing the comedy of His Majesty's Army.

I held the dumb-bell more firmly. I had only one thought: "It is destiny." The skin on my cheek became more burning and tense with excitement. I felt that in my excitement the broken tissue of my wound had opened, and the warm blood was slowly trickling down my cheek. I now felt the moment was not only right but welcome.

Meanwhile my father had gone into his bedroom. His orderly helped him to undress. I turned away, a sense of shame preventing me from looking in that direction. I heard distinctly the groaning, moaning and yawning of a man who is in far from good health. Finally his man left.

The General turned out the lights in all rooms with one movement, the switch being just above his bed. Now all was quiet. A restless body tossed to and fro. My forehead was moist. I could still feel the blood trickling down my cheek. My hands were wet by it. I waited for the clock to strike the next time. . . . Ten! At the last stroke, I crawled out of my hiding-place. I was uncertain what would happen. My thoughts were dominated by a stupidly repeated sentence: "Make a clean cut of it!"

In my right hand the dumb-bell was firmly clasped. I counted three, prepared at the last count to give the signal for the downfall of the world.

One—two—three!

I pulled myself together, tiptoed to the curtained bedroom door, and stood so that I could not be seen. I stayed thus for a long time. Then I raised the dumb-bell and hit it noisily against the hollow-sounding door-posts.

I heard some one sit up in bed, and a hoarse, sleepy voice said:

"Who is that?"

I did not answer. Then everything in the room was quiet. But I felt that he was sitting up in bed, holding his breath and listening. For the second time I hit three fearful blows on the door-posts. The man inside jumped out of bed. His breathing was rapid and painful. A hand fumbled around in search of the switch. Then I knocked for the third time, with a wide sweep of the arm, and cried: "Father!"

Madly he turned on the light in all the rooms. And then I raised the dumb-bell. . . . But some one came toward me. Who was it? With his feet in flapping slippers, wearing a long gray night-gown, its cord untied at the waist, his white hair tousled, his mustache drooping, undyed, gray, with patches under his deathly frightened eyes, the prominent cheek-bones of a corpse, blue lips, which could not be concealed by the ugly glitter of his gold teeth—this old man who tottered through the door was my father.

"You?" said a voice like a death-rattle.

"I," replied another voice in broken tones.

Slowly the blood ran down my cheek, my collar, my suit, and fell in thick drops on the floor. With the dumb-bell still raised in my hand, I walked toward the billiard-room and ordered the old man to follow me.

Where was the General, the saber-rattling lord of battle and master of the world? An old man in a night-gown, his stunned gaze centered upon the weapon in my hand, looking occasionally at the blood on my face, silently obeyed and stood trembling, some distance away. I stamped my foot:

"Come here!"

My father's body was visibly shaking as with fever. He looked like some one fighting against a wild nightmare. He bowed his head and tried to say something; but not a word, not a sound could be heard. A heavenly joy filled my whole being. Ah, how, how I longed for the great cue, the key word! I raised my cramped hand with the dumb-bell higher and higher. With bulging eyes my father watched me, but still he did not utter a word.

My hypnotic power was so strong that he never took his eyes off me, nor ran to the door, which he could easily have done. I swung my arm far back—and then something insane occurred. A rhythm seized my legs which I could not control. Imperiously I held out my other hand. My father bowed still lower, protected the back of his head with both hands, and I followed him around and around the billiard-table, with that stamping tread.

HE marched panting before me, and I kept time to this uncanny triumphal march, never overstepping or diminishing the distance between, as I marched behind him, my armed hand raised, my head thrown back in unconscious enthusiasm. His breathing grew more and more asthmatic. His unfastened night-gown, with its wide sleeves, slipped farther and farther off his shoulders, until it fell off him completely.

Now he was no longer an officer. A naked old man, with a deeply wrinkled back, was swaying feebly before me.

"The truth," I thought, "the truth!" I stamped on, enjoying the triumphant secret of the incomprehensible rhythm. How long this march lasted, this deliberate chase around the table, I shall never know. First he lost one slipper, then the other. Finally, he was stumbling in front of me, stark naked.

I did not hold myself back. I knew that the black magic at work in me must not lose its power. Suddenly the naked old man stood still, turned to me, and fell panting on his knee. In his upraised hands I could read the prayer: "Be quick about it!"

The man who was kneeling before me was not fifty-nine years old; he was eighty. Again I had a feeling of insane triumph. But now I thought: "I didn't want this. I never wanted my father to kneel to me. He mustn't do that. Nobody should. Is that Papa? I don't know. But I will not kill this sick man, because I am not certain."

Pain and pity!

My father was still kneeling before me. But what is this? All over the floor, blood in large pools! What have I done? Is that his blood? Have I shed blood? Oh, God! What is that? No, no! Thank God, I am no murderer. It is *my* blood,

spilled by him. *My* blood? It is mysterious; his blood and mine, mingled here on the ground.

I lifted the General up and threw his night-gown around his shoulders.

"Go to sleep."

That was the last word spoken between us, this night.

Later, out in the street, I hurled the dumb-bell, and with it the sickness of youth, far from me.

Chapter Twelve

WHAT happened from day to day and year to year since that abysmal hour, to describe all further details, is abhorrent to me.

However—I was found guilty on all three charges and was condemned, according to military law, to nine months' imprisonment in a fortress, chiefly because of actual physical violence against a superior officer. During my imprisonment and afterward, I never again saw my father.

Later on in New York, at the beginning of the world war, I often read his name in the newspapers, but it gradually disappeared from the reports. Having been immediately promoted to be an infantry general, he was probably one of the first generals to be retired, whether guilty or innocent, although they were mostly guilty. Whether he is still alive, and where, and in what circumstances, after the power and influence of his social class were destroyed, I have no idea. I am through with him and with my former country, though I was born on the old so-called "military frontier." To both I say: *"Ave atque vale!"*

While in prison I earned some money by copying music, collating manuscripts, and correcting proofs. After my release, my savings were somewhat more than the price of a third-class ticket and the legally prescribed sum of money which must be produced in order to land in America.

When I left the offices of the military court, and had my savings and my last soldier's pay in my pocket, I was free for the first time in my life. I immediately sold my entire military wardrobe, procured civilian clothes and other necessities, took an express ticket for Hamburg, which was good for three days, and one lovely July morning left the capital. After a journey of a few hours, the train entered the station of that large provincial town where I had spent my childhood. I seized my valise and got out.

It was noon. The sun was streaming over streets still moist with rain. Everything seemed alien and dead, so far as I was concerned. The air was oppressive, and the people's faces were strained. At first I was bored; then I had an inexplicable sense of discomfort. I became nervous and began to regret that I had interrupted my journey. I was faced by the dreariness of an endless afternoon.

Then my eye was caught by an advertisement on a billboard: "Island Pleasure Grounds—Moving Pictures—Scenic Railway—Roller Coaster—Military Bands—Restaurant: Excellent Hot and Cold Cuisine."

I knew the place. I must have been there once. I had chosen the right program for this afternoon.

I went through a lofty towerlike structure bedecked with many flags. I was greeted by a chaotic roar of electric organ music—and all of a sudden I had a vivid picture of that thirteenth birthday of mine. But in the course of years everything had become mean and threadbare. The merry-go-rounds went more slowly; their color had somewhat lost its magic; the overhead draperies were faded and tattered, as they fluttered when the machinery turned.

As it was a week-day, there were few visitors in the streets where the booths were. Indolently, silently, smoking their pipes, and shouting only once in a while, the proprietors and barkers were standing alone or in small groups.

I went up to one of the loafing booth-owners:

"Could you tell me where the booth is, in which there are automatic figures, whose hats you knock off?"

"Of course, you mean old Kalender's booth?"

"I don't know the man's name."

"Well, old Kalender was murdered early yesterday morning."

"Kalender?"

"Why, yes! The whole town is talking about it. The old man was bumped off by his rascal of a son—by August, the ruffian!"

"I have only just arrived here."

"Haven't you read the paper?" he asked. "Today's *Morning Post?*"

"No."

"Wait a moment."

He went into the booth and returned.

"Here you are. Here is the *Morning Post.* This is the article—no, not that one: this one here, to the right, at the bottom of the page. What? Of course, you can keep the paper. I don't want it any more. The booth? Look! Do you see that crowd? That's where it is, on your right as you go out."

"Thank you."

I took the paper and read it as I walked along:

FATHER AND SON
MURDER BY A CRIMINAL SON

Crime is alarmingly on the increase. All human relationships are being undermined by the canker of heartless, profiteering cynicism. Family ties are being loosened; brother raises his hand against brother; and a loved and cherished son cold-bloodedly splits open his kindly father's skull with a club—the picture cannot be visualized without a shudder of horror.

The entire community for many miles around knew old man Kalender. He was what might be called a local institution. His booth on the Island is a favorite with young and old. Which of our citizens has not tried, at least once, to knock the hat off one of his grotesque figures with a ball!

It has been shown, and the unhappy mother herself has regretted it, that the old man never scolded his son, but gave everything his son demanded of him, although he often did it with a sigh of misgiving. So great was his love for this son, who was no longer a child, but a grown man of twenty-six!

Nevertheless, twenty-four hours ago, at five in the morning, the son lured his father out to the booth, on some pretext or other, got him into conversation, and killed him with a club right in front of the grotesque puppets. The motive is so far a puzzle, and it remains to be seen whether human justice is capable of solving it. Often as the son had robbed and cheated his father in the course of years, this time he took nothing. Kalender's well-filled wallet had not been touched. It is certain that this is not a case of deliberate murder with robbery.

At the time of the murder everyone in the amusement park was asleep. The murderer dragged the body in cold blood to a disused building yard, where there were piles of rotten boards and building materials stowed away. The son threw his murdered father, as far as can be ascertained, into an old lime-pit, piled firewood, a sack, and other rubbish over him, dragged up a heap of long boards and piled them high over the pit, so that it looked as if they had been there for ages. It was by pure chance that a ragpicker, several hours later, discovered blood-stains on the boards and notified the police.

Was robbery the motive? No! Was it revenge? No. The mother swears that there had never been a quarrel between father and son, that the father had always been indulgent; in fact, he was a little afraid of his son.

But what does the murderer say? Nothing! He is silent. He does not care! Here we are in the presence of the Sphinx, of unfathomable mystery.

I COULD read no more. The article filled many columns of the newspaper. The print swam before my eyes. . . .

Doctors declare that the human body contains two nervous systems, the active and the passive. But I maintain—and the medical men may laugh at me—that there is a third nervous system, a third, unexplored nervous system, which I must, with all due modesty, call the magic nerve.

All of us in our youth have eagerly read ghost-stories. When the ghost or some other grisly apparition, appeared in the story, the hero always felt "a cold shudder running down his back," and we always experienced that feeling. "Cold shudder" is not a bad description of the vibrations of the third nervous system. "Back," certainly, is inaccurate. The keyboard on which these shudders play lies outside our material being, and is situated in that subtle unexplored substance which surrounds us and streams back to us, in that substance for which "aura" is the commonest name, and which, in fact, finds its maximum density in our backs.

When the hand of the invisible powers presses this third nervous system, faculties, conditions and potentialities are aroused in us which, once they retreat into darkness, leave no traces behind, evade expression, and make a mockery of memory.

People will understand me. I was standing before the booth of the *murdered man,* before the booth where I had shed my father's blood, many years ago. At that time, before I succumbed to a severe attack of nervous fever, the yellow, hollow-eyed face of a boy had bent over me. How attentive, how strangely interested that staring face was, that last picture before the sleep of sickness overcame me! And he was the same age as I! In the presence of the judge he was silent. He could not describe his motive. But has he not fulfilled that which he saw in me on that day long ago? Perhaps the ball merely left my trembling hand too soon. Nevertheless, I had taught the boy that there were other objectives, besides the hats of helpless unfeeling puppets.

THE crowd before the booth was tense with wisdom and excitement. They were talking about the murder, excited and happy because something had happened at last, because there was something which affected their curiosity and self-consciousness like hot whisky. They shouted and cursed August, the murderer of his father Julius.

Behind the counter, where there were pyramids of balls in baskets and bowls, stood an elderly woman, in a cape and hood, with black knitted mittens. In an unmistakably Saxon dialect she invited the chattering crowd:

"Come on, gentlemen! Try your luck. Ten shots for five cents!"

What was that? Behind her, a boy suddenly appeared, a yellowish, weakly youth, with deep-sunk, dark-ringed eyes. Who was it? Then he disappeared in the background—the ever re-born, the eternal boy of thirteen.

At this moment I was seized by the insane rhythm of the character puppets.

A fearful chord was struck on my third nervous system. Swaying up and down, grinning and saluting, there they all were: the mandarin, the Jack Tar, the hangman, the fantastic officer. Mockingly they bobbed up and down on their mythical school benches, hid themselves, like people who do not allow themselves to be caught, who have no intention of surrendering their loot, who are so sure of their immunity that they even taunt the police by bobbing up and down.

On the revolving disk, in their shabby frock coats and top hats with mourning bands, the tottering opium-addicts wandered mournfully past the imaginary door.

Who are you? Who are you all in your undisturbed motion? Are you our neighbors, predecessors or successors? Those millions of unknown people whom we meet in the streets and in drawing-rooms? Are you shattered corpses which, according to an incomprehensible law, must bear for all eternity amongst us the form you once had? Are you still unborn, all of you, shadows whose future existence is projected into the present?

Are you the powers of light and darkness, the countless total of formless beings, of immaterial forms, but active destinies, who hover between the two only real poles of existence, between the Me and the Thee?

Are you the creators of all movements from the beginning? The initiators, indicators and spectators of all murders, wars, sacrifices, heroic deeds, achievements, crimes, love-affairs, walks, celebrations, marriages, excursions, deathbed sighs, earthquakes and mild breezes, the fomenters of great peace and great unrest, whose mysterious looms weave the invisible threads which bind all living things together? Who are you?

The old Saxon woman asked me to try my luck. But I left the Island the same evening and resumed my journey.

From Hamburg I wrote the following letter—and this was my final communication to the Old World:

To His Majesty's Attorney General

"Sir: Although unknown to you, I am writing to you about a matter which is very dear to my heart. If I had to choose a pseudonym, in order to lend any significance to my very ordinary name, I should sign myself, *Parricide.*

"With your humanistic education you will immediately understand what the Romans meant by this word, and you will certainly also remember, furthermore, that Duke Johannes was called the *Parricide,* because he challenged his father, the German Emperor Albrecht, to death, when they were out walking together.

"I mention this merely to show that your city's leading newspaper (the *Morning Post,* founded in 1848, issue of July 4, 1914) is wrong in stating that parricide is a privilege of the lower classes. As facts from time immemorial show, it happens in the best circles. I, for example, who come from a military family, have killed my father twice; and the first time it was really a sanguinary encounter. I mention my own case, sir, in order to give you a profounder insight into a case which you will assuredly have to examine officially. Needless to say, I refer to the cast of August Kalender.

" 'But my dear Mr. Duschek,' I can hear you say, 'how can you expect a lawyer to compare the two cases? In the first place, your father, His Excellency Field Marshal Duschek von Sporentritt, is still alive.'

"Here, my dear sir, I must unfortunately interrupt you, because theoretically it makes no difference whether my father is alive or not.

"I can see your faintly mocking smile, as you say: 'It may be actually a matter of indifference to a philosopher, a theologian or some such theorist; but to a lawyer only the real fact is valid and in evidence. Further, your esteemed father can hardly be compared to old Julius Kalender. Everyone in our city knew that stiff, strict, dashing officer years ago. He was a real son of Mars, a rough warrior, a soldier to the very marrow of his bones, in whom there were no weaknesses and compromises. The son of such a martinet did not lie on a bed of roses. He had to prove something; he received more curses than praise. We lawyers know the human soul and are experienced psychologists. Therefore we are prepared to admit that such—possibly excessive—training might inflict wounds, hurts and scars on a young soul, which might later turn into hate and deeds of violence.

" 'That something of the sort happened to you, and you were punished accordingly, is hereby admitted. You see, we prosecuting attorneys can also speak for the defense. But the mitigating circumstances aforesaid hardly apply to this beast August. Wasn't his father a good fellow, an artistic temperament, so to speak, a good-humored joker, an indulgent father, who never raised the devil, and always paid the debts of his son for women and liquor?'

"Permit me, sir, to make a remark:

"Whether the father was strict or easy-going is, in the last analysis, unimportant. He was *loved* and *hated* because he had

the power of a *father*, not because he was kind or unkind. This profound secret, this slightly evident but far-reaching revelation, came to me in the most difficult hours of my life, in one hour particularly, when much of the nature of this world was revealed to me.

"You may ask: 'If hatred of fathers is a circumstance to which sons are subjected, why do not more sons murder their fathers? Why has the conscience of the world always regarded parricide as the most horrible of murders? I insist upon an answer: why do more sons not murder their fathers?'

"My answer is: they do murder them, in a thousand ways, in their wishes, in their dreams, and even in those moments when they think they are trembling for a father's life.

"You, sir, have had a classical education. Unfortunately, I have not, for my father condemned me to military school, acting to the best of his knowledge. Nevertheless I know the Greek tragedy in which *Œdipus,* unaware that the gray-headed traveler is his father, kills the old man. This tragedy is a veritable fount of human metaphysics, and I have no hesitation in agreeing with Sophocles, that:

"'Every father is *Laius,* the progenitor of *Œdipus;* every father has sent his son out into the desert mountains, out of fear lest the latter deprive him of his authority—that is to say, lest he become *different,* take up a different profession from his father's, lest he refuse to carry on his father's traditions, point of view, intentions and ideas, and actually deny these, overthrow them, and discredit them, substituting his own in their place.'

"Every son, however, like *Œdipus,* kills *Laius,* his father; knowingly or unknowingly, he kills the old stranger who bars his way. So that we may understand each other more clearly, I ask you to consider the relations between the generations as a whole.

"You are enough of a psychologist and professional man to know the distaste and fear with which older officials, soldiers, merchants and artists follow the careers of their younger colleagues. They would like to get rid of the young altogether, or keep them for life as grateful pupils, docile disciples. The motive power of our civilization is violence! And the education of which we talk so proudly is nothing but passionate violence, sharpened by self-hatred, by the recognition of one's own hereditary defects in that likeness of himself which every father punishes in his son, instead of his own person.

"This tragedy of father and son is built, like all other tragedies, on a crime. Would you like to know what the crime is in this universal human tragedy? It is a greedy, unquenchable thirst for authority, the inability to step aside and be resigned.

"How do we know, sir, whether the kindness of the amiable Julius to his depraved August was not one of the thousand forms which the desire for authority can assume? We must admit that we know Kalender and his son very slightly, and know nothing of the nature of their relations. Julius cannot speak, and August refuses to do so. But it remains certain that robbery was not the motive of this parricide.

"One more point! The Kalender case and the Duschek case (you will probably think me insane) may be termed classic for the following reasons:

"The profession into which my father drove me from you was the profession of killing. Fencing, shooting, tactics, artillery instruction—all these things which I was compelled to study during many bitter hours, without being able to overcome my loathing of them, were all comprised in the science of murder.

"What of August Kalender? To what profession did his father condemn him? From his earliest youth, day in and day out, all he saw were those balls as hard as stone, with which human heads were bombarded, to the accompaniment of rough, furious and repulsive cries.

"The school, my dear Attorney General, to which our fathers sent us both was an academy of murder. Who, therefore, is guilty? The Albanians have an old saying that the person murdered, not the murderer, is guilty.

"I do not want to be pardoned. I the murderer, and he the person murdered—both of us are guilty; he a little more so than I. But may there not be 'fellow-criminals,' or rather, 'chief criminals,' bearers of the germs, good and bad, of Fate, who infect us?

"Just consider this: On May 30th of last year, on the very day when I raised my hand against my father for the second time, I had originally had suggested to me nothing less than an attempt on the life of the Czar of Russia. Suggested by whom? By the purest people, the most disinterested fanatics. Yes, by heaven, they were—although there are moments when it seems to me they were creatures of illusions, dream figures. However, that has nothing to do with this case.

"Nevertheless I would suggest, sir, that as judge you should spend a night in Kalender's booth, in the company of his puppets, before you bring your indictment into court. I myself would like to know whether these figures are still during the night, or must they bob up and down to the rhythm of their damnation, even in those empty hours. Do those old piano-players, dancing-masters and undertakers glide through the gray morning twilight? As they patiently expose their heads to the impudent balls, they are probably saying to themselves: 'Oh, you big and little idiots, who think you can hit us, who are *unfortunately invulnerable!* We are merely the mirage between your Me and your Thee. You think you are wounding us, but you are killing each other!' I swear to you that you will understand this letter in the presence of Kalender's puppets.

"I will close this long and unconventional letter cleanly and truthfully. I have said a great deal about the enmity between fathers and sons. But I assure you I have also known the love of a son for his father. Now I know that this love was the strongest impulse of my soul, the all-consuming possession of my life. It kept all other life away from me, and filled the cup of my misfortune to the brim. I know this love. It must be the shyest and most mysterious love in the world, for it is the mystery of unity and of the blood itself.

"In the hope, Mr. Attorney General, that you will not fail to spend a night in Kalender's booth, I remain,

"Your obedient servant,

"Carl Duschek."

I HAVE given an exact copy of my letter to the Attorney General of that city. The next day I embarked at Cuxhaven, and after a ten-day crossing, I had my first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty. Noise and the music of the orchestra greeted us. It was August 1, 1914. Here follow the words of one who has been saved, in the form of an

Epilogue.

I spent my childhood and youth in a world where, I believe, not a soul had the faintest conception of true experience. In a world of active and passive fools, I lost beyond recall the most precious days of my life. Groaning under the pressure of false weights, my soul created false counter-weights.

One thing I have understood. Everything is meaningless, unless it brings new blood, new life, new reality into the world. Only new reality matters. Everything else is the devil's work, especially dreams, those horrible vampires, to which all weaklings and cowards surrender, all who are afraid ever to crawl out of childhood's corner. Many people never do so, many thousands, even millions, prefer to remain hidden in the dark corners of their childhood.

It seems to me, you people over there in Europe, that your world of uniforms, courts, orders, churches, tinsel republics, industries, trade activity, fashions, art-exhibitions, newspaper and opinions, represents merely a huge out-of-date, spider-webbed, decorated corner, in which the vast childhood fear of mankind cowers, committing evil in the illusion of dreams. Let he who can, escape.

What can bring reality into the world? Who can say? Thought, which brought down fire from heaven, like the hoarse cry of a wanderer in the rosy dawn. The eyes that first deciphered the riddle of the stars; the hand that bound together the planks of the first ship; the leisurely glance of a mother suckling her child; the divine step of a beautiful woman; and every bravery of the heart.

Who can say what productivity is? But whatever it may be, it can only be something that comes directly from a pure soul. Therefore, beware of the dreams of cripples, of the oppressed, of crazy people, of wits, of vengeance-seekers, when they offer their dreams for sale.

Since I have experienced reality, I long for a son. Yet no! Now I dare to confess it. The first time I thought of *my* son, the first time I clearly saw *my* son in a vision, was when I chased my father around the billiard-table, with the weapon in my upraised hand. That was the final depth of that night's mystery. We have abandoned the earth, and the earth has avenged herself by taking all reality away from us, and substituting a thousand illusions and bad dreams. But I want to reunite my race with the earth, with a limitless, unconfined earth, so that we may atone for all murders and vanities, for the cruelty and decay of crowded living.

A few months ago I married. Things are going tolerably well with us, and are improving. But—in case I should forget it—within the next few days I hope to come to terms. I am thinking of the little farm in the West, which I want to buy.

THE END.

WE'LL NEVER BE RICH!

(Continued from page 41)

It's funny to look back on." He laughed —the secure laugh of a man who can straighten such things out. To Ned Colton, he seemed to grow taller, and younger, even as his own face, in the mirror above the fireplace, looked old and tired. It looked like the face of a failure—he hadn't thought it would look like that in college, no. . . . In the Army game, with the steam out of your legs, just praying to bat down the passes! Then he roused himself, for Tom Amherst was talking.

"I don't say you'll make a fortune out of it, right away," he was saying. "Those days are over. But the Estate's interested—and some other people too. It's all been very hush-hush, up till now. And we're starting in pretty quietly. You have to, with the present state of the world, in those Eastern countries. They've even got real bandits—in sheepskin coats —not just bankers!" And he chuckled. "But we've got the dope—and we've got the concession. And it's a job for a big man. A two-year job, at least. But in two years—well, you'll only be thirty-two. Of course, your present business— I know you have commitments—but we could arrange about that." He smiled; and as he did so, Colton and Stein disappeared into the mist. Ned Colton saw himself riding up a rough road, among foreign mountains, with a friendly bandit in a sheepskin coat at his side. But the bandit would be friendly—the Amherst Estate would take care of that. He saw himself, in two years, coming back to another Bright Acres.

"Naturally," he said, out of reminiscence, "it's a country for a single man."

"Afraid so," said Tom Amherst. "But you know Aunt Ettie's little house—the one just as you go into her main drive? Nancy liked its looks, Saturday. And there's a good school for Patsy—the Maidenbrook. You could pay Aunt Ettie rent, if you wanted. I think they'd be pretty comfortable, both of them."

NED COLTON wanted to say, "Why have you always hated me, Amherst?" But even as he thought it, he knew. He remembered Tom Amherst, congratulating him perfectly, the night they had elected Ned Colton president of the Leaf. He could see the small room where no non-member ever set foot, and the others' faces. It was a very small seed. But under the friendship it had always been there—just as under all the extravagant poise and cool power of Tom Amherst, there was a central insecurity—the bitter insecurity of a spoiled small boy in great houses, a boy who had too much power too young.

Tom Amherst had come to college. wishing for certain things, but not wishing to lift a hand for them. And the things that he did not have—the easy applause and liking, the votes in the Class-Book and all that—rankled disproportionately. But if one did not have them—well. life was a longer game—and one could give a little push here and a little tug there. in a certain direction, to the man who did. For that was also a sport. It was fantastic, absurd, to think of Tom Amherst as a tempter, a Mephisto.

"And yet," thought Ned Colton wearily, "if it hadn't been for Tom, I'd have gone into business with Bud Wennick, out West. We planned to, and Bud's father was for us. And that was my stuff. But Tom made it seem small. Just the way he made the apartment by the river seem small—amusing but small, in the boom days. So we got that white-elephant on Park Avenue—and hated it too. Even Nancy hated it, then. Why, I got my shoes made in England, because of Tom Amherst! And Nancy joined that silly club of Aunt Ettie's! And when he was tired of us, he went back to Bright Acres —to Bright Acres, after the crash—and then West and then to Europe."

"REMEMBER when I had Nancy down for the Junior Prom, Tom?" Ned said suddenly.

"Why, yes, old man," said Amherst. "But I thought we were discussing business." He looked tactfully at Ned Colton's glass. But the glass was still full.

"I know," said Ned Colton. "But this is more important. Remember when I had Nancy down for the Junior Prom? I hardly knew you then, and you gave her quite a rush, at first. But then—it wasn't that you realized she was my girl. There'd been some mix-up in the cards—you didn't realize till I told you that she came from Dallsburg. And the—" He let the sentence trail in the air.

"What the dickens are you talking about?" said Tom Amherst.

"About you," said Ned Colton. "You fell in love with Nancy then. I'll grant you that much. But you were Thomas Amherst IV. It wouldn't be a suitable marriage. You had things looked up—yes, you even had things looked up; because when you came to Dallsburg for our wedding, you knew more about Nancy's family than I'd ever told you."

He paused for a second. "What a long time you must have hated me," he said. "But now, of course, it's rather different. Even selling hats at Delphine's—that could be an amusing story. And Nancy could do Bright Acres—she isn't from Dallsburg now. And Aunt Ettie thinks she's a dear girl. Two years," he said reflectively. "Two years is a lot of time, too. Time enough to change—almost anything. I suppose you could send divorce-papers direct from the Amherst office," he said. "And then by bandit, over the mountains. Inside his sheepskin coat!"

"Exactly," said Amherst, rising, his eyes very dark in his face. "And I think that's enough. Decent people don't discuss these things." He frowned. "The trouble with you, Colton, is that you've never grown up," he said. "And that was amusing. once. It isn't any more. I was giving you an easy way out. If you don't care to take it, you needn't. Oh, yes, I'm in love with Nancy, if you want to know. You can fight it or not, as you choose. It doesn't matter very much. You married her when she was a child, and she's stopped being one."

His voice continued, a smooth, powerful engine. Ned Colton was very tired. He wished to pay attention to the voice, but he kept thinking of an old story—the story of the man who played bridge against the Devil, and held, for once, the perfect no-trump hand—three suits from ace to jack inclusive and one ace. . . . Only when the Devil led—he led a green ace, the ace of hippogriffs. It was rather like that now.

"And we'll come to a reasonable arrangement about—your daughter," said Tom Amherst. "After all—I like Patsy, you know."

"Oh, shut up!" said Ned Colton wearily. "Shut up! Stop talking."

"What?" said Tom Amherst.

"Shut up," said Ned Colton. "I've heard you. Yes, I know there's a poker right next you, but I can hit you before you can reach it. I don't care whether you're in love with Nancy or not. I don't care whether she wants to marry you or not. All I know is this: The day you try to marry her, I'll shoot you. With a gun."

"What?" said Tom Amherst.

"I don't say I'll kill you," said Ned Colton. "You can't tell about that. And yes, it'll be hard on Patsy and Nancy. But not so hard as some other things."

"You're mad," said Amherst strongly, but his eyes flickered.

"Oh, no," said Ned Colton in a tired voice. "Just from Dallsburg. And I'll grant you, you could stand up to being shot. But not to the papers afterward! You see, you're afraid of the papers. They're possibly the one thing you're afraid of. And you couldn't hush it up—not that. But I'm from Dallsburg, and I know just enough about guns to shoot you rather painfully. And in Dallsburg, we don't mind about the papers at all."

TOM AMHERST opened his mouth to speak, but at that moment Nancy entered. She was not Nancy-at-a-party, Ned Colton noticed. She had her hat on, for one thing, and worry in her eyes. She did not look at Tom Amherst, but at Ned Colton.

"Why didn't you tell me Patsy had a temperature?" she said fiercely to Ned Colton, and her voice was the voice of an irritated partner, not at all the voice of the strange Nancy of the last two days.

"I called the apartment this morning," said Ned Colton stupidly. "She didn't—I mean I'm awfully sorry. I ought to have told you she'd picked up a cold."

"It doesn't matter," said the Nancy who worked at Delphine's and caught subways and painted the kitchen chairs with ten-cent enamel. "I've packed us, anyway. We've just time to catch the eight-five."

"I'll send you back in a car," said Amherst in an unrecognizable voice. But Nancy shook her head. She looked at him frankly, an apologetic but hurried guest.

"No, thanks, Tom," she said. "The train's quicker, after a holiday. And I phoned for a taxi. It's there. They're putting the bags in." She offered him her hand. "Good-by, Tom, and thanks for a lovely week-end."

"Good-by," said Amherst. "Good-by, Ned." They touched hands. "I— See you soon," said Amherst in his unrecognizable voice. . . .

When the taxi had pulled out of the

driveway, Ned Colton suddenly felt the Nancy beside him begin to shake all over.

"There, beautiful," he said, putting his arm around her. "It's over. It's all over. It's done."

"I know it," said Nancy. "But oh, Ned—it's a bad house—a bad house. I'm so glad we're out."

"There, beautiful," said Ned Colton again. "I told him I'd shoot him if he married you. And he knows it. I ought to have spoiled his looks, too. But there wasn't time."

"He—he kissed me, on the terrace, last night," said Nancy, weeping. "Tom—old Tom! And kept telling me how Patsy could have a pony-cart. And I didn't say anything because he was your old friend, and you were getting a rest and having fun. And I thought I could stick it out. But when I got into that awful, horrible, enormous softy bathroom again and started to take another b-bath—I just couldn't stand it! Ned, has Tom gone crazy?"

"No, beautiful," said Ned Colton soothingly. "He's just spoiled. Born rich. And they're different. They don't know how to lose things."

"But Ned, we won't see him again? All that manner, and hurting people's feelings, and making a goat of that poor Hollister boy! And the stuffed shirts and the talky-talk, and being a little tin god, and always having to do things at just the right social moment. We won't see him again? Please, we won't?"

"No, beautiful," said Ned Colton. "You see, we'll never be rich. And we'll never see him again."

HOOP-TE-DO!

(Continued from page 19)

something, Captain? Aint you forgot about—"

"What?" I asked him. "What?" He give me a look, and I recklected how he'd talked me into the 'greement I would play the part of a lover towards Miss Charlotta Prout. "Oh, yes," I says, getting up. "I forgot."

Then, lo and beholden, it was Orene's turn. "What?" she says, awful eager. "What is it you forgot, Captain?" Then she grabbed my hand and pulled me down beside her again and didn't let go of me. "Tell Orene, Captain," she says. "Tell Orene."

"Tell her what?" I says.

"What you just forgot," she says. "Tell Orene what you forgot, Captain."

Well, I knowed it wouldn't do to tell her, so I hardly see what to say; but right away Miss Charlotta Prout come forrud and set on the other side of me on the davenport. "Guess Captain pretty near forgot *me!*" she says, all hoop-te-do and laughing. "Looks like I would have to train him better if things is going to be in the future like he seems to want," she says.

"Here!" I says, because that give me a scare, her putting it so plain and prackly leaning on my chest while saying it. "Here!"

"Here what?" Ernie says, and he walked around behind the davenport right quick, like he was looking for matches or something on a table that was there, and give me a poke between the shoulders; so I recklected to play my part again. "Aint it prackly almost fixed up between you and Charlotta already, Captain?" he says in a pretended voice. "Aint it, Captain?"

"What?" I says. "Oh, yes," I says. "Maybe it might be that way some day—almost," I says. "Not right now but some day. maybe. I don't say it will or it won't," I says.

SO this Mrs. Orene Willis, she leaned against me on the other side. "No," she says. "Captain knows there's lots of fish in the sea," she says. She leaned her face around kind of in front of mine, all bright eyes and smiling. "Captain aint going to put all his eggs in one basket," she says. "Not my cute Captain!" she says.

So all this time Charlotta was kind of h'isting up her hand in front of me where I could see it, and I recklected my 'greement to hold it and I give it kind of a flirtish slap, and she says, oh, oh, I would haf to learn to stop that during while we was out calling, excepting just only a little sometimes among good friends of ours like Ernie and Orene.

Orene give another couple spiteful titters and says yes, but they needn't think she was born yesterday, and anyways Ernie and Charlotta better go set on them chairs because Captain and her liked the davenport to ourselves. So it went on; we set there as much as an hour, me between 'em, during while I just give myself up to injoyment of the occasion. This Mrs. Orene Willis and Miss Charlotta Prout plied me with every female form of pressing their suit on me.

THEN, after all this and that, Mrs. Orene Willis finally at last says again, "Tell Orene what you says you forgot when we first set down here, Captain. Tell Orene."

I give her a couple winks. "I can't," I says. "It's a secret. It's a secret between me and Ernie."

She give a holler. "I bet it is! I knowed it!"

"It aint neither," Ernie says, and he looked mad. "I aint got no secrets with him—excepting something I could tell on him that took place once in Boston harbor. If he's got a secret since then it's one between him and Charlotta. That's what you meant, wasn't it, Captain? You and Charlotta got a secret, aint you, Captain?—or else Boston harbor, Captain!"

I see he meant it for a threat, so I says yes, I meant a secret I and Charlotta was having, and Charlotta says oh, Captain! and how her and I mustn't tell right out until we'd settled on the day, but just could let a few close friends guess, and got so affectionate it made Mrs. Orene Willis crazier than ever over me. Orene says she wished it was last night all over again, when she set on me during Lapland, because she hadn't never felt so at home until then. Charlotta says no, if there was going to be any more setting on her little Captain take place, she would be the one.

They was sweet as daisies of the field to me; but letting off outcries like cover-

ing up scorn when they talked towards each other across me. Long before we got up from the davenport and all went out to Earl's Place next the sardine wharf for supper, it come over my brains Ernie was even a poorer hand at studying out women than I'd time and again told him he was. Women having a double nature, he would believe their outside behavior, while the truth about a woman is, it takes a man that can see through them, which you got to get partly by gift and partly by experience; whereby I was settled into a bachelor account of having both. So my brains took in that no two females would ever behave like that over any man without it being gennawine.

IN the first place, take the case of Ernie—he was only a foreman in the sardine cannery and it's natural to women to like a captain. Then again there was lots of points Ernie didn't have; he was just more less like anybody you'd pass on the street and not give thought to, just a more less ordinary man, about six foot and blondy, like you see hundreds of. Women'll only give way to their feelings over a man like that lessen there aint nobody special on hand, so there was all the difference in the world, and no wonder Ernie was more less the gooseberry of the party.

He got kind of brooding and ugly, and when the time come to pay for supper for the four of us at Earl's Place, forced me into settling by means of hinting about Boston harbor, and the same for all four tickets to the movies afterwards; though by that time, after what the supper cost me, I was pretty near ready to let him tell it, come what may. It wasn't nothing I could ever be arrested for—anyways not now, because excepting Ernie all the rest that knowed it was prackly disappeared, and on the witness box my word would be as good as his.

Well, it didn't come to that, and in the movies where it was dark I was setting between them again, and, the way they was whispering, there couldn't been any people in forty feet didn't know the audience had a captain in it. Them two didn't pay no 'tention to the actors that was acting the theater up there before 'em. Almost the hull time they was both whispering in my ears so's the other one could hear 'em, terrible embarrassing, and I commenced getting scared again about the position I would be in if I didn't look out mighty careful.

Mrs. Orene Willis, being already married, why, she wouldn't never be no trouble to me particyourly, no matter how strong I let her feelings get; but Miss Charlotta Prout was carrying it 'way beyond any part she could been acting, like she let Ernie think; so I better shift my course and take it over the quarter.

"Where's your hand on this side, Captain?" she whispers afterwhile. "I can't find it no more."

"It's safe," I says, not mean but more less rebuking. "If the lights was turned on you'd see it was all safe," I says, so she would understand by this time I was letting Mrs. Orene Willis hold both.

Well and so, this Mrs. Orene Willis, she was in big spirits and when we come out nothing would do but I and her and Ernie must all leave Charlotta at her aunt's boarding-house first; and then,

when the three of us got back home, Orene kep' saying good night about a hundred times, and afterwards, when I went in my half and them in theirs, she knocked on the pa'tition and must put her face up against it, because I could hear her plain, and she hollered, "Good night, Captain!" through the pa'tition about twenty-thirty times more.

THEN, lo and beholden, next morning as he was starting for the cannery, Ernie come in and waked me up and stood over my bed and berated me, and all thus and so, and would I do like I give my word to or have the hull Cosy's Island hear the plain truth about Boston harbor once for all?

I done my best to keep on sleeping; but he would jerk the bedclothes away and talk in a low mean husky voice up close to my face, bent over, so's Orene couldn't hear him through the pa'tition. "Set up and listen to me," he says. "Set up and listen or I'll march straight on to my work and tell every soul in the cannery every last thing about Boston harbor!"

"Go on away," I says. "Can't you see I'm trying to get a little sleep?" I asked him.

"You listen!" he says. "Yesterday you give me your word you'd play the part of a lover to Charlotta, and all you done you let Orene pull the wool over you."

"Go away!" I says. "There's something in this case you don't understand," I says, and I come out with it. "I ain't a-going to go on and play the part of a lover towards Miss Charlotta Prout because it gets her too excited over me, and pretty soon she'd hold me to it and have you and Orene for witnesses—yes, and that girl what waited on us at Earl's Place and them people setting all around us at the movies, too!"

"She wouldn't unless I'd tell her to," he says. "She was only acting a part and you done everything on earth to spoil it. Yes, and as soon as I and Orene heard you go to sleep last night, Orene commenced and give me worse than ever. Are you going to play your part like a man from now on, or what about Boston harbor?"

I set up. "I'm sick and tired o' Boston harbor," I told him. "I don't want to hear no more about Boston harbor long's I live, and if I ever do and I get pushed, I'm going to tell everybody it was you. Besides," I says, "after a thing like that, if they don't do nothing about it, why, after a certain length of time, the law dies out," I says. "Them laws is all died out long ago," I says, "and the hull business never 'mounted to nothing in the first place," I says. "Looking back on it now," I says, "I wonder I ever let it worry me, even at the time it took place."

"Is that so?" he asked me, and put on a pretty ugly look on his face. "Oh, all right! Then I'll walk straight across the street and tell the Medgers first."

"Listen!" I says. "What's the use of all this and that? My goodness, aint the Medgers stirred up enough already on account their doggone big aunt?" I says.

"They'll like this," he says, and acted like he was starting for the door. "I don't know how they'll use it on you; but I expect they'll think up a way."

"Wait," I says. "I didn't say I wasn't willing to argue, did I?"

So he come back and set by the bed and we commenced arguing. Well and all, so the upshoot o' the hull matter was simply I would be willing to go on ahead and act the part of a lover; but only in the condition I would have black on white to protect my future from Miss Charlotta Prout. If he would bring me a paper signed black on white by Miss Charlotta Prout swearing she promised never to take no advantage of nothing I says or done in acting the part of a lover towards her, and will regard me as a bachelor pure and simple from this day forth, no matter what, why, then I will continue the work.

Ernie says all right, that was fair and he would have her sign it; so that afternoon he went around there soon's he got off and brought me the paper before supper. The part where it says what she will do was in pencil and in his writing; but she had signed it with her own signature in ink, and he had put his name under to be a witness. This is the way it read—Ernie read it off to me:

"'I swear to all parties may be concerned I do not care a red cent what Captain Ambrose Valentine ever does towards me or towards anybody else, or anything he says to me or anybody else, no matter what or where and do not even like him much and would never be able to either no matter what. If I would have to let him hold my hand for a certain purpose and have to listen to him trying to make love or even have to stand him putting his arm around me a minute sometimes, I state and swear and double-swear it would not be for any pleasure I could take and must be solely in public and would only agree to it for certain reasons. I state and swear and double-swear I would not be married to him or even have very little to do with him if he was the last man on earth excepting I am forced to let on a while like I kind of like him on account of certain reasons but don't. I state and declare and promise and swear and double-swear black on white to give him the grand go-by as soon as these troubles are over as he will find out after that mighty quick you bet.

"'Signed

"'Charlotta Prout

"'Witness she signed it

"'Ernest Willis'"

SO that evening we was all at a music party at Mrs. R. H. Carter's of the sither, and I had a chance to whisper to Charlotta during the sither when Orene was holding Mrs. R. H. Carter's notes up before her. I wasn't going to take no chances Ernie would fool me with a false writing in her name, so I had the paper in my pocket and I showed it to Charlotta and asked her if all aboveboard and her own writing where she signed it, and she says, "You bet your life!" right quick. And so then I could breathe a big sigh of relieft and know all safe again. She give me sweet smiles and I could accept them, and also her setting against me the way she was, and not feel a qualm.

Soon as Orene could get away from holding the notes for Mrs. R. H. Carter, she bounced back, too, on my other side; and this was the commencing of what you might call a round of pleasure. Since

the world got started with the sky up overhead and the seasons working round one after the other like they do, and the bees and flowers and birds singing and the ocean and all them rivers, I don't expect no man was ever more made over or more set up against, and hand-holding every minute or two if the slightest chance, and whispering going on in his ears that would make people stare, and other compliments besides, said right out to my face.

No, sir, when two females get a-going it over a man, seems they don't care who notes 'em at it and prackly willing to show the public. Because this hull business was prackly in public, and, in all the time I was undergoing their struggle, I was only alone with this Mrs. Orene Willis two-three times and never once with Miss Charlotta Prout. Orene would always say, "No, the three of us'll see Charlotta home," and both of 'em would walk 'longside me holding onto both my arms, with Ernie behind kind of muttering, all the way right to Charlotta's aunt's boarding-house door.

ONE them two-three times when Mrs. Orene Willis didn't have nobody else around, she come in my half herself to see about some plaster I complained had fell off. She says I must done it with a chair myself and showed me lots of smiles and soft words and says she would get it fixed but would haf to charge it on the rent extra or else Ernie would suspicion she was favoring me. So, one the other times was when I went in her half to pay the rent and she says this plaster cost seven dollars repair it was better for me to pay on account of Ernie, and I was arguing look how Ernie never showed no interest how much she took on over me, and she says well, he better because she would make him yet, and in regards to this seven dollars she thought the world and all of my wishes and was trying her best day after day to follow them and turn into my idol of a woman, and then put her hand on top of my head so I would look up at her and says, kind of bird-like, didn't I wish her to be my good little business woman?

So this plaster cost me the sum of seven dollars, and she says if she had knowed in time there was a man in the world like me she certainly would never have give the slightest glance at Ernie Willis.

How I looked at it, Ernie was getting more the gooseberry than ever. There was a few times at parties or before company if Orene wasn't looking I see him whisper something quick in Charlotta's ear; but she would be smiling at me and maybe brushing off my coat collar with her handkerchief or scratching a spot off of my vest with her fingernail and rebuke him by not even giving no sign she as much as heard him. The way it commenced looking to my brains, why, he was a man that had such a big notion of himself—how she was all wild in a state over him—he had made a big mistake on that question.

Like I already says, he hadn't no looks I ever see nothing in, just blondy with ordinary curly hair, and more'n once his own wife says to me right before him and other people, too, the kind of eyes she liked on a man had some yellowish in

'em, like mine; she didn't like to see them eyes on a man that was too blue, she says, and you could tell she was hitting at Ernie. Yet and all, wherever there was a looking-glass you would catch him slipping it glances, so he would think prackly every female that didn't insult him was wild over him, while all the time in their heart they would really be after somebody else.

Then take the case of this paper I had got signed black on white by Miss Charlotta Prout she would never hold me to no bonds, no matter what. In the first place, you take a woman and she will sign anything and expect to get out of it if she wants to, and in the second place, I had up and sent word to Miss Charlotta Prout I would prackly not have nothing to do with her lessen she signed it, so it was the only way in the world she would have the least oppatunity. Well, she might think she could get out of that paper; but she couldn't, and I kep' it in my sea-chest, not taking no chances on her slipping it out my pocket when maybe she was dusting me off sometimes or something, or maybe just tickling.

SO, with that paper all safe, I give her free reins and would wink at her half the time and compliments right back at her and always tickle her as much as she done me. If at parties with Lapland again, I would let her set on me and never fail to set back on her when it was the gentlemen's turn. I would set on Orene, too, to keep the peace; but not as much as Charlotta. The truth is, I would never risked setting on Orene once or anything if it hadn't been for her being married. Orene was one them women with an expression on their face you see would be all right as long as there was company, or you was company yourself; but otherwise look out, because if ever under her claws, why, you will walk the chalk every minute but even then get hollered at and raked over from morning till night and long after.

So whenever he could get the chance Ernie would come in my half and complain of her till I would get mostly to sleep, yet I would still go on kind of hearing him complain until I would haf to open my eyes sometimes again a little. One night like that, he got to taking on so he got me clear all wide awake again. He was in a hoarse voice and setting up close to my chair so's Orene wouldn't hear nothing through the pa'tition; but what you might call his language got to beating up against my brains, you might put it.

"Well, but see here!" I says. "Didn't you tell me Orene would all summer down if I done like I been doing in regards to Charlotta?"

"Summer down!" he says. "If you would ever stay awake awhile so we couldn't tell you was asleep on the other side the pa'tition, maybe some night I could get a little sleep myself," he says.

"I won't do it," I says. "I aint a-going to give up my sleep for no man—Boston harbor or no Boston harbor!"

He looked awful bitter. "You're a shipmate!" he says. "You're a shipmate!" Then he got up and kind of walked up and down. "I aint got a true friend in the world," he says. "Right now, excepting Charlotta Prout, there aint hardly a creature loves me."

"Charlotta Prout," I says. "I bet she don't."

"She does, too," he says. "She's pretty near the last of many," he says. "Excepting for the propaty being in Orene's name," he says, "I would take Charlotta tomorrow and go seek the fur Northwest and join the canning industry out there," he says.

"I bet Charlotta wouldn't go," I told him.

"She would, too," he says. "If matters don't summer down pretty soon, I'll do it anyways," he says. "They want men like me out there in the Northwest," he says, "in them canneries. Charlotta would make a good cannery hand, too," he says. "A man's got to sleep sometime," he says.

Just like him, that was—talking about him needing sleep and all the time me setting there on a hard chair in my nightgown wanting to get in bed and him walking up and down between me and it. The more he talked, the worse condition he got in and even pointed his finger in my face and accused me of being a failure. He called me a puffick failure over and over; says he ought to knowed Orene nor nobody else wouldn't never believe Miss Charlotta Prout could ever give me the slightest smile that wasn't false.

"Failure!" I says. "I aint neither no failure!" I was mad, yet by this time got so sleepy again I couldn't hold but one eye partly open. Then I give kind of a wriggle around him and got in bed. "Ask them women," I says. "Ask them women if I'm a failure. I like Charlotta a lot the best and she does me; but ask both of 'em!" I says. "Put out that light and go on away and ask 'em now," I says.

HE kep' stooping over me and talking some more; but by this time I hardly knowed what he was saying, yet seems I kind of made out he was calling me a failure some more. Then I partly come to again and seems like he was talking desperate and says come what may, he'd made up his mind him and Charlotta would make their way inland to them Northwest canneries where he could get some sleep himself. The next morning seemed like I could recklect a knocking and knocking on the pa'tition from the other side, like Orene was signaling him

he better come back in their half and hear what she had to say.

So of course and all, I didn't lay no importance on all this and that he says about him and Charlotta leaving the home-ties together, on account in the first place I was living in Cosy's Island and she knowed I had enough for two if she could ever make it—though I wasn't ever going to let her, of course. On the other hands, besides, I see by this time Ernie was a man you couldn't put no trust in, so, whatever he says, I'd commenced believing exactly the opposition.

Looking back on old times when him and me was shipmates, I couldn't hardly recklect a single time he ever done what he says he would, excepting once when he had a half dollar that was heads on both sides and he says he would win all of Mr. Benn the engineer's pay, and done it.

That's the trouble with a man you can't trust; he tells you he will do something and you don't pay no 'tention because you know he won't, and then he takes and does it. Always just the wrong time, too. There I was, he'd got me all compilicated up with them two women, excepting for the paper I had on Miss Charlotta Prout, and then, me never suspicioning, didn't he turn right around and take and do exactly what he says he was a-going to!

It was late a Sunday night I had the canvasation with him when he says him and her would light out to join the Northwest canning industry, and on the Monday I had to go 'way up inland myself to Dover, New Hampshire, account of having to be a witness where it laid between the freight-cars and a tugboat, which of the two done damage three years before to a shipping company, and I never got back till the Wednesday, when, lo and beholden, the hull beautiful little city of Cosy's Island was all agogs. This here Ernie Willis and Miss Charlotta Prout had took the law in their own hands, slipped off their mooring to the home-ties and run away nobody in Cosy's Island knowed where, and with only a short note to Mrs. Orene Willis that says flesh and blood could stand just so much gab and then it would haf to leave.

THE first that told me about it was Francis Ferguson that handles baggage, right when I got off the train, and at least eight more stopped me to talk about it as I come along Water Street on the way home. Many of 'em says it must be a terrible blow to me and all such and so on. Says they cal'lated this Miss Charlotta Prout meant the world and all to me; but I didn't give 'em no satisfaction and says no, the woman was not created yet could wring regrets out o' me, and so ha-ha! Little would I worry what would ever become of any of 'em.

The way my brains looked at this matter, why, I hadn't told Charlotta I had to go to Dover or good-by or anything, because I'd forgot about it myself till breakfast time Monday morning when I see the date on a newspaper and had to hurry. She might thought I wasn't never coming back, and anyways had likely give up hopes of ever getting that paper she signed away from me, and maybe commenced brooding and all at just the time the

tempter come in and says he see he wasn't never going to get a-hold of Orene's propaty, so come on let's go!

That's how it got looking to me as I come towards home from Water Street, and I hadn't catched a glimpse the bad side of this business at all or even snifted the slightest smell of the danger until I was opening the gate of my half to go in, and here, lo and beholden, come this small young spitty-fire, Mrs. Medger of the big aunt. She come running across the street, a-hollering and squeaking at me.

"Wait, Captain!" she says. "I got something to tell you, Captain!"

"I don't want to hear it," I says, because since that night of her aunt I never heard one thing from her excepting what I rather not. She would always tell me where there was some new spot on my clothes she hadn't noted yesterday and twitter like an English sparrow, giving me mean glances like one, too. "I already heard it," I told her. "I'm tired of hearing it," I told her.

"Oh," she says. "Is that so, Captain? I guess you aint heard it all, though, in additions to just the news of the 'lopement. I guess you aint heard what the hull town's saying about you, Captain."

"About me?" I says. "About me?"

"Oh, my goodness, yes!" she says, and commenced. "Everybody says they knowed you was a fortune hunter from the first you come here, Captain."

"Fortune hunter? What you mean, me a fortune hunter?"

"Orene's propaty," she says, and give her head a lot of them twitterings like as if laughing and teasing. "Oh, yes, the hull town says that's why you made all this trouble between the Willises, Captain, and played the snake in the grass and double-faced false friend in the home, working up Orene to be jealous of Ernie account of Charlotta Prout, and you all the time paying your suit to Orene, setting on each other in Lapland and always whispering and carrying on and working in the dark to replant her husband. Don't pretend no innocence, Captain! Everybody knows what's going to happen now."

"Now?" I says. "Happen now?" I says. "What's going to happen now?" I says; and all of a sudden a creeping feeling come over my spinal cords. "What you mean, what's going to happen now?"

"You and Orene," Mrs. Medger twitters. "Of course you and her have got your way and it's all plain sailing now for you and Orene."

"Me and Orene?" I says; but I was weak as water and sprung all moist from head to foot. "Me and Orene?"

"Why, of course!" Mrs. Medger says. "Orene will have her freedom now, so of course her and you can go prackly straight to the altar soon's she gets her papers. She's uptown now at Lawyer Wells's; but I expect you know all about that a lot better'n I do, don't you, Captain?"

I DIDN'T say anything; I turned my back on her and kind of staggered into my half and got the front door shut and bolted like one in a doze; then I went to the back door where there wasn't no bolt and the key was lost, and piled everything in the kitchen up against it excepting the stove.

About half an hour afterwards, during while I was packing, I hear a twittering and hollering outside, awful spitty-fire and shrill, and a cacklish voice answering back like a couple dozen crows in a tree top. Right away my blood run cold as ice and I looked out a hole in the front window-shade and see Orene coming in the gate of my half, and her and this young small Mrs. Medger spitty-firing across the street at each other. Then Orene come towards the front door, fixing her face from the way she had been having it towards Mrs. Medger and working it round into a sweet welcoming smile.

She knocked and tried the knob and then she went around to the back door and tried it and hollered "Oh, Captain!" a good many times in as nice a voice as she could manage, and then she must thought maybe I had went out a while, because she went over in her half. So I figured she would be setting at the window waiting to see when I come back, and there couldn't been a mouse in the world could finished packing quieter than what I done.

She'd already c'lected the full amount of the leash for my half a month back, so my conscious was clear on money matters, and, come the first dark, I hove my chest and valise out the side window away from her half, and over the fence and down through the next yard to the alley and left 'em there against the back fence, and worked my way to a public garage and hired me a truck, and come back for 'em and had the truck haul me clear to Lemport Junction and took the first train, no matter where it was going.

SO that's how I come to settle in Cobble Reef after my wanderings had lasted some two-three weeks, under the name of Frank Johnson. Cobble Reef's a place where a man would be hated for a bachelor, of course, same as anywheres else; but, on the other hands, nobody wouldn't expect to find nobody here, on account nobody excepting summer people would dream of picking it out to come to.

I never see nobody from Cosy's Island again for five years, and then it was this old Francis Ferguson, the baggage man, had a vacation fishing and put in here from a sou'wester. He says two more men had got married to Orene on account of her propaty, and the second one still steadfast; but he says there wasn't no news ever come of where the other one went or of Ernie Willis and Miss Charlotta Prout—though I didn't care whether there was or not, particyourly not about Ernie.

Like I says, any married man will work against a bachelor; it's their nature, so you got to expect it; but take where Ernie had wormed this case around so as to go spot-free himself and leave me behind all insnared to this Mrs. Orene Willis, I considered he put himself outside the bale of manhood, even for a married man.

Looking back over the hull business, though, I see where I had showed a mite o' weakness myself. It was being scared of him coming out and telling everybody them pickadillies of Boston harbor. They didn't 'mount to nothing at all, and, though they are something I wouldn't tell nobody myself on account I might get misunderstood, I needn't been scared of him, because, the way things worked out like I been telling you, I had to leave Cosy's Island anyways.

GOING THEIR OWN WAYS

(Continued from page 55)

the next half-hour, as he watched the varied changes of mood reveal themselves on the young girl's face. He knew what she was feeling, as she kept glancing toward the clock, as her manner grew more abstracted, as she suddenly remarked: "I can't think what Jack's doing. He's been away a quarter of an hour. Your wife said it wouldn't take ten minutes."

"Ten minutes to get there. There'll be another ten minutes back," he reassured her.

"Oh, I see."

He knew what she was feeling when the twenty minutes were passed, became twenty-five minutes, then half an hour—with the anxious look getting angrier. "What can he be doing? Where is it you said your wife was going?" With her working out sums in mathematics, trying to calculate how long it should take; and then suddenly, so as to save her face, so as not to let him think that she was jealous: "I get so worried when Jack's late. All those road accidents, you know." With himself half-wondering whether it really was to the Mackesons' that Hilda was being driven.

And then the husband coming back, forty minutes after he had set out, his wife's eyes meeting him, an angry glower showing in his face; with his embarking on a long and amusing description of traffic signals, bad drivers, blocks, policemen, wrong directions; a description which was addressed to the room at large, but was addressed actually to his wife, with herself listening in angry reproachful silence. Yes, Ryan had rowed in that galley. He had known what it was to face that judicial outraged look of jealousy and distrust, just as he had known the indignation, the resentment, with which the man tried to parry a suspicion he had not deserved. Well he knew it!

Sitting there, leaning back against the wall, in the peace of his hard-won harbor, listening to the husband's protracted but still entertaining description of his journey, it seemed to him as though the reel of his life were being unwound, as though he were seeing his life as it had been four years ago reënacted for him.

He pictured the departure an hour or so hence, the outburst the moment they were alone together in the car, the simultaneous: "Why did you look at me like that?" "Do you expect me to believe that story about a traffic block?" The accusations, the counter-accusations; her retort: "What about that night you drove Elsie Garrett home?" "What about that absurd fuss over the telephone-call you found out afterward was from my sister?" A stream of bickering in which every grievance in their married life would be brought forward, as generals mobilize their reserves for action.

BEHIND closed lids he saw with his mind's eye the journey home, savoring it with the delight of a sailor who, safe in harbor, hears the beating against the breakwater of the tempest he has survived, remembering how the stream of recrimination would abate, would subside into a sullen silence. In a white

heat of anger they would climb the stairs, in a white heat separate at the stairway's head. With the carefulness of an anger that could find no outlet, the husband would set his trousers in the press, arrange his links and studs along the mantelpiece, lay out his keys, his loose change, his wallet. That was how it would be in two hours' time.

He smiled, remembering. Once it had been like that for him. Once— And then, suddenly, like a chill wind blowing into a warm room, there came to him the memory of the odd pang that he had felt when he saw the young couple smile at each other after dinner. He had pictured the quarrel. He had forgotten the smile; had forgotten how that smile was the complement, the explanation of the quarrel. He had known how it was now, how it would be in two hours' time. But in three hours' time—no, that was not how it would be then. The smile told him that. The memory of his own past told him that. They were quarreling now; but that was only because they were young, because they were in love, so crazily over-in-love with one another, so absorbed in one another, that they would tolerate no happiness that came to the other save through themselves. Each had given so completely, so utterly, that it was intolerable that there should not be an equal surrender in return. With his mind's eye, with memory's eye, he saw how it would be in three hours' time; when a word, a touch, had in one second broken down the cardboard wall of hatred. He remembered how it had been, knew how it would be: the sudden turning of each to each, the blessed peace of reconciliation. It was only because they were so in love that they could quarrel.

Sitting there in the harbor of his safety, he let the reel of the past turn on. Yes, that was how it would be. In three hours' time, when the party had been broken up, when he would be back at home, reading himself to sleep with a detective story while Hilda was dancing, he knew not with whom or where, these young people would be lost, fulfilled in the miracle of love's renewal.

In clear colors he saw the magic of those moments. It was for him like a traveler's seeing flashed upon the screen of a cinema a landscape that was once familiar. Across the miles and years its scents and sights and sounds return, to wake an intolerable homesickness for the countries he will never see again.

Ryan looked at the young couple, who had still to live through all he had outgrown; who were not yet sensible and worldly-wise; who had not yet taken the world's medicine of "going your own ways." Their hearts were black with anger, with distrust, with jealousy. Misery was theirs now, but rapture in the close future waited them. From the security of his hard-won harbor, from his heart's depths, he envied them.

UNCLE FRED FLITS BY

(Continued from page 37)

so much so that Pongo says it was all he could do to stop himself nipping across and taking her little hand in his and patting it.

"I've told you a hundred times, Mother, that Wilberforce is only jellying eels till he finds something better," said Julia.

"What is better than an eel?" asked Lord Ickenham, who had been following the discussion with the close attention it deserved. "For jelling purposes, I mean."

"He is ambitious. It won't be long," said the girl, "before Wilberforce suddenly rises in the world."

She never spoke a truer word. At this very moment, up he came from behind the settee like a leaping salmon.

"Julia!" he cried.

"Wilby!" the girl yipped.

And Pongo says he never saw anything more sickening in his life than the way she flung herself into the blighter's arms and clung there like the ivy on the old garden wall. It wasn't that he had anything specific against the pink chap, but this girl had made a deep impression on him, and he resented her gluing herself to another in this manner.

Julia's mother, after just that brief moment which a woman needs to recover from her natural surprise at seeing eel-jelliers pop up from behind sofas, got moving and plucked her daughter away like a referee breaking a couple of welter-weights.

"Julia Parker!" she exclaimed. "I'm ashamed of you!"

"So am I," said Claude.

"I blush for you."

"Me too," said Claude. "Hugging and kissing a man who called your father a perishing old bottle-nosed Gawd-help-us."

"I think," said Lord Ickenham, shoving his oar in, "that before proceeding any further, we ought to go into that point: If he called you a perishing old bottle-nosed Gawd-help-us, it seems to me that the first thing to do is to decide whether he was right; frankly, in my opinion—"

"Wilberforce will apologize."

"Certainly I'll apologize. It isn't fair to hold a remark passed in the heat of the moment against a chap."

"Mr. Robinson," said the woman, "you know perfectly well that whatever remarks you may have seen fit to pass don't matter one way or the other. If you were listening to what I was saying, you will understand—"

"Oh, I know, I know. Uncle Charley Parker and Uncle Henry Parker and Cousin Alf Robbins and all that. Pack of snobs!"

"What!"

"Haughty, stuck-up snobs. Them and their class distinctions! Think themselves everybody, because they've got money. I'd like to know how they got it."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Never mind what I mean."

"If you are insinuating—"

"Well, of course, you know, Connie," said Lord Ickenham mildly, "he's quite right. You can't get away from that."

I DON'T know if you've ever seen a bull-terrier start on a scrap with an Airedale, and just as it was getting down nicely to its work, suddenly have an unexpected Kerry Blue sneak up behind it and bite it in the rear quarters. When this happens, it lets go of the Airedale and swivels round and fixes the butting-in animal with a pretty nasty eye. It was exactly the same with the woman Connie when Lord Ickenham spoke these words.

"What!"

"I was only wondering if you had forgotten how Charley Parker made his pile."

"What are you talking about?"

"I know it is painful," said Lord Ickenham, "and one doesn't mention it as a rule. But as we are on the subject, you must admit that lending money at two hundred and fifty per cent interest is not done in the best circles. The judge, if you remember, said so at the trial."

"I never knew that!" cried the girl Julia.

"Ah," said Lord Ickenham. "You kept it from the child? Quite right, quite right."

"It's a lie!"

"And when Henry Parker had all that fuss with the bank, it was touch and go they didn't send him to prison. Between ourselves, Connie, has a bank official, even a brother of your husband, any right to sneak fifty pounds from the till in order to put it on a hundred-to-one shot for the Grand National? Not quite playing the game, Connie. Not the straight bat. Henry, I grant you, won five thousand of the best, and never looked back afterward; but though we applaud his judgment of form, we must surely look askance at his financial methods. As for Cousin Alf Robbins—"

The woman was making rummy stuttering sounds. Pongo tells me he once had a Widgeon Seven which used to express itself in much the same way if you tried to get it to take a hill on high—a sort of mixture of gurgles and explosions.

"There is not a word of truth in this!" she gasped at length, having managed to get the vocal cords disentangled. "Not a single word! I think you must have gone mad."

Lord Ickenham shrugged.

"Have it your own way, Connie," he said. "I was only going to say that, while the jury were probably compelled on the evidence submitted to them to give Cousin Alf Robbins the benefit of the doubt when charged with smuggling dope, everybody knew that he had been doing it for years. I am not blaming him, mind you. If a man can smuggle cocaine and get away with it, good luck to him, say I. The only point I am trying to make is that we are hardly a family that can afford to put on dog and sneer at honest suitors for our daughters' hands. Speaking for myself, I consider that we are very lucky to have the chance of marrying even into eel-jellying circles."

"So do I," said Julia firmly.

"You don't believe what this man is saying, surely?"

"I believe every word."

"So do I," said the pink chap.

The woman snorted.

"Well," she said, "goodness knows, I have never liked Laura; but I would never have wished her a husband like you."

"Husband?" said Lord Ickenham, puzzled. "What gives you the impression that Laura and I are married?"

There was a weighty silence, during which the parrot threw out a general invitation to the company to join it in a nut. Then the girl Julia spoke.

"You'll have to let Wilberforce marry me now," she said. "He knows too much about us."

"I was rather thinking that myself," said Lord Ickenham. "Seal his lips, I say."

"You wouldn't mind marrying into a low family, would you, darling?" asked the girl with a touch of anxiety.

"No family could be too low for me, dearest, if it was yours," said the pink chap.

"After all, we needn't see them."

"That's right."

"It isn't one's relations that matter; it's one's selves."

"That's right, too."

"Wilby!"

"Julia!"

They repeated the old ivy-on-the-garden-wall act. Pongo says he didn't like it any better than the first time, but his distaste wasn't in it with the woman Connie's.

"And what, may I ask," she said, "do you propose to marry on?"

This seemed to cast a damper. They came apart. They looked at each other. The girl looked at the pink chap, and the pink chap looked at the girl. You could see that a jarring note had been struck.

"Wilberforce is going to be a very rich man some day."

"Some day!"

"If I had a hundred pounds," said the pink chap, "I could buy a half-share in one of the best milk walks in South London tomorrow."

"*If!*" said the woman.

"Ah!" said Claude.

"Where are you going to get it?"

"Ah!" said Claude.

"Where," repeated the woman, plainly pleased with the snappy crack, and loath to let it ride without an encore, "are you going to get it?"

"That," said Claude, "is the point. Where are you going to get a hundred pounds?"

"Why, bless my soul," said Lord Ickenham jovially, "from me, of course. Where else?"

AND before Pongo's bulging eyes, he fished out from the recesses of his costume a crackling bundle of notes and handed it over. And the agony of realizing that the old bounder had had all that stuff on him all this time, and that he hadn't touched him for so much as a tithe of it, was so keen, Pongo says, that before he knew what he was doing, he had let out a sharp, whinnying cry which rang through the room like the yowl of a stepped-on puppy.

"Ah," said Lord Ickenham. "The vet. wishes to speak to me. Yes, vet.?"

This seemed to puzzle the cerise bloke a bit.

"I thought you said this chap was your son."

"If I had a son," said Lord Ickenham, a little hurt, "he would be a good deal better-looking than that. No, this is the local veterinary surgeon. I may have

said that I *looked* on him as a son. Perhaps that was what confused you."

He shifted across to Pongo and twiddled his hands inquiringly. Pongo gaped at him; and it was not until one of the hands caught him smartly in the lower ribs that he remembered he was deaf and started to twiddle back. Considering that he wasn't supposed to be dumb, I can't see why he should have twiddled, but no doubt there are moments when twiddling is about all a fellow feels himself equal to. For what seemed to him at least ten hours Pongo had been undergoing great mental stress, and one can't blame him for not being chatty. Anyway, be that as it may, he twiddled.

"I cannot quite understand what he says," announced Lord Ickenham at length, "because he sprained a finger this morning, and that makes him stammer. But I gather that he wishes to have a word with me in private. Possibly my parrot has got something the matter with it which he is reluctant to mention even in sign language in front of a young unmarried girl. You know what parrots are. We will step outside."

"*We* will step outside," said the pink chap.

"Yes," said the girl Julia. "I feel like a walk."

"And you?" said Lord Ickenham to the woman Connie, who was looking like a female Napoleon at Moscow. "Do you join the hikers?"

"I shall remain and make myself a cup of tea. You will not grudge us a cup of tea, I hope?"

"Far from it," said Lord Ickenham cordially. "This is Liberty Hall. Stick around, and mop it up till your eyes bubble."

Outside, the girl, looking more like a dewy rosebud than ever, fawned on the old buster pretty considerably.

"I don't know how to thank you," she said. And the pink chap said he didn't, either.

"Not at all, my dear, not at all," said Lord Ickenham.

"I think you're simply wonderful."

"No, no."

"You are. Perfectly marvelous."

"Tut, tut," said Lord Ickenham. "Don't give the matter another thought."

He kissed her on both cheeks, the chin, the forehead, the right eyebrow and the tip of the nose, Pongo looking on the while in a baffled and discontented manner. Everybody seemed to be kissing this girl except him.

EVENTUALLY the degrading spectacle ceased; the girl and the pink chap shoved off, and Pongo was able to take up the matter of the hundred quid.

"Where," he asked, "did you get all that money?"

"Now, where did I?" mused Lord Ickenham. "I know your aunt gave it to me for some purpose. But what? To pay some bill or other, I rather fancy."

This cheered Pongo up slightly.

"She'll give you the devil when you get back," he said with not a little relish. "I wouldn't be in your shoes for something. When you tell Aunt Jane," he said, with confidence, for he knew his Aunt Jane's emotional nature, "that you slipped her entire roll to a girl, and explain, as you will have to explain, that she was an extraordinarily pretty girl,—a girl, in fine, who looked like something out of a beauty chorus of the better sort,—I should think she would pluck down one of the ancestral battle-axes from the wall and jolly well strike you on the mazzard."

"Have no anxiety, my dear boy," said Lord Ickenham. "It is like your kind heart to be so concerned, but have no anxiety. I shall tell her that I was compelled to give the money to you to buy back some compromising letters from a Spanish demi-mondaine. She will scarcely be able to blame me for rescuing a fondly loved nephew from the clutches of an adventuress. It may be that she will feel a little vexed with you for a while, and that you will have to allow a certain time to elapse before you visit Ickenham again; but then, I sha'n't be wanting you at Ickenham till the ratting season starts, so all is well."

AT this moment there came toddling up to the gate of the Cedars a large, red-faced man. He was just going in, when Lord Ickenham hailed him.

"Mr. Roddis?"

"Hey?"

"Am I addressing Mr. Roddis?"

"That's me."

"I am Mr. J. G. Bulstrode from down the road," said Lord Ickenham. "This is my sister's husband's brother, Percy Frensham, in the lard and imported butter business."

The red-faced bird said he was pleased to meet them. He asked Pongo if things were brisk in the lard and imported butter business, and Pongo said they were all right, and the red-faced bird said he was glad to hear it.

"We have never met, Mr. Roddis," said Lord Ickenham, "but I think it would be only neighborly to inform you that a short while ago I observed two suspicious-looking persons in your house."

"In my house? How on earth did they get there?"

"No doubt through the window at the back. They looked to me like cat-burglars. If you creep up, you may be able to see them."

The red-faced bird crept, and came back not exactly foaming at the mouth, but with the air of a man who for two pins would so foam.

"You're perfectly right. They're sitting in my parlor as cool as dammit, swigging my tea and buttered toast."

"I thought as much."

"And they've opened a pot of my raspberry jam."

"Ah, then you will be able to catch them red-handed. I should fetch a policeman."

"I will. Thank you, Mr. Bulstrode."

"Only too glad to have been able to render you this little service, Mr. Roddis," said Lord Ickenham. "Well, I must be moving along. I have an appointment. Pleasant after the rain, is it not? Come, Percy."

He lugged Pongo off.

"So that," he said, with satisfaction, "is that. On these visits of mine to the metropolis, my boy, I always make it my aim, if possible, to spread sweetness and light. I look about me, even in a foul hole like Mitching Hill, and I ask myself: 'How can I leave this foul hole a better and happier foul hole than I found

it?' And if I see a chance, I grab it. . . . Here is our omnibus. Spring aboard, my boy, and on our way home we will be sketching out rough plans for the evening. If the old Leicester Square Grill is still in existence, we might look in there. It must be fully thirty-five years since I was last thrown out of the Leicester Grill. I wonder who is the bouncer there now."

Such (concluded the Crumpet) is Pongo Twistleton's Uncle Fred from the country, and you will have gathered by now a rough notion of why it is that when a telegram comes announcing his impending arrival in the great city, Pongo blenches and calls for a couple of quick ones.

The whole situation, Pongo says, is very complex. Looking at it from one angle, it is fine that the man lives in the country most of the year. If he didn't, Pongo would have him in his midst all the time. On the other hand, by living in the country he generates, as it were, a store of loopiness which expends itself with frightful violence on his rare visits to the center of things.

What it boils down to is this: Is it better to have a loopy uncle whose loopiness is perpetually on tap but spread out thin, so to speak, or one who lies low in distant Hants for three hundred and sixty days in the year and does himself proud in London for the other five? Dashed moot, of course, and Pongo has never been able to make up his mind on the point.

Naturally, the ideal thing would be if some one would chain the old hound up permanently and keep him from Jan. One to Dec. Thirty-one where he wouldn't do any harm—viz., among the spuds and tenantry. But this, Pongo admits, is a Utopian dream. Nobody could work harder to that end than his Aunt Jane, and she has never been able to manage it.

"The Last of the Bodkins," a novel by P. G. Wodehouse at his delightful best, begins in our next issue.

THE VARNABLE MYSTERY

(Continued from page 51)

"No," Noah said. "Alice was in the barn, adjusting the carburetor on the car. Frank was out taking a walk. I was down cellar, making beer."

"Any reason, Frank," Judson asked, "why he should kill himself?"

Frank Waldron hesitated, glanced quickly at Noah, then at the girl.

"Worried about anything?" Bill Judson asked sharply.

"We don't know," Alice said dully.

"No," her stepbrother said.

This, Link reflected, was the law of clans: when trouble strikes—unite!

"Where is he?"

"In his study," Noah said in his chilled voice. "I'll show you."

"Please let me go with you," Alice said quickly.

Bill Judson said, "No, Alice; you stay here with Frank."

Noah led Link and Bill Judson upstairs and along a hall to a doorway from which white light streamed. This bril-

liance poured from two softly hissing gasoline lamps with mantles and green glass shades, one at either end of a handsome old mahogany desk.

A man with thin white hair through which his white scalp gleamed was sitting slumped back in a chair before a portable typewriter on a blue blotter. A sheet of manuscript paper was in the roller. The man's right hand resting on his knee loosely clasped a short-barreled nickeled revolver.

Link glanced at the pencil-sized hole almost centered in the dead man's forehead, then bent down, with Bill Judson, to read what was typed on the paper.

The words stood out, sharply black.

I wish to be buried in a plain pine coffin on the top of Indian Hill without a headstone.

Bill Judson straightened up and said with ponderous finality: "Well, I guess that settles it, Link."

Link was studying the typewriter. He walked around the desk and went to the end of the room, to a many-paned door. The light behind him, shining through the panes, showed him the low rail of a balcony and gleamed on a pine branch which hung down, touching the rail. He tried the knob. The door was not locked.

He returned to the dead man's desk. It was very neat. Nothing was out of place. The wastebasket beside the desk contained a discarded typewriter-ribbon, and a few scraps of paper.

Link bent over the typewriter again.

"Strange," he murmured. "Very strange."

"That he wants to be buried on that hill?" Bill Judson said gruffly. "Not to my way of thinkin'."

"I mean, this note."

"What about it?"

"Why didn't he sign it?"

"Why should he sign it? He typed it out, picked up his gun and shot himself."

Link said thoughtfully: "If he was murdered, the murderer went out that door and over the rail to the ground."

Noah Enderby, in the doorway slowly chewing gum, said coldly: "I thought you'd twist something ugly out of this. Isn't it bad enough as it is?"

"We won't twist what aint here," Bill Judson answered.

LINK was gazing absorbedly at a neat pile of perhaps a dozen small cream-colored squares of heavy linen on one corner of the desk. The topmost cloth square was slightly rumpled and pinched in one corner. He picked it up, examined it, and replaced it on the pile.

"Remarkable," he said.

The black-haired man in the doorway said quickly: "What's remarkable about a man's wiping his spectacles? That's what he always used it for."

Link glanced at the little linen square, then at the typewriter. "Nothing," he said apologetically. "But in relation to that letter, I think this linen is very remarkable."

Noah said belligerently: "Why?"

"Noah," Bill Judson said heavily, "we'd just as lief be left alone."

Noah Enderby hesitated. His jaws moved slowly. With an air of tightening his already tight lips, he turned and walked out of the room. Bill Judson closed the door. Returning to the desk he said: "What is it, Link?"

"I don't know. I may be wrong."

"But what is there? It's a clean-cut case, aint it? There he is, with the gun in his hand, and that note in the typewriter! What do you suspect? Why didn't he kill himself?"

"Couldn't anyone have typed this note to make murder look like suicide?"

"Shucks, Link; that aint likely."

Frank Waldron tapped on the door and came in. He looked ill. In a shaken voice he said: "There's something I've got to tell you. I—I'm the one who's responsible for Mr. Varnable's death."

Bill Judson shoved out his jaw. "So you're the one who killed him!"

"Morally," the young man said, "I killed Mr. Varnable."

"Suppose," Link suggested, "you tell us all about it."

"IT was the jewelry—Alice's jewelry," Frank blurted. "Her—her grandfather left it to her. It's worth a fortune. She's to have it when she's twenty-one. According to the terms of the will, it's kept in a vault under the cellar floor."

He braced himself against the desk.

"The jewelry was kept down there in a little iron box. Nobody but Mr. Varnable had the key. You see, he's the executor. But—I—I—" His voice pinched off. He gulped again. "I've always been crazy about jewelry. Ever since I've worked for Mr. Varnable, I've been crazy to see that jewelry. He wouldn't show it to anyone. He said it would violate the will. But I've read the will. It says nothing of the kind. And I've been crazy to see that jewelry, for years. But I never got the chance until yesterday. Mr. Varnable went to Northtown and left his keys on this desk. I went down cellar and opened the box."

He stopped, gulped, cried: "Half of them were gone! I made a list and checked it against the list in the will. I knew then that the jewels were the source of the mysterious sums of money he had been speculating with. I realized he'd been selling the jewelry piece by piece. It made me furious that he was cheating that helpless girl. He treated her like a servant, anyway."

"And you're engaged to her," Link said.

"Not quite. There's only an understanding. We were hoping to be married when Mr. Varnable finished his book and paid me for my work. I didn't know what to do. I thought it over all night and all day. This evening I came up here and accused him. He had a violent temper. He rushed at me, swinging his fists. I thought he was going to kill me."

Frank Waldron paused and wet his lips. "He told me to clear out. Then I knew beyond a shadow of doubt that he was the one who'd been stealing those jewels."

"What time was this?" Link inquired.

"About ten, or a little later. I went outside and walked and walked. The scandal of this will ruin Alice's life!"

"Have you," Link asked, "told Noah or Alice about this?"

"No!"

"Did anything else happen?"

"No. He pushed me out of the room and slammed the door."

"How long did you walk?"

"Until about twelve."

"You mean," Bill Judson barked, "you were walkin' two hours?"

"Yes. When I came in, Alice was running down the stairs. She said her father's door was locked, and he wouldn't answer. I went up with her, and we banged on the door. But he didn't answer."

"Where," Link asked, "was Noah?"

"He came up while we were hammering on the door. We broke the door down."

Link said quietly: "Who cleans this room?"

"Alice."

"I want to see that jewel-box," Bill Judson said grimly. "Where's the key?"

"Noah took all the keys."

"When?"

"Just after we found Mr. Varnable—like this."

The deputy sheriff said brusquely: "Run along, Frank. We'll meet you downstairs."

When Frank was gone, Judson said, and could not quite keep the triumph from his voice: "Well, Link, I guess that sort o' clinches it."

"Will you find out what you can about the jewel-box," Link answered, "while I finish looking things over here?"

Muttering, Bill Judson walked out of the room.

Link knelt beside the dead man and moved from side to side, so that the light from the gasoline mantles fell on the typewriter at various angles.

He looked in the wastebasket. A black cat walked in from the hall, sat down and stared at Link with golden eyes.

The ex-detective regarded the cat and said: "Hello, Meanie." The cat softly said, *"P'r'r'r't!"* and strolled over with its tail stiffly vertical and rubbed its chin against Link's knee. He scratched it back of the ears and said: "Meanie, what do you know about this?"

The black cat purred loudly. . . .

Link returned his attention to the wastebasket. He opened up and read every scrap of paper it contained. None of them supplied what he was looking for. He went over to a long mahogany table and glanced at neat piles of manuscript stacked on the satiny surface. He read the opening sentence on one page:

The Varnables left their vineyards and their fields and took up their flintlocks and their powder-horns—

Link returned to the desk. He searched it thoroughly—opened drawers, went through the wire basket at the back, even opened a box of carbon paper.

FROM downstairs Bill Judson's voice boomed: "Link! Link! It's empty! Every piece of jewelry is gone!"

The black cat followed Link downstairs. Bill Judson excitedly seized the storekeeper's arm and whispered: "Listen! That old crook was plannin' to sell 'em and make his get-away! But he didn't have the nerve! Killed himself instead!"

Link said: "Maybe I've got a suspicious nature." And he walked into the parlor. Noah Enderby and Frank Waldron were standing before the fireplace. Alice Varnable sat staring out a window, with her chin cupped in her palm.

"Perhaps," Link said, "you'll find the jewels buried on Indian Hill."

The deputy sheriff cried: "Say—there's an idea! That's why he left that message in the typewriter!"

"That doesn't hold water," Noah said coldly. "Why should he hide them there, then leave a note telling where to look?"

Bill Judson glared at him. He said grimly: "I'm goin' up to Indian Hill and look for that jewelry."

"Perhaps," Link said quietly, "you'd all better come."

The two men and the girl looked startled. Frank Waldron said: "That's ridiculous."

"Will you bring that lantern?" Link quietly added.

The secretary stared at him rebelliously. Finally he said: "All right. I'll bring it."

"And we'll need a spade," Bill Judson growled.

Link asked Alice Varnable if she was coming with them.

"Yes!" she gasped. . . .

It was, Bill Judson informed Link as they left the house, only a five-minute walk. Frank Waldron went ahead with the lantern, following a cowpath. Noah, with a spade over his shoulder, walked with Alice Varnable.

Deliberately loitering, Bill Judson said in a hoarse whisper to Link: "Still tryin' to make this out into a murder? Tell me somethin': What system do you use when you work on a case like this?"

Link answered: "Well—I call it Matthew's system."

"What do you mean?"

"Seventh chapter, seventh verse of Matthew. 'Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' Is this Indian Hill?"

"Yep; we're almost to the top."

THEY were walking hip-deep in dew-soaked weeds. The hill, misty in the moonlight, looked lemon-colored.

Link touched one of the wet weeds lightly with his fingers.

"What are these yellow things, Jud?"

Bill Judson laughed. "That just goes to show how little you know about the country. Goldenrod's one of the commonest weeds there is. You've certainly got a plenty to learn, Link."

The others were waiting for them on the hilltop. This was a roughly circular flat area perhaps two hundred feet in diameter. Here the golden weeds grew more thickly than on the slope. Higher hills shut this one in. Mist rose in a pale-green steam from a near-by ravine.

It was, Link thought, a desolate spot.

Bill Judson was sending a white beam here and there into the weeds from a pocket flashlight. Frank Waldron with the lantern, and Noah Enderby with the spade, began a tour of the other side, looking for freshly-turned earth.

Alice Varnable was standing alone. For perhaps five minutes she watched the men. Then she cried, as if she were suddenly frightened: "I can't stand this! I can't stand this!"

Link went over. "Do you think it's a waste of time, Miss Varnable?"

Her dark eyes, staring at him, were opaque in the moonlight.

"Yes," she whispered.

"So do I," Link said.

The three men came walking over.

Noah said: "We've decided to postpone this until morning."

"Where," Link asked, "are the rest of the family buried?"

"It's down the hill," Bill Judson answered, "on that side."

"I wonder if you'd show it to me?"

Noah grumbled: "I'm fed up with this chasing around. What's it all about?"

And Link said mildly: "It's just an idea I had. Would you mind coming down with me?"

HE wondered if the girl would refuse to go. But she didn't. As they descended the hill, she stayed close to Bill Judson. There was a flat place between the foot of the hill and the Amatuck Road—a rectangle perhaps three hundred by five hundred feet enclosed by an iron fence. Moonlight slanted across headstones within the rectangle. An abundance of dwarf cypress trees lent the Varnable burying-ground an appropriate melancholy. Link felt that all about him were brooding ghosts.

At one end of the graveyard the side of another hill rose sheerly, and in the face of this was set, in moss-grown masonry, an iron door.

"I suppose," Link said with an apologetic air, "the heads of the family are ordinarily placed in this vault. Miss Varnable, if your father had not left instructions to be buried on Indian Hill, his body would have gone in there, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"It hasn't been opened," Frank Waldron said, "in years."

"Seven," said the girl. Her voice shook. "When my grandfather died."

"Where's the key?" Link asked.

"In the house," she said. "I'll get it!"

She started off toward the house, broke at once into a run.

Link said sharply: "Jud! Keep these two here! Don't ask questions—just keep 'em here!"

Link was running. He ran down the graveyard, and as he jumped the iron fence, he saw the dark dress of Alice Varnable flutter as she darted through the trees. She was circling the hill. She disappeared. Link raced after her. In a moment he caught sight of her again. She was running toward the barn. She vanished into an open door. Before he reached it, Link heard the growling of a starter. He ran inside just as the motor took hold. He fumbled along the side of the car until he found the steering-wheel. A door slammed. The girl had escaped from the other side. She ran out into the moonlight in the direction of the road.

Link caught her by the arm as she started down a path beside the house. He panted: "It's no use, Miss Varnable."

She struggled, began to cry.

"Where's that key?"

Her eyes, in her upturned white face, were desperate. Her mouth trembled, and she said: "I'll get it."

"Please don't try that again."

The key, in a drawer in a mahogany table in the parlor, was of wrought iron, at least eight inches in length.

Link pocketed the key, and with the girl walking silently ahead of him, started back to the graveyard. The night was very still. The girl's dress swished against the tall wet weeds.

In the graveyard Frank Waldron and Noah Enderby, with hands in air, were backed against the door of the vault.

Link picked up the lantern and inserted the key in the lock.

"You'd better," he suggested, "keep them covered, Jud."

The hinges groaned. The door swung outward in protesting jerks. Link held up the lantern. Cold earthy dampness puffed past him.

On the floor of the vault, just inside the door, was a black suitcase.

Link said: "Don't take your eyes off those people, Jud."

"I'm watchin' 'em!"

Link bent down and unlatched the suitcase. It was packed with a man's clothing: shirts, underwear, socks, ties and handkerchiefs. On top was a chamois-skin bag. Link untied the red silk cord at its throat and held its contents to the lantern light. Soft old gold glowed; sapphires, rubies, diamonds sparkled and gleamed.

He replaced the bag and said: "Miss Varnable, please come here."

Her faint voice said: "I'm here."

"Is this suitcase Frank Waldron's?"

She hesitated. "Yes," she whispered.

LINK went out and said: "Jud, you can arrest Waldron. When Mr. Varnable found out he was stealing the jewels, Waldron killed him. Waldron packed this suitcase and hid it here with the jewels, intending to slip away. But he was afraid he'd be stopped. He was afraid to go through with it."

The dead man's secretary sat down heavily on the ground and covered his face with his arms.

Bill Judson excitedly removed from his hip pocket a pair of handcuffs. One of them he snapped about Waldron's wrist.

He exclaimed: "How'd you know they were in there?"

"Because of the note in the typewriter. I knew Mr. Varnable didn't type that note, and that whoever had, didn't want Mr. Varnable buried in this tomb. The goldenrod on Indian Hill proved that. Mr. Varnable suffered from goldenrod hay-fever. No matter how eccentric or sentimental he may have been, I couldn't believe he would have chosen a grave under goldenrod.

"Waldron wrote that note because he realized after he shot Mr. Varnable that he could not let the body be placed in this vault. His suitcase was here before he shot Mr. Varnable. He had packed it and left it here, planning to slip away before the theft was discovered. After the murder, he realized he would not dare come here. He would not dare go away. So he wrote the note. And he took infinite pains to prove that he had not written it:

"After he typed it, he wiped the keys carefully with the end of that little square of linen. Then he pressed the dead man's fingers down on the keys. But he missed two keys which were used in writing the note—the *u* and the *t*. There were no finger-marks on the glass tops of those two keys."

The girl said faintly: "Noah, please take me to the house. I'm cold."

Bill Judson began ponderously, "Listen here, Link—" He stopped, went on briskly: "Let's get goin'. Seems to me we've done a pretty good night's work."

HIGHLY ELIGIBLE

(Continued from page 23)

technique of bringing around headstrong youngsters.

"Why don't you go for a drive, Miss Tennington?" suggested Miss Hendrick sweetly. "Let me call up the garage for you."

"You're too good to me," said Lou icily, and walked out of the room.

"She's up to some mischief," said Mrs. Tennington after a silence. "I wouldn't be surprised if she goes straight to the beach and destroys all that we were trying to build up."

"God forbid! It'd be nothing short of a calamity if she does. As I explained to you so many times, Mrs. Tennington, neither you nor Lou should be seen on the beach until after the big dinner, until after Newport finds out that the Landimores actually dined in your house. Everyone on the beach will cut Lou dead if she shows her face there before the big dinner. I know my Newport."

"So do I! And I've a good mind—"

A VISION of her own mother locking her in her room crossed her memory. She was nineteen then, and was threatening to elope with the first violinist of a French orchestra. Had it not been for her mother's iron will, God alone knows what would have happened to her. A French violinist! She shuddered.

"I've a good mind," she repeated, "to take a leaf out of my sweet mother's book. The world may be changing, and the girls of 1935 may imagine that their generation knows it all; but let me tell you, my dear Miss Hendrick—"

Miss Hendrick never found out what her mistress was going to tell her. The sight of a long blue roadster dashing down the driveway into Bellevue Avenue made Mrs. Tennington stop in the middle of the sentence. Wise as her mother's "book" was, it had failed to anticipate the havoc that the automobile was to play with discipline in American families.

"Let's proceed with our work," she said after a pause. "There's nothing like work to take one's mind off one's worries."

"How very true!" agreed Miss Hendrick. "I've a little surprise for you today. The Ambassador has accepted your invitation."

"My dear!"

The two women embraced. Mrs. Tennington was crying freely. The Ambassador! It was almost unbelievable.

"You are a magician, my dear. . . What would I have done without you? The Ambassador! How on earth did you manage to persuade him?"

Miss Hendrick smiled mysteriously.

"Please don't cross-examine me," she said, dropping her eyes. "I've pulled some strings which I never risked pulling before, not for anyone."

"I understand—I understand. . . . But at least I insist on paying whatever expenses you may have incurred."

"I wouldn't think of it."

"I insist, my dear."

"You mean it?"

"I certainly do."

"I really hate to abuse your generosity, but the fact is—the fact is that I've promised to buy a platinum cigarette-case for a gentleman who helped me take the hurdles."

"A platinum cigarette-case? Nothing else? You're a magician. Here—I want to give you a check right away. Will two thousand do?"

Miss Hendrick swallowed hard. She had never heard of a platinum cigarette-case that was worth two thousand dollars; but for that matter, she had never heard of anyone in the entourage of the ambassador-in-question who accepted bribes. So she nodded modestly and reached for the proffered check. She was eighteen hundred dollars to the good on the transaction, having promised old lady Landimore but two hundred dollars for bringing along the man whom they all called "the Ambassador," but who had long since ceased representing his country in any place on earth except the Colony restaurant in New York and the Everglades Club in Palm Beach.

"And now that we've settled that little matter," beamed Mrs. Tennington, "let's proceed with our work . . . I hate to be mean, my dear, but can you see the face of that preposterous Kate de Bonn when she hears that I had the Ambassador on my right at my very first dinner in Newport?"

Yes, Miss Hendrick could well visualize the enraged face of Bob Whaldren's mother, but—

"What's wrong, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing at all, nothing at all! But if you don't mind my saying it, the Governor should sit on your right."

"The Governor? That impossible fossil! Why, Miss Hendrick!"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Tennington; but don't you see, according to the last ruling of the Protocol Division of the State Department, the Governor of a State must be given precedence over an Ambassador if neither is in office at the time."

She went on, quoting the various rulings of the past ten years. When Lou returned home shortly before the dinner, the two women were still debating the relative merits of an ex-ambassador and an ex-governor.

Chapter Four

NO one on the beach had cut Lou. Miss Hendrick and Mrs. Tennington may have known Newport, but Newport knew "liquidity" when it saw it. And Lou Tennington was "liquidity," honest-to-goodness, unquestionable "liquidity," in so far as the members of the Spouting Rock Beach Association were concerned. Bankers and stockbrokers, retired capitalists and directors of corporations, they all could recite by heart the list of assets left by the late Charles P. Tennington, a list which seemed highly ludicrous in the days of plenty, but which became nothing short of the Revelation of St. John the Divine after five years of depression. What Mrs. Tennington and Lou had always taken for granted—that their fortune was invested in tax-exempt bonds and unassailable preferred stocks—was considered a miracle by Newport. The old men spoke of Lou's late father as "that wizard

without peer in the history of American finance;" and the young men, listening to their talk and thinking of Lou's face and figure, minced no words in denouncing Mrs. Tennington, whose wholly unnecessary strategy was depriving them of the company of the most eligible girl in America.

"Poor kid!" said George Mawrey. "She's being crucified by that fool of a mother and that grafter of a social secretary."

"Who gives a damn," asked Dick Posterman, "about that unfortunate affair in London? I for one would marry Lou even if her former fiancé was caught in the act of beheading a Daughter of the American Revolution."

"And as for me," admitted Jack Traydor, "I wouldn't begrudge her a love-affair with the whole Communist Party."

The opinion of Messrs. Mawrey, Posterman and Traydor, the three well-known Newport characters in search of cash, was heartily seconded by everybody on the beach and in the Clambake Club, so much so that precisely at the moment when Lou suddenly appeared in the doorway of her cabaña, wearing a pale-blue bathing suit and a white cap, several young gentlemen of dispatch and determination were weighing earnestly the advisability of burning Miss Hendrick in effigy.

THE ovation that welcomed Lou would have pleased a Nazi chieftain. George Mawrey—he was the first one to detect that slender long-legged figure on the threshold of the deserted Tennington cabaña—staggered as if shot, then whispered in a voice vibrating with agony: "Boys, pinch me. . . . Please, pinch me! I'm dreaming—I know I'm dreaming." Nobody bothered to pinch him. With a mighty yell of "Death to Martha Hendrick!" they swung into action, and the next moment Lou found herself surrounded by these shouting, laughing tanned young men who, according to the rules of pre-depression Newport, were in duty bound to cut her dead.

"Am I being razzed or welcomed?" she asked, when she was finally permitted to speak.

"Razzed?" Dick Posterman clicked his heels and bowed from the waist. "Is it customary in your land, O powerful Queen, for starving beggars to razz a plate of chicken-soup?"

"How very flattering!" Lou stepped back and curtsied gravely. "Seeing, however, that I've but one plate of chicken soup to give away, will you, Dick, ask the rest of the bums in this bread-line to try their luck in some other flop-house?"

"My Queen's wishes shall be respected. Boys, I suggest you beat it."

His suggestion was ignored. The breadline refused to budge. At a sign from George Mawrey, it broke into a roaring:

"No, no, a thousand times no!"

Lou wished her mother and Miss Hendrick were there.

"By the way, boys," she said casually, "does any one of you know Nelson Landimore?"

Did they know Nelson Landimore? Did they know that blankety-blank? Did they know that rotter? Did they know that ace of cads? Did they know that Yellow Peril? Did they—

"Shut up now, all of you," ordered Lou.

"I'm looking for facts. I'm not amused by your profanity."

"Facts! D'you hear her? She's looking for facts . . . . Now, aint that something!" Jack Traydor patted Lou's arm and said as if talking to a child: "Why, you naughty little girl, don't you know that even at Pascali's in New York no child would play with Nelson, because Nelson always tries to make children cash Big Bad Checks for him?"

"Can you prove it, Jack?"

"Can I prove it? Can you prove that Franklin Delano Roosevelt is President of the United States? Can you prove that Mussolini's first name is Benito? Can you prove that Broadway is a street, not a mammal? Can you prove that Al Smith used to wear a brown derby?"

"All of which means precisely nothing, Jack, except that you've progressed considerably in your knowledge of politics since those days when you thought that the Electoral College couldn't be much of a college because you had never heard of their football team. . . . What I want is not second-hand wisecracks, but proofs! You talk about bad checks issued by Nelson Landimore. Can you produce a single one of them?"

"Say—" Jack Traydor gave her a look of undiluted disgust. "Are you taking me for a sucker? Do I act like a half-wit who would cash that cad's checks?"

"I'd hate to tell you, Jack, what you act like. But never mind that. How about you, George, and you, Dick, and all you others? Has any one of you got a Nelson Landimore check marked *N. G.?*"

THE brown young men scratched their heads and eyed each other gloomily.

"I suppose," sneered George Mawrey, "the fact that none of us ever bought a bottle of beer from Al Capone proves that he's an early Christian martyr."

"You bore me," said Lou. She pushed her way through the "bread-line" unceremoniously, took a few steps toward the water, then settled down on the sand, stretched her legs and closed her eyes. She knew that by this time she was being watched by everyone on the beach, and she pretended indifference; but her heart was beating fast.

The bread-line followed her after a moment's hesitancy.

"You're a low-life Bulgarian; that's what you are," said Jack Traydor tentatively.

Lou didn't budge. Years before, it used to amuse her to hear Jack refer to everyone as a "low-life Bulgarian." Now it sounded like something out of the First Reader.

"Bulgarian, nothing," came another voice. "She learned her tactics in a Chinese laundry. No tickee, no washee. No Landimore checks, no good time."

Lou yawned audibly.

"Comrades!" George Mawrey winked at the bread-line and raised his voice: "Are we going to permit those blood-sucking capitalists to lead a life of luxury here on the beach—while the starving garment-workers are crying for justice everywhere from Maine to California?"

Lou opened one eye, lifted her head, sized up George's stocky figure pityingly, then said as if thinking aloud:

"Good old Newport! You never change: Too proud to fight the man who's up, but always ready to kick the man who's down."

They could hardly talk, from indignation. They hissed and growled and stuttered and stammered.

"You've no right to say that!"

"Of all the people on earth, you ought to know—"

"What a ridiculous charge!"

"Sounds like Bob Whaldren."

"Who's the man that's up?"

"That's it! Suppose you tell us who's up and who's down."

"Gladly," said Lou. "Bob Whaldren's down, and Nelson Landimore's up."

"Nelson's up? You're crazy."

"No, I'm not. He must be up, because with all the dirty things you say behind his back, every one of you is jealous of him. You don't laugh at him the way you do at Bob, and none of you would dare repeat those accusations to his face. Wait! Keep your traps shut for just a second longer—it won't hurt you, you know, to be silent for one short second. My mother's giving a dinner tomorrow night, a dinner in honor of Nelson Landimore. I invite you, all of you, to drop in after the dinner for a friendly chat with Mr. Landimore. . . . Think of the opportunity I'm offering you, my heroes!"

They were thinking of it, thinking hard.

"D'you mean it, Lou?"

"I certainly do."

"Well—" Once more George Mawrey assumed his favorite rôle of Newport's spokesman. "You can't expect us to start a riot in your mother's house. . . . After all, you're dealing with gentlemen, and a gentleman is not supposed—"

"To tell foul things about another gentleman behind his back."

"You're wasting your venom, Lou. In the first place, none of us considers Nelson Landimore a gentleman. And in the second place, it is quite possible—I didn't say *'probable,'* mind you; I said 'possible'—that if we work fast between now and tomorrow night, we may get hold of a few exhibits which we'd be tickled pink to present to you with our compliments for whatever use you'd care to make of them."

"Well spoken, my lad," approved Dick. "But remember, Lou: You're the one to display those exhibits. As for us, we'll merely procure them."

"What exhibits are you talking about?"

"I rule this question out," said George, "as irrelevant, immaterial, non-consequential and altogether fresh. The defense rests—until tomorrow night. Come on, boys. Follow your *'Führer.'* . . . We've a long journey ahead of us."

WITH a resounding "Hail Mawrey!" they fell into quasi-Prussian formation and marched away—twenty-odd goose-stepping, sunburned figures. Although the youngest of them was at least five years older than Lou, she felt as if she had spent the afternoon in a kindergarden. What was it that Bob's stepfather used to say about the young men of Newport? Something about their utmost childishness? Oh, yes: "A typical young man of Newport is an amalgam of an unreconstructed stockbroker and a not-conditioned infant who spends week-days in a leather chair and week-ends in a perambulator."

Lou laughed mirthlessly. A moment later she was angry with herself for laughing at Count de Bonn's witticisms. The man was a worse scoundrel than even Nel-

son Landimore. Landimore wanted money, and Lou Tennington happened to possess what he was after. But that beast in Monte Carlo! He did not want money; he did not need money. Bob's mother had enough money to take care of his craziest whims. What he wanted was to mold people to his will, to take that bit of wax known as Bob Whaldren and make out of it a knickknack to carry in his pocket. She would have looked pretty, married to a knickknack, sharing with her husband his stepfather's pocket! She was lucky, she was very, very lucky indeed to have escaped the fate Count de Bonn was preparing for her. The most fortunate part of the whole affair was that *she* had walked out on Bob, not Bob on her. Let him write those asinine articles in his dirty communist sheet, and pretend his thorough contentment with his New Life. New Life! What arrant nonsense!

LOU opened her beach-bag, produced a mirror and scrutinized her face appraisingly. So long as she continued to look as she was looking now, she could make Bob Whaldren quit his New Life at the snap of her fingers, she decided, and her decision made her feel better. It was strange, of course, that Bob had not tried to telephone to her or drop a few lines of apology; but then, she had called him some of the choicest names, she had to admit that. It must have hurt his pride considerably to hear her describe him as a "cheap exhibitionist" and a "publicity hound." Well, it was coming to him! Some one had to tell him the truth about himself, and she was glad that she was the one who had done it. He had made her the laughingstock of two continents. She had walked out on him. The score was tied, and the game was over. No more Whaldrens for her—no more parlor pinks!

"From now on," she advised herself, "you're going to have a program, young lady. Number One: you will dispose of that Landimore peril. Number Two: you will limit your circle of friendship to three-dimensional people, and shy off those peculiar animals whom Clarence Darrow failed to get out of the branches."

Highly pleased with this new set of resolutions, Lou jumped up and went for a swim, with every eye on the beach following the slender lines of her long supple body, with every dowager under a parasol making a mental note not to forget to invite "that Tennington girl" to tea.

"There's something invigorating about her," said Mrs. Dwight Van Ryn, whose only son was having considerable difficulty in finding a bride capable of supporting his ocean-going yacht.

"There would be something invigorating about you too," replied her son gloomily, "if instead of talking about the 'fundamental soundness' of the country, Father had unloaded our stocks in 1929."

"But don't you think, Roger—"

"No, I don't. . . . Here, read it and weep!" He handed to her the early edition of a New York afternoon paper and pointed at Charley Merrydom's column. "According to that fat louse, Nelson Landimore's hugging the rail. . . . Dining with the Tenningtons tomorrow night and having the situation well in hand."

"Leave it to Boston."

"You're right there, mater. There ought to be a law against Boston."

Chapter Five

AS Bob opened the letter, a draft fell out. He picked it up and read:

"Pay to the order of Robert Whaldren a sum of two thousand dollars

Richard de Bonn."

Bob's first impulse was to mail the draft back to his stepfather at once. After all, the Count had no money of his own, and those two thousand dollars came from the same hateful source—from Bob's father, via his mother's divorce settlement. To accept aid from his stepfather meant to admit defeat, to concede that whether boy or candidate for Congress, he could not get along without Thomas W. Whaldren's dollars.

"My dear Richard," Bob started the letter which was to accompany the draft back to Monte Carlo, *"I deeply appreciate your desire to help me, and I do not doubt your sincerity, but—"*

He stopped when he reached that *"but."* He remembered suddenly that he had but forty-five cents in his pocket, and that whatever he could sell or pawn had been already sold and pawned: His handsome pigskin week-end bag, his platinum wristwatch, his dinner jacket, his topcoat and every suit of clothes he possessed except the one he had on. The proceeds from the sale of the watch had been spent on a dinner he gave for Comrade Romney and Comrade Gorlik, the two members of the Party who seemed to have taken a fancy to him and were helping him to draw up plans of his campaign. As for the pigskin bag and the rest—his landlady, the grocer, the Automat and the subway had to be taken care of.

A quarter and two dimes! Searching carefully through all his pockets, he could not find a cent more.

The choice, as he saw it, lay between cashing his stepfather's draft or calling on Comrades Romney and Gorlik. The Party was poor, of course, and barely able to meet the bills of its printers; but Bob would be willing to accept as little as fifty dollars. Why he decided upon that particular sum, he did not know. Possibly because he had often heard his father shout on the phone: "Hell, I wouldn't invest even a fifty-dollar bill in that wildcat scheme!"

So fifty dollars it was to be. The Party surely owed that much to him for the daily article he had been writing for the last three weeks for its paper, not to mention several lectures he delivered under the Party's auspices in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Didn't Comrade Romney shake his hand after his first lecture and congratulate him on smashing all records of attendance? Didn't even that arch-capitalist morning newspaper admit that "Three thousand, five hundred men and women paid a dollar apiece to hear Bob Whaldren denounce Wall Street"? And didn't he turn down the innumerable offers of lecture managers and magazine editors, so as not to deprive the Party of a monopoly on his services?

Comrades Romney and Gorlik were certain to hand him a fifty-dollar bill. It was foolish to doubt it for a single second. Naturally, he loathed the idea of asking them for money, but their money was honest money, while Richard's money—

Bob frowned, picked up the draft with two fingers, as if he were touching something dirty, and pushed it away. Then he picked up his hat and rushed down the four flights of rickety stairs. His room-rent was overdue and he hoped he could avoid encountering his landlady.

"Just a moment, Mr. Whaldren," he heard her voice just as he was about to open the front door.

"Sorry, Mrs. Maloney. . . . I'm really in a frightful hurry."

HE was out of breath by the time he reached the subway station three blocks away. That was a narrow escape!

He felt as if instead of owing Mrs. Maloney a week's rent, he was guilty of some crime. What if she really needed those three dollars? What if she herself was penniless? Perhaps he should have talked to her and explained that he was on his way to raise some money. But, no—that was something of which he was still incapable—even after three weeks of eating in an Automat. It was one thing to talk to three thousand five hundred men and women who paid a dollar apiece to hear him denounce Wall Street and predict a revolution. It was another, oh, so vastly different thing, to face his own landlady and hand her a few smooth phrases instead of three dollars.

He met Romney and Gorlik in the doorway of their office, situated in a shabby building on the lower East Side.

"Well—well!" beamed Romney, a broad-shouldered middle-aged man, dressed in a fashion which suggested a fairly successful insurance salesman rather than a formidable revolutionary. "Just in time to buy us a drink. We were just talking about you. Weren't we, Abe?"

"We certainly were," said Abe Gorlik, a thinnish fellow in his early thirties. "In fact, we were just about to give you a ring and tell you to come downtown. . . . Come on, Bob. The Party is thirsty. A couple of beers will do it no harm."

"If it's just the same to you—" began Bob, and could not continue.

A couple of beers? Even at a dime per glass, even if he himself just sat and watched— He wished fervently he had at least fifty cents in his pockets; but having spent a nickel on the subway ride, he had but forty cents left—which meant that he wouldn't be able to tip the waiter.

"What's the matter with you?" wondered Romney.

"I'll tell you what's the matter with him," laughed Abe. "The truth is, Jim, that our young friend doesn't like beer. Well, Bob, just to prove to you our broad-mindedness, we'd compromise on a couple of champagne cocktails. Come on.

I know a nice place in the Village. Won't take us a minute in a taxi."

He hailed a passing cab, and the first thing Bob knew he was driving toward the Village, with Romney and Gorlik chattering gayly and obviously anticipating a pleasant afternoon. He felt a peculiar numbness. He couldn't think. His ears rang. He took off his straw hat, and turned it around and around in his trembling hands. He didn't dare to watch the taximeter. Each time he heard his friends ask him something, he uttered a guttural sound and nodded enthusiastically. As if in a fog he saw the cab stop in front of a former speak-easy in the heart of the Village. He still hoped that either Romney or Gorlik would volunteer to settle the fare, but they went straight in, leaving him on the sidewalk.

"Red skies, sailor's delight," said the driver pleasantly, pointing at the crimson sunset.

"Yes, yes, of course—"

"If you won't be long, Mister, I'd just as soon wait for you."

Bob did not answer. He was still turning his hat around and around.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Mister," said the driver confidentially. "I won't charge you for waiting. It says 75 now—see?" He pointed toward the meter. "So 75 it'll stay until you come out."

He turned off the flag before Bob could utter a word. Seventy-five cents! Including the tip, it was forty-five cents more than Bob's entire capital.

"Fair enough, eh? Strictly against the rules, Mister, but what the hell! It's a lousy racket, any way you take it."

Bob nodded.

"I suppose so," he mumbled; then he turned around slowly and crossed the sidewalk with a drunken gait. The driver sighed. He was sorry to see a nice young fellow drunk as a brass monkey at this hour of the afternoon.

ROMNEY and Gorlik had already ordered champagne cocktails when Bob found them in a small room behind the bar reserved for valuable clients.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting," apologized Bob; "but don't you see—"

"It's perfectly all right, Bob." Romney slapped him on the back vigorously. "Sit down, and let's have a chat. There's something Abe and I wanted to discuss with you for a long time. —Here, waiter. Put them down and repeat the order in ten minutes from now. Your luck, Bob!"

Romney and Gorlik swallowed their cocktails avidly.

"How about you, Bob?"

"I won't drink mine, if you don't mind."

"Mind? Why should we mind? You're the host. What you say goes. And now, let's begin. You do the talking, Abe. You've figured it out in detail."

"It's like this," said Abe, taking off his horn-rimmed glasses and moving his chair close to Bob's. "To be absolutely frank, we want you to help us, Bob."

Bob saw a ray of hope. If they wanted him to help them, they couldn't possibly refuse him a small loan.

"I'm at your disposal, comrades," he said earnestly. "If necessary, I'd be willing to lecture twice a day. I likewise think I'll be able, on top of writing my daily article, to do a bit of reportorial work for you."

"Splendid," approved Abe. "Remind me about it next week. Right now I want to talk to you about something else. The Party needs money, Bob, needs it badly, needs it desperately. When I say 'money,' I don't mean a few thousand. I mean lots of money. We can put to good use right away at least one hundred thousand dollars."

"Say two hundred thousand dollars, and you'd still be underestimating our needs," added Romney.

"Very true, Jim; but I do believe that one hundred thousand may see us through the next three months."

"I've me doubts, old fellow." Jim shook his head.

"Leave it to me, Romney; I know what I'm talking about. Now then, Bob, how do you propose to go about it?"

"You mean you want me to advise you on lectures and books—things like that?"

"No, Bob, I don't mean that at all. I want you to tell us as to how long, do you think, it would take you to get one hundred thousand dollars from your father."

Bob opened his mouth wide.

"You're joking, Abe."

"I've never been so serious in my life."

"But why? But how? Really, I'm at a loss."

"I know—I know," interrupted Gorlik. "You think I've lost my mind. I have not, my boy. Listen carefully!"

BOB *was* listening, but all he could think about was that he owed seventy-five cents to the taxi-driver outside, and that some one would have to pay for the champagne cocktails.

"Are you following me, Bob? Good! As I said a minute ago, we could put a hundred thousand dollars to good use in the campaign; and you have contacts that could get it for us, haven't you?"

"Contacts?"

"I mean, you must know people who have money and who feel somewhat as you do—though they wouldn't go so far as you have. They wouldn't want to come out so openly; but they might contribute."

"Who?" Bob asked.

"You know your friends—we don't," Gorlik suggested.

"And," said Romney, "you yourself ought to be able to get something from your father.'

"For campaign funds for the communists?" Bob said. "How could I speak of such a thing to my father?"

"You needn't tell him what you want it for—if it's yours. You could simply call your father on long distance and tell him to instruct his lawyers to deposit in your name as much as you think you can get."

"But," said Bob, bewildered, "but—" He could not tell them, as yet, that he could not ask money for himself, and that he had in his own pockets less than a dollar—less, indeed, than half a dollar. "I want to help the Party," he said. "I'll lecture—I'll write."

"What would that do for us? If you want to help,—if you mean what you say, —you can help by raising money. And you won't even try to do that?"

"No."

They got up stiffly.

"Wait!" cried Bob.

"Wait for what?"

"Don't you understand? Don't you see? My father and I—he'd laugh at me. . . .

I can't—I can't. . . . I've no money myself. I even—I even haven't got enough to pay for the drinks. And that taxi is still waiting. . . . Oh, don't you understand? I've sold everything I had—"

"Chiseling, eh?"

Romney sneered, took a roll of ten-dollar bills out of his pocket, peeled one off and threw it onto the table.

"Here," he said. "This is not the first, and I'm afraid not the last ten-dollar bill squeezed by the Whaldren family out of the working-class. Don't think I believe a word of your hard-luck story, but it so happens that we can't afford to be mixed up in a scandal, not in this sort of scandal, anyway. Keep the change for yourself, My Lord. It'll be entirely in keeping with the best traditions of your crowd. —Come on, Abe. I can stand a bit of fresh air."

THE balance of that day will forever remain a blank in Bob's memory. He has a vague recollection of having stayed in the bar until closing time, of having been pushed none too gently onto the sidewalk and deposited in the taxi that was still waiting for him; of having been driven up Fifth Avenue and through the Park. . . . How he reached Mrs. Maloney's house, and who, if anybody, settled the fare, which must have amounted by that time to much more than he had left of Romney's ten-dollar bill, he will never know. According to Mrs. Maloney, who was awakened by the sound of loud voices on the sidewalk, in all her born days she had never seen a more disgraceful sight.

"Was he drunk? I'll say he was! Must have been in a fight, too. 'Tis a mystery to me how he managed to climb those four flights of stairs. Looked at me and said: 'I'm sorry, Lou!'"

Bob himself does not recall having had even a single drink. The memory of an untouched champagne cocktail—the only memory of that day which he did actually retain—still was haunting him.

The cloud of fog which descended upon him and wrapped him as in a blanket in that bar in the Village lifted only after he opened the door of his room and saw a sketchily clothed girl, a cigarette in her fingers, sitting up on his bed and propped against the pillow.

"There surely must be a mistake somewhere—" he stuttered, without making another step. "This happens to be my room. . . . At least, I think it is. . . . You're taking me for some one else!"

"It's your room, all right," said the girl. "That's why I'm here, sweetheart. Grace Brown is the name. I've a hunch that you're going to hear a lot more about me before long."

She laughed, and motioned to him to come nearer; but seeing that he continued to stand in the doorway, she got up, put her cigarette on the table and then walked toward him resolutely. There was something peculiarly businesslike about her manner.

Blackmail? In the ensuing chapters Mr. Vanderbilt reveals how innocent some of the supposedly super-sophisticated wealthy class may be—and into what dramatic difficulties their situation may betray them.

The Prize Winning Letter and Two Others about

The AVERAGE AMERICAN

In the March Issue of REDBOOK, we published "Mr. Kent at Forty-five"—a Portrait of an Average American

by Henry F. Pringle

Who was made famous as a biographer when he won the Pulitzer Prize for his Life of Theodore Roosevelt.

After Mr. Pringle wrote his brief biography of "Mr. Kent at Forty-five," we wanted to learn what our readers thought of that picture of an average American; and we offered one hundred dollars for the best comment in a letter of less than five hundred words. We print below the prize-winning letter, and two others which seemed to us so good we awarded them special additional prizes.

Detroit, Michigan

DEAR Mr. Editor:

If Sidney Kent, as pictured by Henry Pringle, truly represents a composite picture of the Average American at forty-five, style 1935—then no depression exists, or did, recently!

Mr. Pringle's journalistically sharp eye must have been dulled by an equally smug personal financial situation and an almost-content Design for Living if he could unearth no truer picture of the average American at forty-five, in 1935. Tens of thousands of decent-souled men, almost entirely unresponsible for their present plight, would gladly and instantly change positions with either Kent or Pringle. Both before and during the depression, the writer too traveled extensively in our United States of Depression. His criticism of Mr. Pringle's fictional Average American at forty-five is based not only upon personal experience and that of many friends and former and present associates, but also from first-hand, undulled observations through rubbing shoulders with thousands of *truly* average Americans in many States and walks of life.

Kent, as portrayed, has had a job *continuously,* and has suffered but a *mere* 25% reduction in a $4,000 income. His family of four have admittedly dressed quite decently, have had a part-time maid, and are still "country-clubbers." He has been able to retain *all* his life-insurance and even pay back money borrowed upon it for speculation. He has kept his home and has recovered considerable of his temporarily frozen four-hundred-dollar bank-account. His son has continued in college and his daughter in school. *What a depression picture!* And while tens of thousands seek employment, Kent's work *bores* him!

If Kent's situation is "average"—why, then, a need for any New Deal—why billions for national and local relief? Why a Government Alphabet Family to raise wages, to save homes, to stimulate industry?

What about men who have lost tens of thousands of dollars, and much or all of their insurance; have had their incomes cut 50% or 75% or have no income at all—no job? Have lost their homes and their automobiles, and whose children had to leave college? Industrial executives, bankers, builders, engineers, men who formerly earned as much or more than Kent, now become peddler-salesmen or drive trucks—now earning but a scant living, wearing frayed clothes, needing dental and optical care, beleaguered and besieged by collectors, swamped under burdens of depression-created debts? And what about those of the soil? What of the common laborer?

The men of forty-five in these groups are not puzzling about a job for their sons who are soon to finish college. They are worrying about today—and the inevitable tomorrow. They have just reason to have fear for the future of their wives and children. Bravely "carrying on," they have *had* to hope and believe in the New Deal and the future of America—for few have lent them a helping hand.

Meanwhile, Pringle shows us a Kent smugly content, feeling he "hasn't done so badly," and that life has been pretty good; a Kent with reason for few fears nor worries since his first momentary panic when America's house of cards crashed in 1929; a Kent comfortable as to home and finances, and with no relatives requiring assistance—while less fortunate thousands formerly as pleasantly situated, now "double up" with relatives or huddle in one or two rooms. Meantime, each day dramatically shortens the period in which these depression-hit men can make a "come-back."

Verily, it would seem, Mr. Pringle wrote not from facts but to spread cheer, for if Pringle is right, millions of Americans are wrong. The facts are, that for a goodly percentage of "Average Americans at Forty-five"—life truly "began (all over again) at forty!"

For the forty-fivers were forty in 1930, when the depression was getting well under way.

Very truly,
H. B. Grimm.

Norfolk, Virginia

MY dear Sir:

No, the average American man is not romantic. In the bright lexicon he carries in his mind such queer words as *"cantafjordit, gottahurry"* and that most famous word *"thewifeandkiddies"* loom much larger than small words like *romance, self-expression,* etc.

He is semi-religious, however, in spite of the fact that he bows down to strange "idles;" grinding his life away that the

strange idle may not have to do her own work. Funny expression, or do you think so?

He is possessed of a perfectly marvelous mind. Beyond a doubt—for he never picked up a book or paper in all his married life but that the strange idle emitted such sounds as these: "Darling, the Fritterers are coming over," or, "Have you forgotten we're going over to the Biggers tonight?" "Will you see about the furnace?" and "Could you hear the baby's prayers? I'm a *wreck!*" In spite of all that, he can discuss intelligently any subject of national or international importance.

Invariably, he plays bridge. To keep down our divorce statistics, probably, though personally I've sometimes thought—well, let's pass that. Anyway, he plays bridge. Sometimes he plays golf. He gave up chess long ago, though the wistful look returns at mention of the word.

He may or may not belong to various organizations and men's clubs which always meet during the lunch-hour—never at night. Draw your own conclusions there—you're getting to be a big girl now!

His health is splendid. In answer to any query on the subject, he "feels fine." His druggist may admit that the sales of various and sundry remedies have not dwindled through the years. The average American man will not admit to making use of them; nor will he admit he has a nerve in his body. Not until the grand crash, and he won't know it then.

In fact, he is extremely reticent, anyway. It is known as sparing the little woman worry. You'll never know whether it's a penitentiary sentence or a slump in the market he's facing, until it's over. This is his great fault.

He is a devoted father. That boy and girl are the biggest gambles he'll ever make, and no margin can be too high for him to pay in blood or money.

I give you the toast "To America's greatest institution, the Average American man!" for, Reader, I married him.

Yours, very truly,
Julia Royster Simpson.

St. Louis, Mo.

SIDNEY KENT impresses me as being too resigned, too unconscious of frustration, to represent the Average American. I picture a more active resentment, puzzled, but slightly bitter in the man of today. He hopes the New Deal will work, but is cynically certain that it won't. Some vague inner conviction warns him that the proper solution has not been found. He doesn't know the solution—he wishes he did. He is impatient, irritated.

His cynicism is the result of the crashing of institutions he has believed infallible. His bank has closed; his bonds are worthless, his income cut; his sons need jobs. He accepts the situation because he must—not with philosophic calmness, but with a growing distrust and impotent anger. His anger is directed not at any particular person or political party, but at general conditions. He is even a little angry with himself.

He views the capital-labor strife with alarm. Unfortunately for his own peace of mind, he sides with neither. He can see great virtues and great faults in each. This adds to his bewilderment.

He is beginning to realize that the economic chaos didn't spring up overnight, that something has been radically wrong for some time. He is having mental growing-pains, and he doesn't like it.

He turns a jaundiced eye on other aspects of his life—boyhood dreams and ambitions, his emotional life, his business career. Things assume an undue importance. He is conscious of frustration and resents it. He is floundering in a turbulent sea of doubt: Whom can he trust —what can he trust—what of his children?

During his life he has worked hard, confident of results; he had married for love, brought children into a seemingly safe and sane world. He had planned a definite future for those children. As a father he is an astonishing combination, at times indulgent to a fault, at other times showing a hide-bound sternness that would do credit to a Puritan.

He appreciates the conveniences of modern life, but has a sneaking idea that maybe too many of the old bromides have been debunked; that the boys of his time developed into pretty fine men, and possibly the younger generation know and want too much.

Game! Yes—carrying on to the best of his ability—bless him; but with an underlying feeling of resentment and distrust.

The unusual man may accept the situation with calm resignation, but not the Average American: he is fighting every step of the way—he may be down but he won't be out.

Charlot Mason.

THE KEY TO CINCINNATI

(Continued from page 62)

stolid German-American way, decided to look further. A second study gave due weight to non-resident and old-age mortality. This offered a more encouraging picture, but it still appeared true that Cincinnati mortality was higher than the average. So they probed still further; and this time it was disclosed, among other things, that: Cincinnati's death-rate from scarlet fever was 126 per cent higher for white children than the average in other cities examined; that the mortality from whooping cough was thirty-two per cent higher for white children and fifty-five per cent for negroes; that tuberculosis deaths were twenty-six per cent higher for whites and 120 per cent higher for negroes; that infant white deaths from gastro-enteritis were fifty-four per cent above the average; that deaths from appendicitis were thirty-two per cent above the normal.

Bleeker Marquette and Floyd Allen then got into action. Most of these diseases are preventable, at least to a degree; what lay behind the tragic figures? Common sense told them that the city did not differ greatly from other cities in so far as general health conditions were concerned. Indeed, it had rather a good climate. Could it be that the Basin was to blame for the high rates? They proposed to find out. Stripped of scientific terminology, what they proposed was to answer the question: "Is it true that you die more quickly if you are poor than if you are fairly prosperous? Is it true that poverty denies not only liberty and the pursuit of happiness but life itself?" The answer, they learned after an incredible amount of work, was yes.

Their first step was to reduce *all* of the dwelling-places in Cincinnati to a rental basis; dwellings that were mere tenements as well as palatial houses in the hills. Then, by laborious study of census figures, the city was divided into four main areas. Section No. 1 lay wholly in the Basin; it has a population of eighty-five thousand whites and twenty-seven thousand negroes and the rents average from seventeen to twenty-six dollars a month. Section No. 2 is on the edge of the Basin with some of its dwellings on the lower slopes of the hills; there dwell 101,000 whites and thirteen thousand negroes and the rentals run from twenty-six to forty-five dollars. The hill area is No. 3 with 106,000 white and four thousand five hundred negroes, with rentals from forty-five to sixty-five dollars. The relatively plutocratic part of Cincinnati is No. 4 and is, of course, wholly in the hills. It has 110.000 whites and only two thousand negroes. The rentals start at a theoretical sixty-five dollars—actually, of course, these houses are owned—and go on up. Having marked out these areas, Mr. Marquette and Dr. Allen began a case-by-case study of the people who had died in them between 1929 and 1931. They examined twenty-three thousand individual death-records, and in order to understand the infant mortality rates, twenty-five thousand birth-records as well. And they found:

> That in Section 1, the worst area, there is an infant death for every eleven babies born.
>
> But in Section 4, the best area, only one death occurs in every thirty-three births.
>
> That in certain parts of Section 1 babies die from gastro-enteritis ten times as fast as their lucky brothers and sisters in Section 4.
>
> That measles and whooping-cough mortality in the Basin, which is Section 1, is higher than for all the other three sections together.
>
> That among the eleven thousand negroes in one subdivision of Section 1, the tuberculosis death rate was 560 per 100,000 on the average.
>
> But among another group of negroes in Section 4, where sunlight and fresh air were to be had, the deaths from tuberculosis were only 61.7 per 100,000.

They will, as the work goes on, bring forth additional facts. But already two conclusions may be drawn: The first is that any other American city, had it the nerve, could learn just as much about the ravages of death in slum areas. The second is that adequate housing is a vital need in Cincinnati, as elsewhere. Cincinnati, at least, is going ahead. A six-million-dollar project has been approved by the Public Works Administration at Washington. This will be a start. Some of the worst tenements will be cleared away. It will end some of the diseases and death. But reliable estimates reveal that a total of one hundred and fifty million dollars could actually be used for slum-clearance in Cincinnati. C. M. Bookman, director of the Community Chest from which came the funds for the extraordinary study I have just described, believes that thirty million dollars could be used almost immediately.

NO such sum will be available for a good many years. Cincinnati's Utopia, like all dreams, is far away. Some slums will remain. People will continue to die too young. A fraction of Cincinnati's thirty-six thousand unemployed will be too old or too broken when prosperity finally returns, and will ever be a burden on the city. It is so everywhere. American cities, in the year 1935, look very much alike. They have hotels, as well as slums, which are identical. Their shopping and business sections are so similar that an absent-minded man might easily suppose that he was in Kansas City when, in fact, he was walking down Race Street in Cincinnati. In every American city is a huge motion-picture theater with flashing lights which announce that Gloria Gorgeous is being presented in her latest epic about love and passion. Even the newspapers, hawked at the street-corners at dusk, are much the same. Their headlines blare about Bruno Hauptmann or Huey Long or the NRA. Their inside pages offer *Andy Gump* and *Little Orphan Annie.* Even the inhabitants of American cities look alike. Their business men are well-dressed and a little worried. Their housewives are a degree plump. Their stenographers and shop-girls are smart and pretty.

The people look alike. But they are not, underneath, such peas in a continental pod. A last generalization, then, about the people of Cincinnati, Ohio: One side of their character—if you will permit the convenient fiction of a composite character—rebels against the cost of welfare programs, community chests and slum removal. All this means money; all this means the possibility of debt. But another side of their character is open to conviction. Your composite Cincinnatian has an appetite for facts, even for unpleasant ones. Ultimately he admits, although he fights against the admission, that all these reforms pay dividends in lower death-rates, less crime and better citizenship. And having been convinced, he does not falter. Slowly but surely he gives his approval and pays the bills. As time passes, he is paying them almost cheerfully.

"To the city, unique among American cities, which knows that greatness does not depend on size! To the city whose people still believe in the ancient verities: industry, honesty, thrift! To the city where furtive politicians have been ignominiously retired to private life, and where the citizens rule themselves! To Cincinnati, which faces the future unafraid—without pessimism, but without ill-judged optimism!"

If asked, I would offer that toast to the Queen City of the West.

THE OPEN DOOR

(Continued from page 27)

countenance. "I wonder if you are deliberately seeking to provoke me."

Florimond laughed. "Should I waste my time? I know a poltroon when I see one."

"Now, that really is going too far." The stranger was obviously and deeply perturbed. "Oh, yes. Much too far. I do not think I could be expected to suffer that." He rose from his chair at last, and called across to a group at a neighboring table. "You there, messieurs! I take you to witnesses of the gross provocation I have received from this ill-mannered bully, and—"

Florimond's piercing voice interrupted him.

"Must I box your ears before you will cease your insults?"

"Oh, no, monsieur. So much will not be necessary." He sighed mournfully, in a reluctance almost comical. "If you will send a friend to me, we will settle the details."

It came so unexpectedly that for a moment Florimond was almost out of countenance. Then he brought his heels together, bowed stiffly from the waist, and stalked off to request of Desjardins the usual service. After that, pursuing the tactics long since perfected for these occasions, he departed from the inn. As the unvarying routine of the matter had taught him to expect, it was not long before he was followed. Himself, as usual, he opened to the knock; and with his usual air of indignant surprise, admitted the moon-faced gentleman. As usual the victim displayed all the signs of distress proper to these occasions. His nervousness made him falter and stammer.

"M-monsieur, I realize that this is most irregular. Bu-but the fact is—I realize that I have been too hasty. It is necessary that I should explain that—that a meeting between us is, after all, quite—quite impossible."

He paused there, prematurely as it seemed, and as if fascinated by the wicked smile that was laying bare the swordsman's dog-tooth. Into that pause came the sarcastic answer that had done duty on every occasion since Dumasque's:

"Ah! I am to wear a placard on my breast, so as to warn the impertinent that I am a fencing-master."

BUT the phrase which hitherto had proved so disconcerting, proved now the opposite. The stranger's expression completely changed. It became so quickened by surprise and relief, that it entirely lost its foolish vacuity.

"A fencing-master! You are a fencing-master? Oh, but that makes a great difference." The enlivened glance swept round the room, observed its bareness, the lines chalked on the floor, the trophies of foils, plastrons and masks adorning the walls. The man drew himself up. His figure seemed to acquire an access of virility. He actually smiled. "And this, of course, is your school. I see. I see. In that case, everything arranges itself."

Heels together, he bowed with the proper stiffness. "Forgive the needless intrusion. We meet, then, at eight o'clock in the Pré-aux-Chêvres." He turned to depart.

For the first time in one of these affairs, it was Florimond who was disconcerted. He set a detaining hand upon the other's shoulder.

"A moment, Monsieur le Mystérieux. What the devil do you mean by 'everything arranges itself'?"

"Just that." The eyes in the moon-face twinkled with amusement. "For me, as for you, monsieur, a duel with an ordinary civilian would be a serious matter. If there should be an accident, the consequences might be grave. You see, I am myself a fencing-master. But since you are of the fraternity, there are no grounds whatever for my apprehensions."

A sensation of cold began to creep up Florimond's spine. As a swordsman, he knew that while among asses he might be a lion, among lions he was certainly an ass. He looked closely at this stranger in whom he had been so mistaken; he looked beyond the pallid moon-face and observed that the man was moderately tall, well-knit, of a good length of arm, and an exceptionally well-turned leg.

"You are yourself a fencing-master?" he echoed, and his stare was foolish.

"Even of some little celebrity," was the answer in a tone of mild deprecation. "My name is Danet."

(Please turn to page 117)

Fumbling Youth

by ANGELO PATRI

SAYING no to young people who plead for the immediate desire of their hearts is not easy. *No* is a stern word, and one hates to play the stern parent to so tender a thing as first youth. Yet occasionally it must be said.

"I don't see why I couldn't go, Father. I could have driven out, seen the game and been back next day for classes. The Dean is an old fossil. 'You can't drive a car. You can't cut classes, no matter what. And you can't take a girl out.' Gosh, doesn't a fellow ever get a break?"

"It depends. The whole thing sounds childish to me. You're sixteen—"

"Oh, now, please. I'll be seventeen next month."

"Well, seventeen next month. Your total experience with a car is what little driving you got in vacations, with me alongside. You wanted to stop work, drive all night over strange roads, see a big game, drive back again without rest, and attend classes next day. To top it, you wanted to take a girl along. Haven't you any consideration for the girl, or her people, or us? Suppose, and it is very likely, you met with an accident? You wouldn't have a leg to stand on."

"Don't go Victorian on me, Father. Times have changed. Girls can look out for themselves. We could have a good time, if you people didn't butt in all the time and spoil everything, with your old-time stuff. We're living in a new age, and you'll have to get used to it. Things are different since you were my age."

"It seems so. I know times change, styles and manners rearrange themselves into new patterns. But I doubt that human nature changes with them. The fundamentals are still there for you to bark your shins on; and you'll do it, too, if you're not mighty careful."

"All the other fellows can—"

"Yes, all the other fellows are in the same boat. You will all soon learn that along with every extension of your liberty goes a restricting responsibility. Nobody is free. You pay for what you take in this world; and my advice to you is not to take anything that you can't pay the price for. It's bad sportsmanship to make somebody else pay your way, you know."

"We're only young once. We want a little fun before we settle down to the grind. What you call responsibility, I suppose."

"What I am trying to get through your head is that you have this one chance to be happy in your youth. Spoil it, and you're out. The trouble with you fellows is that you think your life will be ruined if you don't get what you want, the minute you think you want it."

"You don't give me any credit for anything. The Dean, either! The minute I lift my nose out of a book, you think I'm going to do something terrible."

"I'm giving you credit for intelligence enough to know that there are other values in life beyond those of your minute-to-minute desires. I'm giving you credit for wanting to live a bit above belly level; and that is about where you are just now.

"Oh, you'll get over it. You're fundamentally sound and decent. You'll learn that one dance, or one game, or one girl, is not the whole of your day. I'm not blaming you—just shoving you back into normal."

"I suppose you're right, of course. But I did want to see that game. Guess I'd better go along now and square myself with the Dean."

Youth must learn by experience. Meanwhile it must be guided and advised, and if need be pushed, into discovering the fundamental values of life that lie below the patterned surface. It is these values that provide safe anchorage for drifting souls.

REDBOOK welcomes back Angelo Patri to these pages. For many years a teacher and also a principal in a large city school, Mr. Patri speaks from most practical experience, and out of a long and varied knowledge of the problems of girls and boys.

He is an idealist but not a dreamer; he has faith, but in his faith he faces facts. He thinks and speaks for those who believe this is a better day than yesterday, and that we have in our hands the making of a tomorrow which will be better yet for our youth.

Angelo Patri's page will appear in this place in succeeding issues of Redbook. —*The Editor.*

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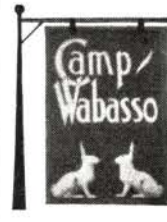

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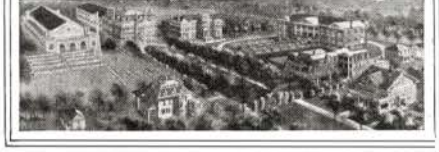

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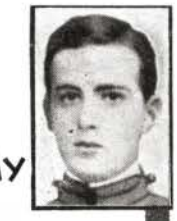

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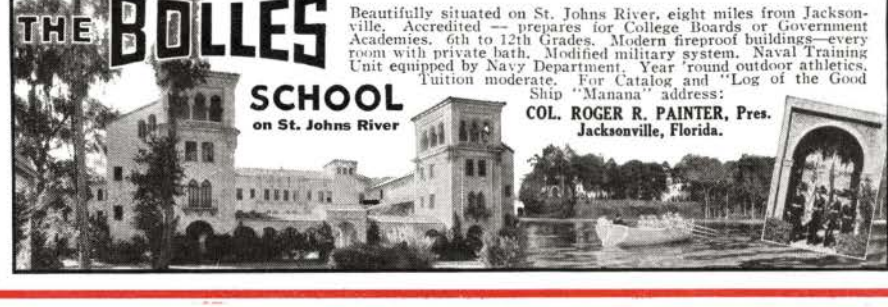

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(Continued from page 105)

"Danet?" Florimond's voice cracked. "Not—not Guillaume Danet?"

Again the stranger bowed, that stiff bow from the waist so suggestive of the swordsman. "The same. Very much at your service. I see that you have heard of me. You may even have read my little treatise. It has made some noise in the world. Until tomorrow, then, at eight o'clock, my dear confrère."

"But—a moment, *mon maître!*"

"Yes?" The other paused, his eyebrows raised.

"I—I did not know—"

His own phrase was cast in his teeth.

"Am I to wear the name Guillaume Danet on a placard on my breast as a warning to impertinent little provincial fencing-masters?"

"But to meet you, *mon maître*—it is not possible. You cannot wish it. It would be my ruin."

"That will not matter, since it will probably be your death."

Wide-eyed, pallid, Florimond stared at this opponent whose aspect, erstwhile so mild, had now become so terrible. "I will apologize, *mon maître.*"

"Poltroon! You provoke, you wantonly insult the man you suppose to be incapable of defending himself, and you can imagine that apology in private and in secret will adjust the matter. You are caught in your own trap, I think. You had better be making your soul. Good-night!"

"Wait! Ah, wait! If—if I were to compensate you—"

"Compensate me? How?"

"If twenty-five louis—"

"You miserable cutthroat! Not for fifty louis would I forgo the satisfaction of dealing with you as you deserve. To bleed you of a hundred louis, might be to punish you enough. But—"

"I will pay it. Master, I will pay it." Frantically he made an offer that would beggar him of almost every louis wrung from the victims of his dishonest practices.

Round grew the eyes and the mouth in the round face that confronted him. "A hundred louis!" The great master's tone reminded Florimond that every man has his price. Slowly Monsieur Danet seemed to resolve. Slowly, with a shrug of the shoulders, he spoke. "Faith! Why not? The object, after all, is to punish your temerity. Since you are penitent, to kill you or even to maim you might be too much. I am a man of heart, I hope. It is not in my nature to be inclement. I will take your hundred louis, and bestow them on the poor of Paris."

It was of no consolation to Florimond to assure himself that the poor of Paris would never see a franc of the money. With a heart of lead he counted out his hoard, and found to his dismay that ninety-eight louis was his total fortune. But now the great Danet showed himself not only clement, but magnanimous. Far from exacting the last franc, he actually left Florimond three louis for his immediate needs.

You conceive, however, that this generosity did not mitigate the fencing-master's bitter chagrin to see the fruits of months of crafty labor thus swept away. The only solace for his mortification lay in the reflection that what he had done once he could do again. There would be no lack of pigeons still to be plucked. In future, however, he would proceed more cautiously and not trust too readily to a mild and simple exterior.

So putting a brave face on the matter, he resumed his habits, and each evening at the Sucking Calf he sat like a spider in its web, waiting for the unwary fly to blunder in.

THEY were on the threshold of winter, a season of diminished treaveling; for the best part of a fortnight Florimond's vigilance went unrewarded. Then one evening a traveler arrived whose entrance was like a gust of wind, whose voice, summoning the landlord, was sharp with authority.

The vintner bustled forward, and Florimond could scarcely believe his ears.

"Landlord, I am seeking here in Rheims a rascally fencing-master who is a disgrace to his calling, and who goes by the flamboyant name of Florimond de Souverain de la Galette. Can you tell me at what address he may be found?"

It was Florimond himself who answered. With the feeling that the gods were casting a timely gift into his very lap, he sprang from his chair. He seemed to spin round in the act of leaping, and landed, heels together, before the inquirer.

"He is here."

He was confronted by a tall, lithe gentleman elegantly dressed in black, who regarded him sternly out of an aquiline countenance. A cold, stern voice rang upon the awed stillness of the room.

"You are that scoundrel, are you?"

At least a dozen pairs of eyes were turned in pity upon this rash stranger who came thus to skewer himself, as it were, upon the fencing-master's sword. A dozen pairs of ears listened attentively.

"Another in my place might account himself your debtor. For I have to thank you for four pupils who have sought me in the course of the past two months. Each of them had been craftily entangled by you in a quarrel, so identical in detail as to betray its calculated nature. Each of them, so as to keep a whole skin, paid you in blackmail either ten or fifteen louis. Before the last of them came to me for fencing-lessons, I had already begun to understand the rascal trade you are driving. I have since assured myself of it, and for the honor of the profession of arms, of which I am a jealous guardian, I account it my duty to put an end to it."

"Who are you?" demanded the now livid Florimond.

"You have the right to know. I am Guillaume Danet, master-at-arms of the King's Academies."

"You? *You* are Guillaume Danet?" Goggle-eyed, Florimond regarded him; and then his glance was drawn beyond this tall stranger to a man who entered at that moment, carrying a valise: a man in sober brown that looked like a plain livery; a man with a round, bland, pallid moon-face, hatefully well known to Florimond.

"Then who the devil may that be?"

The stranger looked over his shoulder.

"That? That is my valet. The man I sent here a couple of weeks ago, to verify my conclusions about you."

And then this poor rascally Florimond committed his worst blunder. Like all rogues, judging the world to be peopled by rogues having kindred aims, he uttered a snarling laugh.

"He did more than that. He anticipated you, Monsieur Danet! That scoundrel had a hundred louis from me. I have nothing left."

"I see. He played your own game, did he? And you do me the honor to suppose me equally base?"

He laughed, not pleasantly. He raised his cane, and for months thereafter they told the tale in Rheims of the caning administered by the great Danet to Florimond de Souverain de la Galette, a caning which made an end of Florimond's career as a master-at-arms, at least in that part of France.

WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS MOST

(Continued from page 29)

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We will have a tax on laughter. Employees who laugh at their bosses' jokes must pay twenty cents per guffaw. Straight men who laugh at the comedians' puns, thirty-five cents.

There will be no tax on babies who laugh when adults chuck them under the chin.

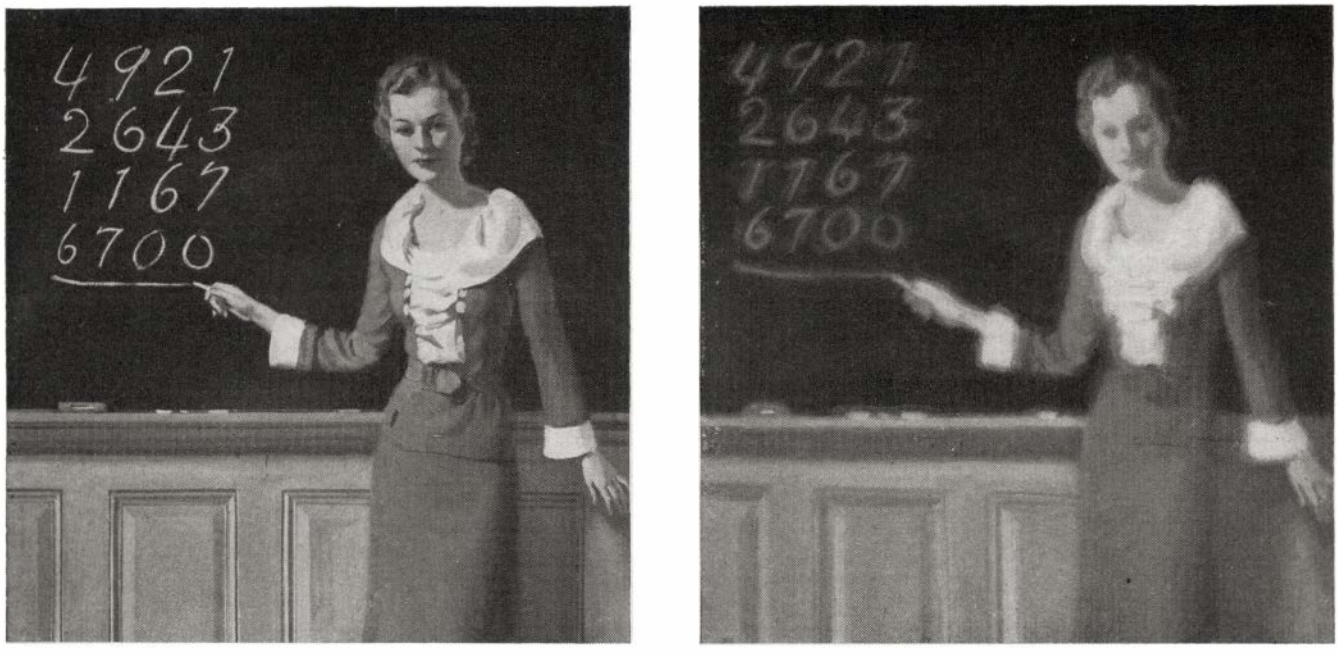
This law will have many enemies. Soapbox orators will shout—I can hear them as clearly as though it were tomorrow:

"Comrades, down with the Cantor tax! The Cantor tax is unfair! I demand we strike. For one month let's cut out laughing, cut out desserts, cut out going to the movies, cut out all pleasures. Boy, will Cantor burn up! Ha! Ha! Ha! Am I laughing when I think of it! Ha! Ha! Ha!" And he laughs so long that he owes twenty dollars in laughing taxes!

But framing laws for the United States is just one of the thousand of things I can do. Right now I am expecting a call from France to straighten out her governmental affairs. I cleared up England in short order. They're really in excellent condition now. . . . Pardon me, there's a knock on the door. . . . Come in. . . . Yes? You want me? No, I'm not Napoleon. No, I couldn't be. I'm Eddie Cantor. . . . I've been missing from where?

Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, but there's a man here in a uniform who insists on taking me for a little ride. . . . Well, I'll be seeing you, if you keep reading my stuff!

Test Eyesight Regularly



The Blackboard Problem—as it looks to Jim and as it looks to Bill

BILL failed in arithmetic. He couldn't add blurry figures that wouldn't stand still. Poor vision is a tough handicap to a child in school. At least one in every ten has some form of defective eyesight.

A Special Warning

Contrary to a widespread idea that the Fourth of July has been made "safe and sane," the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness states that the toll of accidents from fireworks was greater last year than in many previous years.

Many of these uncorrected defects are progressive and cause increasing eye-strain and impairment of vision. Eye-strain may lead to severe recurring headaches, nervous exhaustion, hysteria, insomnia, dizziness and other disorders.

In older people there are other conditions of the eyes which are far more serious than imperfect vision. If untreated, they may eventually lead to blindness. Glaucoma and cataract can be present and in the first stages give little indication of their threat to your sight. Recognized early, glaucoma may be successfully treated; a cataract may be removed by an operation.

Good reading habits of young and old prevent many eye troubles. Have your eyes examined regularly, even though they seem to be normal. Never wear glasses which have not been prescribed. Don't read with the light shining into your eyes, or without your doctor's consent when recovering from serious illness, or when lying down—unless your head and shoulders are propped up and the page is held at right angles to your eyes below the line of vision. Hold your work or book about 14 inches from your eyes.

Don't use public towels or rub your eyes. Conjunctivitis and other communicable diseases may follow. Do not use any medication for diseases of the eyes unless it has been prescribed for the purpose.

Make sure that no member of your family is endangering his sight. You are cordially invited to send for the Metropolitan's free booklet "Care of the Eyes." Address Booklet Department 735-R.

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

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REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH

BRILLIANT MARRIAGE

by

URSULA PARROTT

who wrote "Ex-Wife" etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN

THE STRANGE TALE OF MARIGOLD ALDISON, A LONG ISLAND DÉBUTANTE, AN HEIRESS AND A COMPLETELY HAPPY GIRL, WHO DISCOVERS ALMOST ON THE EVE OF HER MARRIAGE THAT SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF A PENNILESS MIDDLE-AGED ADVENTURESS.

A COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL—50,000 WORDS

BRILLIANT MARRIAGE

MRS. RODNEY ALDISON sat at the cumbersome old dressing-table in her great bedroom, which overlooked the Sound from its northern and western aspects, and the famous gardens of Elmslee from its southern aspect; and Mrs. Aldison's maid Ellen brushed Mrs. Aldison's hair, which was somewhat faded, as even the most golden hair fades, when left to Time's retouching. Mrs. Aldison's social secretary, Miss Cane, wrote down such words as Mrs. Aldison dictated, relevant to the annual opening of Elmslee gardens to the public for a fee, the sums thereby gained to be turned over to the Infants' and Children's Hospital.

She who had been Madeleine Shore dictated a few sentences, paused, let her thoughts wander—over the wide and lovely vista from her bedroom windows, back to the reflection of her own beauty in her mirror, beauty that was fine-worn like the face of an old coin, but beauty still—and forced her thoughts again to her dictation. The annual opening of the Elmslee gardens for the benefit of the hospital had been done so often that the arrangements for it had become a matter of routine; and though she had been quick and competent almost as long as she had been Mrs. Rodney Aldison, the June breeze that made the pale brocade curtains sway a little stiffly was a languorous breeze; and sometimes, to be quick and competent for no special reason, was a bore.

MADELEINE

She said, and Miss Cane wrote down:

" 'Dear Margaret, You'll pour tea and preside over cake for me, as usual, won't you? Your decorative figure, graceful before my most massive tea-service, has become a most important part of the show.' " And: " 'Dear Mrs. Lounds, I'm afraid I do disagree with you about the advisability of increasing the price of admission for the garden show this year. While it's true that interest in gardens increases continuously, I'm afraid it's not equally true that people have more money to spend. I think our chances of fourteen hundred at fifty cents, are better than chances for eight hundred at a dollar.' "

In the intervals when she paused between letters, the room was very still, redolent of garden scents from the opened windows, and a fainter fresh salt fragrance of the sea. It was a beautiful room, of an old fashion.

"Suitable to us who use it," Mrs. Aldison thought. And indeed Miss Cane, looking specially diminutive, in the wing chair where she sat with lifted pencil, seemed so long settled into middle age, into competence, into impersonality, that it was hard to imagine she could ever have looked young, more than politely interested in the matter at hand, anything but composed. Ellen, brushing with a long smooth soothing stroke, had been white-haired almost since Mrs. Aldison acquired her, more years ago than she felt like counting.

BUT Madeleine Aldison wronged herself a little in her thought. If she did not look young, she was, in her fair pale slenderness, very far from looking old.

" 'And so, my dear Louise, if you'll be an unofficial guide, because Martin's as grumpy as usual, and has no doubt inculcated all his assistant gardeners with the notion that "them as pay to see gardens haven't paid to ask foolish questions" (I did hear him mutter something just to that effect once), it will relieve me enormously. Do come for luncheon Monday, and we'll plan a sort of tour for the visitors.' "

When she stopped, Ellen said: "That's fifteen minutes, Mrs. Aldison. Shall I 'do' it now, or will you rest first?"

"I can't rest; the Treaners' dinner is early."

Ellen, "doing" her hair, with the side-part, the knot on the nape of the neck that dated her—she felt it was no disgrace to have been adult so long ago as before the World War—spoke persuasively. "They say, madam, that there's something new on the market—not a dye, but a golden tint for sort of refreshing golden hair. Mrs. James' maid was telling me."

Madeleine's laughter rippled. "Let Judy James 'golden tint' all she likes for the admiration of her son's classmates at college, Ellen."

Miss Cane's leathery little face wrinkled into something like a grin.

"You're like Miss Marigold, Ellen, wanting Mrs. Aldison to put in a modern dressing-room, a sort of make-up chamber, complete with mirrored ceiling and chromium furniture."

Ellen defended herself: "Mrs. Aldison is young enough to take trouble over herself, besides having much finer looks to take trouble over than most of those who do."

Madeleine smiled a little. Ellen and Miss Cane, with their perpetual slight disagreements, usually amused her. They had both been members of her household so long, they were privileged. She thought the odd thought,—but it was not quite new to her,—that probably they were the closest friends she had.

She talked, to stop considering her own occasional loneliness: "In my day, as I told Marigold, a dressing-room was a place where one's husband slept when he had quarreled with one." But having lightly said the first thing she thought, she immediately regretted having said it. For it reminded her of the long, long time since Rodney, with whom she had never—precisely—quarreled, had intruded in her room. She hurried away from that thought.

"One brushed one's hair and washed it, added a few unobtrusive waves with an iron, if waves weren't natural, and let it go at that. A simpler system."

So she had been brought up. The implications of her training, in matters more serious than the tinting of fading hair, had stood by her in crises. Not to "lure"—disgusting word—Rodney by any pretense to her own bright youth, but to be graceful, gracious, self-possessed, self-restrained.

Madeleine Aldison nodded her head—her hair was now dressed—at her face in the mirror, at this thought. She and Rodney were cordial friends, fond of each other, even, interested to some extent in each other's conversations. All that was something, surely, to have retrieved from bitter time. . . .

Miss Cane was saying: "I'm sure Miss Marigold admires her mother for refusing to paint and dye absurdly, as so many mature women do."

Madeleine smiled at her, at the little creased face, at the gray-mouse hair that no amount of painting and dyeing would have done much for, probably. Smiled warmly, because Miss Cane's voice was so warm, saying, "Miss Marigold."

Whether Marigold admired her for refusing to paint like an actress, she did not know. It was enough to know that Marigold's warm youth, Marigold's bright face, regarded her always with love, with more—with a devotion that was out of fashion between daughters and their mothers nowadays.

Marigold would be home for dinner. Madeleine didn't believe at all that her day's shopping had been necessary. Probably she went to town in the heat for no better reason than to drive out with that new young man, and so have an extra hour with him. He seemed a pleasant sort, making his way in the newspaper business, which seemed to be what so many bright young men chose to make their way in, since selling bonds had stopped being any use.

"Your white lace, madam?" Ellen asked.

by URSULA PARROTT

who wrote "Ex-Wife" etc.

She nodded, putting on the smallest amount of pale lipstick and a little pale powder. She held out her arms for Ellen to slip the dress over her head.

Whether Marigold was serious about this young man—what was his name? Oh, yes, Garry Dane; that would mean Garrison Dane probably—was hard to tell. Madeleine hoped a little that she was not, because she thought Marigold at twenty could well remain care-free and irresponsible, a girl for a year or two longer. Not that she was specially irresponsible, or that marriage nowadays was essentially a settling down. But if she wanted to marry, she should do as she pleased. Thank Providence, money need be no bar to whatever she wanted.

As Ellen fastened the last hook, there was a knock at the bedroom door. Miss Cane went to answer it, came back looking a little surprised. "It's Thorne, Mrs. Aldison. He says he wants to speak to you."

That was slightly odd. Thorne, still usually referred to as "the new butler," though he'd been with the family a year now (since the retirement of the old butler, who had served various branches of Aldisons for thirty), had no possible reason to come to her bedroom, where she was, in theory, resting, unless in emergency. She thought with sudden dreadful sharpness of the crowded roads out from the city, of Marigold, who drove so beautifully but so fast. She crossed her room, went through the little foyer to the hallway, stood there staring at Thorne, without knowing that she took a single step.

His face, calm as usual, was instantly reassuring. He said: "A lady is calling to see you, madam."

"But Thorne, I'm going out to dinner immediately. Why—"

His face then seemed, very slightly, unusual. He dropped his voice, so that neither Miss Cane or Ellen could hear him. Madeleine thought, for his first word or two, that that was ridiculous.

"Madam, it is a lady who would not give her card, but who said to tell you it was your sister, home from France, who wanted to see you on an important matter."

Madeleine made a small sound in her throat, more than a sigh, not quite a gasp. Then years of composure stood by her, made her voice natural. "Thank you, Thorne. Tell her I shall be down immediately."

She closed the door on his respectful puzzled face. She went back across the room, and sat down before her dressing-table again, because her knees, she felt, would not hold her on her feet another second. From Ellen's and Miss Cane's expressions, seen in the mirror, she knew that her own must be startling.

Miss Cane's voice said: "Is anything the matter, Mrs. Aldison?"

It was an effort actually physical to say: "Nothing, Miss Cane. Not..ing at all."

She had no least doubt that the woman downstairs was Justina—Justina, whom she used to love so much, whom she hated afterward, but only for a little while.

Memories of all her childhood and her youth surged through her when that name echoed through her head: the drawing-room of the brownstone house where she and Justina were permitted to have school friends to tea, sometimes; Justina and herself in ball gowns their first season. (Justina, usually impatient to rush at any form of what she called "life," had waited a whole year, so that she and her younger sister could "come out" together.) Justina in a deep rose dress, almost red (it had been criticized as too extreme for a débutante, but Justina had laughed at criticism then), leaning over a staircase, calling down some laughing jest, to herself and Rodney.

It seemed to Madeleine somehow horrible that she had forgotten in what Boston house that staircase was, or what the jest had been, yet could remember how the rose dress was made, and precisely, Justina's bright laughter. It happened in the year of their début, when they used to be called, much to their own young delight, the lovely Shore sisters.

Ellen said, very hesitantly: "Madam, is there anything—"

Madeleine pulled herself together. There were in fact so many things that had to be done, very quickly, that it was extremely difficult to decide what must be done first. Fortunate, that Rodney was dressing at the golf-club, and going directly to the Treaners'. But Marigold—Marigold might be arriving within minutes, and she must not meet her—aunt. Oh, call her her aunt, face the meeting. Introduce them casually. The skies would not fall. It was to have been expected that it would happen sometime, even though she had pretended to herself it could never happen. She glanced at her watch: just half-past six. The Treaners' dinner was at seven; the Treaners' house was a fifteen-minute drive. Marigold could scarcely be expected before seven, even if she were prompt, which she seldom was.

JUSTINA

Madeleine said, quite steadily: "I want you both to stay here. I may need you." She could cry out, if Marigold came in, "Darling, you do look hot and dusty from town. Run upstairs and take a shower—you'll be so much cooler," and send Ellen to help her dress, and tell Ellen, who would do as she was told without asking questions, to keep her upstairs until the visitor left. She could get Miss Cane to stay with Justina, to talk about the weather, and keep her thoughts forever to herself, if—if it were necessary for her to leave the room for any reason: if, that is, Justina had come to make a scene, in spite of her promise to Rodney, which it was surprising she had not broken before. There was scarcely any reason for this visit, unless it were to make a scene. And in that case she, Madeleine, would have to telephone Rodney, much as she hated to.

SHE stood up, distressed at the bitterness of her own heart. Because once she had so loved her older sister; in spite of the things that had happened since, the ghost of that finished love troubled her. Except for one time in the smoke-haze of a Paris café—and that was a time thirteen or fourteen years past—she had not seen Justina for all of eighteen years. Even so, it was horrible that she should go to meet her as if she were going to meet a mortal enemy.

Her mind said: "Have no illusions. That is precisely whom you are going to meet."

She said: "I'll take my wrap and purse with me now, Ellen. Miss Cane, if my visitor does not leave in twenty minutes, will you please come to interrupt us? Ellen, if I send Miss Marigold up to you, tell her it was my wish she stay with you until my guest leaves."

Summer ermine light as silk around her shoulders, a purse of old gold and rose brocade, made to order with her slippers. She had refused to fight time with paint and dye, but she had continued to dress beautifully, because to do that, seemed suited to the position in life to which it had pleased God to call her. That was out of the catechism she and Justina had studied together; but Justina had been called to a different position afterward.

She said to herself, violently: "You *must* pull yourself together, and stop being hysterical inside. Else you are helpless." And thinking of the consequences that might ensue upon that helplessness, she was instantly quite steady. Only—her mind felt so clear and empty she was aware of the very slight noise her brocaded slippers made, as they carried her down the polished stairs.

At first glance, she thought the long drawing-room was empty. She had walked a little way into the room when a voice spoke from one of the long French windows that led onto the west terrace where sunlight still lingered.

The voice, faintly mocking, a little hard, but glamorous still, said: "Portrait of a perfect lady, as usual, Madeleine. You don't change."

Madeleine had the completely irrelevant thought that *glamorous,* that word much overused latterly to describe the more exotic motion-picture stars, truly described Justina as she used to be.

She did not answer the voice.

JUSTINA walked into the room. *Glamorous* no longer described her.

Madeleine said: "Won't you sit down?" And she knew by her sister's smile that the formality sounded a little ridiculous. Yet something hard inside her said: "Use formality. It's a weapon. It stands for what you have that she has not. So does this room, this house, your life."

She had never before so considered her possessions, either her fine white paneled drawing-room, with its heirloom mahogany and its English chintzes, or her wide gardens, or her furs, or her position as Mrs. Rodney Aldison. The very thought seemed horrible when she recognized it. But since she must fight, not for herself but for Marigold, the security, the peace of mind, the safety of Marigold's young girlhood, she would use what weapons she had.

And not say one unnecessary word, or ask one unnecessary question! Let Justina explain what her visit meant.

MISS CANE

They sat in opposite chairs, in the room where dusk was gathering in the corners. Madeline slipped out of her evening wrap, laid it against the back of her chair, sat quiet then.

Justina swung a slim ankle back and forth, a slim foot with a slipper that was just a little worn at the toe. That worn spot hurt Madeleine to watch.

Silence between them lasted minutes that seemed long. If anyone who once had known the lovely Shore sisters had come into that room, into that silence, he would have known them still, and for sisters unmistakably, and seen the history of their lives written plainly in the difference between them. There sat a pale lady in a white dress, her gray eyes oddly innocent like a child's, her figure, her face as slender as they had always been, her fairness a little paled, like her face. And there sat a raddled beauty in a brightly flowered chiffon frock, suitable—but on the outer edge of elaborateness—for a late afternoon formal call at a country house. Her golden hair was obviously assisted to brightness; her arched eyebrows and lashes were darkened. She was not slim; she was thin, as if the restless spirit burning behind her blue eyes was wearing her out at last. Only her hands, taking out a cigarette now, lighting it quickly, were old—as if not all the beauty-shops of France could take away the years she had worked hard with them.

She said, in that odd rich musical voice that was changed, but not completely changed: "Well then, Madeleine: I'll begin, since it's clear you won't. I've been in the country a month, and I have not notified your—dear—husband."

The last words snapped.

Madeleine thought: "So she hates him still! Well, she was always better at hating, and loving too, than I was. It's curious that I can't hate her much, looking at her. I only ache, for her and for me because we're not young any more, we who were so happy being young together."

The odd voice went on: "It's expensive, living in France the last years, or anywhere in Europe, for that matter. Your husband made no gesture about increasing my allowance when the exchange changed around."

"I should have spoken to Rodney about that." Madeleine meant it. But she remembered too that the allowance was a very generous one.

"It doesn't matter. After nearly twenty years, I wanted to live at home again. The money's still sent to my old French address, and I have it forwarded. Rodney's quite capable of stopping payment, if he knew I'd come home."

That, Madeleine considered, was quite true. Rodney, where Justina was concerned, was implacable. The conditions of the allowance were that she remain out of the United States.

"It amounted to a life exile, Madeleine, if you stop to think about it."

She had thought about it often. But what else could they have done, could she have done? She was aware that Justina was shaking a little, with rage, actually. She was stumbling over words. So, now she would say what she had come to say. And recognizing that, Madeleine was suddenly frightened.

"Well, he won't send me back to France now, now that I've met my daughter whom he named for a golden flower, in a fit of sentiment when he first saw her yellow head." She was being a little inarticulate, but the words came out: "Whom he wouldn't name for me! My daughter Marigold."

Madeleine said, in a voice so hoarse she did not recognize it as hers: "Don't say those words in my house."

"So!"

Yes, so she had given her hand away. But after all, neither she nor Rodney had ever had any hand to play. At any time in any of the eighteen years Justina could have said those words, could have said, "My daughter Marigold," and have proved those words were true.

She was being reassuring now. "Don't worry too much. I am Mrs. Otis still—the name I use, I mean. Otis died two or three years ago."

(Madeline thought: "I have known so little. I haven't known if he lived or died, or if she'd married some one else. It's incredible to have known so little.")

"Stop looking as if the room were full of ghosts, Madeleine. I sha'n't necessarily trouble you; that's why I explained that I still call myself Mrs. Otis. I sha'n't trouble you if you do what I say. You can't blame me for rejoicing that at last I can laugh, more or less, at Rodney."

She would go on like that; she would be alternately reassuring and threatening; in the end she would do what she pleased. In fairness to her, say her life had made her hard, say she had, for a long time, kept her word pretty well. Suddenly Madeleine remembered a phrase before those three words "my daughter Marigold," which could tumble her carefully ordered life—and Marigold's, which was more important—in ruins about them both.

She said sharply: "What did you mean when you said, 'since I met—Marigold'?"

"Exactly that. Not that I ever expected to meet her in the modest Village cafés where I go for amusement." Her voice had got scornful again. "I've met her three times, always with the same man, a newspaper man named Garry Dane, who hasn't a penny to his name or any background that counts."

"But I know him," Madeleine said. "It's quite all right. He's been here." She almost said: "He'll be here, practically, immediately."

There was violence in her sister's voice. "It is not all right. I could have secured the like of Garry for a husband for my daughter." She paused. The words tore at Madeleine. She had said them herself proudly, thousands of times through years that had seemed safe.

"My daughter," she who had never had son or daughter of her own. And Rodney had said "my daughter," Rodney who had so wanted children—and who had been kind, nevertheless, when after that accident the doctors told her: "Never." He had said: "It doesn't matter, Madeleine, dearest." Tears came into her eyes, but whether for Rodney's young warm tenderness, or for old grief she'd known when she knew she would never have a child, she could not tell. . . .

"If I had kept her myself," Justina said, "I could have seen that she met people like *him.* I tell you, she is not to do it. She is to make a brilliant marriage, much more brilliant than yours, even, a marriage that will make up for all my humiliations. What about Richard Taylor, Third? I saw a rotogravure picture of him and Marigold together. That's one of the really important fortunes of the country."

Madeleine did not answer. She had decided abruptly that her sister was a little mad. All those years in the second-rate resorts of the Riviera, of Morocco, of Paris, she had been planning what sort of marriage Marigold must make. The years when Marigold was a schoolgirl, the year of Marigold's début.

Justina said: "Do you hear me? The girl has beauty, charm, more fire than you ever had. She has every chance. I forbid you to let her see that young man who will waste her time."

The whole thing, Madeleine felt, began to take on the dreadful absurdity of nightmare. She managed to say, very quietly: "I have always left her free."

Then suddenly, and blessedly, Miss Cane was in the room. Madeleine said: "Go telephone Mr. Aldison, who will be at the Treaners' now, or almost there. Tell him an emergency has arisen that makes it essential for him to come home at once, but don't alarm him. Tell Mrs. Treaner that I will be unable to come to dinner."

Miss Cane went out of the room, managing somehow to convey the impression that the woman in the chair opposite Mrs. Aldison's did not exist.

But either Justina did not notice that, or did not care. She said: "How many dinner engagements have you broken in your life, Madeleine?"

"Only two or three, probably." She was thinking that that was the way to have done it, to have said, explicitly in Justina's presence, that she was sending for Rodney.

Justina answered that thought: "You needn't think that I care, any longer, about anything Rodney threatens. I did, until a few minutes ago. But you have made it clear that you will go to almost any length—and so I suppose Rodney will—to keep Marigold from any disturbance I might create. Therefore, as you must see, that strengthens my hand."

That was rather mad, but reasonable also. She spoke as if she were considering the best means to raise money in a campaign.

"What do you want, precisely, Justina?"

"To see that my daughter has everything I missed, and also to get back what I can for myself now, of position, of ease. I'm not talking about money particularly; Rodney's seen I didn't starve. I just decided recently that, as the never-to-be-mentioned black sheep, I had served my time."

Well, there was nothing to be done about that, either. If she felt she had served her time, that was a fact. Rodney was better at coping with facts.

"It's ridiculous, Madeleine, after all these years, for you to feel you couldn't introduce me as an old friend, as a relative, even. People have forgotten."

"They've only forgotten because you never reappeared." Yes, she had said that out loud, and didn't care.

"I'm going to insist that more is done about me than has been done, else I'm going to tell Marigold the truth."

Madeleine could not speak. The truth, the shabby truth, to trouble a young girl's care-free life! The dreadful truth that Justina ran away from her dull good husband, Gregory Melvin, three years after she married him, two years after she, Madeleine, married Rodney—ran away with her chauffeur, who claimed, with some shadow of truth, that he was an Englishman of good family. Who obviously, first to last, was interested in what money could be got, as consequence of his elopement.

Madeleine thought: "I can't bear to live it through again, remembering." Yet she could not help remembering, even though Justina watched her face.

SHE remembered Justina had confided, shortly after her elopement, that she was to have a child by the husband she had left—who had shot the top half of his head off, very promptly after her departure. She remembered that Justina had sent for her then, and she had gone immediately to the little Georgia town where her sister and her sister's chauffeur were living, in incredible poverty. She remembered how Justina protested when she said she must tell Rodney. She remembered how Rodney stumbled upon the plan for all of them, which seemed—to Justina too, such a splendid plan at the time.

They three sailed to Europe together. What Rodney had said, or what he'd paid, to the chauffeur Otis, he did not tell his wife nor his sister-in-law. He did not tell his wife then, either, though she found out afterward, that he had said to all his friends, "The doctor says a change of air will be good for Madeleine. She and I are having a child," and had received their congratulations, before he sailed. He and Madeleine had known, for almost a year then, that they would never have children. . . .

So Marigold was born, in a little French town, and named, as Justina truthfully said, because her red-gold hair reminded Rodney of marigolds.

Madeleine said, aloud: "At the beginning you did not hate Rodney or me."

"I grant it. I hate you now—not you, as much as him—probably because you've both had everything, and I've had so little. Don't say that's a small reason for hate, until you've been on the other side. . . . I've hated him ever since—that time in '17."

"You don't need to remind me," Madeleine said.

Justina had gone straight back to Hilary Otis, when they all came home from France, to Rodney's complete disgust, although he said he had expected it.

Apparently he had expected various other things, which happened in the next two years: That Otis would blackmail him, time and again; that finally Otis would claim that he was the child's father. When that happened, he was confronted with dates and other evidence which Rodney had in readiness long before, and with Rodney's ultimatum that he would be turned over to the authorities, unless he left the country.

Justina said, casually, as if she were talking about an incident in a book: "I was always sorry that Hilary did that last thing. . . . Rodney had been pretty smug, though."

No use to answer that, either, Madeleine knew.

The last thing that Hilary Otis had done, was to confront Madeleine with definite evidence that Rodney had been unfaithful to her.

IN the first weeks after those two were gone, Rodney had tried to explain. Echoes of his stumbling words came back to Madeleine even now, sometimes: "You see, darling, please don't think I'd have you different; but you are sort of completely spiritual; and sometimes a man—sometimes a man—" He used to stop then, staring at the view of sea and sky from his own terrace, his hands in his pockets, a solid, inarticulate man, who she knew, adored her. Yet she, who was as inarticulate, and even shyer, could never reach out to him, could never tell him that she wanted him to behave as if that infidelity—a trivial and casual thing—had never been. She could only say: "Never mind. We'd better not talk about it." After a while, they never did talk of it any more. Afterward they were friends, friends at first self-consciously, and in the end from habit. "A formal marriage," people called it.

So, Hilary Otis, and Justina permitting him, destroyed for her something that had been warm and precious in life even if she could not ever say, even to her husband, that it was warm and precious to her. The time when she had first realized what they had destroyed, was the time when she hated them both. She had lived through that time. . . .

There was the sound of a car, stopping fast, under the *porte-cochère*. There was a clear laugh ringing out, and the sound of light footsteps.

Looking at Marigold standing in the doorway, Madeleine thought: "She is my heart. She is my heart."

Her "heart," smiling straight across the room to her, was of medium height, of extreme slenderness, had a mop of red-gold hair, in length halfway between her own desire to have it very short, and Madeleine's to have it long—which is to say it touched the back of her shoulders, but was smartly drawn back on the sides. Otherwise, Marigold had charming short features, eyes oddly as gray as Madeleine's, and eyelashes worthy of the picture star she sometimes thought she wanted to become.

In some moods, she wanted to be a picture star as in others she wanted to be an Amelia Earhart, the Olympic fancy diving champion, a great opera-singer, or the "inspiration" to some genius.

In other words she was twenty, and so full of vivid life that she made the two women sitting watching her face somehow grow a little dim, as if a light had been blown out above them.

A percipient young woman, she noticed in the first ten seconds after her arrival that Madeleine looked extremely disturbed, even before she noticed that there opposite was that Mrs. Otis whom she hadn't much liked, when she

and Garry encountered her in Village bars, which she hadn't much liked either; but they were all that Garry, the dear, could afford.

Garry, behind her, was saying, in a voice too surprised: "Why, Mrs. Otis!"

Marigold said with aplomb: "How pleasant to see you here!"

Then they all talked at once for a minute, Garry greeting Madeleine, Madeleine saying, "Mrs. Otis and I are old acquaintances," Mrs. Otis saying, "Nice to see you, Miss Aldison."

Things to that effect, that seemed very confusing to Marigold, who had suddenly received a shock. She had never noticed Mrs. Otis very particularly, more particularly than one notices anyone casually introduced in a café. But now, seeing her in a room with Madeleine, she noticed. Mrs. Otis was as like her mother Madeleine Aldison as if she were a caricature of her, painted with a cruel brush.

Madeleine said, distinctly, and much too casually: "Darling, you do look a little hot and dusty from town. Better go up and change. Ellen will help you dress." She thought: "But what to do with the young man then, I don't know."

Marigold thought: "So I'm to be sent out of the way! Something *is* wrong. Well, if it makes it simpler for Madeleine." She turned to go, but the abrupt appearance of her father through one of the doors from the terrace stopped her. She was literally unable to move, in the instant of seeing his face, which normally regarded the world cheerfully, and herself with adoration. "Black with anger"—that was a phrase in books. But, black with anger was the way he looked.

Madeleine's voice, a little higher, a little more clipped than usual, dominated the room. "Dear Rodney! You *have* hurried. My old acquaintance, Mrs. Otis, just came to call. Marigold has met her once or twice before in town, I believe. You know Garry Dane, don't you?"

Would he gather from those confused sentences that as yet Marigold knew nothing—that he must control his rage quickly, so that she would guess nothing?

He guessed, that was clear. He said, "How do you do, Mr. Dane? How are you, Marigold?"

So, she had a second's grace. She said, "Run along now, Marigold," abruptly, as if there were not much use finding words to pretend everything was precisely as it should be any longer.

Marigold went out of the room.

MADELEINE was aware simultaneously of two things, importantly that Rodney's solid presence was infinitely comforting, and that the young man Garry was looking puzzled, as well he might.

But Rodney was taking charge of that too: "Mr. Dane, if you'd wait for my daughter in the library, I'd be obliged. My wife and I have something to discuss with this lady." He didn't look at Justina when he referred to her. He had not spoken to her at all.

Madeleine looked at her now. She was sitting looking extremely composed, but her eyes were dancing wickedly.

Rodney waited for the young man's footsteps to retreat across the hall. He seemed to consider closing the double doors leading to the hall, but glancing at all the French doors to the terrace, apparently decided that was useless.

Justina's voice said: "What a solid citizen you've turned into, Rodney! You were better looking when you were thinner."

He flung his grizzled head back, hearing that voice, but did not answer immediately, not until he'd sat down, his tall heavy body graceful, for all its weight. He sounded so arrogant, when he spoke, that Madeleine understood more clearly than ever before just how much he made Justina hate him.

"Now, Justina: I'm driving you back to town. I'm putting detectives in charge of you, until the next boat sails for France. I'm increasing your allowance thirty per cent to compensate for the difference in exchange—I should have thought before, that sooner or later, that would serve you as a pretext; but I am happy to say that I'd succeeded almost in totally forgetting your existence."

Madeleine thought: "Whether he handles it wisely or unwisely, he's handling it from this minute on." Her relief at that knowledge made her conscious that she was deadly weary, that she would have been unable to say one more useful thing, or manage anyone another five minutes.

Justina's hard laughter, not loud, sounded loud in the room. Then she said: "But I'm not sailing."

Rodney's big square hands clenched, unclenched, relaxed then deliberately.

"What's your asking price this time, Justina?"

She turned on him. "It's my taking price too. I never realized until lately that the time's past when you can threaten me. While Hilary lived, while you said you'd turn him over to the police,—I knew you could have done it,—I had to be careful. Besides, we always needed money."

She repeated what she had said before to Madeleine: "I've served my time in exile. I've come home to stay." Then she said slowly: "I've been thinking that it would be amusing to make you entertain me, receive me as a long-lost—distant if you like—but very welcome relative."

He said, right out: "You are mad."

She answered him gravely: "Only as mad as the years I've lived have made me. Rotten little *pensions,* when Hilary's gambling luck was out; second-rate clothes; no position at all.

"Now I've come home. You can do as I say. That includes looking after my daughter better, not letting her waste her time with penniless young men—"

RODNEY'S reaction was identically what Madeleine's had been. "Don't say *your* daughter in my house."

Her voice was cooler than his. "I'll say *'my daughter'* anywhere I choose, and you can't stop me. You never could have stopped me, except that I wanted money then, for Hilary. You know that you can't stop me."

His face, suddenly gray, showed that he knew. But he only said: "If you behave badly, I will not give you one penny, and you'll find you'll always need money. You never showed the least love for the child, even when she was a helpless funny little thing." His voice was remembering; and Madeleine remembered too, how he had loved that scrap of bright-haired baby, as he had loved all small helpless things.

"Even then," Justina said, "you could and did use her to aggrandize your ego, you the heir to the Aldison fortune, who could have no heirs to it."

Madeleine cried out then, a small cry she stopped quickly.

Rodney looked at her, said, "Never mind, my dear."

But Justina's anger rose with her voice. "Did you think I'd stay buried forever? Do you think it's any use to threaten me now? My daughter would scarcely admire you for letting her mother starve."

Rodney said violently: "Be quiet."

Marigold's young voice was calling from the stairs in the hall. "Mother, may I come in a minute?"

Rodney said: "Come in, Marigold."

She came only as far as the door, stood there in a sort of dusty pink frock that was lovely with her hair. Madeleine's heart said: "I can't bear for her to be dragged into the whole sordid—" She did not finish.

Marigold said, lightly: "Dick Taylor telephoned from the club—there's a sort of party. I thought perhaps Garry and I had better join him for dinner, since you are all staying at home." She meant clearly: "We're being a nuisance, for some reason, so we'll get out of the way."

She said again: "Is that all right, Mother?"

But Justina was standing up. Madeleine had known for at least half a minute what Justina meant to do; she had grown too angry to estimate consequences.

Justina said: "Don't call her 'Mother.' It irritates me, because I happen to be your mother, actually."

Only Rodney Aldison moved, stood up, his tall heavy body taut, and took a step toward Mrs. Otis.

Marigold thought: "But Father's menacing like—like a great animal waked suddenly." The word echoed in her head, "Father." If that pale fair woman sitting so dreadfully still were not "Mother," perhaps Rodney Aldison was not—but it was too mad. That woman, Mrs. Otis, was just drunk, or out of her mind.

Rodney Aldison turned to his wife, went to her chair and stood beside it, his hand over the chair-back, touching his wife's shoulder.

Then those three in the room stared at her, Marigold: three faces staring—Rodney Aldison's flushed so the veins in his forehead showed dark, Madeleine Aldison's very white, Mrs. Otis' face unchanging, because it was so made up it could not change. Only her strange blue eyes began to dance.

What were they asking her, those three staring at her, those two whom she loved, that one whom she disliked?

Madeleine Aldison's voice said: "Rodney, you'd better—"

Rodney Aldison's heavy voice said: "Marigold, you will have to know. What this woman says is true."

Marigold Aldison, twenty, tumbled right out of the secure and lovely world, in which the great problems were the length one wore one's hair, whether to sun-tan or not, one's tennis form, which of several nice athletic handsome people one chose to marry. The sights of this world were long silver sports-planes, blue seas shining off *cabaña*-dotted sands; shops, cafés; the sounds were dance tunes, young laughter; even the very fragrances—Park Avenue florists' shops, corsages of gardenias, ferns decorating débutante luncheon tables—of that secure world slid through Marigold's head. She put out her hand to steady herself. By the time her fingers touched the cool hard paneling of the wall, by the time she thought, "Then I'm not Marigold Aldison. But if I'm not Marigold Aldison, who am I?"—by the time these thoughts had flashed through her mind, the room cleared again before her eyes, and she knew that even the exigency of that question could wait.

ELLEN

Because there regarded her, besides that flamboyant woman at whom she would not look, those two who had always looked at her with happy pride in her in their eyes; those two from whom she had had love and thoughtfulness, all of her life she could remember. They regarded her with agony that postponed any exigency of hers.

She went straight across the room to them. She said: "My dears, what do you want me to do?" and re-phrased that more explicitly: "What can I do to help?"

She heard Mrs. Otis behind her say: "Touching," and laugh.

Marigold did not turn her head.

Madeleine Aldison said, in a pitiful small voice: "Marigold, you really do belong to us. We're your uncle and aunt—"

Her husband's voice, interrupting, sounded decisive. "I know what to do now, Madeleine. Don't trouble yourself further. Marigold is a sensible enough girl to know that you and I couldn't care for her more if she were our daughter, actually. Now, Mari—" (this was a "little" name he had used for Marigold all her childhood), "you can help by taking your young man out of the house, over to the club. There's no need of having a newspaper man close by at what's, after all, a family scene."

The voice behind Marigold said: "The only reason I don't call him in, Rodney, is that I like him less as an associate of my daughter than any of you seem to—"

When she said, "my daughter," Marigold turned and faced her. Justina's hard handsome face quivered a little, looking at her. But nothing in Marigold responded to that look. She could not understand it. She said that, "I don't understand," and turned back to Madeleine.

Comfortably as it had sounded when it consoled her long ago for the small bumps and bruises of childhood, Madeleine's voice said: "Don't be too disturbed, dearest. Run along, as Rodney told you, and have as amusing an evening as possible. We—Rodney and I—will go to the club and call for you, though perhaps rather late, when we've arranged—"

Her voice trailed off, the certainty gone from it.

Marigold understood that. Neither of those two whom she had called father and mother could arrange that their lives or hers should be as they had been, in the time before she had walked down the staircase into that doorway, though that time was only by minutes distant.

SHE turned, kissed them both casually as she had kissed them on her way to any other dancing evening, started to walk past Mrs. Otis without speaking, having nothing at all to say, and was stopped by Mrs. Otis' hand on her arm.

"Marigold—"

"I can't talk to you, Mrs. Otis, because whatever's not clear, it's completely obvious that you are here to cause trouble to the two people in the world I care for most!"

Marigold fled on that, not knowing whether it had been the right thing to say or not. Echoing in her ears, it sounded young. Well, it was said, and she was out of that room. Her face, as well as her thoughts, would need a little rearrangement before she faced the eyes of Garry Dane.

Chapter Two

GARRY DANE had been sitting contemplating the well-furnished shelves of the Aldison library for a longer time than he realized, when Thorne came in to turn on the lights. Then sudden brightness on the dull gold and green and red gilt-lettered volumes stopped the confusion of his thoughts.

Those handsome volumes—not all of them, just a row of them—were more valuable than all his worldly possessions. That occurred to him, abruptly. He said, "Impossible," half aloud, so that Thorne at the door turned to find whether he had been addressed. Judging from the young man's face that he had not been, he went away, closing the door so softly Garry did not notice its closing.

But to say, "Impossible," and to admit it, are different things for a young man very deeply if reluctantly in love. After wondering a little why Marigold was gone so long a time, he went back to the problem of Marigold with as much uncertainty in his mind as usual.

Because he was from the West, and less than a year in his first New York newspaper job, when he was introduced to her, —at one of those "amusing" rather than smart dance places, where those of the better streets off Park Avenue rub shoulders with those of the streets up and down from Times Square,—the name *Aldison* meant nothing. He saw a lovely slender thing with gold-red hair, a trusting sort of smile that said, "I believe you'll be one of the nicest parts of this nice evening,"—and something quivered in his heart. But not then, nor for a dozen evenings after, did he encourage that quivering. He had, too clearly, outlined his life for himself, from the time three or four years past, when he had practically memorized the books in the section marked *"Journalism"* in the little Midwestern college where he was that combination rare even there, of star athlete and prize student.

A job on a first-rate New York newspaper. That was achieved. Experience in daily writing. Then, writing for himself, and travel. If he wanted to travel more than to write, if the writing was to be just a means of the traveling, that perhaps was to be expected of a man who'd never seen a great seaport, nor the sea, for that matter, until they put him on as an assistant on "ship news," on the New York *Daily Globe*.

"Ship news" was an assignment not generally much sought after, because it necessitated hard hours; going down the bay in winter dark and summer dawns to meet the arriving liners at Quarantine, and attending such midnight sailings as years of depression had not discouraged, to listen to the not usually very original opinions of celebrities as to America, in the moments either of their arrival in it (the foreign ones) or departure from it (the native born).

But "ship news" was to him who signed his stories "Garrison Dane," and was just twenty-five years old, the very forefront of romance, though it was only the prelude of adventure. There were mornings on the revenue cutter going down the harbor when, though he had had little sleep and less breakfast—for the cutter left the Battery at seven—ecstasy filled him. The last of the dawn fog lifted; the sun came up over gray waters that looked golden for five minutes; and there, side by side at anchor, lay the proud graceful hulls of half a dozen liners from as many far ports, waiting for their clearance for Manhattan, looking so beautiful that they made the heart of Garrison Dane beat faster just to see them.

Some day he would sail! Not just on any trip, New York to Cherbourg, overnight in Paris and return—the sort of trip the lines gave ship-news men occasionally for that vague word "publicity." He would sail around the world, with his own tickets.

Meanwhile, New York was a gay place for a young

newspaper man who danced well, had good manners, and certain dark pale looks concerning which he was almost unself-conscious, but not quite, because girls mentioned them too often. Garry's looks were more romantic than when he first came to New York to work, because of that pallor due entirely to irregular meals, too little sleep and lack of fresh air except on the cutter going down the Bay.

Well, with his looks, his smile, of its sort as charming as Marigold's, his nice manners, shyer than hers, they had met. Shortly thereafter he had found out who she was. Save that that made her slightly more exciting, it had very little effect on his feelings toward her—which progressed until her heart-shaped smiling face before his eyes, the sound of her soft voice, that was somehow warm and exciting for all its softness, in his ears, were grown more real than all his dreams for his life. In spite of himself!

Then he began to think, in a fashion curiously realistic for one so young and honestly in love. "Marry a rich girl and see the world from her yacht!" a flippancy he'd heard somewhere, rang through his head horribly now. It wasn't that he would do it. Under a certain new hard newspaper veneer, Garrison Dane was still very much the nice boy who had been his mother's great pride. He thought of her a little, now. But even if she had lived, her gentle inexperience could scarcely have helped to advise him.

THORNE

It was not that he would marry Marigold for her money. He would marry her, he knew, and let his vague shining dreams go forever, to work for her, support her according to his salary, to have her dear warm slenderness beside him for his own. He would live in the traditional garret for her, and work for her. The point was different: Did he have the least right to ask the heiress of the Aldison fortune to experiment with a garret at all?

He had his hours of thinking he was entirely presumptuous to suppose that Marigold would consider marrying him at all. But he had not any of those hours recently. The touch of her shoulder beside him driving along the sunny Long Island roads, the looks she stole at him sometimes from between her thick lashes that were so much darker red than her hair they looked almost black against her white skin, told him that she could love him. Not that she did—he understood that probably she did not know her own mind yet; but with just a little persuasion, she would know.

He had not brought that persuasion yet; he did not know whether he would ever bring it. Such demonstration of tenderness as there had been between them included three kisses of the sort that might be described "greeting kisses," and an hour this afternoon when he had held her free hand, as *she* drove competently in *her* car—how he hated that last. Not but what she would have let him drive, had he asked. But he would not ask, and knew besides, that she was a better driver, having had a great deal more driving experience than he. He resented that too, but admitted it was scarcely Marigold's fault, if the circumstances of his upbringing had not included practice in handling the best sports roadsters.

SUDDENLY he put his head between his hands, in that quiet room that smelt of fine leather bindings and of flowers.

Why was she who had come so quietly between him and other adventuring, the one she was? Or why was not he Richard Taylor, Third, that handsome cordial young man he'd hated on sight, unfairly, for his advantages?

If Marigold were not Marigold—

The library door opened fast. She came in, in a lovely pink frock, with an expression on her face Garry had never before seen. At her dressing-table she had made up her mind to face it, to find it amusing, or at least so to behave that other people would think she found it amusing.

Garry said: "You look very grown-up in the frock, Miss Aldison, darling."

She said: "I find I'm not Miss Aldison. Isn't that odd? Naturally, I'm not going to broadcast the fact, but I thought it would be interesting to tell one or two people —to see—" She paused.

"When you've had a shock, Marigold, and are trying not to show it, make your voice lower than its natural pitch, not higher. When it's high, the strain shows." He had an instinct to help her to steadiness, some understanding when he looked at her tense face, that if she broke from steadiness, she would not forgive herself.

She smiled, a stiff little smile, said: "Thanks, Garry. Let's hurry. We've probably kept Dick's dinner-party waiting half an hour as it is."

"Is Dick the other of the one or two people you plan to tell—whatever it is?"

"Probably."

On that "probably," which angered him, though he knew it was unreasonable that it should, he was silent. And silently, through the dim sweetness of the country road so summer-scented, they drove to the brilliant lights of the Beach Club.

He thought: "What did she mean? But she must tell me if she chooses. I sha'n't ask."

She thought: "Dear Garry couldn't be any comfort, if I told him details. Dick could be more, simply because he's always known me."

Chapter Three

WAITING on the cool flagged terrace of the Beach Club, where the elms marched down almost to the edge of the sea, Richard Taylor III considered whether he had better admit to Marigold that he had been giving no dinner-party, that he said that just for an excuse to persuade her and Dane to join him, when on telephoning to ask her to dine, she told him she was with Garry—or whether to say the other people had "disappointed."

Not devoid of humor, in spite of the state of his heart, he was slightly amused at himself for considering the question vital either way, and more than slightly exasperated that the state of his heart should have brought him to the point of considering petty lies. Still, perhaps that was in a sense an improvement. Had not Marigold said, crossly: "Dick, you are *so* good and careful, it's slightly dull." That, when he was remonstrating with her for her new taste in dance- and dining-places. His point had been directed not against Garry Dane, her companion in the places to which he objected. Of that he was quite sure. He just thought that Marigold, so lovely in herself and so well known to be the only daughter of wealth, might get herself kidnaped. Nor did it occur to him that he, the only son of wealth and name much more conspicuous, had gone where he chose habitually, had in connection with his relief work gone alone into neighborhoods and houses much more dangerous than anything Marigold had ever seen, without once considering his personal risk. That, he would have said, was different.

The passers-by who noticed him sitting there a little apart,—his wide thin shoulders hunched a little in his beautifully cut blue jacket, his hair, which was fairer than Marigold's, a pale blur in the half dark,—said, "Hello, Dick," listened to the tone of his "Hello," and interrupted him no further. Unless they were young and feminine, or mothers of the young and feminine, sometimes they sighed a little and said, "Waiting for Marigold?" with not much of interrogation in the words.

He had, it was so clear to any who observed, been waiting for Marigold, literally or metaphorically, these several years.

At a moment when he was beginning to realize that this evening he was waiting longer even than was habitual with him, his mother moved out of the lights near the veranda, came along the terrace and seated herself in the empty chair opposite him. Her strong massive figure, gowned with dignity and without regard to the warmth of the summer dusk, in black silk that rustled, sat silent for a long moment, a solid comfortable presence that he found disturbing, nevertheless.

She said: "You're waiting for Marigold?"

"Marigold and a new young man of hers."

Her square intelligent face peered at him, in the dimness, as if wondering whether she were supposed to pay

attention to that or not. She decided to pay attention to it, indirectly. "I don't usually presume to interfere in your affairs" (she did, but not objectionably); "but why don't you propose to Marigold?"

"I have, I do, I did this week, even three or four days ago. She said she'd known me too long; she said she was frightfully fond of me: she meant I was dull."

A woman of strong characteristics, Mrs. Taylor's maternal instinct was far from the weakest of them. Her indignant voice boomed: "Dull, *you?* The most promising young man in New York politics—on our side, I mean—with such sound understanding of present-day problems, even not counting your looks, your charm—"

Dick said, gently: "Shut up, Mother. How did we get on the subject, anyway?"

To that she answered honestly: "I've been bound to get on it for months, particularly these last weeks since I've seen you were unhappy. Of course, all young girls feel that goodness is dull, until they find out how rare it is. . . . You, my darling, will never cause Marigold a moment's unhappiness, from the time she makes up her mind to be sensible and marry you, any more than your father ever caused me any."

He was touched, for all that he was startled that his situation, of a young man much in love but not greatly hoping, was so plain.

His mother said firmly: "Marigold will accept you, of course." He thought, as if she who had always tried to get for him everything he wanted, could by belief get him this he wanted most!

She stood up, said, "Here she is," and walked away as Marigold and Garry Dane came along the terrace.

"There you are, Dick."

Ah, why should one voice, one faint fragrance, one smile, have power to turn his heart over! "Hello, Marigold. . . . How are you, Dane?"

"How are you, Taylor?"

"Did you say we were dining with people, Dick?"

"I did, but we aren't."

She smiled a little absently. Well, at least she did not seem to be cross.

"What'll you drink, Marigold?"

"Tomato juice; nothing else is cool enough."

"You, Dane?"

"Rum cocktail, thanks."

"Waiter, two rum cocktails and one tomato juice."

"It's pleasant here, Taylor." Garry's voice sounded as if he hated to admit it.

"Not bad after the city. I was tied up there all day."

Garry, who was "tied up" six days a week, regardless of heat-waves or blizzards, or variable weather in between, looked as he felt—as if Taylor were being patronizing. Dick, becoming aware of the look and disliking it, since he had no wish to be patronizing, thought: "He goes about expecting to be despised for working for his living. Actually, I bet I work longer hours."

Those two who were bound to dislike each other regarded each other straightly for an instant, with appraisal.

Marigold said: "I want to dance. With you first, Richard. I'll save up, Garry."

"For your old age?"

She laughed, went off, with that light swaying walk of hers that was, Garry thought, a little like a long-stemmed flower swaying.

She slipped into Dick's arms, and said: "There's something I want to tell you—or maybe I don't."

HE missed a step, because his heart stopped a beat. He thought that she was going to tell him she was in love, and not with him.

She went on before he could speak. "No, I can't—not here, where it's so just as usual. Probably you wouldn't know. Your mother might, because she came from Boston too. All the way from home in the car I thought I wanted to tell you, but what's the use? Besides, I should probably wait until mother and father—I mean Rodney and Madeleine—"

"What on earth are you talking about, Marigold?"

"About something strange that has happened."

Her little cool hand was trembling in his. Why, she was frightened! "Darling, what is the trouble? Marigold, you're shaking all over."

She had just begun to do that.

Two couples that they knew passed, said, "Hello." Afterward, Dick never could remember who they had been.

Marigold's little feet hesitated and stopped still. Her gray eyes, fixed with intentness on something over his shoulder, made him turn his head.

A most extraordinary-looking woman in a bright dress was standing at the top of the two or three steps that led from the lounge to the dance-floor. At the same instant he saw his mother, seated at a floor table very near the steps, glance up and notice the woman standing there. Her expression was so startled that Dick almost forgot Marigold leaning against his arm.

Chapter Four

IN the drawing-room of Elmslee, Marigold's departure left a silence of lull before storm. It broke with Rodney's icily quiet words:

"Now that you've done as much damage as possible, you'd better go. Anything further that's to be said may be left to our attorneys."

Justina shifted her ground. "Madeleine, are you going to let him turn your sister from your door?"

Her husband gave Madeleine no chance to answer. "Yes. Your own repeated madnesses closed all decent doors to you, this long time since. This last piece of cruelty—disturbing a young girl's well-ordered life—is only part of the pattern."

Justina said sullenly: "Her life will be more seriously disturbed, I tell you, if she marries that newspaper man."

"You can't tell me, or my wife either, anything about the child we've had for twenty years. It's too bad she ever had to know of your existence. But, that's done. This good may come of it—that having used your threat at last, you have no weapon left to use. The child loves us—she's a good child; and after all, she's twenty. You have no legal power over her."

That, which had just occurred to him, really seemed reassuring.

Justina's hard bright blue gaze was scornful, still. "Like the patriot, or general or some one,—I never was good at remembering history,—I have not yet begun to fight, Rodney."

Her voice was so convincing he hesitated. "What do you want, really?"

"To have again at last what I used to have when I was Justina Shore."

Madeleine Shore Aldison, whose years of self-control were written finely on her face, forgot them. She began to sob the hard sobs of a woman unused to the release of weeping. So dreadful was the sound to the ears of her husband, that what he had meant to say next to his wife's sister went clean out of his mind. He put clumsy gentle arms round his wife. He found such comfort as he could. "You mustn't, you must not, my dear! I sha'n't let her interfere with Marigold."

Her sobs grew wilder, so that she could not speak. She could not tell him that she was not thinking of Marigold, who had all life ahead, nor grieving for her; she was weeping for the first time in long years for her lovely sister Justina, who could never, never "have again what she used to have," never have back young beauty, and young warmth, never have a chance to manage it all better, any more than she herself could have that chance. Her husband's arms were round her shoulders; he and she were closer than they'd been since youth; but it was too late for that to be important, either.

Something slid over the face of her sister, hearing those sobs, watching that composed figure looking so broken at last. No look of satisfaction, nor quite regret, but a sort of bewilderment, as if she were remembering things she had forgotten a long time, as long as when Mrs. Rodney Aldison had been her little sister Madeleine.

There was a knock at the door. Miss Cane's thin short figure appeared. "Mr. Aldison, is there anything I can do?"

"Yes: Get sedatives. Get Dr. Marchand. Show this person to her car."

The hard mask slipped on Justina's face again so quickly, so smoothly, that it was difficult to know whether, for seconds, it had been gone. "Not my car, Rodney. Just a taxi, and I dismissed it."

Madeleine struggled to speak, managed: "Don't, Rodney. Don't turn her out like that. It doesn't matter, now we're all middle-aged—"

Rodney did not understand, but something in the sentence caught at him. Middle-aged! And all his adult life, practically, he had hated that blue-eyed woman, ever since his dear young friend Gregory Melvin killed himself over her mad folly. How old would Gregory have been, if he'd lived until now?

For the life of him, Rodney Aldison could not remember; and the failure to remember hurt him as if it were a reflection on the genuineness of his old love for Gregory. Let's see—Marigold had been born in 1914, in the fall of the year the war started; he'd thought himself lucky to get them all safely back to America. . . .

The face of his wife's secretary, still hesitating before him, as if he'd not made his orders or the sequence in which they were to be carried out, clear enough, brought him back from irrelevancy. . . . It was certain that Gregory would be in his late fifties. . . . Madeleine's sobs were lessening. He spoke more quietly: "Get a car for Mrs. Otis. Tell the chauffeur to take her wherever she wants to go. Telephone Dr. Marchand, and say that I wish he'd come at once, to give Mrs. Aldison a sedative."

Madeleine protested, "That is not necessary, Rodney," but her faint voice alarmed him.

He said, "No harm in it, my dear," and patted her hair uncertainly. Why, it felt just as silky as it used, so long ago, when he loved running his hands through it! Too bad, how life had slipped by, wasted, for him and her. Thanks to that gaunt woman standing there! Yet with that curious sensation of his wife's hair under his fingers, he could not manage to think her sister quite as dreadful as usual.

Justina said: "I'll go, for now. We might have lunch one day soon, Madeleine."

On what was to Rodney the complete outrageousness of that, she left, following Miss Cane's little steps out the door, like—the comparison did occur to him absurdly—a sailing-ship following a sturdy small tug. She did not give one backward glance to her sister or himself. There was a kind of insolence in that abrupt departure, as if she left so lightly, knowing she could come back when she chose.

Madeleine said: "I don't need Dr. Marchand, really. Besides, we said to Marigold we'd go to the club for her. . . . Your hand's very soothing."

Being soothing was a new rôle to Rodney. He liked it. He wanted to say patting her hair soothed him, himself, but decided that would sound too inane. "You sit quiet, for now. Later, when we've got you to bed, I'll go fetch Marigold. What was all that business of her wasting her life on a newspaper man? I don't want Marigold to be serious about anyone, for years."

His wife forbore to remind him that Marigold was older now than she herself had been when she began to be serious about him.

He said, in a minute: "Dreadful business if she takes it too hard, knowing." He could feel Madeleine's forehead quiver under his hand. So he said quickly: "She'll forget about it, I expect. With all the things she has for amusement. Or do you think we should take her on a trip?"

"A trip." Quaint word, if one stopped to think of it, for what was supposed to be the cure for most sorrows, illness, *ennui*. He'd taken Madeleine and Justina on a "trip" at the time of all that trouble. Much good that had done, in the end! He said brokenly: "Nothing's any use."

And in that first evincing of the sense of futility in him who for all of his life had thought so many things—from "keeping fit," to "making careful investments"—were of great use, she was so troubled that, though she was weary now almost beyond thinking, she leaned against him, and said, "There, dear!" as to a child.

They were both grateful for Dr. Marchand's brisk entrance that ended a moment too poignant.

Chapter Five

IT was Rodney's effort at politeness, his instructions to tell the chauffeur to take Mrs. Otis wherever she wanted to go, that brought on the disaster.

Driving down the scented lane in the first dark, while the air felt still sun-warmed, she realized, when the chauffeur approaching the highway, had said, "Where to, ma'am?" that she did not know. Certainly not immediately out of this heavenly air to New York's city streets.

She said: "Drive toward the station. There's a call I may make."

Then, as always since her hard years, a taste of luxury, the comfort of the smooth-running car, and the look of the chauffeur's smart uniformed back, delighted her, lent her confidence, made her feel everything would be quite all right now, if she just was clever about the next step.

Confused, troubling recollections swirled in her head. Not just of Rodney's hard handsome face accusing her—that memory she held before her eyes whenever she wanted to feel justified in ruthlessness,—nor of dead Hilary Otis' swaggering grace, for which she'd flung away all of life besides, that counted; but of her young sister Madeleine walking in a pink frock through a flowering apple orchard, on the family "place" near Concord—a place burned down a dozen years, and sold by the Shores half as many before that. She'd almost forgotten they'd ever owned it. Why should she see, so clearly now, Madeleine's smooth bright head, her gray eyes smiling, walking through the ankle-deep fresh grass, and a shower of apple-bloom drifting down over her hair, over the pink frock.

SUDDENLY she knew why that memory came back across the bitter years. Because that girl tonight, Marigold, had walked, in her pink frock, with the same swaying grace.

Marigold—her daughter! The words didn't mean anything, really. She had said them over to herself too many times, as a threat. Her daughter and the daughter of dull, kind Gregory Melvin, who'd loved her so, and whom she'd never loved.

She sighed, pressing her thin shoulders against the deep cushions, that seemed to rest her, actually, and drawing long breaths of the summer night.

They were on the station road when she realized that she was hungry. Of course, no dinner. She remembered that on her way up from the station by taxi she had seen a discreet sort of roadhouse. She could have a cocktail and a sandwich, while she thought what next to do.

She leaned forward and spoke to the chauffeur. . . .

But inside, in the dim lighted room with its shabby garish decorations, and its patrons minding their own business strictly at various wide-spaced tables, she had three cocktails before her sandwich. Because of two thoughts that came to her: First, that this was terribly the sort of place she was used to, whatever its individual variation according to climate or country. And next, that the child Marigold's eyes had been rather dreadfully appraising. Well, she had never found any better recipe than an extra cocktail or two, for the hours when her heart felt old and tired. Besides, they helped her to think.

She thought, drinking the third, that she'd better go straightway to the Beach Club, where Marigold had said she was going, and explain the situation to her. Naturally, it had come as a shock to the girl at first; that was to be expected. But surely, she would see, when she was told all the facts, that her mother was badly treated, that she couldn't have stayed with dull Gregory Melvin, that love was its own justification. These young people, from all the books she read about them, understood about love.

Of course, in her odd circumstances, she'd never happened to know any of the nicer young people, until, in America, she saw them about in restaurants, just as she'd seen Marigold. When she remembered that, she remembered there was something about which she'd wanted to warn Marigold. . . . Oh, yes, that she must not throw away her chances, since it was her duty to make up, by having everything, for her mother's wrongs.

Reassured by the cocktails, and her thoughts no less consistent than they'd been most of her life, she went out to the waiting car, said, "Beach Club," and settled down contentedly to the short drive.

The doorman was extremely hesitant about letting her in; truly, the insolence of the modern American servant was beyond belief. Stepping out of a splendid car, walking into a fine carved doorway, she had forgotten, or near enough, a succession of Swiss, French and Italian servants who had been insolent with an insolence that had to be endured, times that she had not had money to meet her bills.

She said, "I'm Mrs. Rodney Aldison's sister," with

arrogance in her voice. He hesitated, let her enter. He was a substitute doorman, who did not know Mrs. Aldison—who came seldom to the club; but of course he knew the name. He started to say, "Shall I find Mrs. Aldison for you?"

But Justina Otis had swept on, toward the sound of dance-music.

THE sight of the people dancing, the beat of the music, the sense that they were all beautifully dressed, confused her, made her hesitate at the top of the steps. Then she saw Marigold, dancing with that young man whom she'd seen photographed with her. Richard Taylor, Third. That was a good thing; the girl must be already following her advice.

She wished she had not had that third cocktail, with so little to eat, too, because the room seemed very warm; and over there a massive old woman, who looked so like what Mrs. Richard Taylor, Second, had been bound to turn out to be, was staring at her as if she were an unpleasant sort of ghost.

Beside her a club steward said, not very courteously: "What can I do for you, madam?" It happened, at that moment, that the dance-music stopped.

That old woman who looked so like Jane Taylor it was funny, stood up suddenly, as if she were coming toward her. Jane Taylor, young matron when she was young débutante, a solid girl even then. One of those people who had what they called strength of character. Silly, not to know that Richard Taylor, Third, must be her son.

The steward said: "Madam, I must ask you what you want here."

It was unfortunate that sometimes the effort to speak at all, when one's head was spinning, seemed to make one's voice specially sharp and clear.

She said, so that twenty people heard: "I want to speak to my daughter, Miss Marigold Aldison."

Then Marigold was coming quickly toward her, but not as near as that old woman.

Jane Taylor said to her: "Well, Justina, I supposed you were dead." To the steward, she added something quickly, so that he went away. To Marigold: "Let me manage this, dear. Dick, give this lady your arm and Marigold the other. The child looks faint."

Her solid rustling black silks led them straight across the dance-floor to a table in a corner, some little distance from any occupied tables. The steward who had spoken to Justina was arranging places, hurrying.

Before she seated herself, Jane said kindly to Marigold: "Facing things out is always best, I've found."

She ordered coffee for Justina, a glass of sherry for Marigold—"Yes, you need it, my dear." She, alone of them at that instant, remembered Garry Dane. "Richard, go tell the young man who was with Marigold that the child's upset, and he'd better go home and see her another time."

Richard looked at Marigold. She said: "Tell Garry to forgive me, that I'll call him, late tonight."

He went outside, to the terrace, being very sure that Dane would think he was being insulted. He was sitting there looking angry already.

"Dane, I'm frightfully sorry—the fact is—some impostor has turned up pretending to be a relative of Marigold, and she's a little disturbed."

Richard was just making his first guess at the situation.

"Then that's what Marigold meant by saying she wasn't Marigold Aldison." The words slipped out before Garry thought. The two young men stared at each other, then decided neither to make confidences nor ask them.

"I'm afraid it's terribly rude not to insist you stay for dinner, Dane, anyway. I'd suggest we dine together, but I'm afraid my mother'll need a little assistance in coping with this female."

Garry thought, suddenly: "Mrs. Otis! She's blackmailing them. Well, I can put a stop to that, somehow, as well as these people."

Dick was pressing him to borrow his roadster for the journey back to town. Abruptly Garry accepted, took the keys, went down the terrace steps.

"Well," thought Dick, "I wonder why he's in such a hurry to be off?"

Garry was in a hurry because he had decided to go at once to the proprietor of the restaurant where he and Marigold had met Mrs. Otis, find out her antecedents, make her behave. He could get to town quickly in Dick's car, could even have, in the returning of it, an excellent reason to drive out next day, as soon as he finished his morning's work, and see Marigold, having straightened out whatever was troubling her.

Dick got back to his mother's table in time to hear her say: "That coffee did make you feel better, didn't it, Justina? Now tell us why you said that silly thing about being Marigold's mother. You disturbed the child. Naturally, she is devoted to her mother." And without changing voice: "What do you call yourself now, Justina—Mrs. Otis? This is my son. Dick, this is Madeleine Aldison's sister Justina. You wouldn't remember about her."

MARIGOLD

But the woman Justina had begun to talk, breathlessly—as if, Dick thought, she had waited so long to tell this story, she could suddenly wait no longer.

He heard Marigold gasp once, saw his mother put an old hand over her young one, heard his mother say, "Oh, my poor friend Madeleine, my poor Madeleine!" at another point, watched Justina Otis' face, as she justified, blamed, grew confused in details of her story, because she talked so fast, went back when she noticed she'd left things out, and repeated details.

In the end he grew impatient for her to end that sordid tale, that had nothing to do with the freshness of Marigold. He wanted to be alone with Marigold to tell her so.

He had not been watching Marigold. All three at the table had watched Justina's ravaged face, which was exotic still, which probably would be exotic to the last day she lived. Until Justina said one simple sentence.

The sentence was: "I came back hoping my own daughter would not judge me."

Jane Taylor's old eyes, Dick's ardent ones, Justina's own defiant glance, turned to Marigold then.

The melodramatic but somehow touching words stirred in Marigold every generous impulse she had. Jane Taylor, looking at her young troubled face, thought Justina had known very precisely how to phrase that appeal. That was not quite so. Justina had only operated on the instinct that makes a gambler press his luck when he feels it's in.

Marigold spoke quickly: "Why should you think I'd judge you? I don't know enough."

Then, feeling that perhaps that sounded inadequate, she hunted for more words.

But those were sufficient for Justina. "Then we'll be good friends, the best of friends."

It was too eager; it took too much for granted, so that it rang false.

But Marigold, bent on being gallant, was not being analytical.

"Of course," she agreed.

"And what that 'Of course' has let her in for," Jane Taylor thought, "she can't begin to guess. Yet what else could the poor child have said?"

Her son's voice, she considered, did not skillfully enough conceal his exasperated impatience. "That being settled, we might dance, Marigold."

MARIGOLD stood up obediently—as if, he thought, she was so bewildered she would follow any suggestion made to her just then.

He was more conscious than she of curious eyes glancing from them dancing to that table where his mother and Mrs. Otis sat, evidently with very little to say to each other. He thought bitterly that Marigold would have time enough, in the weeks to come, to notice people watching her.

She said: "At home, when she first announced who she was, I was determined to have nothing to do with her."

Dick spoke tactlessly: "You shouldn't have changed your mind."

She didn't answer.

"To add to the interest of this evening, Marigold, there's your father looking for you. Now he's going to Mother's table."

"We'd better join them, Dick. Father may make a scene. . . . I can't, all at once, stop calling him Father, can I?"

"Why stop at all? You'll only hurt him if you do."

He was taking her back to the table without protest, though his opinion was that his mother was entirely capable of dealing with the situation.

He was right. They arrived just in time to hear her say: "Sit down, Rodney, and don't look as if you were going to be violent in an instant. In the first place, too many people are watching you. More importantly, it's no use. The story's out, or will be, in half a dozen more or less extravagant versions, by tomorrow morning. You'd best leave it to me to straighten them out."

A small sound like a groan passed the lips of Rodney Aldison. Hearing that strange sound, Marigold put her hand on his sleeve. "Father, we'd better go home, don't you think?"

But her eyes, everyone noticed, looked at Justina as if she were asking permission.

And Justina, with the last words hers, and triumph in her face, said: "Run along, my dear. I've got to get back to town shortly, myself. I'm at the Parker Hill Hotel. Telephone me tomorrow, and come in to tea, if you're free."

Marigold hesitated. Jane Taylor said firmly: "Go with Rodney." Rodney, it was obvious, was beyond saying anything.

Dick walked to their car with them and went straight home himself. He did not know how much later it was that he heard some one at the door of his room, heard his mother's comfortable voice asking in the darkness: "Are you asleep?"

He said: "No."

"I just wanted to tell you not to worry!"

As if he were ten years old!

He heard the sound her dress made, going away down the corridor, before he could think of any sensible answer.

GARRY DANE

Chapter Six

MARIGOLD walked across Central Park, east to west, through the dusty sunlight of a city afternoon, in the air more scented with gasoline and oil-fumes from the cars moving fast along the underpasses, than by grass and trees in thick leaf. In a printed frock in which yellow and violet flowers wandered over a green silk with a certain air of unreason, in a wide black hat of very thin straw, in black linen slippers—in short, in the smartest possible version of clothes designed for a young woman to spend a hot day in town, she walked a little wearily, on her way to see Justina.

More than ten summer weeks' passing separated her from that early June evening when Justina had made her melodramatic entrance. In those weeks the simplest thing had been to decide what to call her.

She had said, in that odd voice of hers that seemed to hold echoes of so much old joy, so many old despairs, even in its most casual sentences: *"Mother*—let Madeleine have the name. She's used to it. Besides, it does make me feel—just a little—old. Call me Justina, it's more *intime."*

Marigold had said: "All right, whatever you like." Her acquiescence may have misled Justina, for Marigold had no intention of being—found in herself no capacity to be—*intime* with the woman who was in fact her mother. She managed, with difficulty, to be reasonably cordial.

That was one of the minor things that had made these weeks strange beyond anything in her life before them. More important, was the difference in Rodney and Madeleine Aldison. She had thought of them, always, as the two most secure people she knew, not just secure in position or place, but in themselves. It hurt, more than her own uncertainties hurt, to see them so uncertain.

From the beginning, when the story "broke," as Garry put it, at home, at the club, almost immediately afterward in the gossip columns, and so quickly to the news headlines—"Aldison Heiress not an Aldison. . . . Who is Marigold Aldison?"—Rodney and Madeleine had seemed helpless, as if there were no possibility of recovery from this blow, perhaps anticipated so long there was no strength left even in the anticipation.

It was Jane Taylor who settled what, practically, was to be done. Her crisp heavy old voice at first had been an exasperation to Marigold, but became through that nine-day wonder of the newspaper headlines, a reassurance.

"Now, Rodney, no sense storming. Make a statement and stick to a statement. . . . Marigold, I don't want to hear you say again that you detest the type of woman Justina is. You must be tactful."

And later in Justina's presence—a Justina slightly disconcerted by the whirlwind of her own raising: "Don't talk nonsense about wanting Madeleine to be your social sponsor. If you don't resign yourself to being inconspicuous, we *sha'n't* manage to keep the story of your romance with your groom, or whatever he was, out of the tabloids."

They had, at least, kept that out, though the old story of Gregory Melvin's suicide was told.

"Don't threaten Justina with withdrawal of her allowance, Rodney, unless you want pictures in Sunday magazine sections of your 'luxurious estate!' "—Jane Taylor's voice put that in quotes—"in combination with pictures of her residence in whatever sort of showy misery she finds. She'll be sure to find a showy sort."

Well, Justina sublet an excellent apartment on Central Park West, Marigold went to tea with her twice a week, and life at Elmslee settled down to as near normalcy as was likely, considering the fact that Madeleine had canceled all her summer entertaining.

Except the garden fête. She had not canceled that, because it was for charity. It was a success of a sort. The hospital would benefit, at least. More than twenty-five times as many people as usual took advantage in theory of the opportunity to see Elmslee's famous gardens, though most of them took little interest in the flowers. They surged up along the terraces; they even invaded the lower rooms; at one time it was necessary to send for police reinforcements. A murmur of their voices rose clearly to Marigold's room, where she spent the afternoon with her door locked. They were asking principally if there were a chance to see her, or Justina, or Madeleine or Rodney. Occasionally they seemed to be asking one or another of the gardeners for details of her adoption.

At the end of that day, by the time when Marigold dared put her head out the window to savor the sudden quietness, she had reached a curious sort of hard tranquillity, a feeling that since she'd survived that dreadful day, she would survive whatever dreadful days might come thereafter.

After that, things steadied.

ONLY, just as the lives of Rodney and Madeleine had narrowed with catastrophe, so the life of Marigold narrowed. She withdrew from her usual summer occupations, from the dozen or twenty of her contemporaries with whom she'd swum, danced, exchanged visits, other years. And so Garry Dane and Richard Taylor, who had been in June just slightly more special to her than half a dozen other people, were grown much more important. How important, or which one more so, she had not yet decided.

And her heart, under the lemon- and violet-colored flowers of her frock, jumped a little as, around a curve on the path, she came upon Garry, seated on a bench, looking as if he'd been waiting for her rather a while.

"Hello, my sweet. Isn't this a happy accident?"

"I don't believe it's an accident at all, Garry."

"Of course not. If there weren't so many more exciting things to love you for, I might even be able to love you for your intelligence. Sit down and talk to me about weather for five minutes."

His dark hair clung damply to his pale forehead. He looked as if he'd had too much weather of the New York summer sort. He also looked rather specially excited.

"Justina hates to have me be late, Garry. Also I hate to be, because then it makes me late getting home." But she sat down, saying: "I'll stay just a minute."

"You look fresh and cool as a person just out of a shower, Marigold."

"I am just out of a shower." She'd stopped at the Aldisons' closed town house on East Seventy-first Street, and been pleased that the caretaker's manner to her was exactly as usual. The manners of so many were only almost as usual, since she had turned out to be some one named Marigold Melvin.

"Isn't it odd, Garry—something just reminded me—that I have no feeling at all about that Gregory Melvin who, really, is my father?"

"It would be odd if you did have any, considering that he died some months before you were born. Don't expect to have all the proper sentiments, complete, Marigold. No one does."

"Don't they, really?"

He laughed. "Besides being ungrammatical, that's idiotic. As if I'd know! You think I know all about life, because I work for a living. That just makes me know a different set of things than you and Dick know."

SO far in self-analysis he had come himself, since the night he'd raced back to town in Richard Taylor's car, determined to manage everything to protect Marigold from blackmail. In the light of subsequent events, he'd been somewhat impressed with his own futility, and was recovering, with slightly more humor than he'd had.

Marigold said, "I see," absently, and went on to talk about what she was thinking. "That night at the club—I don't believe I told you this—when Justina said, 'I didn't expect my own daughter to judge me,' I felt so sorry for her, so sure that everyone should be kind to her, because she must have suffered so much—in spite of being angry with her before, for disturbing Mother and Father. But now I can only be sorry for her, when I'm not faced with having to spend an hour in her company. Garry, I sometimes wonder whether she suffered very much."

"Of course she didn't, except in retrospect. She and her boy friend, your stepfather,"—Marigold winced, but Garry didn't notice,—"no doubt had a fine time spending Rodney Aldison's money, gambling and quarreling and making up with champagne celebrations when the new checks came in." He did notice then that Marigold's face looked stony. "Surely you don't care?"

"I care terribly, Garry. It makes me feel all—all dirty."

He gave her such flippant philosophy as he had. "The goings-on of one's parents shouldn't be disturbing, if one remembers one may inherit from any one of a hundred or more ancestors beyond them. Besides, the whole business of 'family' is absurd. Without a certificate of character for every one of .one's great-great-grandmothers, who knows his family?"

He paused, watching her. "I see that you're not amused, like Queen Victoria. Such a slim pretty Victorian, though! Never mind; we'll talk about something else. . . . Me. Do I seem just the same as always, today? I'm not."

She regarded him rather wistfully, thinking, "I do have my days when Garry's what I want, and my days when Richard is. Apparently this is a Richard day. I wonder if everyone else is so mixed up."

She said: "Do you take anything seriously, Garry?"

He answered promptly, "You!"

"I didn't mean that. Anything besides me?"

"The newspaper business, to a degree."

"I don't understand about the newspaper business very well, why it holds people so. But that wasn't what I meant, either."

"You mean have I serious principles and things? You sound as if you'd been spending the morning with Richard Taylor, Third, and him discoursing on the responsibilities of wealth."

She flushed. She had seen Richard, not for all morning, but only for lunch. That was something about which she'd decided not to tell Garry, and now defiantly told him. "I'm doing relief work two mornings a week. Richard thought I might as well, since I had to come to town anyway, to see Justina. He also thought it might interest me, make me see my own affairs in proportion. He's right. It does."

"If I were you, it would interest me much more to spend mornings like this, sitting in the sand."

"We all have to do something. Besides, I stay cool. After lunch" (lunch with Richard, he guessed) "I always go home—to the town house, I mean, and change and have a shower."

He ignored that last. "Why do we all have to do something?" His voice was more annoyed than he meant, largely because she hadn't seemed interested in what had happened to him that had made him different today.

She hesitated, said a little unhappily, "I suppose we don't, unless we feel we do," realizing that while she watched Richard's grave face glowing when he explained what his hopes for social betterment were, it was all quite clear, but away from him, she was too new at thinking about it to make it clear to anyone else.

"The interest of Richard Taylor, Third, in the masses of humanity is one of the most exasperating, offensively patronizing, generally absurd things I know about."

He sounded suddenly furious. Now she *would* be late for tea with Justina. But she didn't want to leave him, angry. And she said precisely the wrong thing.

"Was ship news hard this week, Garry?"

It was the wrong thing, because he had spent several miserable days in which a series of de-luxe sailings were scheduled, watching dozens of young people like Marigold, but not so pretty, or like Dick Taylor, but not so serious, sail off blithely in cabins costing more than two months' salary of his, and wondered how he had ever considered that he might ask Marigold some day to marry him. Well, she wouldn't understand any of that, if he tried to tell her.

"Any week's hard in which I don't see you for four days, Marigold."

"I know; it was horrid of me not to come in Tuesday to dinner, when you asked me. But I was tired." And she had gone sailing by moonlight with Richard.

She felt somewhat disloyal remembering that, but told herself firmly that she had no need to feel disloyal, since she wasn't committed to either Dick or Garry. She looked up at Garry. He did seem worn out. It must be hard to work every day of one's life. He was to be excused any impatience he had about Richard.

"I do have to go now, Garry. Do you want to meet me afterward? I'll stay in town to dinner if you like."

"That was my general idea in waiting for you. We'll meet here in an hour and a quarter, if you like."

She stood up. He stood, started to say good-by politely, and said instead what was on his mind.

"I wanted to tell you that my aunt died—"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Garry."

"Hell, I never saw her, and she was eighty-four years old or something like it. The important thing to me is that she left me forty-eight hundred dollars. Curious sum. Nothing to the likes of you and Richard Taylor, Third."

It was to her just two hundred dollars less than her clothes allowance for her débutante season; it approximated the cost of her sports roadster; it was twice the price of her mink coat. She kept thinking absurdly of what forty-eight hundred dollars was to her, because she was too hurt by the anger in Garry's face to know what to say to him. Forty-eight hundred dollars was four times what Richard said was the minimum decent wage for a man with one and a half children. They always had one and a half, or something and two-thirds children in the statistics in the relief bureau. Averages, of course. Thorne, the butler at Elmslee, got two hundred a month; that was half of forty-eight hundred a year.

"Well, Marigold, do you know how much money forty-eight hundred dollars is?"

She wondered if it approximated the allowance Rodney gave Justina.

"It's more money than I should ever be able to earn in my life, probably, Garry."

THAT apparently had been the right thing to say. His face softened. "I'm sorry, Marigold, I was cross."

So was she. She hated to believe him unreasonable. But there was nothing to be done about it now. "I'll see you in an hour and a quarter."

He watched her slim back receding as if that could simplify either the problem of his love for her, or his resentment at the money that separated them. . . .

It was, Marigold decided, an unfortunate day for her, altogether. Justina was in a very bad temper.

"Perfectly preposterous, my sitting here in the hot city, when Madeleine could ask me to stay, as well as not."

They'd been over that before, more than once. Marigold tried to be firm but pleasant. "You know, Justina, you'd be unhappy, and so would everyone. You and Rodney and Madeleine settled that you weren't friends, years and years ago. There's no use trying to change what's happened."

"You're just quoting Jane Taylor, word for word. She always was a prig."

Marigold recognized that she was, in fact, quoting her, and was extremely glad that she remembered her heavy sensible phrases.

"This apartment is dreadfully hot, Marigold."

Marigold thought about that. It seemed to her no hotter than any other place in New York, and cooler than many. She didn't like the apartment; its furnishings were too rococo for her taste. But it was what Justina had chosen in June. She said: "Why don't you take a trip to Maine or Canada, or some place really cool?"

Justina looked grim. "I'll sit right here. It would please them too much if I retreated now."

There was obviously no answer to that.

JUSTINA began to walk up and down, the skirts of her green chiffon "hostess gown" trailing behind her. She looked quaint.

As usual, regarding her, Marigold's thoughts grew confused. She hated elaborate chiffon tea-gowns of the sort affected by picture heroines before censorship came in. She admitted that nevertheless on Justina they were "effective." What a bitter handsome face, and what a tired grace! A reluctant pity rose in her, as almost always. When Justina recognized it, as she had before, she would play upon it. Marigold knew that too. Still, it must be dreadful to be old, finished, to have thrown away one's life and lost at last even him for whom it was thrown away.

She drew a long breath. Kind old Jane Taylor had said, "When you're dealing with Justina and get disturbed, always draw a long breath. It's supposed to relax the nerve centers. And Justina will have enough nerves for a whole roomful of people. No one else can afford any, if sense is to be made."

Remembering that advice, and following it, Marigold was very slightly amused, so that a little smile showed at the corners of her mouth, while she tried to think of some harmless subject of conversation.

Justina, through eyelashes that were amazing for her age, noticed the smile. "There you sit, smiling in a superior manner, just like your father. You don't seem to have inherited anything from me but your looks."

Marigold had always thought she inherited those from Madeleine. She said, a little shakily, but thinking perhaps it would be a fairly harmless subject of conversation: "Tell me about my father. I was just thinking a little while ago, that he wasn't very real." Nor ever would be, probably, as real as Rodney's kind heavy handsome face, looking at her, lately, rather apologetically.

At least her question made Justina stop pacing the floor. She sat down, said, "Your father—" rather uncertainly, as if she hadn't expected that question, and paused.

Marigold helped her. "Rodney said he was a grand person, but I didn't ask any details."

Justina's eyes narrowed. "He was Rodney's best friend; that's why Rodney hates me so. Did he tell you that?"

"No."

"Your father. Does it shock you if I say that I didn't remember him very well for years? I don't now, except watching you. There is something, some expression—"

She stopped again, remembering, and Marigold waited.

"So many things have happened since," her voice slid off, remembering those.

"There were Madeleine and I, in a tall narrow Boston house. That was at the beginning. . . . Well, that would bore you."

It would not have. Marigold would have liked to hear of the girl Madeleine was, but since she could not say that, said nothing.

Justina's strange eyes regarded the view of sky and fluffy clouds riding outside her wide window, clearly not seeing sky or clouds. Her voice was simpler—yes, that was the word, less filled with either mockery or pretense, than Marigold had ever heard it.

"I never told anyone this. I married Gregory Melvin at the end of my first season because I knew that for my day and generation—long-ago day, very pre-war generation—I was fast. That was the word we used to use. I was restless. I said we had a narrow house. That used to seem to epitomize something. I wanted—oh, so many things I've forgotten: to be a great opera-singer, or a king's mistress, or a famous actress."

Marigold, who had had moods of wanting to be a picture star, an aviatrix and half a dozen other things, could understand about that, except the king's mistress part. But kings had gone so out of fashion since her mother was a débutante.

Justina said: "Anything except a Boston débutante. So I married Gregory Melvin, because he was the best man I knew. Not the richest, or the handsomest, but the best character. He took me to live in another narrow house. And Madeleine was married to Rodney.

"It was no good." She sounded surprised even after so long, that it had been no good. "One can't help one's lack of character. I think I tried, or perhaps I didn't really. When I first guessed I was having you, it was spring, and the tulips were out in the Public Gardens. I used to get Hilary—Hilary Otis—to take me on long drives, for that time. Out to Concord to see the apple-blossoms. There's a road there, or there used to be, where you can drive for miles between flowering orchards."

She stopped, said: "Marigold, it's absurd for a woman of one generation to attempt to explain anything to a woman of another. You see me now—" She lifted her old hands, looked at them as if their appearance surprised her. "You would have to have known a young woman in a fawn-colored spring suit, and a hat that would seem outrageous to you, perched on top of coronet braids. . . . Never mind. I came back one day with the feeling it was then or never, wrote the note that was in all the plays of the period, packed a suitcase and walked down the steps of my house alone, at dusk. First time I'd ever carried a suitcase, but Hilary was meeting me elsewhere. I've carried plenty of suitcases since."

Tears that she hadn't expected slid down Marigold's cheeks. But for just once Justina was not looking for her effect and so did not see them.

Why she wept, precisely, her daughter did not know, unless she was weeping because young and reckless and beautiful women grew old and haggard, and learned to consider money important.

Justina said, as if she were describing something she had done yesterday: "I did leave my jewels—though many times afterward I wished I hadn't. So I had no jewel-case, only the one suitcase. I laid it down on the lowest step for a minute—because the front windows that I could see from the sidewalk were the windows of Gregory Melvin's study, and I knew he was probably sitting there reading until it should be time to dress for dinner. I went up close to the window, stood on tiptoe—then it was on a level with my eyes. If he had seen me, I suppose I would have told him I was just coming in from making a call. Or perhaps I would have gone in and faced him then, told him what I was doing.

"He was reading in a chair by the fireplace, where there was a little fire burning, because although it was spring, the dusk was cool. He had a nice profile, and that sort of sandy hair that looks red in certain lights. . . . I suppose that's where the red in your hair comes from. . . . He was absorbed in his book. I watched him for a minute or two. He looked completely steady, secure within himself. He never looked up. So then I went back to the steps, got the suitcase, and walked down the hill with it."

SHE looked at Marigold then. "My goodness, child! You mustn't weep over something that happened more than twenty years ago. There's plenty of sorrow nearer at hand. I didn't succeed in telling you much about your father, did I? Only more about myself."

"That's all right, Justina."

So, the child was a softer little thing than she expected. But before Justina Shore Melvin Otis—who was what a series of irrevocable decisions had made her—went on to decide what use could be made of that softness, she said one more thing with no purpose behind the saying, more than the wish to have her daughter know it, a thing that had been truth, though time had dulled its meaning:

"If your father had ever been able to make me know how much he cared, if I'd had the least idea he cared so that he would kill himself for loss of me, I would never have gone. I would never have left him."

Her daughter made the first spontaneous gesture of affection Justina had ever won from her. She put her arm around her mother's thin unbowed shoulders, said: "I know you would not. Don't grieve about it any more."

WITH that soft cheek against her hair, with that slim arm across her neck, Justina, who had not grieved for years, having learned that scheming was more profitable, hesitated, but not for very long.

By the time Marigold left her with a little sort of embarrassed pat, and sat down, Justina had made up her mind. "But be casual about it," she told herself. "This new generation is very casual."

"Have some more iced tea, Marigold darling. I'm frightfully sorry I disturbed you." She waited till Marigold drank half the tea obediently.

"There is perhaps, a point, my dear. If there can't be understanding between one generation and the next, there can at least be an avoidance of the same mistakes. I threw away my life for love, which comes to nothing in the end. Knowing that, was the reason I was so disturbed to discover you in the company of that young newspaper man whose name I scarcely remember."

"Garry Dane," Marigold said, in such a low voice her mother could have been excused for not hearing then.

But she repeated: "Garry Dane. You were looking as if you might possibly fall in love with him any minute."

RODNEY ALDISON

She paused. Surely the girl would be confidential now. Marigold said nothing.

"I want you to have everything I missed, Marigold, not to throw away your life too. Why don't you marry Richard Taylor, who seems to be devoted?"

As if, Marigold thought, she could have noticed that in their brief encounter at the club. And disliking herself for the thought, she tried to make up for it by candor:

"Oh, perhaps I'm too used to Dick to fall very dramatically in love with him. Garry's much more exciting. Not that I'm sure I'm in love with him, either. This summer I haven't had time to think. . . . Sorry, I didn't mean that as it sounded."

Justina had heard nothing else, past "Garry's much more exciting." If there were anything in thought-waves, Garry, sitting on the bench where Marigold had left him, talking to a girl Marigold had not yet met, would have been overwhelmed by Justina's sudden bitter hate.

Neither he nor Marigold could guess that his very existence stood in the way of Justina's last and so most-cherished dream—in which Justina resided forever with her married daughter Mrs. Richard Taylor, Third, entertained her daughter's guests at a series of elaborate dinner-parties with her stories (carefully selected) of a Europe they did not know, took her daughter (expecting the heir—yes, Justina was prepared even to be a grandmother of the right fortune) to Palm Beach for a few weeks' change, traveled with her to Paris for spring clothes, after the heir's safe arrival. Oh, to sit in a first-rate Paris dressmaker's and choose regardless of rates of exchange, or anything so stupid. She'd been in the great houses, but at the end-of-season sales, when they did not parade mannequins for the benefit of the furtive women who pawed over clothes on racks, and put up with *vendeuses'* faint insolence.

Her eyes were glowing so that Marigold wondered. Marigold liked no more than any of her contemporaries to be told what she must not do, and Justina's voice seemed to her to be much more emotional than the situation warranted. She stood up to go, but still feeling a sort of warmth for her whom secretly she called "a poor old thing, really," said what seemed kind: "I certainly sha'n't commit myself to Garry or to Dick either, without telling you beforehand—if you'd like to be told." ("And telling Madeleine and Rodney too, because I don't believe in being secret about things, as if one were ashamed.") That addition to her thought she did not mention.

Justina's whole face glowed. Ah, how pathetically easy it was to please "poor old things," who had so little of their own to be pleased about.

Thinking that, Marigold kissed her mother dutifully, knowing that would please her too, and went out into the lessening sunshine, relieved that the visit was over, and not proud of herself for that relief.

A little breeze had come up from the river. That was pleasant. She and Garry might find some place really cool to dine, after all. She quickened her steps.

He was looking much more cheerful than she had left him, talking to a handsome girl, dark-haired as himself. He jumped up, laughing at something he'd been talking about.

"Marigold, darling, here's some one I want you to meet. There are all sorts of newspaper women, ranging from swell to terrible, just like society girls.' Marigold wished with some slight impatience that he wouldn't make her self-conscious. No one but Garry—and a woman at a bazaar once—had ever called her "society girl" to her face. "This is one of the swell variety," he went on. "Sally Patrick."

The dark-haired girl said in a composed voice: "Miss Aldison." And Marigold said: "How do you do?"

Garry said: "We're all going to dinner together. We'll take a cab to the Village."

Marigold wished vaguely that they were dining somewhere other than the Village, which would be specially hot and smelly; but she said, "All right," politely.

"Not even if I have to remind you that this was payday on the *Star,* and you can borrow up to twenty dollars from me, Garry," interposed Sally Patrick. "We'll go to a roof. A reasonable roof, I grant you, being a reasonable girl. The Sylvania, for instance? It won't be crowded on a week-day and so early. Isn't that a better idea, Miss Aldison?"

Marigold thought for the first time that she wished some one would mention somewhere the occasional embarrassments of the rich. She had so carefully told Garry that she liked "quaint" places, that he and she were forever eating bad ninety-cent dinners. Now she didn't know what to say, but apparently it was decided.

"The Sylvania then," Garry said, "to celebrate my inconsequential inheritance! Sally and I have been deciding how to spend it, Marigold."

"Marigold—" Miss Patrick said. "It does suit your hair, your name."

Marigold didn't know whether to answer that, or Garry's speech, so answered neither. Garry was hurrying them along to a cab. The dark girl, walking along in her very nice print frock, slid a glance at her from under her own wide-brimmed dark hat. Marigold noticed, and began to feel increasingly uncomfortable.

For some reason Garry's manner was odd, and the girl's was too. But if she didn't make an effort, the girl would think she was being a snob, and not credit her with just shyness.

She said: "The heat turns me into a strong silent woman. It's dreadful, really. When the temperature drops, I have to make up for it by being garrulous as—garrulous as—" She couldn't think of anything she was as garrulous as.

Miss Patrick said: "As a tabloid columnist."

Since tabloid columnists had had plenty to say about Marigold through the summer, she wondered whether Miss Patrick was mentioning that by allusion, or just making conversation, too.

They arrived at a taxi before she decided.

GARRY said, as they started south through the Park: "I shouldn't have kept you in town in the heat, Marigold. —Marigold lives in a place where the wind off the ocean blows over the loveliest gardens, forever."

"And if you had wanted me to go home to it, so you could dine alone with this Miss Patrick," Marigold thought, "you should have arranged that earlier."

"I've seen Elmslee," Miss Patrick said. "At the garden fête. The paper sent me out."

Marigold said: "Oh."

"You shouldn't be so sensitive, Marigold," Garry said.

"What if you were front-page news for a bit? Your photographs came out better than most people's do."

"Why on earth is he being so completely awful?" Marigold thought.

He was not being "awful", or at least not meaning to be. Confronted with Sally Patrick, whom he had not seen for precisely as many months as he had known Marigold, he had been at first slightly annoyed, and then just amused. She sat down beside him and told him entertainingly enough of her assignment near Central Park. (She had spent the afternoon making a silly woman admit, for headlines of the sensational *Star* tomorrow, that she faked a suicide note to bring her husband's attention back to her from a certain chorus-girl.

Her manner was so easy that Garry's annoyance passed by the time they had a cigarette or two. . . . Evidently she had taken certain kisses shared between them last mid-winter just as lightly as he. He had not called her up since that evening when Marigold's eyes had pulled him away from all his careless pleasant recreations. Odd to think that but for that chance encounter, he might have been —well, very seriously interested in this slender dark girl.

While he was thinking of that oddity, Sally told him a very amusing story of a recent extra-marital adventure of a man on another newspaper whom he disliked.

She'd said, at the end of that: "You shouldn't dislike Jimmy. You'll be so like him, in five or six years when you're thirty. You'll be a star reporter, in the modern well-dressed quiet manner. Friend of princes, politicians, the police—"

He'd said, with violence: "No. I want more."

Sally raised her dark, nicely shaped eyebrows, and drawled: "So I heard. I'd like to meet her."

Then in a sort of defiance he'd said: "I was talking of work I meant to do, and places I meant to see. But if you'd like to meet Marigold Aldison, you can. I'm waiting for her here. She's calling on her mother." A flicker in Sally's eyes should have warned him, would have warned him, had he not been so preoccupied with his own sudden desire to tell some one how he loved Marigold. Sally used to be understanding.

He told Sally at some length. She seemed very understanding. So, in the end, he told her all the tangle of his desires, even to the problem of the forty-eight hundred dollars.

She put whatever he told her away for reference in her mind, not sure that she would use it at all. She had been hurt for a month when Garry dropped her. But she was three years older than he; time moved fast for a woman in her work; and she had not been lonely for him very recently. She waited to see Marigold.

By the time Marigold appeared, Garry had dropped into an old manner Marigold had never seen, but Sally was used to. It took him as far as the Sylvania to adjust himself to those two girls in joint company.

By which time he wished that he'd kept the evening for just Marigold and himself, and not been betrayed by an old liking to try an odd combination, or more importantly, to waste hours when he could have concentrated on Marigold. But it was too late to do anything about it. So, going up in the elevator, he made a point of talking to Sally, to make her feel very welcome.

He assumed too much understanding from Marigold, who had never felt quite so unwelcome anywhere. Sally said, getting out of the elevator: "Well, I need fresh powder. How about you, Miss Aldison?" She was glad of that, because it gave her a minute to think. When she saw a telephone-booth in the dressing-room, she decided what to do. . . .

Dick had mixed his mother a cocktail. On evenings Dick was elsewhere, Jane Taylor always told the butler: "No cocktails. I sha'n't bother." But she liked one, if Richard made it. Because his long-dead father used to make her a concoction weak, sweet and pleasant-tasting, that people would laugh at nowadays, she did enjoy Dick's excellent dry Martinis. He was bringing the shaker and two glasses to her in the patio when a maid said: "Miss Aldison calling from New York."

RICHARD TAYLOR

The maid took the tray and brought it outside. Dick answered from the extension at the edge of the patio.

A small voice said: "I'm at the Sylvania roof, and I'm not having a nice time. Don't come if you're engaged; but otherwise, how long would it take you?"

"Seventy minutes, not five more, Marigold."

His mother said: "Drink your cocktail and run along. I can dine alone with pleasure, thinking that Marigold has got round to summoning you. You haven't time to tell me I'm an interfering old woman. I heard Alice say that was a New York call. . . ."

Reassurance lightened Marigold's face, walking out to their table. Nice to be wanted somewhere; Garry was looking at her again as if she were very much wanted where she was. Even so, she couldn't always understand his moods, and wanted Dick, who had only one mood, for her.

They sat outside. Sally Patrick regarded the sweep of the Hudson beyond the (from that height) inconsequential bumps of the railroad terminal and the post office, and said, as if she felt it important: "Some of Manhattan's views make its inhabitants seem awfully little."

The sunset, blazing above the river and the Jersey hills, was fading a little as they watched. Marigold said: "When I was little, and first had a pony, I used to think some afternoon I'd make him gallop fast, so fast we'd catch the sunset, be all bathed in rose and purple and golden air.'

"Romantic!" Garry's voice was tender, though. "Do you know, Sally, in spite of her insubstantial lovely looks, Marigold's really a solemn young woman. Devotes her mornings to relief committees, has theories about 'responsibility.' "

In another mood Marigold would have let that go. Now she said: "Yes, indeed. I'm on the committee of unemployed women workers. And I think it's important to do what one can."

They ordered dinner, in the silence after that. Garry asked them both to dance. They both refused, saying it was hot inside.

Over tomato-juice no one seemed to have anything to say. So Marigold challenged Garry: "You never have got round to telling me your political philosophy, Garry."

It was Garry's turn to think: "Why is she being awful? I wanted Sally to see how nice she is."

Sally answered for him, drawling: "I don't suppose he's 'got round' to having a political philosophy yet. They work their men pretty hard on the *Globe*."

"Exactly. Theories are for the leisure classes. Your friend Mr. Taylor wouldn't have so many, if he had to occupy his mind with budgeting a weekly pay-check."

WELL, the evening had gone wrong. They both were sorry, but neither knew what to do about it. Only Sally enjoyed herself: "I thought this was to be a celebration, Garry. No celebration complete without champagne, very dry."

He ordered it.

Marigold said: "I expect you're an intellectual communist at heart, Garry—the general idea of pulling down everything and starting over."

He, watching her flushed angry cheeks, made an effort for peace then. "I'm not as bad as that. Only young men like Richard Taylor do annoy me, as they'd be bound to—"

Sally grew a little bored; but copy was copy, and she might or might not use it some day.

"What are Mr. Taylor's theories?"

"He believes," Marigold was relieved to get on something as relatively impersonal as Dick's political faiths, "that there has to be a great redistribution of wealth, but that it can come normally through increasingly heavy taxes and death-duties."

"So that the show lasts his time," Garry interrupted.

Sally said: "Keep still, Garry."

Marigold was so angry she skipped a couple of connecting steps, and said: "He believes the minimum wage scales are too low."

("Remember," Sally told herself, "to check up wage-scales in every factory the Taylor interests control. Oh, hell, I'll never use it. The Aldison girl's too sweet and

dumb. Would I have married Garry if he'd got round to asking? Yes, probably.") "And unemployment is a crime," Marigold was going on. She got human suddenly over that. "That about unemployment being a crime, was just something else Dick told me, like all the rest I've bored you with, until I started to do a little bit of relief work. Then I saw."

"I can imagine." Sally's voice wasn't unkind. But what did they think they could do, all these charming young things with their beautiful clothes and hands and voices? "Do what one can," this one had said. Well, that was a theory too.

Garry said: "I am sick of America's depression problems. I'm going to take my forty-eight hundred dollars and go round the world in a cargo-boat, see what China's like before it gets communized, and Turkey before it gets modern as Main Street. . . . The whole show will blow up soon, so what's the difference? We can't stop it."

Two months' minor social service gave Marigold an answer, if it was a childish answer. "If everybody tried, we could stop it blowing up."

"Work on a newspaper, Miss Aldison, and get over the illusion that ninety per cent of people are worth saving from blowing up."

MARIGOLD had no chance to answer her, because Garry interrupted:

"Leave it all behind, and come round the world with me, dearest. Forty-eight hundred dollars is enough for two to have a year."

She gasped, because of the sudden seriousness of his voice. But surely he could not be serious. Miss Patrick's immobility told her nothing.

Marigold said, lightly: "Then what?"

"Then anything. I'll write a book to support us, or I'll get a job. Why worry about the year after next? Your mother didn't."

In the warm air blowing high off the river, Marigold felt suddenly cold. No, her mother had not thought. . . . And a man had died and other people had suffered.

"You were joking, Garry, of course." But she was not quite sure.

"Was I?"

His dark head bent, his pale face was intent on hers, but his deep hazel eyes were dancing with excitement. Both forgot for a minute that Sally Patrick was there.

He thought: "I've managed this badly. I should have asked her alone, so seriously there could be no mistake. But at least, I've asked."

She thought: "That would be love, to let the whole world go, everything, everyone, beside the person one loved." And conscious of the beating of her heart, so that she thought Miss Patrick must hear it too, she met his eyes and wondered if that was what she wanted. To put her hand in his, to go away from all the complications of other people. From Madeleine's and Rodney's troubled faces—they'd had their lives, and had each other still. From Justina's exigencies that were hopeless. From Dick's reasonable belief that he could tell to plenty of other girls.

To sail south in moonlight, and in sunlight, to anchor in strange harbors where the great cruise ships never touched. . . . It appeared she was not Justina's daughter for nothing, after all.

But when she thought that, she shook her red-gold head, suddenly as one waking from a dream, found meaningless words and a meaningless tone: "Sounds too thrilling, Garry. But I can't sail tonight, because Dick is calling for me here, very shortly."

His face went through anger to composure.

Sally said: "You aren't drinking your champagne, Miss Aldison."

She drank it slowly, while Garry and Miss Patrick told her newspaper stories, and was pleased to see Dick walking out on the terrace toward them.

He ordered another bottle of champagne which no one wanted much, and asked Marigold to dance.

"I was glad to come, and always will be, but don't make your voice so worried next time, dearest. I was sure that you were in serious difficulties, that whoever was with you had fallen under the table, or something."

Perversity seized her. There he was, wanting to take care of her again. "What could happen to me on the Sylvania roof?"

"Nothing; I was being absurd." But for once he didn't mind if she was cross. She'd wanted him, had decided that she'd rather be with him than with Garry Dane.

Dancing, her mood changed swiftly. She would not tell him that she'd summoned him out of pride, because that would hurt him. And, probably most adult thought she'd ever had, perhaps it wasn't justifiable to use young men for no better reason than that one knew they were available. Perhaps it was unkind, even.

"We'll go home soon, Dick. It was horrid of me to drag you all the way in."

"Promise to be horrid like that more frequently."

Miss Patrick evidently had changed her mind about dancing too. They passed her, looking up at Garry, laughing as if they had some secret jest. Garry wasn't looking amused now, he was looking cross.

Back at the table, he said to Richard: "Marigold was attempting to explain your political principles to us. They didn't make much sense, but perhaps that was her interpretation."

That, Marigold decided, was really being offensive.

But Dick never flickered. "I'm sure it wasn't the interpretation."

Garry insisted: "We'd really like to know. Miss Patrick and I are just a couple of poor newspaper people, so busy collecting facts we can't weigh them."

Sally said: "You are, Garry, completely at your worst."

For a minute, Marigold thought, he looked as if he knew it.

Dick ignored Sally's sentence, and said simply: "We're all tired out from the heat, I expect. Shall we start home, Marigold? It's a fairly long drive."

The very banality of that calmed everyone, as probably Richard knew it would. But Marigold stood up to go, feeling nevertheless thoroughly unhappy. She didn't want to quarrel with Garry.

"Good night, Miss Patrick. We must do this again, soon."

"Good night, Garry." He wasn't going to help her. He didn't even say "Good night." Only, as Richard was saying good-by to Miss Patrick, pleasantly, Garry took her hand, bent his head, kissed it.

That hand felt tingling half the way across Long Island, as they rode in a silence that Dick seemed not to wish to break. That very silence in the end was more disturbing than conversation. The quietness and the breeze rushing past as they went fast along the empty road, made New York, and noisy voices, and petty disagreements, seem remote.

There was for her, as she grew sleepy, no reality besides the dark road curving ahead, with trees bending over it. They came to her own lane and to the great bulk of Elmslee, dim in the soft night.

Dick got out, took her hand to help her out, touched her hand, and caught her in his arms suddenly. In those strong arms she could rest, could be safe. All her life would be as familiar, as pleasant as the look of Elmslee in a summer night.

"Will you marry me, dearest? Will you marry me?"

She made him an odd answer: "When I know myself, I may."

And with those dubious words, that were nevertheless more hopeful than any he had heard from her before, echoing in his ears, he left her.

UPSTAIRS there was a light under the door of Madeleine Aldison's room. On impulse, Marigold knocked.

"Come in, dear." That voice had, at the end of so many evenings of her girlhood, discussed with her the little happy events of them, had offered quiet advice, had laughed softly at small entertaining things that happened.

Marigold knew why she'd knocked. She opened the door and said quickly: "I'm so glad you were still awake. I was feeling awfully old, and wishing I could have stayed sixteen and thought of nothing but sub-débutante parties forever—" Then she caught sight of him whom she called Father, seated in a deep wing chair, his silver hair as brushed as usual, his general appearance, in a dark brocaded dressing-gown, as well groomed as in evening clothes. But she had never seen him in his wife's room before, except once long ago, when Madeleine was ill.

"Come in," he said gruffly. "Your mother and I were talking about something that concerns you."

Madeleine's yellow braids hanging beside her face made her look like a girl, sitting up in the great canopied bed. "Will you have some hot milk, darling? I'll ring. Ellen's still up, I'm sure."

Hot milk! One of the things she'd been brought up to believe in as efficacious for nerves, so that she still drank it faithfully, though she lay awake till dawn notwithstanding. Marigold didn't look tonight as if she had nerves, though. She looked very well, better than she had been looking. Well, the young got over things.

"How was—that woman—today? I was telling your mother she'd be getting bored, soon, and go wandering off some place, like as not."

Marigold suppressed some mirth. Helpless as Justina, by her surprise attack, had made Rodney Aldison, she would never make him call her anything but "that woman," nor keep him from saying "your mother," meaning Madeleine, and "your father," if he chose to discuss himself in the third person.

"Your father wants to adopt a little boy, Marigold. I was wondering how you'd feel about it." Over the hot milk that she sipped so slowly it would be cold long before she was done with it, Madeleine's gray eyes said: "Take this matter-of-factly."

Marigold felt thoroughly disconcerted. That was all, at first.

"It has nothing to do with this business this summer, Marigold. Except that has made me think. You'll be getting married; and your children, if you have any—people don't seem to so much—won't be called Aldison, and I would like the name to go on. This boy we've been talking about is the son of a distant cousin of mine. His father's dead and the mother's had a struggle. Besides everything else, looking after him would be a kind of—a kind of interest for your mother and me."

Poor dears! Of course they had been lonely since she grew up, and lonelier recently, since she had been so preoccupied. "I think it's a marvelous idea, Father. Truly, I do."

A sound betwixt sigh and grunt, a curious, doubtful sound issued from the throat of Rodney Aldison. "I don't know whether it's any use, but one has to keep trying things."

His wife, who had grieved more than he perhaps over that old loss that made them have to hunt for other people's children to love, said: "There, Rodney. I told you Marigold would be pleased."

But Marigold was only telling herself she should be pleased. In a world where everything was changing, it seemed too much to bear that these two should change too, should turn away to some one else, to a strange child, for solace against loneliness. She damned herself for selfishness; and Madeleine, watching her face, said: "No one can be our child as you've been, Marigold."

Rodney said: "Of course not. And it'll make no difference about money. I'm putting three million in trust for you."

("What's forty-eight hundred dollars, Marigold?" Garry had said not very gayly.)

She said aloud, "It's too much."

"Nonsense! The way things are going, it may dwindle down to nothing in a dozen years. But then, you'll have a husband to manage for you, no doubt."

THEY regarded her simultaneously, as if they were inconsistently resenting that husband. She decided to tell them, just because it would interest them, and because in the last weeks she'd told them very little about the details of her days.

"I suppose I shall acquire a husband. Actually, I had two proposals today. I never had two in one day before."

"Richard and Garry Dane." Madeleine's voice was certain.

"I'm arranging that trust-fund so whoever you marry has no control over it," Rodney said.

His wife and Marigold both laughed at him.

"I know I'm practical, but you'll both be glad some day I was. Which one of these people do you care for, Marigold?" as if he could not help asking.

"Neither—both—I don't know, Father. So I refused them both."

He looked relieved.

Madeleine leaned forward and spoke emphatically. "We want you to do exactly what you want, Marigold. When you're ready to decide,—and I agree with your father in hoping that you wait a long time before deciding,—don't let any consideration of money or the absence of money trouble you. The only reason to marry is for love."

As she had married long ago, and as Justina had not married.

"Your mother is exactly right, Marigold. I'll arrange your money so that you can't be the prey of fortune-hunters. Then, do as you please."

Marigold decided that they'd all—herself included—feel less embarrassed if she jested. "You're both great liberals compared to Justina, who wants me to marry a dynasty, as nearly as I can make out."

Rodney said, "That woman!" again. Madeleine yawned. The hot milk apparently was going to be effective this evening. Marigold said: "Good night."

She was suddenly so tired that undressing was an effort. Thoughts of Madeleine and Rodney's decision—the little boy would be called "the Aldison heir" pretty soon, she supposed—got jumbled in her head with thoughts of her evening, of that strange quiet girl whom she'd disliked unjustly probably, and of Garry. Getting into bed, she suddenly remembered that Garry had not proposed, speaking literally. She laughed—and slept.

BUT she was not quite done with her evening. Some sound in the familiar sounds of summer night was different. She waked, frightened, sitting up, clutching her knees for comfort. A dark shadow sharpened in one of the west windows, the one by the trellis. A voice said: "Don't scream, for goodness sake, Marigold, dearest."

She switched on her bedside light.

Garry, looking very dusty but quite pleased with himself, climbed down from the window, talking fast: "I walked from the milk-train, because I couldn't wait until morning to tell you how sorry I was for my bad behavior."

She asked an irrelevancy. "How did you know which room was mine?"

"From the picture they had in the paper. Remember, or did you see that one? It had arrows and a caption, *'The third to the sixth windows from the left mark the room of the adopted Aldison heiress.'* Now I'm here, aren't you going to ask me to sit down, Marigold?"

She laughed in spite of herself. "No, I'm not. My family would be too disturbed. Even with the picture, I don't see how you got all the way up here."

"The trellis. Not that it matters, Marigold. I had a small flirtation with that girl Sally Patrick before I knew you. So I was rather self-conscious before you with her, and in front of her with you. That's all stupid—I mean, I wanted to explain but none of that is what I came all the way out here for."

"Have a cigarette, then, and tell me quickly why you did come. We have two watchmen at night. How you missed them both, I don't know. Perhaps you didn't miss them. I should hate to have to explain your presence to the police, in three minutes, if you didn't. As you pointed out earlier today, I am oversensitive lately about the possibility of further tabloid notoriety."

"I didn't see either of them."

He stood looking down at her, as if—as if he were hungry. Growing aware of that look, she pulled the sheet higher round her. A blue sheet, embroidered with her initials. How silly, to think of that suddenly, and so to think that on that far journey he might want her to take, there would scarcely be monogrammed pastel sheets, or even linen ones.

He sounded almost angry. "What an old-fashioned gesture."

She nodded: "Yes, it was. So what?"

But for that he had an answer. "So I didn't come out to make love to you, either."

"You haven't yet told me why you did come. I guessed that, I expect, about Miss Patrick."

Still standing that little distance from her, he said, "I came out to tell you I did mean it, about wanting you to come round the world with me, about wanting you so—so much, Marigold."

Then he was on his knees and she was touching his dark silk head with her hand.

In that pretty quiet room, with the wind rustling its taffeta curtains, with the single bedside light shining on the Provincial furniture she'd always adored since Madeleine chose it, on the etchings she'd outgrown in taste

since she chose them herself one year with a Christmas check, on the dressing-table silver, and the mantelpiece knickknacks that were souvenirs of various journeys—the wooden cat that came from Haiti, where she'd stopped on a cruise, the porcelain figurines from Paris, the Roman mosaics, a dozen other mementoes she'd not looked at consciously in years—in that room that epitomized her life, a long minute passed.

At the end of it she said: "I would have to be very sure, and I'm not very sure. Wait, Garry. And I should tell you perhaps that I said nearly the same thing to Dick."

Garry raised his head. "What you said to him doesn't matter. I'll wait a little while. But not long, because I am an uncertain person, like yourself."

She wondered about that, whether she was fundamentally an uncertain person, or whether it was just that she was inexperienced.

She never decided then. A knock at the door interrupted her.

"This would happen," her voice was impatient. "It's not that I'm Victorian. But Mother and Father will be so distressed."

He said: "Your mother?"

"Oh, I didn't mean *her*. I meant Madeleine."

She was putting on her negligee and crossing the room, more or less in one motion.

She opened the door a crack.

Miss Cane's little figure looked littler than ever in a green tailored bathrobe. Why did she choose green, Marigold wondered. Probably she hadn't chosen. Probably it was a gift. The irrelevancy of that made her aware of imminent hysteria. She drew a long breath, after Mary Taylor's famous recipe.

MRS. TAYLOR

Miss Cane said: "I'm so sorry to disturb you, but one of the watchmen called me. He thought he saw something—some one—going in through your window, but thought it might be a shadow. I didn't want to alarm the house."

Marigold opened the door wide. "It wasn't a shadow. You've met Mr. Dane, I believe. He felt he had something important to tell me, or else he suddenly developed a balcony complex in the *Romeo* manner."

Behind her, Garry said: "How do you do, Miss Cane. —Marigold, pull yourself together."

"I've been doing that all summer, for one thing and another. Something always happens to make me fall apart again. Miss Cane will take you out the front way. . . . I shouldn't tell Mother, unless you think the watchman will, Miss Cane."

Miss Cane took charge. "Miss Marigold, go straight back to bed. I'll bring you hot milk—Mrs. Aldison thinks very highly of it as a sedative—as soon as I've seen this gentleman safely out." She looked at Garry as if she totally disapproved of him.

Marigold went back to bed and did have rather mild hysterics, interrupted by the reappearance of Miss Cane, who seemed to have dressed while the milk was heating. She made conversation impersonally about the approach of dawn, talking just enough to seem natural; hovered about until Marigold was clearly on the verge of sleep. She went away then so matter-of-factly that when Marigold waked in late morning, she had some slight doubt as to the reality of the whole incident, thinking it was just possible she had dreamed it, until she remembered the way Garry's head felt under her hand.

Chapter Seven

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD Carroll Aldison, who was Rodney Aldison's third cousin, was to be known as "the second adopted Aldison heir" sooner even than Marigold had expected. For his mother, a thoroughly nice woman, was so delighted at Carroll's chance to be brought up by the head of the Aldison family that she told two or three friends about it. Also about Madeleine's generous invitation, to herself, to come and live at Elmslee. The husband of the second or third friend remembered reading in the local Ohio paper (a second-string Ohio city that carried Associated Press) something about a girl named Aldison, with a funny first name like Flower.

To make conversation between hands of the Wednesday-night poker-game, he asked the city editor of the local paper what was that girl's name, and told the story of his wife's friend Mrs. Aldison getting a chance to have her son educated in the East. He was rather surprised that the city editor stayed out of the poker-game for ten minutes, having a long conversation with his wife, who knew widowed Mrs. Aldison, just to find out if the first name of the Mr. Aldison who was going to adopt the boy Carroll was Rodney, and if his country place was named Elmslee. His wife was sure as to that; she copied the address down so she could write Mrs. Aldison; and yes, she did happen to have a picture of the boy Carroll, of whom she'd been fond, poor little chap, fatherless and all.

So is news made. The city editor came back to the poker-table, made rapid excuses and departed. Some one said: "The newspaper business sure is a funny business."

The story was in time for the late editions of Thursday morning's papers, on the news-stands as little Carroll, holding his mother's hand, walked through the train gates at the Pennsylvania Station to meet his dear cousin Rodney, with a barrage of cameras to record that meeting. (The Ohio city editor was good; he'd even checked and included for New York offices to note, time of the child's scheduled arrival.)

Unwanted newspaper publicity resembles an attack of influenza, in that if one weathers the first shock to the system, one is likely to recover; so Rodney, case-hardened now, neither knocked down cameras nor camera-men, but posed with a smile that might be called grim, but could pass as a smile. The boy, he decided, was nicer looking than his photographs, looked more like an Aldison, and was a friendly little chap. So with that comfort which camera-men could not take from him, he urged Mrs. Aldison (ladylike but terrified) and the child into the fastness of the Aldison limousine, and escaped. . . .

Elmslee went into siege again, with extra watchmen at the gate, and Miss Cane refusing all information to the incessant ringing of the telephone. But neither Madeleine nor Marigold cared. Marigold had a strange feeling she carefully did not analyze, on first regarding this small quiet person who was no doubt to usurp her place in the hearts of those she had called Father and Mother; but in an hour or two she'd decided he was a very nice small boy; and—life went on. With a shrug of her pretty shoulders, she went to save Madeleine trouble by showing the strange Mrs. Aldison through the formal gardens.

IN the Central Park West apartment of Justina Otis, the mornings usually came and went silently, with only the slipping of sunlight away from the windows on the Park to mark the passing of noon. So today.

Toward one o'clock the young woman from Harlem who was Justina's maid decided she couldn't wait any longer for her mistress to wake up, inasmuch as she'd bought an early edition of an afternoon paper on her way out to do some errands. From her uncritical viewpoint, anything from crime to romance that got one's name on the front page of newspapers was just glorious.

Very white, in the faint light of a room in which the shades were kept drawn for coolness, even after she waked, Justina stirred, opened her eyes and accepted her breakfast tray.

"Madam,"—Stella's voice was eager,—"I brought you an afternoon paper. There's something about you and Miss Marigold in it." Miss Marigold, for whose visits she waited so eagerly, whose clothes, manners, voice, and shade of hair all her friends in Harlem wanted to know about in endless detail, so that glory was reflected upon her every time Marigold called.

Justina picked up the newspaper. . . .

Stella was a rather more than ordinarily competent maid; but dealing with heart-attacks was beyond any routine she had ever learned. Justina, white as the pillow-cases she fell back against, fighting for breath with great gasps that were a dreadfully loud sound in that quiet room, was nearer than she had ever been to the end of ambition and disillusionment alike.

It was just because Stella happened to remember a talking picture in which the heroine suffered from the fairly romantic complaint of angina pectoris, that she thought of the odd-looking capsules in the top drawer of Mrs. Otis' dressing-table, and knew how to use them.

Justina opened her eyes laughing, as if Stella's terrified face leaning over her were amusing.

"Shall I send for a doctor, Mrs. Otis?"

Justina shook her head, and after a minute spoke, in a quite normal voice: "I've never admitted—to myself even—about my heart. It would make me feel so finished if I admitted it was serious."

That, Stella knew, was not addressed to her, but to Mrs. Otis' thoughts. She straightened the bedclothes a little, mechanically, her brown hands still shaking.

"How did you know what to do, Stella?" Justina asked.

Stella explained about the talking picture.

Apparently Mrs. Otis thought that was very funny too. But her laughter stopped abruptly when Stella said, timidly: "I hope the story in the paper wasn't what disturbed you, ma'am."

"Give me the newspaper again, please."

Stella hesitated, but Mrs. Otis reached out her hands, which were so much older than her figure or her face even, and so Stella handed it to her.

SALLY PATRICK

It hadn't occurred to either Rodney Aldison, his wife nor Marigold that Rodney's wish to adopt a son could have such repercussions in the feelings of Justina. But then, they hadn't anticipated the newspaper interpretation, either—which implied, especially in the sensational paper which Stella had bought and Justina was reading, that the adoption of Carroll Aldison meant the disinheritance of Marigold Aldison, so-called, who was in fact Marigold Melvin, the daughter of Mrs. Otis by an earlier marriage, who lived in only modest comfort on Central Park West, where her daughter visited her faithfully twice a week.

This story was signed by some one named Sally Patrick, of whom Justina had never heard.

(Sally, torn between desire for a scoop and a kind of vague liking for Marigold, had felt, finishing that story, that she'd been extremely reticent. No mention that Richard Taylor, Third, was a great admirer of Marigold; no mention of Justina's exact street address: just the details of the sort of place she lived in, and of how often her daughter called on her, to make the story a little special. Both of which facts Garry told her that day they sat waiting for Marigold.)

Justina made herself read slowly to the end.

There, then, was written *finis* to all her bright hopes that things would come right, finally! She thought, dully: "A woman has a right to hope, especially a woman like me, who has been through things." The things she had been through that had changed her from a girl something like (and in memory very like) Marigold, to this lean tired woman whose own face was so strange to her, mornings before it was made up, that she could not look straight at it—all those dreadful things ached at the back of her head.

She had not minded, while she believed that surely now in a very little while her life would go on along with Marigold's young life, which had become in her thoughts more and more just an extension of her own.

IT never occurred to Justina to discount in the least the newspaper story. She had been too many years away from America to be able to appraise newspapers, to evaluate one as more sensational than another.

She believed it. She believed, because the newspaper said so, that Rodney was disowning Marigold. She decided the reason was easy: he was doing it for revenge upon her, Justina, for hating him so many years and defying him finally. She had hated him so blindly that she judged his feelings by her own.

Her heart began to pound again so that it frightened her. With an exercise of self-restraint she did not know she had, she commanded herself to a kind of a calm. She must be calm, to think how to defeat him of his revenge.

Stella had gone to make her fresh tea and toast. When she brought it in, Justina forced herself to eat the toast, to drink the tea, as if that little nourishment could strengthen her, and she wanted to be strengthened.

If any one who knew her fairly well, if her sister Madeleine perhaps, who once had known her better than anyone else in the world, had come into the room, guessed the turmoil of her thoughts, tried to make her see reason and common-sense, tried to point out such an obvious fact as the fact of Rodney's love for Marigold, it would probably have been useless now.

For Justina had fallen finally over an absurd black headline and a column of leaded type, into the pit that waits for women who live all their lives by their own willfulness. Nothing but her own will had any more reality to her.

Inspiration came to her with her last sip of tea. She searched through the telephone-book with steady fingers.

Stella, lingering in the room with the desire to be helpful, said: "You do look much better, ma'am."

"I feel much better. You'd better start straightening the living-room, Stella. I'm expecting two guests."

Stella went away obediently.

Justina called the number of the Taylor estate offices. To find Richard Taylor, Third, there, was no more than she expected of her luck now that she had courage to back it.

"Mrs. Otis, on a matter of importance."

"This is Richard Taylor speaking now."

She did not hesitate. "How do you do? This is Marigold's mother, as you know. I should like to see you about Marigold—something I've learned that vitally affects her."

She was right. That sentence was irresistible.

"At what time, Mrs. Otis?"

Well, give herself time to get dressed carefully. She would want to be at her most effective. "Four o'clock, at my apartment?"

"I don't know exactly where that is."

She gave him the street address, said, "At four, then," hung up and called Elmslee.

She had to wait a rather long time for Marigold to get to the telephone. They summoned Marigold from beside the lily pool. She left Carroll's mother regarding its wide expanse a little wistfully, as if hoping Carroll would never fall in it.

"Marigold, darling, I'm so dreadfully sorry."

Truly, Marigold could not think at the moment for what.

"It's a dreadful thing for Rodney to do, but just like him."

"Oh, you mean adopting the child. He's really rather darling, and I expect will be very entertaining for Mother and Father."

"Don't call them that to me! I must say, I would have thought Madeleine had more influence than to permit it."

Marigold, with some vague notion that since Elmslee was again surrounded by reporters, they might have some way of listening in to telephone conversations, said: "I don't agree, of course, but don't you think we'd better wait to discuss it?"

"Exactly. I want you to come in town to consult with me, immediately."

"But—there isn't any emergency."

"Marigold, I want you to trust my judgment, and do as I say."

Something in her voice was a little startling. Marigold hesitated, and glanced out through the hall to the terrace: Rodney sat on the arm of Carroll's chair, was showing him a book of photographs. Marigold knew the book. It contained pictures of Rodney as a boy at Elmslee, on a pony, on a succession of horses, on skates, even. She remembered one on crutches following a sudden separation from one of the horses. Well, it was an innocent vanity, for Rodney to think he had been an admirable boy. Probably he had been. Carroll looked only slightly bored. He *was* an exceptionally polite child.

Carroll's mother appeared from the garden. Madeleine's voice said to her—Madeleine evidently was sitting beyond Marigold's line of vision: "We must see about clothes for Carroll tomorrow. They'll send whatever we like out from town."

"He wears size ten," Carroll's mother said proudly.

"Are you there, Marigold?" Justina reminded.

Marigold chuckled. "Yes. I was having a moment of feeling like a dethroned crown princess. All right, I'll be in."

"How soon?"

"Four or shortly after, I suppose."

Before she changed her dress, she telephoned Garry and asked him whether he'd take her to dinner. The enthusiasm in his voice disturbed her for a moment. She had managed, for the last days, desiring a rest from complicated emotions more than she desired any decision in her affairs, to keep a fairly delicate balance sustained in her meetings with both Garry and Richard, having adopted a sort of "I will not be hurried" manner. Now, from his voice, she was giving Garry encouragement.

WELL, handle that when the moment arose for its handling: sufficient unto the hour were the situations to be coped with. The most immediate was how to escape from Elmslee without having a carload of reporters follow her to town.

She dressed in thin black, a version of a tailored suit that was in chiffon, extremely frivolous in effect. She telephoned the garage and then the gate-house. When her green roadster was brought round, the wrong number plates would be affixed to it. Its own would be on the floor beside the driver's seat.

So expert was she grown in considering eventualities! If she passed the reporters at the gate successfully, they'd be likely to telephone her license-numbers ahead, on the chance of having her picked up at one of the bridges, to give an interview on how it felt to have a ready-made little brother.

She grinned, putting on a tight black straw hat with a diamond clip, and affixing a clip that matched to her suit lapel. Just amused—that now was how she felt on having a ready-made little brother; but the tabloids would scarcely be satisfied with that. . . . She pulled the ruffled collar of her white chiffon blouse straight, picked up her purse and gloves, paused for just a second to like her own looks, which had scarcely seemed important enough to notice in weeks, got an arrangement of silver foxes out of the wardrobe,—not that she needed them, but she felt like dressing up,—and started downstairs.

In the hall she encountered Miss Cane, sitting by the telephone again. "I hope you wanted to be called from the garden for Mrs. Otis."

"Oh, was it you that sent for me to come? Yes, thank you."

Miss Cane rested a tired head on tired hands. "Miss Marigold, that young man that was here that night, who came so—so informally—you know, the one I didn't mention—"

"Yes—you mean Garry Dane?"

"He's a newspaper man, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Did he ever explain to you why the papers are so insistent on knowing people's private affairs, that are really none of their concern, possibly, as I keep telling them?"

"He says summer's the silly season, when there isn't as much legitimate news as normally, so that things like Carroll's adoption, or mine, get much more attention than they would in competition with a good murder trial, for instance."

Miss Cane sighed. Obviously she'd had a bad day.

"This'll blow over too, Miss Cane, like the other business."

"Young people have great faith in things blowing over. I'm so tired, I don't believe anything will ever be as it used to be again." She shook her head sadly and wandered off.

With those dubious words ringing in her ears Marigold went out to the terrace to say she was going to town for dinner.

Carroll, still being shown photographs, was beginning to look slightly goggle-eyed. Everyone else seemed placid. No need, obviously, of dropping the word "Justina" into that domestic atmosphere.

She departed for the green roadster. This bit would be fun. The gate at the foot of Elmslee lane, which was normally open day and night, had been closed and guarded all day as in the time, which began to seem distant to Marigold, of her own special headlines.

She started down the lane slowly. About a hundred and fifty feet from the gate she blew her horn twice sharply, as per arrangement, and put her foot down on the accelerator. They opened the gates fast, but she was at them so quickly she barely got through, swung into the highway through a conglomeration of parked cars, and one truck—probably a sound truck; she went by so fast she didn't notice—and was on the straightaway still accelerating until the speedometer needle quivered at ninety-four miles an hour.

In her rear-view mirror she saw two cars follow her, but only for minutes.

She laughed at the wind rushing past her face and the excitement of going so fast. Driving, like dancing, was a thing she did well, and she could drive this familiar road in dreams. A safe dozen miles from home she slowed to a reasonable speed. A little farther along, in a garage she knew, she had her number-plates shifted, and proceeded toward town then sedately, feeling just slightly pleased with herself.

It was a mood that lasted until the maid admitted her into Justina's carefully shaded living-room. She walked in, glowing, to confront Justina, Dick, and an atmosphere of thunder.

Dick had preceded Marigold by about ten minutes. Only in the instant of having his name announced from downstairs did it occur to Justina that while what she wanted to get from him was clear, how best to manage it she didn't know at all.

He came in, his tall young figure looming rather formidably large in her small cluttered living-room, said, "How do you do?" and waited for her to say whatever she had to say. She had not seen him since that night at the Beach Club, and had forgotten how handsome he was. His looks rather disconcerted her, made her feel it was an appallingly long time since she'd had a handsome young man come to call on her, made her wonder if he thought of her as old.

He did, and he disliked the bright rose tea-gown that she'd chosen to wear on the theory that rose-color made one's skin look fresh. Dick thought it was something that might have been suitable for Marigold.

UNABLE to think of any approach but the direct one, Justina plunged into it.

"I telephoned you because it's so dreadful that Rodney's disowned Marigold."

Dick was too startled to be polite. "That's absurd. Who says he has?"

"Read this." She held out the folded-over copy of the *Star*.

"But my dear Mrs. Otis, that's just newspaper nonsense. No one pays any attention to the *Star*, particularly."

"You young people don't seem to take anything seriously."

As one who had been frequently accused of taking everything, from factory conditions to the abolition of slums, much too seriously, Dick found no answer.

"Of course, if you don't care about my daughter's awkward position, I made a mistake in sending for you."

He reflected that any awkwardness in her daughter's position was due to her own insistence on announcing that she was Marigold's mother. But he was not impolite enough to say that. Conscious of growing strain, he tried to simplify things.

"What precisely did you want to see me about, Mrs. Otis?"

He got his answer. "I want you to insist on marrying Marigold immediately."

He was so startled that he looked incredulous.

That exasperated Justina beyond bearing. "Is that such an extraordinary thing to ask?"

"Yes, it really is; because the decision as to when she wants to marry, or whom she wants to marry, is for Marigold to make, don't you think? Not but what I want—very much—to marry her, if she'll have me. I suppose she's told you?"

Justina knew well enough that she'd got that fact from Marigold by much questioning, that it wasn't volunteered; so she didn't answer it. She said, with more certainty than she felt: "Marigold will do what I tell her to do."

"But why should she? I don't mean that as rudely as it sounds. I just mean why should she do anything except what she wants?"

Justina wanted to shout at him: "She must, because I can't wait much longer for everything I want so terribly."

Marigold came into the room.

In spite of its curious atmosphere, she was still gay.

"Hello, Justina! Hello, Dick! This is a pleasant surprise to see you together, or isn't it?" That falling on silence, she tried again. "I had the most exciting trip into town—at least the first part of it. Getting through the barrier of newspaper men at the gate made me feel like escaping from jail. . . . What's the matter with you two?"

Justina played her last card, and badly. "Probably I have not long to live, Marigold. Naturally, I've wanted to see you settled in life before—before I go."

"Oh, come now, Justina—you'll probably live fifty years more. What is this all about? I walk out of the beautiful sunshine, to see you both sitting about like people in the third act of a melodrama meditating on how to dispose of the corpse. Surely this isn't all because Rodney and Madeleine have decided to adopt a harmless small boy."

Dick grinned a little. "Mrs. Otis is convinced Rodney's flung you out into the paper snow."

JUSTINA wrung her hands. It was the first time either of the young people watching had seen a person outside a play make that conventional gesture of despair. They stared at her, slightly fascinated.

But it was, with Justina, a perfectly sincere gesture. She despaired of making them understand. They were too young, too casual; they seemed too hard. It *was* true that that doctor in France had said she might not live long.

He had also said that if she avoided strains and excitements, she might live out her normal term of years. But that last she had discounted, knowing in her soul that strains and excitements were the very breath of life to her.

Something in her ravaged face stirred Marigold. Her voice was gentle when she spoke. "Don't be so disturbed, Justina. If it is true that Rodney's decided he wants a male Aldison to carry on the name, it's also true that he's settling three million dollars on me. So that makes the paper snow rather remote, doesn't it? I told him it was much too much money. It really is a fantastic amount; but Rodney's always been generous."

That praise of her enemy was a spark that exploded twenty years' frustrations in Justina. So violent was her reaction that it was astoundingly more effective than any of her speeches that were planned for effect.

"Don't be a fool, Marigold! He hates you because you're my daughter. He hates me because he thought wrongly I caused the death of the dear friend of his youth. Whatever he's done for you, he's done to aggrandize his own ego, because he could pretend you were his. Now he can't pretend you're his any more, see how quickly he has replaced you? If he's giving you three million,—a quarter of his fortune,—it's to get rid of you, now it's known you're mine, not his. Madeleine's under his thumb. She always has been. If she weren't, would she have consented to this ridiculous adoption? You were all right, as long as they both could pretend you were an Aldison. Now it's known you're not, they'll pay anything to have you out of their way."

She talked so fast it seemed impossible to interrupt. But Dick, looking at Marigold's face, stood up then, and said: "Stop it, Mrs. Otis. I tell you, you must stop it." He had never spoken so to anyone in his life before.

Marigold stood up too, and said to Dick, in a voice devoid of any feeling: "Thank you, but it doesn't matter." Said to Justina, in the same even expressionless tone: "If you don't mind, I think I'll go now. Of course, I don't quite believe you, although I recognize that you believe yourself. You see, I don't know what I do believe any more, about myself or anyone."

She was swaying on her feet. She was so white that Dick crossed the room to her, quickly. But she shook herself free of his arm.

"I'm quite all right, thank you," she said in such a small polite voice that it wrenched his heart.

Through her head were marching in inconsequential order so many memories of kindnesses from those she'd called Mother and Father—laughter shared, and quietness, the gayeties of Manhattan winter-times, the serenity of summers at Elmslee that seemed bounded by very blue ocean and skies enclosing gardens, and filled with air that held the scent of sea and flowers in blossom! Balance those memories against that strange conference those two were holding in her mother's bedroom, that night she interrupted, so sure of her welcome, and their eager interest in that boy who was a stranger, really. . . . No, she could not decide. She never wanted to decide. Nor did she want three million dollars to console her for loss of love she had been sure was hers forever.

She did not want, she would not take, any money at all.

She had arrived at just that decision when Justina spoke. Justina held the temporary advantage of one who knew precisely what she wanted at the moment.

"Don't go, quite yet, Marigold. I have something more to say. Naturally you're upset—you'll be grateful some day for my frankness." She went quickly past that, lest that extraordinary young man should interrupt her again.

Marigold was looking at her as if she didn't hear her clearly; so she began to speak very slowly and emphatically. "All you have to do is to marry Richard, here, who wants you to, very much, and you'll have saved your face, made a completely brilliant marriage. . . . You can laugh at Rodney and Madeleine, and Rodney's three millions."

Dick shouted again. "Oh, damn—*damn!* Can't you see, she'll probably never marry me now—she couldn't after what you've said, even if she were sure." He stopped, and added very quietly: "Marigold, let me get you out of here."

She put her hand in his, as if he were an older brother who was helping her. She said: "Good-by, Justina."

She and Richard went out of the room. Justina heard the entrance door close softly. Still she couldn't seem to move, to follow them, to explain twenty years of reasons that would make her hate and her ruthlessness justified. When she heard the slight noise of the elevator descending in the corridor beyond the foyer, she took a single step forward—as if it was any use to follow them then!

Down the elevator, out through the apartment-house lobby, Marigold still held his hand, but not as if she knew she did. At the door of her car she dropped it, looked up at him, started to say something and did not say it.

He said: "Marigold, I shall always love you."

Her great gray eyes regarded him so unhappily that he forgot everything except the desire to comfort her. "What can I do for you, darling? May I just drive you home, not talking?"

She shook her head. "I'm not going home yet. I have a dinner engagement. Before it, I do want to be alone for a bit."

He could understand that.

She got into her car slowly, as if she were very tired. But when she'd started the motor, she put her hand against his coat-sleeve, gently. "Don't be unhappy, Dick. It's not your fault."

She went away then, quickly.

Afterward, Marigold never remembered very clearly where she spent the hours after leaving Justina's apartment until, at six-thirty, she met Garry. For some part of that time she drove in the Park, round and round, as her thoughts slid round and round, aimlessly. She remembered that when she noticed she was crying, she stopped the car and sat for a long time staring at a field where some small children were playing ball on grass that looked burned with summer heat.

When at last she drove slowly down Fifth Avenue, which was empty and very quiet, with the day's shoppers and the workers in shops gone home, she knew what she meant to do. But she was curiously glad that Garry was already waiting for her, in the small quiet upstairs lobby of the hotel where they were to dine, because she wanted to hurry now, to be done with doubt and hesitation, to have decision behind her.

She said: "Garry, do you still want to take me around the world?"

Chapter Eight

THAT sentence of Justina's, "It was the first time I ever carried my own suitcase," came back to Marigold's memory in the quiet of the night, because it was the first time she'd ever attempted to pack her own trunks, and she was finding it more difficult than she would have thought.

Three days had hurried past since that evening when she told Garry she would sail with him: Sail with him on the first boat he chose, marry him at the first port they reached, but not in New York before sailing. For that odd stipulation, her reasons were mixed but definite.

She told Garry: "If we're committing ourselves to each other for life rather in a hurry, we'd better have some days or weeks in each other's unmitigated company, to make sure that it's what we want to do."

HE could not understand that small streak of caution, in a mood he recognized as otherwise quite reckless. The Marigold who had met him that summer dusk in the hotel lobby, her cheeks flushed, her eyes luminous as if from tears she did not mean to shed, offering all and more than he'd ever let himself hope, was no Marigold he had known before.

By what steps she had come to the decision that he was the man she wanted of life, she did not tell him; and he did not ask. He had wanted her so much that now he was unexpectedly to have her, he would not question the why of his unexpected luck. But for her sake, he did protest the marriage postponed to some indefinitely distant port.

"It simply isn't respectable, and will create a particularly gaudy scandal if you sail with me, unmarried. And what's the point?"

"Why should my mother's daughter care about respectability? And we sha'n't be here to read about the scandal."

"People you care about will be here to read it—Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Aldison, for instance."

CARROLL

Something twisted in her young face. It occurred to Garry, for the first time, that Marigold did in a way resemble Justina Otis. He'd never noticed that resemblance before.

She said, slowly: "Since I'm not really their daughter, they needn't care particularly if I'm an example of the proverb that blood will tell in the end."

But that exasperated him. "I don't like being the illustration of a bad end you seem to think you're coming to. I want to take you round the world because I love you."

She seemed to consider that. "I know, Garry; and I must love you too with half of me, else I shouldn't be flinging myself at you with such determination."

"Why with half of you?"

Her gray eyes, her voice, were completely cool. "The other half is Marigold Aldison, 'society girl,' one time Aldison heiress!" Her voice flicked the phrases contemptuously. "She'll cease to exist, some distance farther south. It's south we sail, isn't it?"

He said, "Yes, probably south," and let the rest go, though he didn't understand.

She had come near telling him the other part of her reason for refusing to marry him before sailing. To her, being married, had always meant—from the time she was a flower-girl at a wedding on a neighboring estate—a wedding in Elmslee gardens. In June perhaps, or perhaps in September, when the delphinium reached its second blooming; in either case, the bridesmaids' frocks could be chosen to match the delphinium's exquisite blue.

Being married had included half a dozen friends from school, and from her débutante year, as bridesmaids; had included the presence of Rodney and Madeleine, looking pleased because she was happy, but a little sorry to lose her too; an orchestra playing pleasant inconsequential music in the rose pergola—that sort of thing. The bridegroom's face had always been entirely vague; she had trusted time to make that plain.

And time had; Garry's handsome thin dark face, across the table in the hotel dining-room, was a bridegroom's eager face. If she guessed a little, watching that face, that she still was not sure of anything except that he was the person who would best help her to escape from all her life that was familiar, she made her thoughts move on quickly from her guess, because the necessity to escape was still so strong upon her.

To get free from Madeleine's habitual kindness, from Rodney's generosity, since she could never believe wholeheartedly in either any more, after Justina's dreadful words; to be married in some city she hadn't seen, far enough away from Elmslee gardens so that the wedding she had meant to have, and wouldn't have, would seem a very distant thing too.

Garry said: "Have you a passport?"

She nodded. She and Madeleine had been on a cruise to Egypt in the late autumn of the previous year. She'd had her passport renewed for that cruise.

"I have too. I got mine when I almost went to Paris for a fortnight, last December."

She wasn't listening. She said: "I have six or seven hundred dollars in my checking account. That's all I'll take from Rodney. It'll be enough so I can pay for my own cabin and passage as far as wherever we get married, won't it?"

"Farther than that, on the sort of ship we'll take. Marigold, have you the least idea that, married to me, six or seven hundred dollars will be an extremely large sum of money?"

She refused to be serious about it. "That'll make a nice change for me."

Then they talked about boats they might take; and afterward, leaving her at the door of the car, parked on a side-street, leaving her because she'd said she wanted to go straight home, he'd said: "You might kiss me, Marigold."

She went into his arms in the quiet empty street with an eagerness that startled him, though it reassured him.

He could not know that she was trying to make his kisses stand between her and everything else in the world she'd cared about—make his arms hold her away from memory and doubt.

So the three days went by in a blur, in which she was polite to Madeleine, to Carroll, to his mother, to Rodney; and Madeleine's eyes, she knew, began to look puzzled. She ignored that.

It appeared there was a ship called the *Southern Star,* a freighter which took passengers. It sailed from Brooklyn to a dozen South American ports down the east coast and up the west, ports the names of which Marigold had scarcely heard before. They sounded distant enough.

Garry said: "From the west coast we can cross the Pacific."

Somebody named Marigold Dane, who would be a different person, would cross the Pacific. She said: "And from there?"

He laughed at her. "Go where we please, do what we please, have no plans. I'll try and sell some short stories, so that we can keep on wandering, for years if we like."

"A lot of things will happen while we're gone, I suppose."

"What's that to us? Your friend Dick Taylor will no doubt get a model tenement or two built, and get defeated for office in a couple more campaigns. . . . Sorry, that did sound disagreeable. I hope he wins everything in the world he wants, to make up to him for not having you."

She didn't answer. That conversation went past in the course of a hasty luncheon when they settled on taking the *Southern Star.* It was just one of the small unrelated incidents which punctuated the three days.

ALL that was done with now. The *Southern Star* would sail at ten tomorrow morning. She would meet Garry aboard at nine. She had ordered the limousine for half-past six, because only the limousine would hold two trunks on the rack, and her hand-luggage inside.

Garry had said: "Don't bring much luggage. It will be a nuisance." But his definition of much luggage and hers were very different. She'd taken the least she thought she could manage with, considering changes necessary for different climates. And now at last, toward two in the morning, she seemed to have got all the things in the trunks and cases.

She would get the chauffeur who was to drive her to town to bring the luggage downstairs if no houseman was up. Thinking that, staring at her packed trunks and suitcases, realization swept over her suddenly.

She had eaten her last meal in that house that had been her home, said her last words, and deliberately made them casual words, to those who had been father and mother to her—was prepared to steal out into the sum-

mer dawn away from them, as if she were a thief who had no right to be under their roof.

The very fact that they had so trusted her as to make her escape easily possible, hurt her sharply now. No servant had questioned Miss Marigold's right to have luggage sent upstairs, or to order a family car for half-past six in the morning. No one would question her when she walked for the very last time down Elmslee's familiar curving staircase and went away without any good-by.

FOR the first time it seemed to her that she was doing a wicked and cruel thing, in leaving those two who had always seemed to love her. She began to walk up and down her room among the clutter of luggage, debating again in her mind whether she was right; whether to go without words, as she'd planned, whether it would be kinder to make her only farewell a radiogram sent after the ship sailed. She had planned on that radiogram, sent just too late for them to take any action, so they would not feel it their duty—regardless of their desire—to interfere.

She walked up and down a rather long time, but did not change her mind. For Justina's madness had been more destructive than she could ever know; though Marigold had quickly discounted some of her wild phrases, she could not recover from the belief that she had become a problem in the life of Rodney and Marigold. So she would go now, and let them be done with that problem.

The short summer night was passing swiftly; there was already gray in the blue darkness when Marigold sat down at last on her window-seat, regarding that well-known vista of arching trees and flower-beds dimly outlined in the waning starlight, as if she wanted to memorize it forever.

Sitting there, she settled one other thing: She had allowed plenty of time for it. She would telephone Richard, see him for a few minutes on her way into town—because he had cared for her so much, it seemed unnecessarily unkind to go with no good-by to him, and also, he could give Rodney and Madeleine some message from her that she could not bring herself to speak to them.

Two hours to wait, before it should be time to dress and go. No point in attempting to sleep. There would be time for sleep on the *Southern Star,* with seas widening between her and her decision. . . .

Garrison Dane had far fewer things to pack, so that he had finished before midnight. He looked about his furnished apartment with no emotions concerning it, for it was just one of the many places where he had stayed a little while. But the evening was young; he wanted to do something, anything—to remember afterward that on his last evening in New York he had talked to this person or that person, watched this or that dancer—something to differentiate this evening from some thousands of others that, passing, added up to a man's youth.

He was, oddly, lonely. If he was not leaving behind him as many things as Marigold, he was leaving one thing that had been important to him—his newspaper career. He had meant to go on, to be a star man on the paper, and from that point to begin his journeying. Well, some one else would continue the ship-news column he'd started—and had been very proud of, and had thought would lead to the writing of more significant columns. When the cutter went down the bay at sunrise, some one else would be meeting the *Bremen* and the *Berengaria,* and the *Manhattan* and the *Olympic. Sic transit* a lot of things that had seemed important in their time!

Marigold was worth giving up a great deal more for than a not-quite-achieved career. But feeling nostalgia for that career notwithstanding, he put on his hat, and went out to a Village bar and cabaret called Chiquita's, where he knew he was fairly sure of finding half a dozen newspaper acquaintances.

The first of whom he saw when he entered, was Sally Patrick, who waved a hand at him from across the room where she sat with four or five other people, and then left them and came toward him.

"What's this I hear, Garry, about your resignation going in to the *Globe* today?"

"Yes, I finished there this afternoon." He'd hoped the news would not have been out so quickly, so that, he could once more have sat among newspaper men and talked shop casually, as one of them. He smiled a little at the childishness of that.

Sally said: "Why?"

Well, she was a fairly old and special friend, as age and specialness of friendships were measured in his New York.

"Sit down and have a drink with me, and I'll tell you."

The little Spanish dancer at Chiquita's (a girl who was born in South Chicago and had never been nearer Spain than the beach at Atlantic City, where she'd been told Spain was straight across the ocean, though she danced Spanish dances well, all the same) pirouetted to a swirl of skirts, clicked castanets, smiling, bowed at last to the patter of applause.

Sally Patrick sipped her highball, watched the dance and said: "You'll have a grand time, Garry." A little later she added: "I'll go to the boat and see you both off; I suppose you've no objection to my breaking the story after you're both on your way."

"I don't suppose Marigold will care then."

"Let's dance, Garry."

"You haven't said whether you think it'll work—that I'll make Marigold happy, I mean."

Why he wanted some reassurance as to that, he didn't know, but he wanted it.

Her lazy voice said: "Of course you'll make her happy; she loves you, doesn't she?" And she thought: "He's plain crazy. He'll have an awful time with that spoiled girl, who'll run through his forty-eight hundred dollars in the first two ports they reach, probably. When he comes back, he'll have no job and will have to start over." Though she'd liked Marigold well enough, she had a definite contempt for her type, which she classified as "soft."

Sally sighed. It was so usually the "soft" woman who got asked on adventures supposedly glamorous, though only the hard ones could really stand the risks involved. Then she shrugged a shoulder at her cynical understanding of herself. She'd have gone round the world with Garry blithely, but he'd never think of asking her.

Well, he'd soon be back, though he thought not. There'd be a divorce. A slightly less ingenuous Marigold would return to the Aldison fold. Nothing lasted.

She'd known that so long, that she was conscious of extreme weariness of the knowledge. She said: "I could use another highball, Mr. Dane, to console me for my well-controlled grief at your departure."

He laughed, and ordered two more highballs.

They danced, waiting for them.

She thought: "He'll be dancing to more authentic *rhumba* orchestras than this one; and to Hawaiian music under palm trees—oh, nonsense; they probably play the same phonograph records from here to Calcutta. But I should like to see for myself."

Garry's hand rested between her slim shoulder-blades lightly, but she was very conscious of that light touch. "Don't delude yourself, Sally," she was thinking. "He's always been rather special, as those things go with you. I wonder whether that child he's taking knows in the least what she's doing?"

"You haven't much to say this evening, Sally."

"That's my grief again; it chokes me. Let's go back and drink our drinks."

OVER that highball her dark eyes regarded Garry with mischief in them. The beginning of an idea had begun to dance in the back of her head.

"Garry, what does Miss Aldison's friend Mr. Taylor—with the fine political philosophy that she had such difficulty in explaining—think of her leaving the world behind for love?"

"I don't suppose she's told him."

The idea got just slightly clearer.

Sally yawned. "If I'm getting up to go see you off in Brooklyn at nine or half-past,—and I call nine or half-past nine, dawn, and I hope you appreciate the devotedness of the gesture,—I think I want to go home to bed."

He left her at the door of her apartment-house with

just the slightest pang of regret. She was such a good sort, and they'd had some very pleasant times together. He was glad that he'd happened to encounter her this evening to say good-by, for he didn't take seriously the likelihood of her appearance in Brooklyn before the *Southern Star* sailed.

At a quarter-past six in the morning, having taken some thought as to just what she wanted to say, Marigold telephoned Richard.

"Hello, Marigold. You're up early."

"I wanted you to take me to breakfast at that nice lunch-wagon where we go sometimes after dances. You know, the one where they have such good coffee."

"The one on the Sohasset Road?"

"Yes."

"How soon?"

"Could you make it in twenty minutes?"

"I think so."

"Twenty minutes, then."

"Don't ring off, Marigold. Your voice sounds odd. Is there anything the matter?"

"Nothing at all; only—" She hesitated.

"Only what?"

"Only I'm going away, and I want to say good-by to you."

There was a short silence at the other end of the telephone. The only odd thing about Dick's voice, when he broke that small silence, was its extreme matter-of-factness: "I'll see you in twenty minutes."

TWO trunks, a suitcase, a hatbox, a shoe-box, a dressing-case—no jewel-case. She was taking no jewels but the small exquisite string of pearls Rodney had brought home for her the day she made her début. She wanted those because, whenever she clasped them round her neck, she could remember Rodney's face and Madeleine's face smiling at her as if they were proud of her, as if she were very precisely the daughter they wanted, that evening when she wore them first; when she went down the staircase of the Aldison town house in her débutante's frock of white taffeta, between her father and mother, to her coming-out party.

The pearls shone on her neck now, just showing above her gray-green traveling frock, when she telephoned the garage again, to tell the chauffeur who was driving her into town, to come upstairs for her luggage. When he had taken it, she picked up her gloves, her purse, her gray-green tweed traveling coat, which was collared in red fox just a little darker than her hair, and was ready to go.

She had felt so many things on her way to this moment, that she felt nothing, now it was reached. She went out into the first brightness of the morning, into the car, said "Go by the Sohasset road, Charles," and was past the gatehouse of Elmslee before any emotion flickered in her. Even then she was only conscious of a kind of dull relief that she had managed to go without any painful scene.

Dick's car was drawn up outside the lunch-wagon, waiting for her. . . .

The lunch-wagon was a fad. Late in the evening the trailing skirts of dancing dresses brushed the scrubbed floor, and fashionable young voices echoed and reëchoed under the low beamed ceiling. But this sunrise, the only occupants were two truck-drivers finishing their coffee, the boy behind the counter, and Richard Taylor, Third, who was so absorbed in a conversation with the counter-boy that he did not hear Marigold open the door.

There he sat, his fair hair smooth, as usual, his long wide-shouldered body as relaxed, and only his thin face animated, so that Marigold felt as if her heart had slipped suddenly sidewise in her chest, as if she came awake. There he was, the familiar companion of her girlhood, of her whole childhood, who had always been so serious about people and beliefs, so determined to live what was, in the old-fashioned phraseology, "a life of service." No doubt he was discussing with the counter-boy the counter-boy's opinion as to some facet of the New Deal, as if it were important. Perhaps it *was* important.

Marigold smiled, the first smile she'd managed in three days. Perhaps she never had loved Richard, nor could, because she'd known him so long and well; but that depended on the definition of love. She was, certainly, extremely "fond" of him, so fond that for the space of a second's passing she was conscious of an odd ache, that drawing breath, she defined as she thought: "All good-bys are a little sad. I'm glad I bothered, though, to make this one."

He looked up and saw her. That lightening of his grave face, as of one upon whom the sun shines suddenly, hurt her. So he had always looked when he saw her come into a room.

His face changed, grew puzzled, after that first instant. Yes, she had said by telephone: "I want to say good-by to you." And she moved forward now, said just, "Richard!" and sat down beside him at the far end of the counter. The boy behind it, looking at the two of them, removed himself to the other end, speeded the truck-drivers on their way with talk about the weather, and stayed fifteen feet away when they had gone, with his back turned, indicating that such privacy as the lunch-wagon afforded was theirs.

Richard reminded her: "You came to say good-by?"

His voice sounded stiff. Oh, no doubt he knew, generally speaking if not in detail, what she'd meant by that telephone-call.

She told him hurriedly, but being explicit enough. His silence, the lack of any expression on his face, disconcerted her, so that she began to repeat things. When she realized that she'd told him twice the *Southern Star* sailed at ten, she hesitated, then stopped abruptly.

The first thing he said was: "Drink your orange-juice."

She hadn't heard him order it, and felt slightly surprised to see it in front of her. She hadn't even noticed the counter-boy bring it. He now brought hot buttered toast and coffee.

"You'd better eat your toast and drink your coffee too, Marigold. From your description, I doubt whether you'll get anything as good on the *Southern Star.*"

"You sound as if you disliked me extremely."

"I don't. My matter-of-factness is a shock-reaction."

That made her angry. "I don't see anything to be shocked about. Even if I am sailing without a ceremony, I'm not—"

He interrupted very impatiently. "Nonsense! I wasn't even thinking about that, or at least not as anything very important." He stopped. When he spoke again, as quietly as before, there was sudden agony in his voice: "I don't say, 'Don't do this because I love you so.' That's clearly no use. If you loved me, you wouldn't be doing it."

She stopped being angry. "Dick, I'm sorry I've made you unhappy." She put her hand on his arm.

He ignored what she said, and her hand. He said: "I say don't do it because you are you."

"That, I don't understand."

"You'll be wasting your life."

"Most people waste their lives, don't they? Live and grow old and hopeless?" She was thinking of Justina's haggard face.

But Dick's voice said: "You don't really believe that, you know."

So she told him: "I do since I've known Justina."

He sounded impatient again. "You've seen her all wrong since the beginning. You've never guessed that she's the most old-fashioned person you've met yet."

Marigold's gray eyes regarded him as if wondering whether he'd gone mad. Well, he wondered himself. He thought: "Words. I'll say hundreds; she'll say hundreds. They'll mean nothing. Then she'll stand up and walk out of here, and I'll wish her luck. She'll be gone; I'll have what my mother would call a broken heart; and Marigold—" He was so sure Marigold would not be happy, that he decided grimly to say exactly what he meant.

He drank his coffee slowly, hunting for the right words.

Marigold said: "What do you mean about Justina?"

WELL, perhaps he could start by way of Justina as well as any other.

"For one thing," he began slowly, "she sounds like a pre-depression society page. You are to make a 'brilliant marriage.' As if there were any dependably brilliant marriages any more!"

"Don't worry; I'm not making one."

"I don't give a damn about that."

"Dick, you aren't usually rude to me."

"Perhaps I should have been. Perhaps I could have been a more romantic character in your life if I'd posed as hard-as-hell, kiss, drink and be merry, tomorrow comes the revolution, and so to hell with it! Let's leave it all behind and go wear sarongs in Malaysia."

She said, not very steadily: "I came to say good-by to you because I had been—fond—of you. But there seems very little use in prolonging this—"

He caught her hand then, in his strong thin one. "Darling, if it's any satisfaction for you to know I'm so fond of you that I'll never get over it, consider that you know it. And let me try to say, even in a very roundabout way, whatever I'm trying to say. Not that it'll stop you from sailing, but that you might possibly remember it, in Malaysia."

She said, crossly: "I told you we were going to South America." Her irritation was at herself, because his voice, the look of his face, disturbed her so.

Then she said, more softly: "I really must go in about ten minutes, Richard."

"It's all the same thing, South America or Malaysia, any place you go to run away from what you are. Justina—to be done with talking about her—found that out. She was, I suppose, a nice young woman brought up to have a sense of responsibility, decency, honor, what you choose to call it. So she slammed a door on Beacon Hill once between herself and all those things—"

"Richard, it is not comparable. I have no husband to whom I've made vows. I'm not—I'm not going to have a child who could be hurt."

"By the way, you're no more in love with Garry Dane than you are with me, of course; otherwise you'd be marrying him before you sailed. That just occurred to me."

"You simply don't know what you are talking about."

HIS eyebrows lifted. He was looking at her, Marigold thought, as if he really did hate her. That was so startling that, though her vanity told her to stand up, say good-by lightly, and leave him, she sat quite still.

He said: "I might argue that if you loved him, you wouldn't want to postpone a honeymoon that could commence so romantically. The Manhattan skyline fading and just you two—" (He said to himself: "I'm doing this shockingly badly. In a minute she'll decide to marry him to prove me wrong.")

He spoke quickly then before she could reply. "That doesn't matter, and I apologize. It truly isn't my business, which you've been just too polite to say. We haven't time to waste on rudeness. We have been friends, intimate friends. Let me say this to you as a friend—not to make you angry—"

She waited.

"You're just running away to escape a life grown slightly complicated. But I think it's a mistake, because I think the man you're running away with is irresponsible, and you are not."

She did start to interrupt then.

He said: "No, let me explain that. It isn't anything to do with being rich or poor. I've met such sense of responsibility among the very poor—old women for their grandchildren, children even for younger children, as has made me ashamed. I've met it in my trivial social-service work, which Mr. Garry Dane thinks is so comic."

She wondered how he knew that, and remembered vaguely that dinner on the Sylvania roof.

"I mean that Dane, and people like him, are irresponsible in that they're always sailing on regardless, metaphorically speaking. I don't mean anything so simple as that he'll leave you for some one new, next year or the year after. . . . I don't see how anyone could ever leave you." There was sudden tenderness in his voice then.

She said, softly: "Let's stop, Dick dear. We're only hurting each other. Wish me luck, and I'll go."

"No. I don't even know whether I wish you luck; and please let me finish. Garry Dane, all the Garry Danes, never touch their times. The shabbiest, the most half-educated communist shouting inaccurate quotations from Karl Marx in Union Square, is more significant. Dane thinks it's romantic to go—as a passenger, not even working—on a freighter, to a lot of obscure towns to look at assorted palm trees and swim on variegated coral sands. While the headlines of every day's newspapers scream at anyone who's ever stopped to think: 'There is intolerance to be fought—poverty, corruption, the seeds of a new war. Take your stand for whatever is your faith. Time rushes on. There are no years to waste."

She was stirred. She resented being stirred. So she said, "Very effective speech, Dick," and was infinitely sorry, as soon as she had spoken; for as she said those stupid words, she knew that he had shown her all his heart, as perhaps he had never shown it to anyone else, or would again.

A mask slid over his face. Animation left it. He said, evenly: "Run along to your palm trees, then."

But when she stood up, and he did, he spoke again. "Even so, I think I shall beg your indulgence—that's another phrase they always use in speeches when they talk too long, Marigold—for another moment's boredom. Since I'll scarcely be boring you again—"

"Dick, I am sorry."

But she could see he did not believe her now, took that as no more than formality.

"I beg your indulgence, as I said, because I do believe—I'm sure from all the years I've known you—that you're responsible according to my odd definition. So remember, if you grow tired of sailing on, to nowhere in particular—there's always a useful life to be led for a change. You can make it extremely useful, with your three million dollars."

"Oh, I'm not taking the three million, or any part of it. Didn't I mention that?"

He said: "Because Rodney and Mrs. Aldison felt lonely and adopted a little boy! Marigold, you should be ashamed of yourself."

She did leave him then, walked through the swinging door of the lunch-wagon. The Aldisons' second chauffeur closed the limousine door when she got in.

But Richard followed. He stood beside the car's open window; and all the years they had liked each other held her from telling the chauffeur to drive on into town.

He spoke as if she were a child, but now as if she were a child he loved. "No, not quarreling, darling, please—even if I have no apology to make. You don't want to say good-by quarreling, do you?"

"No, Dick."

"Well then, Marigold: I have only one more irrelevance to mention. It may be my misfortune—at this moment I truly believe it is—to know that I'll wait for you to come back—the seven years some one I forget waited for Rachel."

She wondered why he looked, so suddenly, completely miserable.

He was thinking: "It's true I'll wait. But I shall never want, quite as much, the older, disillusioned Marigold who may very well come back to me some day. I want her as she is—I want the things that happen to us together to change us together."

"There's no answer to that, Dick, except that I'm sorry. And I know this sounds stupid, but I do mean it, whether you wish me luck or not, I wish you all the best sorts, with the useful life. I'm not being flippant."

"I remember once that you said, Marigold, 'I may marry you when I know myself better.' "

Yes, she had said that, in the summer darkness outside Elmslee. Why should it hurt to remember? "Dick, the only answer to that has to be flippant: I found out differently."

"I maintain that perhaps, even yet, you don't know yourself."

There was a little silence then, between them.

Marigold broke it rather desperately: "I *am* going now, Richard."

This time he did not try to delay her, knowing as well as she that, for now, they had nothing more at all to say to each other.

She spoke to the chauffeur. The car moved forward, smoothly.

On the way into town, she did not remember very well what he'd said. She became too sharply conscious of fatigue to remember anything clearly. Only it occurred to her that she had not given Richard any message for Rodney or for Madeleine. She realized then that she could have thought of no message that was significant, because nothing remained that was significant, except the fact that the *Southern Star* sailed at ten.

AS Richard Taylor walked past his mother's room, she called to him. He hesitated, was conscious that she was likely to guess "something" from his face, steadied that face as well as he could, and opened her door. She was in bed enjoying the substantial breakfast of one long past struggle to maintain a figure.

"The telephone waked me hours ago, Richard. So I heard you go out."

Well, she would know sooner or later. He said, "Marigold wanted to say good-by to me. She's eloping with Garry Dane, this morning."

Jane Taylor's face quivered. She said: "Oh, my poor boy, what can I do to 'make it up' to you?"

As if he were ten, and had bumped his head badly! Those simple words from her who had never in his memory been otherwise than composed, moved him so he was dreadfully afraid he might weep, as if he were ten and had bumped his head—oh, appallingly badly.

"Only pretend it's of no consequence, Mother."

Yes, she understood that.

"Have a cigarette, Richard."

He sat beside her bed, smoking it. She ate a cinnamon bun as resolutely as he had, a half-hour since, drunk coffee.

"You could have stopped her if you'd told Rodney."

He said despairingly: "You know I could not do that. She has to want *me.*"

"I know."

In a minute then she said: "What are you doing today, Richard?"

Bitterness swept him. "I'm going to my office at eleven, to arrange details for a meeting that's being held at half-past eleven, to discuss ways and means of keeping interest alive in the Young Voters' clubs, in political off years."

The tears rolled down Jane Taylor's wrinkled cheeks.

He had tried to comfort her. "In a day or two, or a week or two, all that will be important again."

She leaned over and patted his hand, and that rare gesture of affection was too much for him; he rose and left her without apology.

But he was dressed and ready to start for town at his usual time. . . .

There was a clutter of luggage and bales of freight, much noise, a confusion of people hurrying back and forth on the smallest dock from which Marigold had ever sailed. There was a certain look of surprise on the face of the Aldisons' second chauffeur when he left her there. The limousine going down the street, out of sight quickly, seemed to break the last connection with various things she would remember in better order, even evaluate them perhaps, when she was gone from this small crowded noisy place.

There was Garry's face suddenly close. He was white with excitement. Certainly she should feel something significant, looking at his white face. But she only felt, more intensely, a certain tightness around her heart she had known before, ridiculously, at the start of swimming-races.

"How do you feel, Marigold?"

"All right, I expect. Probably sleepy. I packed practically all night."

"You seem to have an appalling amount of stuff. Well, most of it can go in the hold, I suppose. The cabins aren't as big as those on the *Bremen,* you know."

He was giving instructions to a porter, competently. She could be competent too. She was competent about handing her passport and ticket through the window of the dock office. She didn't remember going up the gangplank, and found herself aboard, wondering what she had been thinking about. . . .

Abruptly there was the girl Sally Patrick.

"I fooled you, Garry. I did get up. Hello, Miss Aldison. How are you? I came to see you both off. Garry didn't believe I'd really rise and get to Brooklyn."

He seemed very pleased about it. No, Marigold knew it wasn't that, particularly. He was just so excited that he sounded intense about everything. "Now you're here, Sally, you'd better stow away."

She shook her head, laughing.

"No, I expect to get a bonus on the story."

"We'd all better go down and see Marigold's cabin, and then go over to mine and have a drink. Mine's rather better, Marigold; I'll change with you after we sail. Apparently a ship-news reporter rates more on this line than the Aldison heiress."

No reason, Marigold knew, that should exasperate her. She was just so tired that everything was irritating: the noise, porters and dock-hands hurrying past on the narrow deck, and whatever anyone said.

"Let's go somewhere, out of this."

Garry looked rather surprised at her tone.

They went down to her cabin, where no luggage had arrived yet. It was actually the smallest cabin she had ever seen. She immediately modified whatever notions she'd had as to the amount of luggage she could keep with her. She could keep one suitcase and her dressing-case, with luck.

"What did you say about a drink, Garry?"

"How do you like the cabin, Marigold?"

"It's all right. Let's see yours."

His was a little way down the corridor. It was larger by no more than three feet.

"I brought a bottle of Scotch," Garry said to Miss Patrick. "I'll open it myself. The one steward probably won't have time to draw breath, till we're down the bay."

He began to fuss with a corkscrew arrangement on the end of a pocket knife.

"There are only two glasses," Sally Patrick said.

"It's all right. I don't want a drink. It's too early." That sounded disagreeable, and Marigold hadn't meant it to be.

Sally was amiable. "Go on. You look as if you needed a drink."

Garry frowned in puzzlement.

"What's the matter, Marigold—are you worried because the cabins are little?"

"No, truly. I just wish we'd start, now we're here." ("And I wish the Patrick girl would go away so that I could decide what I think, looking at Garry.")

She sipped Scotch docilely out of Garry's glass, before he had a drink himself. It warmed her a little.

Sally said, "Here's all the best to both of you," drank her drink down, and glanced at her watch. "Nearly half an hour yet. I don't suppose they'll send visitors ashore until the last moment on this little ship.

"So now to business." She sat on Garry's bunk, swinging her legs, looking, Marigold thought, not specially businesslike, but very decorative.

Conscious of Marigold's glance, Sally rearranged slightly the smart skirt of her navy-blue frock, tilted the small brim of her navy-blue hat to an angle slightly more becoming, and said: "You realize, Miss Aldison, this is a big story?"

"I sha'n't be here to read it." Marigold said that because she remembered thinking it before.

Sally said: "Exactly. So you needn't care if I spread it. I want enough for a Sunday feature, besides the news story."

"Write what you like, Sally. Marigold won't care. But it makes her feel self-conscious to talk about it." That was the best compromise Garry could think of, conscious of the look of dismay rising on the face of his beloved, and at the same time, that it had been nice for Sally to make the effort to see them off, and so he'd like to do her a favor.

Marigold spoke hesitantly. "But I'm afraid I do care, a little. I mean, I've caused sufficient discomfort to Rodney and to Madeleine by my unfortunate publicity this summer, so that I should like to spare them anything further."

"The story's bound to break, darling. We may as well give it to Sally, who's a good friend of ours. Besides, it will help her to have something exclusive. That's important to a newspaper reporter, Marigold. Of course you wouldn't know."

DISMAY almost overwhelmed Marigold. She had wanted, so very much, to be aware of Garry and herself embarking on life together, to be reassured by his look, by his voice, that she was doing what she really desired to do. To have the moment when she should be growing sure dwindle into the discussion of the news-value of what she was doing, caused a dreadful sense of let-down.

She steadied herself and said: "What exactly do you want me to tell you, Miss Patrick?"

Sally took a thick pencil and some folded sheets of copy paper out of her purse. "For the news-story, very little. I have most of the facts. Only, I'd like a statement from you as to why you didn't get married before sailing. Everyone will wonder about that."

Marigold felt too outraged to answer.

Garry's voice was deliberately light. "I knew that would come up, Marigold; and it will in all the news-stories. You should have married me at City Hall yesterday. But since you didn't, Sally's only covering the story adequately in asking why not."

"Why not?" Sally repeated.

Marigold looked at her then. It was becoming clear to her that something more than a desire for an exclusive story motivated Sally. Her smile was just faintly malicious.

Garry said: "Oh, tell 'em we wanted to get married in a more romantic atmosphere than City Hall."

Marigold said, evenly: "Tell them I wouldn't marry until I had time to feel sure."

The most curious expression slid over Sally Patrick's dark handsome face.

"Wonderful!" But her voice was definitely mocking: "Miss Aldison all for trial honeymoon."

Marigold made one more effort to snatch at something that was slipping away with the minutes. "Let's stop, really, Miss Patrick. I am rather jumpy. —Do you suppose my baggage has got aboard yet, Garry?"

He said: "I'll go look in five minutes. Never mind the trial honeymoon business, Sally, really."

She remained entirely amiable. "Well then, there's just the Sunday feature for the syndicate. I thought of a pretty good angle for that. 'Miss Aldison Leaves Political Theories for Sunlight.' Remember that night with Richard Taylor?" She assorted her sheets of copy-paper, found two which were typed. "I wrote it all down that night. You must admit I've been nice and never used it. But now I want to. All Mr. Taylor's political ideas, how you used to be an exponent of them, and how you leave all that behind for romance."

Marigold said, "No, *no!*" and was startled at the loudness of her own voice.

Garry interposed hastily:

"Steady, darling! There's nothing to be so disturbed about. Sally won't write anything that would distress you. But why is it so important? It's just an angle she thought of for a story."

"I don't want Dick's name mentioned."

"All right, all right. Let's forget it. You're just hysterical because you're tired."

Sally began to read aloud from her typed sheets. "'He believes that there has to be a great redistribution of wealth, but that it can come normally through increasingly heavy taxes and death-duties. He believes the minimum-wage scales are too low—'"

Garry laughed. "We're going where all those words won't mean a thing, Marigold darling."

She stood up. "I'm going to see if all my baggage is aboard."

A gong sounded. Sally said lazily: "Visitors ashore. I suppose that's first and last call."

GARRY looked at his watch. "There's more than ten minutes. Don't hurry, Sally. I'll go and check up on your things, Marigold. You sit still."

"You won't know how many there are, Garry."

"Yes, I will. I counted them on the dock."

"All right." It could be done that way too. From the moment of his laughter, it had been finished.

He turned in the doorway. "I may be five minutes. I'll look in your cabin and see whoever is in charge of baggage to check the number of pieces that have been put in the hold, too. If it gets near sailing-time, go up on deck and I'll meet you both at the gangplank.

"You two might, as one of my oldest friends and my future wife, spend the time I'm gone, making peace. I can see, Marigold, why you wouldn't want Taylor's name dragged into this; but do remember, Sally wouldn't know why, off-hand."

Sally said sweetly: "He's a politician, and all politicians like publicity."

Marigold scarcely heard that. There in the doorway Garry stood smiling at her. She hunted for a word and found it. He was debonair. Yes, that old-fashioned romantic word suited him better than any other she would find.

Something in her look held him. His strange hazel eyes searched her face a long moment. That moment held for her all the moments they had shared, and the years they would not share, ever. She knew she would never forget the grace of his body standing there, his eyes, the exact way his dark hair grew back from his forehead. Perhaps she would not even forget the pattern of his gray tweed suit. A little of her heart would go with him to many odd places her eyes would not see. A little of her heart would be his after he had forgotten her. She even knew without regret in that moment that he would forget her, though he had loved her.

He said a very odd thing. He said: "Good-by for five minutes, Marigold." The sound of his quick footsteps lessened and was gone.

Sally Patrick drawled: "You see, I've been slightly in love with Garry for ages; that was why I was so unnecessarily disagreeable. You're going ashore, aren't you?"

"Yes. I should have come back from the first port we touched at, undoubtedly. So you've just hurried the end a little. Don't worry about it."

"I wasn't worrying. I'll go along to the gangplank with you."

They went up the short staircase. At the gangplank Sally said: "Wait a minute. Do you know why you're going ashore, or why you would have come back?"

"Yes, but there isn't time to tell you."

Sally said: "Your clothes would fit me more or less."

Marigold shook hands with her. "My passport rather less than more. But a resourceful newspaper woman should be able to solve the problem of that. Good-by."

She ran down the gangplank, turned for one quick glance back, saw Sally looking for her, slightly bewildered. She did not see Garry. She hurried across the half-darkness of the dock. There was one taxicab in the street. She said: "New York."

Chapter Nine

TO Justina who had once had, and for many years after had successfully invented, so many exciting reasons for rising in the morning, there had arrived at last a time when there seemed to be none.

From the afternoon when Marigold and Richard Taylor left her apartment together, something in Justina was broken that not a "good night's sleep," a masseuse, nor even a new gown—palliatives successful before in her life for various sorrows—could mend at all.

Two days went by, to the afternoon of the day scheduled all summer long for Marigold's semi-weekly visit. Justina kept her appointment, regular for that day, with hairdresser and manicurist. The maid Stella made the small chocolate-frosted cup-cakes that had begun to be invariable for those two afternoons, and put on her best lace apron.

But the doorbell never rang, all that afternoon; and when, at six, Stella brought in iced-tea and a chocolate cake for Mrs. Otis, thinking vaguely, "It might cheer her up," Mrs. Otis was crying.

That evening and the next evening she stayed at home, trying to read, waiting for the telephone to ring, as a young girl might wait for its ringing to announce a lover. But knowing it would not ring.

The capacity to pretend went from her in those days. She only knew clearly that she had, after all, a little loved that daughter she had planned to manage, and had found out that love belatedly.

She waited. Like an old woman at last, she waited sometimes with her hands folded, and sometimes even with patience. She took powders so that she would sleep late, and make the time of waiting shorter. And for what she waited, she did not know, except that it was not, any more, anything that she could plan, or struggle for, or "manage."

The telephone ringing roused her from heavy sleep, so that at first the sound of her sister's voice confused her, made it hard to be certain, quickly, of the place where she was, or from where Madeleine's voice came, or even of the year in which they spoke.

Madeleine had said: "How are you? I've been meaning to come to call, but things have seemed to be extra-

ordinarily complicated this summer." Madeleine added a variety of pleasant things like that; then she said: "Is Marigold staying with you, Justina?"

Justina was wide awake: "What has happened to her?"

"Oh, it's nothing. I expect she's just gone into town—except she seems to have taken a good deal of luggage."

"She's eloped with that young newspaper man; that's what she's done!"

Madeleine said, uncertainly, "Well—"

JUSTINA hung up, and started to dress without waiting for the arrival of Stella. She was frightened. Madeleine didn't know—she didn't know anything. She'd always had money. She didn't know about hunger, and the rudeness of unpaid servants, and shabby clothes, and doing laundry secretly in hotel rooms. She'd been safe. And Marigold must be safe, must be saved from knowing poverty, hunger, rudeness.

Stockings, shoes, brief underwear—thank God, dressing was a quicker process than it used to be! She would go to that young man's paper. She would find where he lived. Marigold didn't know the long weary years that followed on young recklessness. . . . A dress—any street dress. The door of her clothes-closet was hard to open. She wrenched at it, let go of it—caught at her heart, crumpled. . . .

There was a high wind blowing across that winter garden where she used to talk to Hilary. It blew away the dark. There was the road outside Concord, where one walked between apple orchards in full flower. She was running along the road, hunting for her little sister Madeleine, who was gone far ahead with young Rodney Aldison. She called: "Madeleine, Rodney, my dears, where are you?" She was very, very tired; and the apple blossoms were drifting down, white, fragrant, cool. . . .

She opened her eyes once in the hot noonday.

The maid Stella had known exactly what to do. There had been enough in the newspapers about "the head of the family, Rodney Aldison." She had telephoned Elmslee.

When Justina opened her eyes, there were Madeleine and Rodney. But how strange they looked! Well, she was sleepy, and the apple blossoms drifting were cool as snow against her eyes. She said in a faint bright voice: "There you are, my dears. I've been looking for you, *ages*."

Young girls used to say *"ages"* with emphasis when she was a young girl.

She slept then. . . .

The taxi bumped over Manhattan Bridge, with a fine view of river traffic if one wanted to look out the window. But Marigold didn't.

The driver said: "You didn't say where in New York."

She decided, fairly quickly, and gave him the address. She thought: "If I haven't been able to make a decision all summer long, at least now I seem to be able to."

She had made several. She would stop at Richard's office, on the chance of finding him, because she wanted to make immediate apology for what seemed in retrospect her fairly outrageous behavior of the morning—in particular, apology for the "very effective speech."

From his office she would telephone Elmslee, and tell Rodney and Madeleine she was on her way home to make explanations. Arrived at Elmslee, she would ask them simply whether or not she had been more of a nuisance than a comfort, recently, and what they wanted her to do.

She made no decision involving Justina. She did not happen to think of Justina.

DEPOSITED by the taxicab on the curb that was, speaking practically, Richard's doorstep, she was conscious of a slight weakness in the knees, which seemed to increase as the elevator took her upward.

The reception-clerk knew her, perhaps because she had been there once before, to discuss with Dick her work for relief; more probably because her photograph had been prominent in newspapers since that time.

"Mr. Taylor isn't in, Miss Aldison, but he's expected within five minutes. Would you like to wait in his office?"

"Yes, thank you." Not realizing that she was being specially favored, she crossed the clerk's room, a little conscious of upraised faces, so that she was relieved to be inside Dick's high square room, and sank into a chair of green leather, grown a little scuffed by the restless sitting of twenty years of Taylor estate clients. . . . Conventional photograph of Jane Taylor on Richard's desk; portrait of dead Richard Taylor, Second, on the wall—conventional save for a slight look of surprise. That, Marigold thought, might well be from looking down at the many odd friends and associates of his son. The liberal politicians, the social-service workers with and without axes to grind, the theorists of economics, the practical architects of model tenements, would no doubt seem odd to Richard Taylor, Second—who had been noted principally for a certain ruthlessness in making a large fortune much larger.

Marigold smiled a little at herself, deciding that she was thinking nonsense because she was afraid to think of anything else, afraid in particular to turn her eyes to the windows that were on one whole side of the square room.

So, admitting that, she shrugged her shoulders and walked over to the window.

The building was one of the earlier ones built with the idea of including views of Manhattan harbor with the equipment for important tenants. She looked across and down to blue water. But it was so far that none of the moving ships were any more significant than the toy steamers children sailed in bathtubs. If one of them was the *Southern Star,* she could not tell. A curious thought came to her, regarding that crowded harbor that was so great and looked so small; and suddenly she did not care which of the little ships was a steamer sailing south.

The reception-clerk was talking on the telephone when Richard came in from the elevator. She looked up to speak to him, but he had walked past quickly. So he opened his office door without knowing that Marigold waited for him.

She turned when she heard the door click.

He stood against it, very pale under his tan, as if—as if she were unreal.

Immeasurable time seemed to have intervened since sunrise when they had said good-by. Perhaps time was not accurately measured just in moments and hours passing, but in the things that changed as they passed. She and Richard were not either of them quite the same people, even now, as they had been at that parting.

IT seemed suddenly important to alter that strange unhappy look of his. Her voice was very casual.

"I had the most curious notion, admiring your fine view. That, if the revolution we've all joked about for years should come, or any war or cataclysm that might empty the skyscrapers, it might make New York a city finished like old Babylon—where there were probably fine views from the hanging gardens too."

"What are you talking about, Marigold, darling?"

The "darling" was a help.

"I was thinking that in an age to come, if the steel and concrete lasted, and people came to climb the skyscrapers, as we go to climb the Pyramids, they would be bound to have a certain special admiration for the men who ruled buildings like these, and the businesses that created them."

"Why a special admiration?"

"Because the rulers dared to include among their possessions like private telephones and leather chairs, the view of their greatest harbor, and to contemplate that view from a height that made it trivial."

He said: "Very effective speech, Marigold!" Her exact rude words to him! But there was only laughter in his voice, very friendly laughter.

"All right, call that even, Richard."

That thin, sensitive face of his—which held kindliness, urbanity, even a sort of humor, the sort that would be always at his own expense rather than the expense of others—quivered a little. "As if I could want to be 'even' for anything you ever did or said!"

That oddly comforted a heart that—under the thin, fashionable tweed frock that was so suitable for a summer journey she would not now be taking—ached more or less for something, for some far magic she had touched once or twice only with Garry, some whisper of the strangeness of life, its variegated quality. . . . To this daughter of Justina Shore and Gregory Melvin came echoing faintly in that high still room, so faint it was the echo of a distant echo, a sound like the click of a door closing quietly.

Justina, closing a door quietly a generation before, may have heard some slight sound like that, in her heart, on her way to escape the things to which she was born, to find out what the world was like otherwise than among them. Justina, never to find her way back to those things, though she pounded at the door of society all the years of her life!

But in Marigold's heart that slight sound dwindled. She had stayed inside the door.

He said, evenly, "Is your sailing postponed?"

A little color stole into his cheeks. She knew that was a question to which he knew the answer. But she would say the answer for him:

"The *Southern Star* sailed at ten, Richard, as far as I know. I came ashore a little earlier."

"Why did you come ashore?" he asked quietly.

He still stood the width of the room from her, held himself there—she could tell that—by effort, waiting for this answer that could mean to him so much.

WHY *had* she come ashore? An hour ago, to that same question she had answered the Patrick girl: "It would take too long to tell you." For then she had not much time, to walk up from the smallest cabin she'd ever seen, along a cluttered deck, down a narrow gangplank.

Irrelevantly, absurdly, she thought: "I'll remember that little cabin, that deck, that gangplank, better than I'll ever remember any others on ships on which I do sail." Outside the small porthole of that cabin would be framed southern seas, intensely blue, vistas of curving shore and palm-fringed beaches of little towns whose history was with yesterday, or might be with tomorrow—might never be, in any significant sense, history at all. She would not see those pictures framed in the narrow porthole, ever. She had come ashore—because of the whole twenty years she had lived, of her whole life, of those twenty years of Rodney Aldison's life and Madeleine's life and Justina's—because, when the moment arrived for her to choose between two men, all that family history, all those people who had made her what she was, had so complicated the issue. . . . No, she corrected that in her mind. They had simplified it.

She had not thought, in any other summer with sun on her face, dance music in her ears, laughter in her heart, that she would ever be old. This summer she had sometimes known, and the knowledge at first had been frightening, that even her own bright youth was transient.

Sometimes, she had known, when she watched Madeleine's fine-worn face, the face of one who had, in a phrase grown old-fashioned, always been "good," always thought of others, used her wealth and her influence as wisely as she could.

Sometimes, too, she had known, when she watched Justina's face, a face of beauty burnt out, the face of one who had pleased herself first, who had tossed away codes, responsibilities,—duties, they used to call them,—to follow her reckless fancy.

Justina's daughter thought it then, for a brief instant, very clearly: "I chose, at the end, because I want to grow old with Madeleine's face."

Richard said again: "Why did you come ashore?"

She answered him in a single sentence: "Because I'm more one sort of person than I am the other sort."

He said: "Marigold, Marigold, you mean more my sort of person." He came across the room holding out his arms, as if he were reaching out for all his dreams, as if he had to find them now.

She had not meant quite that. . . . Even in his arms she knew she had not meant quite that.

There was one more thing she wanted to say, for the sake of a man she might not see again, not while she was young, probably not even while she grew old, perhaps never in life again, at all—and certainly never see to count, for he and she had been lost to each other when that little ship slipped out into the harbor traffic, and could only meet again altered, strangers to each other's thoughts. Still, for his sake she had to say one more thing, though he would never know she had said it.

She held her face away from the kisses of a Richard grown much younger than the pale man who walked into that room and saw her waiting. "But I don't believe your way of looking at life is the only justifiable way, Richard. The urge just to go and see the world can be as great as the urge to make the world different, better."

How inconsequential the words sounded, and how clumsy—the words that were the only good-by she would manage to say aloud to a man named Garrison Dane who had wanted to show her strange cities! They sounded like the subject for a sophomore debate in finishing-school: "Is life purposeful? What is the justification of life? Is the pursuit for beauty an end in itself, or a means to accomplishment?" Yes, she thought, what she had said had sounded just as stupid as any of those.

Richard's answer came so easily! "Why, of course, dearest, I must have sounded dreadfully smug, long ago this morning."

His arm round her shoulder grew more confident. He bent his yellow head down to her red-gold one.

("Oh, Garry Dane whom I wanted, as you very much wanted me—I was not enough my mother's daughter to go light-heartedly round the world with you. . . . The Patrick girl, for whom you will forget me almost, will be a gayer companion for you. Forgive me, because in the end I hurt you. But when blue seas are tumbling spray across your face, and the warm spice-scented air is languorous, when you're far on the road to forgetting me, thank me just a little bit for knowing myself soon enough. I would always have wanted to be part of the world, not just to watch it. I could never have helped caring a little about unemployment-relief methods, and minimum-wage scales, and political parties. I could have helped that less and less as I grew up.")

She laughed a little at the thought.

("If I have given you up, Garry dear, lost you over nothing more dramatic than a different set of values, still, differences in sets of values are important. I would have worried you so about it. Sally Patrick won't worry you. Even, when you and she come back, laughing still at people's gravities, you may laugh at me. But I sha'n't mind then. Though I'm longer forgetting you than you're likely to be forgetting me, still, by then I sha'n't remember very well.")

"You haven't told me that you love me, Marigold," the voice of Richard Taylor said softly.

She raised her face to his, at last.

SHE could tell him that she loved him. She had loved him, in a fashion of love, all her girlhood. The word, that word *love* on which so many changes had been rung since time began, she could say truthfully. The saying and the meaning to describe her feeling for Richard Taylor, Third, would be more significant as more time passed. She would be his wife, wear his name, his jewels, live in his house. He would be the dear companion of a life that he would keep as well ordered for her as possible through years that might be less and less well ordered in the world. Richard Taylor, Third, would be the father of children whom—Marigold knew suddenly—she wanted because they would make her part of tomorrow as she was part of yesterday. When she said the words, "I love you," she would forever be done with uncertainty.

Common-sense—that virtue so overvalued perhaps in her world, so undervalued in that world that somehow included Justina and Garry and Sally Patrick—presented her with a sentence to put period to irrelevancies. Every road a woman set her steps on led her away from other roads her feet might have traveled. With that sensible sentence, she should—oh, draw a long breath and be done with delaying.

"You're a very long time about answering, Marigold."

He said that lightly enough. She was unresistant in the circle of his arms. She had lifted her head, just now, to return his kiss. But the lightness in his voice could not conceal its eagerness. Ah, whatever her heart struggled against was nothing as important, nothing as real, as the eagerness in his voice, in his eyes. To that eagerness she could be generous.

"I love you, Richard. Probably I always have loved you. Certainly I always shall love you."

He said her name. He just said her name over and over, then.

She could even summon a joke, in a minute or two.

"Richard, I may have taken a long time today, to say I loved you. But do you realize this is probably rather disgraceful—this demonstration of affection, I mean. Do you know you've taken a much longer time today, to get round to asking me to marry you—in fact, you haven't asked me today."

He laughed. "Marry me at lunch-time. I thought all my other proposals were in force—so to speak."

Laughter could be made of that too, and the important thing for just this hour was to make it slip by with gayety. All time ahead, all the months and years, would be all right. She must be managed, a little. "I wouldn't possibly marry you at lunch. I demand all the trimmings, you in an uncomfortable collar, and lines of ushers to dance with bridesmaids." The gardens at Elmslee, after all, with bridesmaids in shades of blue to match the delphiniums! Autumn, not June, and the delphiniums in their lesser second blooming. Was there philosophy to be made of that? Her head began to go round a little. "Richard, I'm so sleepy I can't manage to stay awake even to listen to all the lovely things I'm sure you have to tell to me."

"I'll tell them to you, over and over, through the next fifty years."

There was a discreet knock on the door of Richard's office. An old clerk said: "The first of the gentlemen are here for the meeting, Mr. Taylor."

"Send them in in three minutes."

The old clerk went away.

"Marigold, wait in the library while I pay less attention to what should be done about young people's political clubs in political off-years than I've paid to anything in years. Then I'll drive you out to the country. Will you have luncheon with Mother, because I left her in tears? Marigold, am I so happy that it shows in my face?"

She nodded. "But it looks nice—your face, I mean."

He took her through a door from his office to the library, walking with his arm around her shoulder. She thought with some slight amusement that his comments on the young political clubs would probably be very little to the point.

"Here's a beautiful book on skyscrapers, since you were talking about them, Marigold, angel. Read it for ten minutes." He put her into another big leather chair.

"I sha'n't read it, because I shall fall asleep over it. I just remembered that I never did go to bed last night. Also that I've got to call up Elmslee. Rodney and Madeleine will have begun to worry."

HE called the Elmslee number from the telephone on the library desk. "The operator'll ring you back, when she gets it, Marigold. . . . Marigold, I love you so I can't talk about it. Do you know I'll always try to be good to you?"

Yes, she knew that. He kissed her twice more so thoroughly she had no breath to tell him she knew he would be good to her. He left, smiling back over his shoulder.

The telephone rang. She recognized Miss Cane's voice.

"Will you tell the family I'll be at home sometime after luncheon?"

Miss Cane sounded rather disturbed. "Your father and mother went to town, but I know where to reach them. I'll telephone them."

Marigold, when she said "Thank you—good-by," and hung up the receiver, felt conscience-stricken. It had been dreadfully selfish of her to frighten them all so. Why it had seemed logical once, she could not quite remember.

She smiled, realizing that safe in the security of Richard's love, she would remember less and less the exigencies that had pounded at her all summer through: Justina's exigencies, and Rodney's and Madeleine's, even Garry's, already began to seem remote, with the feeling of Richard's kisses on her mouth, and Richard's arms so happily around her shoulders.

She smiled—and slept. A shaft of sunlight coming through the library window flamed in the waves of her red-gold hair.

In the apartment where Justina slept, who would not wake again, Rodney said to Madeleine: "Miss Cane telephoned. There's a message from Marigold. She'll be home this afternoon."

RICHARD said, "I hated to wake you—you were sleeping so beautifully. I telephoned Mother and told her I was bringing a guest to luncheon. But probably she guessed from my voice."

Marigold said sleepily: "I'll look disheveled and dissolute. Your mother'll think you're mad to want me."

But Richard wasn't listening. "Inside, at that meeting, I was realizing. We sha'n't be separated, sleeping or waking, all the months, all the years. Marigold, you don't want a long engagement, do you?"

Even a brief sleep had set comfortable long distance between her and the day's beginning. Her smile was entirely sure. "The conventional six weeks for trousseau, wedding invitations and all that, will be as long as you'll have to wait, Richard. We'll be married at the end of September, in Elmslee Gardens. Does that sound nice?"

At coffee after luncheon, in the patio, Jane Taylor said amiably: "I'm going to telephone Madeleine and Rodney, and tell them to come over here, straightaway, Marigold. They'll be pleased. I don't know why relatives draw long breaths of relief when a beautiful young woman decides to marry sensibly, but they do draw them."

"Do you suppose they'll care really, very much, whom I marry?" It was the last bit of Marigold's uncertainties finding utterance.

Jane said: "They adore you, Marigold. You're just inexperienced enough not to have realized that they've been disturbed too, these months. That's why they've been slightly different." She went away to telephone.

The sunlight filtered through the trees, making patterns that shifted on the flagstones. Marigold sat looking at it.

Richard came over to her chair, knelt beside it. "I have to keep touching you to make sure you're really here with me."

She touched his yellow hair with the tips of her fingers. "I'll always be here, or somewhere with you, now."

They did not notice that Jane Taylor was gone a rather long time. They did not notice time until they saw Rodney Aldison walking up the flagged pathway to them.

Something old, something broken in his face was frightening. He stared at Marigold.

She said: "What is it?"

But he didn't know how to tell the child. All the way over, he'd been thinking how to tell her, and he didn't know. In the midst of her happiness, too!

He told her badly, and rather oddly, too. For though Justina, with whom he'd shared nothing but enmity for as long a time as Marigold's whole life, was beyond anyone's dislike or judgment now, the habit of years held him. So he could not speak of her as Marigold's mother.

He said: "You'd better come home to your mother now, Mari. . . . Justina's dead, and your mother's grieving. Those two were fonder of each other than most sisters, when they were girls."

Dick was saying: "Dearest, don't feel badly. Marigold dearest, don't weep."

And she could not speak, could not tell him that she grieved, really not for Justina, whom she'd not understood very well, but for a young girl whom Justina had told her of, who walked out of a doorway once, uncertain, confused, as she, Marigold, had been uncertain and confused. Only—that other young girl had never found her way back, never in the world, to tranquillity and safety.

Chapter Ten

SEPTEMBER sunlight, which held the sweetness of all of summer in its warmth, streamed through the windows of Marigold's room, through that same window where on a night not very long past, Garrison Dane had come in by the trellis, to apologize. Waking, on this bright morning of her wedding day, Marigold remembered suddenly how his shadow had been dark in the oblong of the window, how a voice had said: "Don't scream, for goodness sake, Marigold dearest." She had not thought of him, consciously, for days, not since the day when she had read, in his old paper, a brief announcement of his marriage in Havana to "Sarah Patrick, daughter of—"

Only this morning, she remembered that Garry had been in this room, that he had seen, and Richard never had, the Provençal furniture that Madeleine chose for her, long before she made her début, the etchings she had outgrown in taste, the wooden cat she'd bought in Haiti on a West Indian cruise. The room was to be dismantled. Carroll would inherit the furniture, which was simple enough to be called "young." When she came back from her Mediterranean honeymoon, she could choose what out of the knickknacks she wanted to take on into the life of Mrs. Richard Taylor, Third—the rich, sheltered, cherished life of Mrs. Richard Taylor, Third, which would so much have delighted Justina.

Marigold sat up straight in her bed with its blue linen sheets, as she had once sat up when she saw that dark shadow sharpen against a window, and fought back tears. They were not shed for Garry, but for Justina.

SHE heard footsteps in the corridor, dried her tears quickly. A maid came in smiling with a breakfast-tray. "It's a beautiful day for your wedding, Miss Marigold." So it was, now she came to think of it.

Madeleine came in, hovering just a little. So simply, so easily had they two reëstablished their old relationship, that Marigold only remembered as one remembers nightmare, that once she had seriously debated with herself whether Madeleine loved her. Madeleine so surely loved her! She smiled at that sureness.

Madeleine said: "You're happy?" Not as a rhetorical question, but as if she really wanted to know.

"Very happy. But I shall miss you."

"Happy young matrons are too busy to miss anyone, particularly." And then: "You *really* don't mind about no bridesmaids?" They had been over the matter of the bridesmaids before. Marigold's wedding, not delayed because of Justina's death, was to be much simplified because of it.

"I think I prefer things simple, like this."

Some distance down the corridor, Jane Taylor could be heard congratulating Miss Cane on the efficiency of her mailing system for the announcements.

"How odd!" Madeleine seemed really startled. "It's so early for even Jane to call."

Jane's rosy face loomed in the doorway. "May I come in?" She came in, without waiting for an answer.

"Madeleine, forgive me for this visit—such a strange hour, I mean; but there was one thing I wanted to ask Marigold."

"Ask away," said Marigold. And Madeleine, trailing the skirts of her long negligée out, laughed over her shoulder: "If I hadn't known you all our lives, Jane, I'd decide you were growing eccentric."

Marigold's gray eyes confronted the kindly wise face of her who was to be her mother-in-law.

Jane began with preamble: "My son's at home drinking coffee in the dreamy state of a young man who can't believe his luck." She paused. For a minute, Marigold did not help her. Then she said: "You want to know whether it's really luck?"

"Something like that. It's been on my mind. I should have spoken before. Dick's too good for a rebound marriage. So, for that matter, are you. Think of that young man Garrison Dane, and tell me, my dear—is this a rebound marriage? It's almost a twelfth-hour question, but even so—"

Marigold said steadily: "I thought of him this morning, for the first time, probably, in weeks. And I assure you, this is more than a rebound marriage I am making."

Jane Taylor was immediately convinced, and more apologetic than Marigold had ever seen her. But she explained: "If anyone had asked Justina, that morning of the day she married Gregory Melvin, and she had listened to the question, her whole life might have been easier."

She seemed so distressed that Marigold said quickly: "I don't mind the question, really. You had more or less a right to ask it."

Jane's old face bent down to kiss her lightly. Then Marigold was left alone, to begin to dress for her wedding.

THAT afternoon Mrs. Rodney Aldison sat at the cumbersome old dressing-table in her great bedroom that overlooked the Sound from its northern and western aspects, and the famous gardens of Elmslee from its southern aspect.

The last of the few guests were gone. Mrs. Aldison's maid Ellen was brushing Mrs. Aldison's faded golden hair, before dinner, which she would have alone with Rodney. Mrs. Aldison's social secretary, Miss Cane, was writing down such words as she dictated, relevant to the taking out of curtains and laying down of rugs preparatory to the opening of the Aldison town house in a week.

She who had been Madeleine Shore dictated a few sentences, paused, and let her thoughts wander.

Marigold had looked beautiful, happy and confident. Dick had been of course ecstatic. It had been a pleasant wedding, though rather solemn, as very small weddings sometimes are. "Only members of the immediate families were present," the newspaper accounts would read. "The bride's only attendant was her small cousin, Carroll Aldison, who carried the train of her wedding-dress."

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Taylor, Third, would be far down New York Harbor now. The *Berengaria* had sailed at four. Odd that Rodney had worried at the end, so that he drove all the way into town—"to see that they got off all right," was the only explanation he'd made.

In the minutes since she had paused in her matter-of-fact reminders to Miss Cane of things to be done at the town house in the next days, the room had grown very still. It was redolent of the faint pungent scent of autumn flowers, dahlias, and the golden blossoms for which Marigold was named—and of the fainter salt fragrance of the sea. A beautiful room, of an old fashion.

Madeleine Aldison suddenly recalled that on just such a golden day at summer's beginning she had sat so, with Ellen brushing her hair, with Miss Cane, diminutive in the big wing chair, taking dictation. She had noticed the room's quietness, the scent of flowers and of the sea. Then Thorne had knocked at her door and told her that a lady, who said she was her sister, was waiting to see her.

So Justina had come back into their lives, had gone through those lives as a meteor through a calm sky, and was passed forever now—leaving all their lives to some extent changed by her swift reckless passing.

Dignity had come back to Justina's ravaged face with death, and serenity had touched it then, too. It was better as it was, much better. Yet in the eyes of her who had been Madeleine Shore tears gathered again, for the sister whom she had one time loved very much.

COMING into his wife's room without knocking,—so close were they grown through the months of that strange summer,—Rodney Aldison saw tears in her eyes and said, as one offering solace: "Those two got off all right, my dear."

Miss Cane folded up her notebook. Ellen laid down the silver brushes. They left Mrs. Aldison alone with her husband.

He patted her shoulder and said in a voice cheerful, obviously, by effort: "Now the boy will be a great interest to us, you'll see. I'm glad his mother decided she would be happier out West, just visiting us sometimes. Not having to entertain her, leaves you more time to entertain me."

She smiled at him, but she couldn't keep one tear from sliding down her cheek.

Regarding that tear, bright on the smoothness of her skin, he said: "We can't expect things to seem the same, just at first, with Marigold gone."

"I know, Rodney dear. We'll get adjusted. Everything has to change."

He found something else comforting to say. "Except you, my dear. You don't change. And as long as you stay the same, I don't care who else or what else is different."

She looked at him with actual surprise. It was so clear that he meant that, and that he thought it was true she was not changed! A faint warmth stirred in her heart, curved the corners of her mouth happily.

She did not think that only because of Justina's brief return did she know again, surely and forever, that her husband loved her.

THE END

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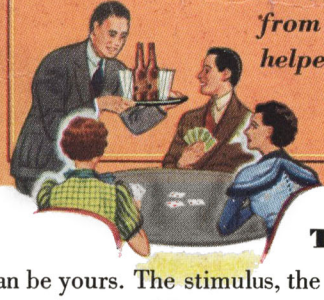

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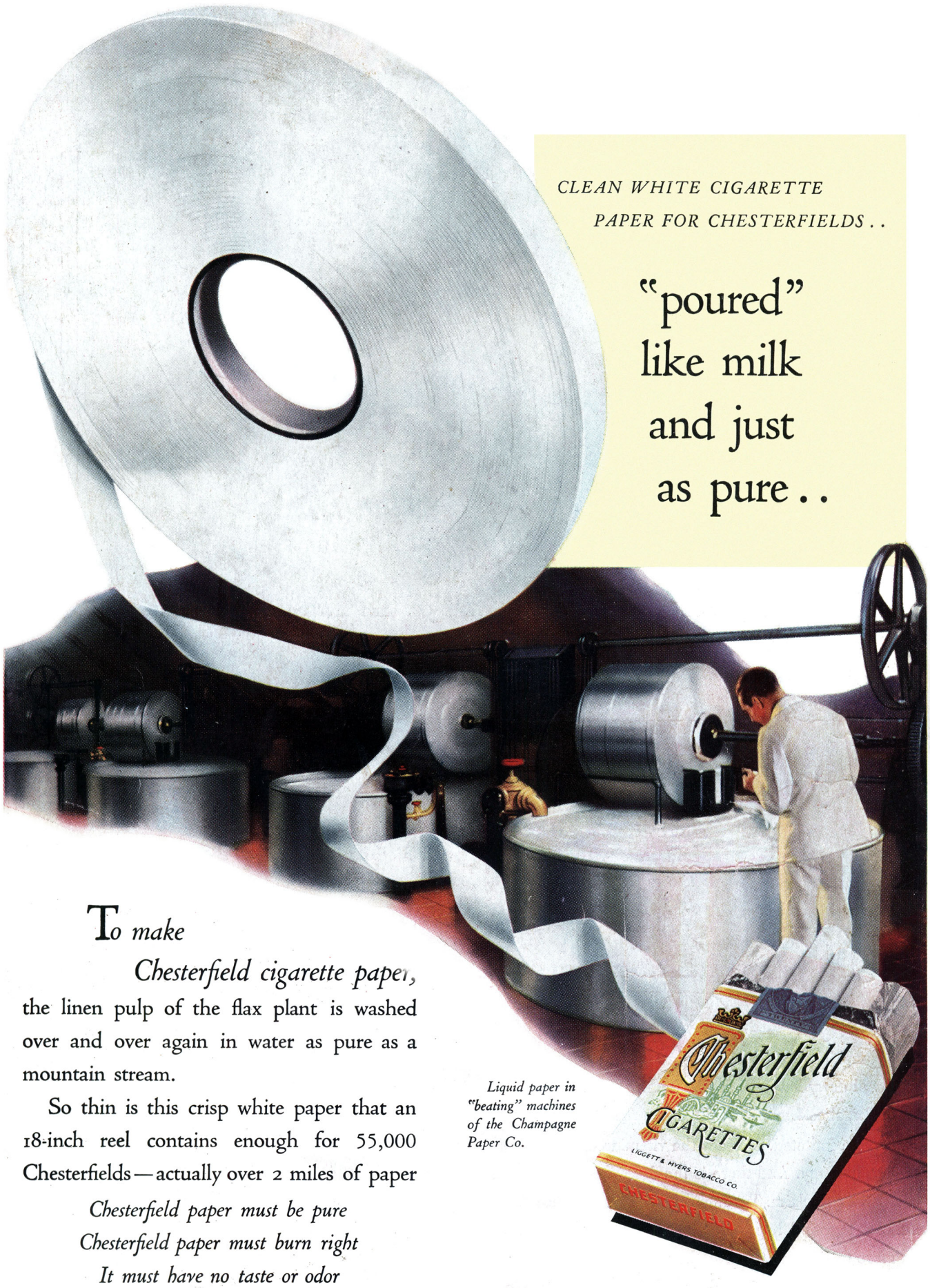

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