OCTOBER

REDBOOK

MAGAZINE

25 CENTS
30¢ IN CANADA

A New Claudia Story By ROSE FRANKEN

Complete Book-Length Novel By **WILLIAM McFEE**

CHARLES MORGAN

AVERAGE PAID CIRCULATION MORE THAN 1,300,000


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Most hauntingly mysterious of jewels is the emerald...
whose subtle green fire inspired Emeraude. Let this glowing perfume scent your day...in Emeraude Accessories.
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Here's one for the Society News Hawks..

"Bride-to-be neglects 'Pink Tooth Brush'!"

"But seriously, Ellen—you're making a mistake! Ignore 'pink tooth brush'—that distress signal of sensitive gums—and that sparkling smile is headed for trouble. What you need, darling, is *Ipana and massage.*"

"The young lady's right, Miss Ellen! Why, even the tots in school are being taught to *massage their gums.* Our soft, well-cooked foods do *rob* gums of the work they need. See your dentist before you see the minister, I say!"

"Don't ask too much of our modern foods, Ellen—they can't give gums sufficient work. Massage your gums each time you brush your teeth." (*Pardonable aside: Recent survey shows more dentists recommend Ipana than the next three dentifrices combined.*)

"Jane was a lamb to set me straight! Now I'm brushing my teeth and massaging my gums every day—with Ipana. My teeth are brighter—and that stimulating 'tingle' after each massage is like a telegram from my gums—'We're getting firmer—hardier'."

And when Ellen was settled in that vine-covered cottage—

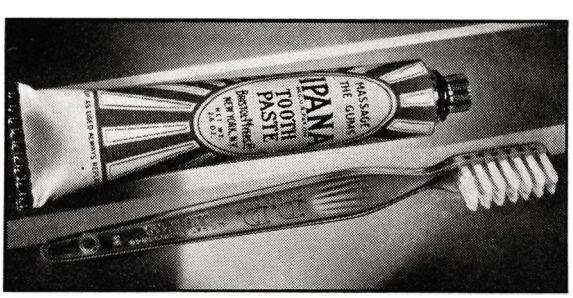
"So-o-o, I'm indebted to our Maid of Honor for saving my bride's scintillating smile! My thanks to the Maid, your dentist and to Ipana Tooth Paste and massage. And I promise to keep this domicile well stocked with Ipana—and to keep my own smile at its sparkling best. I'm starting now to make the regular use of Ipana and massage a daily habit."

Help yourself to firmer gums, brighter teeth, a more sparkling smile, with Ipana and Massage.

IF YOUR tooth brush "shows pink"—*see your dentist at once!* He may simply tell you that too many soft foods are to blame—that your gums, robbed of vigorous chewing, have become weak and tender. And he may suggest, as many dentists do, "the healthful stimulation of Ipana and massage."

For Ipana is designed not only to clean teeth thoroughly but, with massage, to aid the gums to healthier firmness. Each time you brush your teeth, massage a little Ipana onto your gums. That invigorating "tang" you feel means gum circulation is speeding up—helping gums to healthier firmness.

Get a tube of economical Ipana today and start now to make Ipana and massage a daily habit. Let the modern dental routine of Ipana and massage help you to brighter teeth, a more attractive smile.



IPANA TOOTH PASTE

OCTOBER VOL. 77

REDBOOK MAGAZINE

1941 No. 6

EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*
Associate Editors, DONALD KENNICOTT *and* VOLDEMAR VETLUGUIN
GERARD MOSLER, *Art Editor*

REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH

REDBOOK'S NOVELETTE OF THE MONTH

REDBOOK'S ENCORE OF THE MONTH

TWO SERIALS

EIGHT SHORT STORIES

WHERE ARE WE GOING? AND WHY?

(THREE ARTICLES)

ELEVEN SPECIAL FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Cover: Natural-Color Photograph by Paul Hesse

Posed by Miss Jinx Falkenburg — Riding habit from Paddock Riding and Sports Shop—Los Angeles

The short stories, serials, novel and novelette 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

REDBOOK MAGAZINE is published monthly by McCall Corporation. William B. Warner, President; Marvin Pierce and Malcolm MacHarg, Vice Presidents; Francis Hutter, Secretary; J. D. Hartman, Treasurer. Publication and Subscription Offices: McCall Street, Dayton, Ohio. Executive and Editorial Offices: 230 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. MANUSCRIPTS and ART MATERIAL will be carefully considered but will be received only with the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury thereto. TRUTH IN ADVERTISING: Redbook Magazine will not knowingly insert advertisements from other than reliable firms. SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: $2.50 for one year, $4.00 for two years, $6.00 for three years. Add 50 cents per year in Canada; add $1.00 per year for other countries. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions to our Publication Office, McCall Street, Dayton, Ohio. IF YOU PLAN TO MOVE SOON please notify us four weeks in advance, because subscription lists are addressed in advance of publication date. When sending notice of change of address give old address as well as new, preferably clipping name and address from last copy received. OCTOBER ISSUE, 1941. VOL. LXXVII, No. 6.

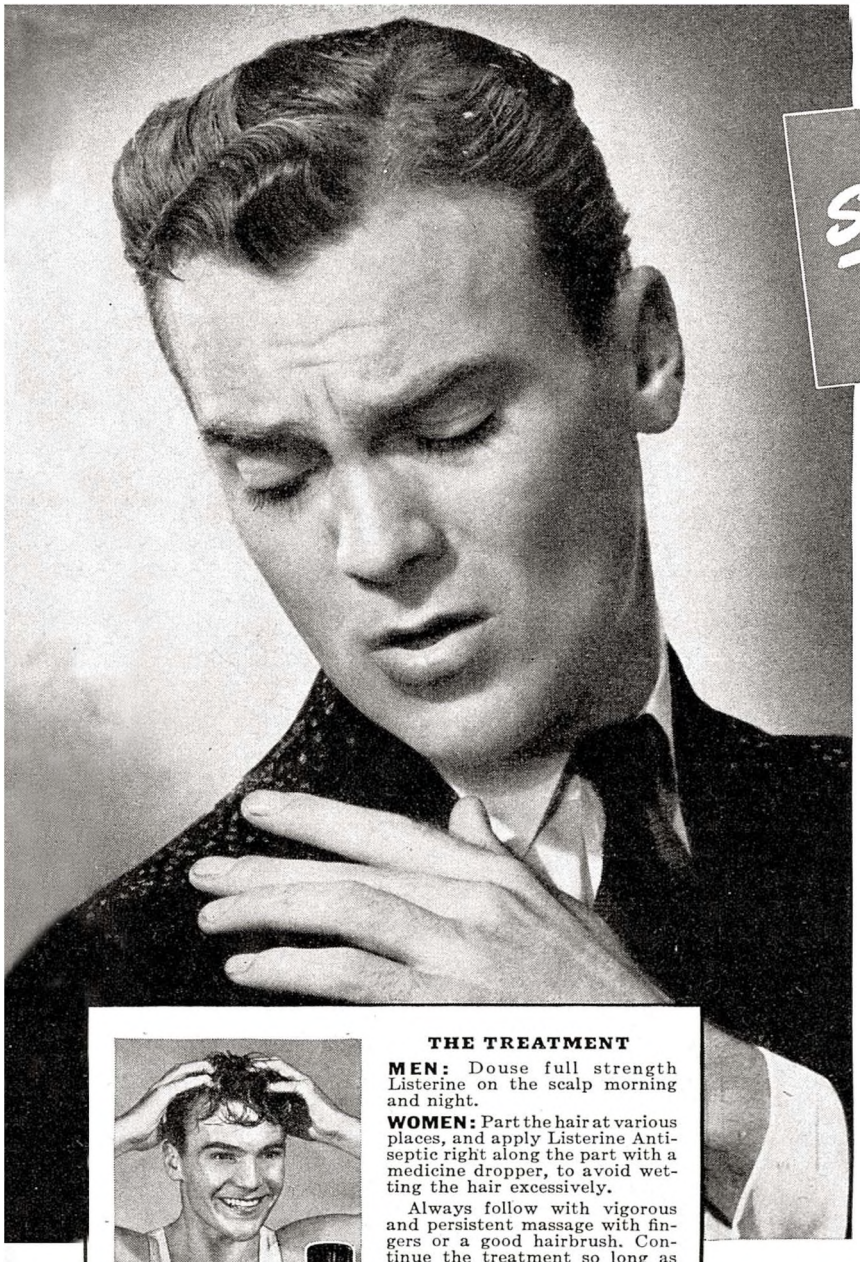
Entered as second class matter July 14, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Printed in U. S. A.

The Redbook School Directory will be found on pages 102 through 108

A "back-seat driver"
gets your goat . . .

infectious dandruff

gets it faster!



START NOW with LISTERINE

WHAT makes the infectious type of dandruff so annoying, so distressing, are those troublesome flakes on collar or dress . . . and the scalp irritation and itching . . . that so often accompany the condition.

If you're troubled in this way, look out—you may have this common form of dandruff, so act now before it gets worse.

Has Helped Thousands

Start right in with Listerine Antiseptic and massage. This is the medical treatment that has shown such amazing results in a substantial majority of clinical test cases . . . the treatment that has also helped thousands of other people.

You, too, may find it as helpful as it is delightful. Listerine is so easy, so simple to use, and so stimulating! You simply douse it on the scalp morning and night and follow with vigorous and persistent massage.

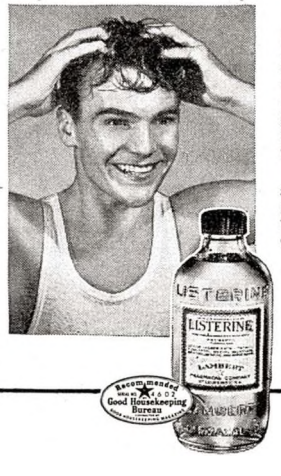
Thousands of users have marvelled at how flakes and scales begin to disappear, how much cleaner and healthier their scalps appear. And remember:

Kills "Bottle Bacillus"

Listerine Antiseptic kills millions of germs on scalp and hair, including Pityrosporum ovale, the strange "Bottle Bacillus" recognized by many outstanding dandruff specialists as a causative agent of infectious dandruff.

This germ-killing action, we believe, helps to explain why, in a series of tests, 76% of dandruff sufferers showed either complete disappearance of or marked improvement in the symptoms of dandruff within a month.

LAMBERT PHARMACAL CO., *St. Louis, Mo.*



THE TREATMENT

MEN: Douse full strength Listerine on the scalp morning and night.

WOMEN: Part the hair at various places, and apply Listerine Antiseptic right along the part with a medicine dropper, to avoid wetting the hair excessively.

Always follow with vigorous and persistent massage with fingers or a good hairbrush. Continue the treatment so long as dandruff is in evidence. And even though you're free from dandruff, enjoy a Listerine massage once a week to guard against infection. Listerine is the same antiseptic that has been famous for more than 50 years as a mouth wash and gargle.

*buy the **BIG** bottle . . . most for your money*

NEWS ABOUT REDBOOK

The six REDBOOK cover girls above turned out to be the favorites of our readers Reading from left to right they are: Josephine Caldwell of Philadelphia; Edith Backus of New York; Kay Hernan of Dallas, Texas; Bea Blaxton of Seattle, Washington Suzanne Sommers of Maplewood, New Jersey; and Jinx Falkenburg of Hollywood California. Kay Hernan, having received the largest number of votes, will from now on be known as our Ideal Cover Girl. Nice going, Texas! Jinx Falkenburg was the runner-up; her face graces the cover of the current issue. The dresses worn by the girls came from Russeks.

OUR Hollywood representative informs us that this is going to be a REDBOOK month in the motion-picture studios. The cameras will be busily grinding, transferring to the screen four "properties" that appeared in our magazine. David Selznick will be shooting the *Claudia* and *David* stories by Rose Franken. The Twentieth Century-Fox people will be concentrating on "The Empty Room" by Charles Morgan (final installment of which will appear in our next issue) and on Hugh Walpole's "The Blind Man's House" (REDBOOK's complete book-length novel of April, 1941); and Lewis Milestone, the director responsible for such pictures as "All Quiet on the Western Front" and "Of Mice and Men," will be putting in work "N or M?" by Agatha Christie (REDBOOK's complete book-length novel of March, 1941).

And now for news on the book front. W. Somerset Maugham's "Up at the Villa," which we published in 1940, is still on the list of national best-sellers. "Wakefield's Course," by Mazo de la Roche (we are publishing the final installment of that novel in our current issue) is about to be brought out by Little, Brown and Co. and is sure to join Mr. Maugham's work on the list of best-sellers. Macmillan's will be bringing out, in book form, "The Empty Room" by Charles Morgan. Farrar and Rinehart will publish "Broad and Alien Is the World," by Ciro Alegria, the novel that won the prize in the Latin-American contest organized by that publishing house and the editors of REDBOOK. (We are publishing excerpts from that novel in our current issue.)

* * * * *

IN our next issue: a new serial by Ursula Parrott, also short stories and special features by Hugh Walpole, Whitfield Cook, William E. Barrett, Kathryn Forbes, Douglas W. Churchill, Deems Taylor, Harry Hansen. A complete book-length novel by Elizabeth Seifert (whose novel "Young Dr. Galahad" won the $10,000 prize offer by Dodd, Mead and REDBOOK in 1938) and "Where Are We Going? And Why?" a section dedicated to the problems confronting the nation at this great moment.

* * * * *

FASHION CREDITS: All the clothes worn by *Claudia* in Rose Franken's story "Claudia Blames It on the Stars" are from Bonwit Teller.

The ponchos illustrated in "Broad and Alien Is the World" are by courtesy of the Good Neighbor Shop.

. . . this great best-selling novel which strips the masks from an American town!

EVERY adult in Kings Row knew that a human face sometimes becomes a "mask"—hiding its owner's secret love, hate, or ambition—but fourteen-year-old Parris Mitchell did not suspect it. He simply took people at their face values.

He liked his affectionate little girl-friend Renee. They tramped the country and went swimming together, at first in Adam and Eve innocence. He loved his big-hearted, girl-crazy pal, Drake McHugh. He liked and trusted Drake's tomboy girl-friend, Randy Monaghan, and Jamie Wakefield, who secretly wrote poems, and whom people called "too pretty for a boy."

Cassie Tower, the prettiest young girl in town, he admired but thought "strange," perhaps because she was always kept at home by her unpopular physician father, who lived mysteriously well without any patients to speak of. Parris liked Dr. Tower, even if few grown-ups did. But he feared and disliked the cold-faced surgeon, Dr. Gordon, whose patients' hearts were so often found "too weak for chloroform." Once Renee and Parris had heard frightful screams from a farmhouse, with Dr. Gordon's buggy there. Parris never forgot them.

Through this sensitive reaction to the people around him, Parris gradually developed the intuitive insight of a born physician; gradually he discovered that each and every one of them faced the world of Kings Row through some kind of protective mask, which hid a sickness of the mind or soul—perhaps a gnawing fear, a paralyzing inferiority complex, or a cherished vice. And later, as Dr. Parris Mitchell, equipped as a psychiatrist by five years study in Vienna, he helped some of them to take off their masks.

How the masks of Kings Row were removed, and how their wearers' tangled lives joined in dramatic and thrilling conflict, makes an extraordinary story that is gripping in its intensity, exciting in its action, fascinating in its suspense, compelling in its power.

Here, at last, is a truly great American novel—a story that springs out of the lusty, zestful, growing years of adolescent America—enlivened with all an American town's charm, zest, ambition, passions, loves, hates, hypocrisies, tragedies, comedies and, sometimes, nameless horrors! The *New York Times* called *Kings Row* "a grand yarn, full of the sap of life. Eventful, swift in pace." The *New York Herald Tribune* said, "Rich in sentiment, emotional, powerfully felt—a moving and passionate book."

And now you can have this amazing best-selling novel, for which thousands have paid $2.75, entirely FREE. Here is one of the most sensational offers ever made by the DOLLAR BOOK CLUB. If you accept membership now we will send you, without cost, a copy of Kings Row.

DOLLAR BOOK CLUB MEMBERSHIP IS FREE!

--and this $2.75 best-seller illustrates the amazing bargains it brings you!

HERE are the advantages of DOLLAR BOOK CLUB membership: First, it is the only book club that brings you books by outstanding authors, for only $1.00 each. This represents a saving to you of 60 to 80 per cent from the original $2.50 to $5.00 price. Every Dollar Book Club selection is a handsome, full-sized library edition, well-printed and bound in cloth.

Second, members are privileged to purchase as many Club selections as they wish at the special price of $1.00 each. Although one selection is made each month and manufactured exclusively for members at only $1.00 each, you do not have to accept the book every month—only the purchase of six selections a year is necessary.

The Economical, Systematic Way to Build a Library of Good Books

Dollar Book Club selections are from the best modern books—the outstanding fiction and non-fiction by famous authors. The Club has offered books by Sinclair Lewis, Edna Ferber, W. Somerset Maugham, Vincent Sheean, Emil Ludwig, Marquis James, Van Wyck Mason, and many other noted writers. And the cost to members was never more than $1.00. How are these savings possible?

70,000 discriminating readers are enthusiastic supporters of the Dollar Book Club. This huge membership enables the Club to offer book values unequaled by any other method of book buying.

Start Enjoying Membership at Once

Upon receipt of the attached coupon you will be sent a FREE copy of KINGS ROW. With this book will come the current issue of the free monthly magazine called "The Bulletin" which is sent exclusively to members of the Club. This Bulletin describes the next month's selection and reviews about thirty other books available to members at only $1.00 each. If, after reading the description of next month's selection, you do not wish to purchase the book for $1.00, you may notify the Club any time within two weeks, so that the book will not be sent you. You may request an alternate selection if it is desired.

Send No Money—Just Mail the Coupon

When you see KINGS ROW and consider that this free book is typical of the values you will receive for only $1.00, you will realize the value of free membership in this popular Club. Don't miss this wonderful offer. Mail the coupon now.

DOUBLEDAY ONE DOLLAR BOOK CLUB, Dept. 10RB, Garden City, N. Y.

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

FREE: KINGS ROW

Doubleday One Dollar Book Club,
Dept. 10RB, Garden City, N. Y.

Please enroll me free for one year as a Dollar Book Club member and send me at once KINGS ROW FREE. With this book will come my first issue of the free monthly Club magazine called "The Bulletin," describing the one-dollar bargain book for the following month and several other alternate bargains. Each month I am to have the privilege of notifying you in advance if I do not wish the following month's selection and whether or not I wish to purchase any of the alternate bargains at the Special Club price of $1 each. The purchase of books is entirely voluntary on my part. I do not have to accept a book every month—only six during the year to fulfill my membership requirement. And I pay nothing except $1.00 for each selection received, plus a few cents handling and shipping costs.

Name { Mr. / Mrs. / Miss .....

Street and No. .....

City .....

Business Address in Full .....

.....Age if under 21.....

In Canada: 215 Victoria Street, Toronto

Our Readers Speak

Bread Cast Upon the Waters

Dear Sir:

The thing which keeps me reading REDBOOK regularly is not any of your sparkling features or "regular" stories, although I enjoy these; rather it is an occasional great story, obviously not for the mass of readers, but presented for its literary value.

I can recall many—a long time ago one called "Leviathan," whose author I have forgotten. More recently there was the incomparable "Curious Challenge" by Edward Havill in the January issue, and Susan Ertz's "Blank Check" in the July. There are many others; I cannot itemize them all. And of course Rufus King's mysteries, although sometimes their matter is trivial, are always written superbly. Keep up the good work. This bread cast upon the waters in the form of genuinely good contemporary short stories, may not bring you greatly increased circulation, but there are other rewards.

Harry T. Reasoner,
Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Summing-up

Dear Sir:

I always read the letter page first, because I get a kick out of the different opinions on stories. Take "This Business of Remarrying Pete"—of course it is too silly for words, but I like silly stories. I even know a couple of *Violets* that I would like to wilt by choking, but they belong to friends of mine, and I have to grin and say how clever they are. Some day I will probably have to help get them out of jail.

Claudia and *David* are almost human. If they ever have a real nasty fuss, then I will admit they are human.

"Speaking of Honeymoons" was a honey. I have no patience with women who forgive and forget and then wish to goodness they hadn't done either.

Your educational articles such as "New Faces in Washington" help me keep a veneer of intelligence.

"My Friend Flicka" is one of the best stories I remember reading. It had less plot than any I ever read but with so much interest packed in the idea of the love a boy for a colt, all plots can go hang.

I am glad you gave Gloria Swanson a break in the August edition. I belong to that age that still cherishes her pictures of long ago. With her looks she doesn't need talking pictures to carry her over. Not only that; her looks at her age will encourage all of us who have been brought up to think that "only the young" could go places.

Mrs. Ben C. Dickinson, Jr.
Jersey, Georgia.

EACH month we will publish not less than ten letters from our readers, and will pay ten dollars for each one published. Address all letters to Editor of Letters, Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. Keep your letters within one hundred words. No letters will be returned, and all of them will become property of McCall Corporation.

My Friend Flicka

Dear Sir:

To one who loves boys and horses, Mary O'Hara's "My Friend Flicka," in the August REDBOOK, presents a realistic and touching story. Tender—but a man's story for all that. Understanding the love of a boy for his horse, and the intelligent and emotional response of a horse, makes this seem actual rather than fictional.

In these days it is well to remember that family life still exists, and that its problems can be seasoned and solved by mutual affection and respect. Of such things this charming story, woven around a boy and his horse, is a fine expression.

Roger Stanley,
Booneville, Mississippi.

Dear Sir:

Never in the years that I have been a subscriber to REDBOOK, have I lost that feeling of keen anticipation, when a new issue arrives.

This feeling of anticipation was more than realized when I found your story "My Friend Flicka" by Mary O'Hara, and finished reading it.

It carried me back to that period when life was lived at a slower tempo, when we had time to know our neighbor and ourselves. When peace *was*, and the goodness of God a certainty.

This beautiful story, along with another gem of REDBOOK's—"A Portrait of Jennie," will remain a part of those things we treasure.

Jessie Bostwick Beach,
Savannah, Georgia.

Sixty-nine Strange Words

Dear Sir:

I am a Russian girl in a small town in Manchuria. All I want to do is to thank you for that wonderful serial "Whiteoak Heritage."

To tell the truth, when I read the first three pages I found sixty-nine words that were strange to me, but that did not stop me; I sat for hours with a dictionary, afraid to miss a single word.

Mazo de la Roche's characters are real and bright; they have become dear and near to me; I smiled with *Pheasant*, cried with *Meg*, and "All my heart belongs to *Renny!*"

Thank you very much again, for REDBOOK's story helped me to improve my English.

My best wishes to REDBOOK over the ocean! I am sorry if I'm late, but everything comes so late to our small town.

Vera Sobolevsky,
Harbin, Manchoutikou.

We Do Read Them

Dear Sir:

Why don't you think up some means of letting people know that their letters have been received and read—particularly the latter? I always feel a bit silly after writing to you, and my thoughts keep centering around a huge well-filled waste-basket. I shouldn't like to think that the letters you do read are picked at random and then published in REDBOOK, but I suppose a busy editor can always make use of that waste-basket. Anyway, do try to think up something, won't you?

G. K. Stayne,
New York, New York.

To the Very End

Dear Sir:

It is one A.M. I can't sleep. I'm on a phantom ship surrounded by burly sailors, rats, lice and fleas. "Plague Ship," by Andrew Geer, in August REDBOOK, brought back "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" memories in 1941 mode. Though I may have read other stories by Andrew Geer, I never read one that I will remember as clearly. Even my husband, who thinks fiction a waste of time, listened as I read aloud—*to the very end.* I'm sure he is dreaming of this modern Flying Dutchman.

Mrs. Norma G. Kinnie,
Rockford, Illinois.

The Violet Controversy

Dear Sir:

Congratulations on Whitfield Cook's "Violet" stories! If anything succeeds in taking my mind off my troubles, these tales do the trick. But won't somebody tell William Reusswig, the *(Please turn to page 99)*

You'll find a Thrilling Promise of Loveliness in the Camay "MILD-SOAP" DIET!

Even many girls with sensitive skin can profit by this exciting beauty idea—developed from advice of skin specialists, praised by lovely brides!

"YOU CAN BE your own beauty expert," says this Camay bride. "You can help wake your complexion to a new April of cleaner, natural loveliness."

So many women cloud their beauty through improper cleansing . . . use a soap not as mild as a beauty soap should be. "My skin is so responsive to the Camay 'Mild-Soap' Diet," says Mrs. Langley, whose lovely skin surely makes her an expert. "It seems so much fresher-looking, so much more appealing."

Mrs. Langley is so right. Skin specialists recommend a regular cleansing routine with a fine mild soap. And *Camay* is *milder* than 10 other popular beauty soaps. That's why we say—"Go on the 'Mild-Soap' Diet."

Change to a "Mild-Soap" Diet!

Instead of trusting your skin to less thorough, less regular cleansing—every single day, twice a day, give your skin Camay's gentle cleansing care. Put your entire confidence in Camay for 30 days. It's the day to day routine that counts.

Get Camay—today. Start with the "Mild-Soap" Diet tonight. How stimulated—how much fresher your skin feels even after one treatment. And just think—in a few short weeks you can reasonably hope to see a cleaner, more appealing skin—a lovelier you.

✓ Camay is milder by actual recorded test—in test against ten other popular beauty soaps Camay was milder than any of them.

Photograph by David Berns

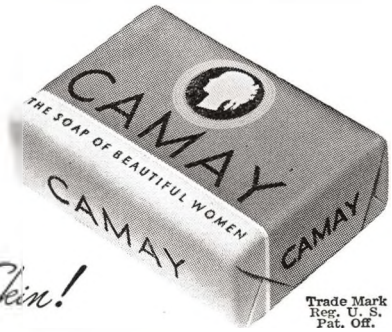
This Lovely bride is Mrs. George J. Langley, Jr. of Bronxville, N.Y. "The Camay 'Mild-Soap' Diet has done so much for my skin," says Mrs. Langley. "I know it has helped me to look more beautiful. I advise every woman who wants to have a lovelier skin to try it."

Tonight...Start the CAMAY "MILD-SOAP" DIET!

Work Camay's milder lather over your skin, paying special attention to nose, base of the nostrils and chin. Rinse with warm water and follow sixty seconds of cold splashings.

Then, while you sleep, the tiny pore openings are free to function for natural beauty. In the morning—one more quick session with Camay and your face is ready for make-up.

THE SOAP OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN



Trade Mark Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

For 30 Days... *Let no other Soap but Camay touch your Skin!*

WISHING *won't make it so!*

JUST your luck, you moan. . . . You've looked forward to this jamboree for weeks, but the day that suits everybody else doesn't suit you one bit! For it's the wrong time of the month for you.

If only you could smile and laugh and be gay . . . be the life of the party! You wish it with all your heart.

Well, other girls manage it, and so can you! But they don't get rid of grouches merely by *wishing*.

They've learned the secret of lasting comfort—Kotex sanitary napkins.

You see—Kotex is *less bulky*, you're not "napkin conscious" every minute, not bothered by rubbing and chafing. And that's not all . . .

Say "Phooey" to old fears!

Kotex helps take your mind *off* your troubles because it has a new moisture-resistant *safety shield* which gives a girl added protection . . . added confidence and poise.

And what a relief to know that with Kotex there can never be any bumps and bulges to give your secret away.

Honestly! Kotex has flat, pressed ends that can't show even when you don't wear a girdle.

With all these advantages, is it any wonder that Kotex is more popular than all other brands put together? It's the answer to *your* problems when you want to feel gay and happy and carefree!

Be confident . . . comfortable . . . carefree

*—with Kotex!**

(★Trade Mark Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.)

WHAT EVERY GIRL SHOULD KNOW about what to do and what not to do, on "difficult days" is contained in the new FREE booklet "As One Girl To Another". It gives the answers to your intimate questions! Just mail in your name and address today to P.O. Box 3434, Dept. RB-10, Chicago, Ill., and you'll get a copy FREE!

BOYER HOLDS BACK THE DAWN

IT would take Dr. George Gallup to find out who makes female hearts beat faster, Cary Grant or Charles Boyer. Between the two of them, they exercise enough influence on American women to sway a Presidential election. The publicity department of Paramount Pictures assures us that, good as Boyer was before, he is "absolutely terrific" in "Hold Back the Dawn," a film which the good Paramount people are about to release. It is a story of a refugee who tries to get into the United States, gets turned down, and has to be satisfied with Mexico. Olivia de Havilland is the lucky girl with whom Boyer falls in love this time. The photograph above shows Boyer and Miss de Havilland in a pose which does not require a caption. Miss de Havilland will be remembered by all and sundry as *Melanie* in "G.W.T.W."

REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF THE MONTH
Selected by
DOUGLAS W. CHURCHILL

LITTLE FOXES

TODAY the screen stands on the threshold of a new season, a period that is like New Year's to the average citizen. As with every other similar period, the cinema looks upon the coming days with adolescent confidence that all will be well. For 1941-'42, however, there appears to be sound reason for hope. No season has opened with such a wealth of good films in the vaults; no recent season has promised more to the paying customers. Of course, there is always the disquieting possibility that such optimism is misplaced. Gambling on Hollywood is not the safest bet in the world.

The reason for this department's ecstatic regard for tomorrow is specific. It is based upon an experience not more than an hour old as this is written. An hour ago in a projection-room *"The End"* flashed on the screen at the conclusion of one of the most adult and distinguished photoplays to emerge from Hollywood in a long time. Samuel Goldwyn has completed "The Little Foxes."

It may be, although it is improbable, that time will temper the extravagant phrases that are provoked by the picture, by the performances of Bette Davis and the rest of a superlative cast, and by William Wyler's direction. First impressions can engender excessive enthusiasm; but so soundly is "The Little Foxes" constructed and so expertly is it delivered, that there is small likelihood that it will fall before the test of time.

Lillian Hellman's play of cold hatred has emerged as a more rounded, more conclusive and far happier story than it was on the stage, and proves again, at least to the satisfaction of the cinema's advocates, that the motion picture is capable of greater things than the older medium. The demands of the screen, such as the despised boy-meets-girl element, have added to the satisfaction of this document of malevolent humanity and made it more complete, certainly more palatable.

The play was sordid; the movie is not. Just as Goldwyn converted Miss Hellman's "Children's Hour" into a thoroughly enjoyable picture called "These Three," so has he transformed this tale of evil people into an entertaining account of characters you loathe but whom you understand.

None of the cruelty and wickedness of the family that in their greed was willing to ruin the earth as well as one another has been omitted from the film. It has been improved by the addition of the escape of the daughter from the malignant household, the absence of which phase ended the play on an inconclusive and futile note. Miss Davis' performance as *Regina Giddens* is outstanding. She has done nothing like it, nor any finer. She plays

Regina to the hilt, a reprehensible, scheming woman who possesses no redeeming quality, one who grows increasingly distasteful with the progress of the picture.

The tale is laid at that moment at the turn of the century when the romanticism of the South has all but faded and is being replaced by ruthless industrialism. Into this new world is emerging *Alexandra Giddens* (Teresa Wright), and the story chronicles those days in which she learns how much men can hate one another, a knowledge that causes her to flee from her family with *David Hewitt* (Richard Carlson).

The events leading to her awakening concern the efforts of her uncles *Ben Hubbard* (Charles Dingle) and *Oscar Hubbard* (Carl Benton Reid), and her mother *Regina* (Miss Davis) to bring a cotton mill to their small Southern town to exploit the poor whites and the Negroes. Their machinations require the aid of *Regina's* husband *Horace Giddens* (Herbert Marshall). An invalid, he refuses to advance the money, and *Oscar's* son, *Leo* (Dan Duryea) steals sufficient bonds from *Horace's* deposit-box to finance the mill.

All these things are brought into focus just at the culmination of *Alexandra's* romance with *David*. *Horace*, her father, knowing he is soon to die, plots her escape from the *(Please turn to page* **74***)*

REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF THE MONTH
Selected by the
EDITORS of REDBOOK

SERGEANT YORK

AS a rule we agree with the selections made by Douglas W. Churchill; but once in a while we feel inclined to write a "dissenting opinion." This, we suppose, proves that both Mr. Churchill and the editors of REDBOOK are not only human, but are strong believers in democracy as well.

This month Douglas Churchill has selected "The Little Foxes" as REDBOOK'S Picture of the Month. "The Little Foxes" was a great play and has been made into a great motion picture; but there is another picture this month which up to now has been shown in New York and Washington only, and which, in our opinion, is bound to be long remembered as one of the greatest films ever made in this or any other country. We mean "Sergeant York," a Warner Brothers-First National Picture, based on the life-story of Sergeant Alvin York of Tennessee, produced by Jesse L. Lasky and Hal B. Wallis, directed by Howard Hawks, and starring Gary Cooper. Dealing as it does with the progress of a conscientious objector who wound up by becoming the greatest individual hero of the first World War, "Sergeant York" is as timely and as significant as a four-motored flying fortress.

There is a story behind the story of "Sergeant York." It all began in 1919. Jesse L. Lasky, then head of Famous Players-Lasky and one of the pioneers of the motion-picture industry, watched from the windows of his New York office the tremendous reception given to Sergeant York, a man who single-handed captured 132 Germans. Mr. Lasky thought that a great picture could be made, based on the exploits of the tall silent man from the mountains of Tennessee. He put on his hat and went to see the hero. He was prepared to offer him a handsome price for his life-story. Much to his amazement, York said no. Lasky raised the ante; York said no once more, and that was that. Years went by. Once in a while Lasky thought of Sergeant York again, and then he would write a letter to him. Usually he received no answer; sometimes he would get a postcard saying no.

Twenty years passed. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was about to be elected President of the United States for the third time when Jesse Lasky thought of Alvin York once more. The two men met again, this time under rather different circumstances. Lasky was not the head of a big motion-picture company any more. He was just another Hollywood producer trying to stage a success. Sergeant York was not a dashing young hero any more. He had put on weight; he was in his late forties and was teaching in a Sunday-school in his native town in the mountains of Tennessee. This time he was willing to listen to Lasky, not because money was more attractive to him now than it was in 1919, but because he had a great project in mind—he wanted to build a chain of Sunday-schools throughout the State of Tennessee.

On July 2, 1941, several hundred New York critics, first-nighters, motion-picture executives, newspaper and magazine editors and publishers—about the most hard-boiled audience in the world—watched the world première of "Sergeant York" at the Astor Theater on Broadway. They started applauding in the middle of the very first reel; by the end of the last reel they were cheering wildly and calling on Sergeant York, who was sitting in a box upstairs, to make a speech. "Thank you," he said. When asked what he thought of the picture, he grew almost *(Please turn to page 90)*

Newspicture Photo

STILL ANOTHER CLAUDIA

IT'S a wise artist who knows his *Claudia*. Arthur William Brown, who illustrates for us Rose Franken's *Claudia* and *David* stories, confesses that sometimes he is not sure which particular *Claudia* is sitting in his studio. Dorothy McGuire, who plays *Claudia's* part in the Broadway hit, posed for Mr. Brown when he was illustrating "Claudia Blames It on the Stars," a story which we publish elsewhere in this issue. But several days later another *Claudia* walked into his studio. Her name is Patricia Ryan; she is the *Claudia* of the air. There is quite a bit of resemblance between her and Dorothy McGuire. Seeing them on the street together, you would think they were at least first cousins. As it happens, until recently they didn't even know each other. Miss Ryan is nineteen. Believe it or not, she is one of the veterans of radio. She began appearing on the air at the age of seven. Her voice, by now so well known to millions of Americans, is not unlike that of Dorothy McGuire. "Altogether," says Arthur William Brown, "it was very, very confusing for me. Several times while I was drawing her likeness (see above), I caught myself calling her Dorothy."

WHAT'S ON *Your* MIND?

WHEN I first subscribed to REDBOOK, I only intended to have some pleasure and practice my English at the same time; but when I read in the April issue that I could have the opportunity of telling what is on my mind, I was only too glad and thankful to take it.

I am a Mexican lady with five children. One of them is a boy thirteen years old, and he must go to high school next year. Now, our family tradition has been always that we should learn English as the adequate language with which to increase our culture. But now that we are discussing our boy's college, my husband insists on sending him to the German school. I don't want to hear about it. I am loyal to English ideas and will not let my boy belong to something I hate, dislike and distrust. There are many other similar cases.

There is something else in my mind: I am afraid that you Americans despise us Mexicans. You are not to blame, because you only know us through the Mexican emigrants, 99% of which belong to the lowest class of the country. They are dirty and illiterate and most of you judge us by them. This feeling is proved by the behavior of American tourists. They go to smart places in shorts. Even when they go into beautiful old churches, they don't take their hats off, or show any respect to the place, which is supposed to be holy. They don't care about hurting our feelings in any way they can. So isn't it but natural that, no matter what our government says, we, the average citizens, have many doubts about the good-will and good-neighbor policy your government has been offering lately?

In spite of Mr. Roosevelt's or Mr. Wallace's wonderful speeches, many of my friends (almost all of them) are opposed to the idea of joining our fate to that of the U. S. if you go into war, as you probably will. I suppose there is a lack of understanding between both countries. You don't know what Mexico really is. I read every book that American authors write about my country, and it is my opinion that they always write after a few days' visit. How can anybody, even the most intelligent man, know a country to its deepest roots in a short trip? How can they tell about our people if they don't come into our homes, live our lives for a while and understand our ideas and general point of view?

Once, not long ago, I went to the movies. On the screen we were seeing a parade performed for the benefit of Latin-American naval delegates. Everything was perfect until the American flag passed. The audience fell into a very significant silence, and in that moment I had an idea: Democracy needs a flag. A flag that would be the symbol of the Western Hemisphere as opposed to the German swastika. All our countries, and I mean the U. S. and the Dominion of Canada too, could learn to love that flag. And I am sure that if the time comes when we have to fight, it will be easier to follow this flag that will unite all American countries in one idea.

We Latin-American people are very particular. We have a very good memory, too. When we see the U. S. flag we respect it, but we can't help remembering that it is the same flag that several times in the last century, and not so long ago in Vera Cruz, defeated our army and occupied our territory. And what happens between Mexico and the U. S. happens with other South American countries. . . . . They would unite under the flag of Democracy.

Mrs. ——
Mexico.

ONCE in a while—like every other human—I get fighting mad. Sometimes it is important; most of the time it isn't—but it serves its purpose. Right now I'm ready to go a round with almost anyone. I'm fed up and disgusted with a lot of people in this land of ours who say we're getting soft, out of condition and unworthy of freedom. And I'm tired of the bleating of a lot of guys who think we're about done as far as living decent lives, acting like decent people and being decent people is concerned. Yes, and I'm angry at so-called "citizens" of this country who keep pointing out to me that moral values are something pertaining solely to Sir Galahad.

A lot of these remarks have unconsciously reflected against those of us who happen to believe in the concepts of freedom, liberty and the right to stand on our own two legs. And like a lot of other boys around me, I'm a soldier who volunteered to help defend those concepts. We didn't have to be dragged into the army to defend them; we went. We all enlisted for one reason or another—and there are plenty of them—but mainly because we wanted a hand in helping to pay back for the privileges we've had. We appreciate the schooling given us, the parental care, recreation facilities, opportunities, the books and the clean feeling that comes from being an American.

We're proud of our country. We're proud we can serve it. We know we may be needed to protect her shores. We know *we* have to carry on, even if others in the back lines fail. If we do our best, that's all anyone can ask.

But brother, just remember this: if you don't like the way things are run here, or the way we get things done, or our ideals and way of life, no one's preventing you from leaving. . . . And if you come around beefing to me about it, we're *not* going to part the best of friends.

A Flying Cadet
U.S.A.

IN high school I studied economics. It was fun to stand up in class and tell about books you read, and thoughts you thought concerning the plight of the American worker. You were called radical. And being called names brought a certain distinction. So we all soaked spongelike heads into the red seeds of propaganda, and we all became cocky, thinking of ourselves as future Voltaires, Rousseaus or what-have-you.

Then we went to college—some of us did. At twenty-one we voted the Socialist ticket. At twenty-two, a B.A. conferred upon us, we went out into the business world. We lived; we saw life. For the first time we realized that life as it is, and life as it is theorized, are two different things.

I saw a man start out in a machine-shop, end up as an *entrepreneur*. He soon forgot about the sweat he had felt as a worker, and bled his own men. I saw a man, a stout-hearted Republican, who knew the welfare of his employees and the amount of his profits depended one upon the other. Never have I met a man so good to his help; never was there a man so aware of the impossibilities of socialism.

"Jim," he once said to me, "only in a democracy is there equal chance for all. It is only the envious, the slackers, who want things the easy way."

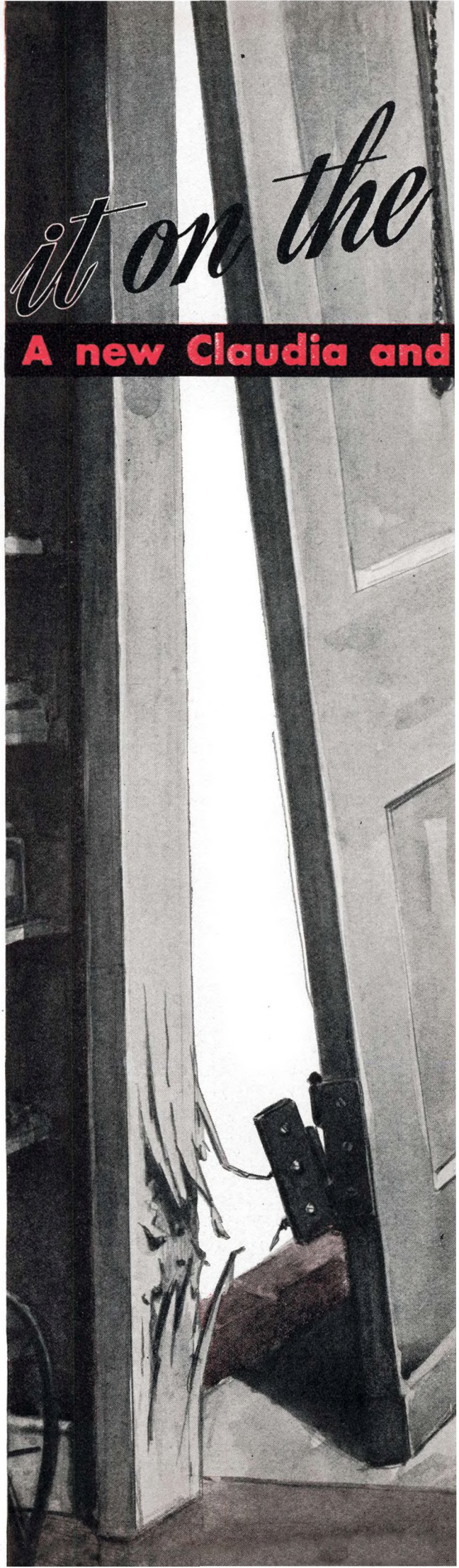
We know now, the realistic majority, that socialism and all such radicalism is childish idealizing. Maybe heaven is run under socialism. But don't forget that Mr. Roosevelt and the people run things around here. A normal, ordinary man; normal, ordinary people. And only God—well, He runs things in heaven, with saints and angels to help Him. So while we're on earth, let's bring our ideas down to it as well. We have democracy. Let us bless and keep it. Amen.

J. M.
New York City

On this page we publish short contributions from our readers, dealing with personal problems affecting many of us in these perplexing days—simple statements of what's on your mind. We pay one hundred dollars for each accepted contribution. All contributions become the property of the McCall Corporation, and none can be returned. Address: What's on Your Mind, Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York City.

CLAUDIA blames it on the

A new Claudia and



By ROSE FRANKEN

Illustrated by ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

"I CAN'T live with me another minute," Claudia decided, and telephoned the village beauty-shop for a manicure appointment.

As usual, she couldn't budge without Shakespeare and the dogs and Bobby at her heels. She might have been some kind of human magnet, the way they drifted after her and congealed, in solid mass, against the rear wheels of the car as she backed from the garage. "All right! I'll run over the whole kit and caboodle of you," she threatened.

The Danes didn't budge, knowing it for an idle threat, knowing it would hurt the car far more than it would hurt them. But Shakespeare, perversely, dissolved beneath the bumpers in his most catlike fashion; and Bobby hopped, for safety, on the running-board. "Which makes everything a lot easier," Claudia commented dryly.

"Oh, please let me!" Bobby begged. Riding on the running-board gave him a delicious sense of hazard, forbidden except for moments of parental leniency. "Don't ever try it with anybody but Mother or Daddy," Claudia frequently impressed upon him. "And better only with Daddy," David would amend. It killed him to admit that his wife was a good driver; he couldn't bring himself to admit that any woman in the world was congenitally fit to be even on speaking terms with a piece of machinery.

"You're not fair about it. I'm only bad in backing," Claudia kept pointing out to him. "And that's merely because I happen to be short-waisted." Nevertheless he insisted that it was because she was feeble-minded and couldn't remember that the wheels always turned in the opposite direction from the way she steered.

This morning, what with the abundance of child- and animal-life swarming about her, she found herself more than ever confused by this annoying contradiction of movement. "You smashed into something," Bobby mildly mentioned.

She climbed out of the car to investigate the damage. "Oh, dear," she said, and wondered how anything so substantial as a garage door could seem to be hanging by a thread.

Edward heard the crash from the barn, and came hurrying out. His ruddy Vermont color returned when he saw that it was only a door. "Can you fix it?" Claudia besought him anxiously.

Edward was good at cows, and he knew his crops, but he was no magician. "I'll have to order a piece of new lumber," he said.

"Oh, dear," said Claudia again. It was her second door that summer, and this was only June—which was playing into David's hand, as it were. Perhaps the easiest way out would be to agree once and for all, that she wasn't a good driver, and stop all future argument. At least it would be depriving him of a certain amount of pleasure, she reflected maliciously, as she started back into the car.

The dogs were too quick for her. They jostled past her, knocking her rudely off her balance, and poured into the rear seat. "Where do you think you're going?" she asked them coldly.

They seemed neither to know nor to care. They sat themselves down, signifying with a complete relaxation of tongue and saliva that whither she went, they would follow. Claudia shrugged. There was nothing to do but make the best of it, for she knew from long experience that it would take no less than dynamite to dislodge them. "If you promise not to slobber down my neck, I'll take you," she compromised.

"Then I want to go too," said Bobby promptly.

"No, you don't. You wouldn't want to wait around while I get a manicure. When's the last time you brushed your teeth?"

He was not at all disturbed by the *non sequitur*. "Before breakfast," he replied.

"Which breakfast?"

Stars

David story

"Oh, dear!" said Claudia. It was her second door that summer, and this was only June.

"This morning. You can feel my toothbrush," he offered generously.

"Thanks. Run up and brush them again to make sure."

"Then I can go with you?" he bargained.

"No."

"But I have to buy something."

"What?"

He was vague about it, but Claudia finally uncovered the fact that he had seven cents in his pocket that needed spending. "I have to get a box of cigarettes for Daddy's birthday," he said.

"Daddy's birthday was last month," she informed him brutally. "Anyway, a box of cigarettes costs more than seven cents."

"But I can borrow some more money."

"Can you? Who from?"

"From you," he said.

"Ha, ha," said Claudia. "Ever hear of a church mouse?"

Apparently he never had. He remembered the town mouse and the country mouse, but he'd never met up with a church mouse. "Never mind," said Claudia, and leaned out of the window to kiss him. He was too young to go out and sell newspapers, so there wasn't any use in worrying him with the sordid information that the family exchequer was considerably the worse after a hard winter's wear in town. David hadn't wanted to worry her about it either, but she'd been noticing how he wasn't interested in food of late, and the way he'd scratch his head before he fell asleep at night.

"Look here," she'd told him, "people scratch their heads for two reasons—and the other one's nerves. What's bothering you?"

"Nothing. Forget it."

Fear had jumped at her throat. "You aren't sick or anything?"

As always, he'd laughed at illness, while she quickly knocked on wood to palliate fate against his arrogance. "Is it the stock-market?" she'd persisted, recognizing a certain look about his mouth.

Well, he *had* taken a little beating, he'd confessed, but nothing much to speak of.

"Margin again."

He had bridled at that. "No, Miss Wisenheimer, not 'margin again.' But I had to sell some stocks at a loss."

"Why?"

"I needed the cash."

"What for?"

"Look here: it's my job to worry, not yours."

"Oh, don't be so noble!" she'd flung at him in healthy impatience. "Am I a wife or an ornament?"

"A pest," he'd told her, and dug his head into her shoulder in a way that reminded her of Bobby when he was hurt.

"Darling, tell me what's wrong," she'd begged. "Please."

"All right. You asked for it. We're broke."

She'd felt like laughing with relief. "Well, of course we're broke, silly! Why wouldn't we be, after my appendix and Bobby's fractured skull, and Matthew's convulsion! It was a terrible winter—anybody'd be broke!"

"Too bad I couldn't treat you to a terrible winter without throwing it up to you."

"If that big contract had gone through," she reminded him reasonably, "we'd be all right."

"But it didn't go through."

"That wasn't your fault."

"I was a damned fool about that contract."

"You weren't. You were just honest."

He gave a short laugh. "If you're in a crooked world, maybe you've got to be a little crooked to get along in it."

"You believe this damned nonsense?" he asked her incredulously. "You actually *believe* it?"

FOR a fleeting instant he'd looked like a stranger—bitter and tense. Panic swept her. This was more than a question of money. This was a sickness of soul eating deep into him. This was like nothing that had ever happened to him before; it was neither the robust acceptance of bad times, nor the mature objectivity of some larger scheme of destruction. This that he was going through now was his own private defeat and confusion. "Hell of a swell wage-earner I turned out to be," he summed up grimly.

Wisdom came to her then, like some gracious visitor at her shoulder. It would have been easy to put her arms around him and say, as she had done during the depression: "Don't worry, darling, I'll do my own work, and we can have soup-meat instead of roast beef, and I can get along without a new coat—" No. At this crisis in his life, he didn't need a virtuous wife to punctuate his deficiencies; he needed a gay, insouciant mistress to challenge his wounded spirit and command his tired brain. He didn't need forbearance, but rather a lusty bickering to preserve his sense of values.

"If you wanted to be a millionaire, you shouldn't have become an architect," she remarked indifferently. "Anyway, we've all got our health and a roof over our heads, so what more can we wish for?"

"I'm not too sure about the roof."

"What do you mean?"

It was then that he told her he'd given a mortgage on the place. She tried to hide her shock. It had always been such a nice feeling to know that they owned their home outright. "Still, the best farms have them," she'd defended lightly, aware that he was alert to her reaction. "There's a good movie in the village. Let's go, shall we?"

He hadn't been able to make her out exactly—but he'd taken her just the same. He sat beside her, and yet he wasn't there. The dark crowded house was a refuge, an escape. He kept his eyes closed, except for the news-reel, which tore him into pieces.

It was clear that his weakened spirit was fertile soil for the horror of the world. He couldn't tune out of what was going on. Even in the middle of the night, she'd wake to know that he was lying there beside her, taut with the consciousness of nations at war. "Asleep?" she'd whisper. And because he made no sound, she knew he was not asleep.

"He's simply got to tune out of it," she thought desperately. "He's got to act as if everything is just as we want it to be!"

For the first time in their marriage, she felt herself the older, the more knowing. She had suddenly to mother not two children, but three, and of these three David was the youngest, and the most in need of her. If it gave him sustenance to feel that she was not worried, then she wouldn't worry. If it gave him confidence to sense that his home ran as usual, free of the attritional economy that pointed to his failure, then his home must run as usual. Secretly, however, she put her shoulder to the wheel, with Jane a willing ally. It was excellent for her morale, but hard on her nails. In the past week she had broken two of them doing housework to give Jane time for extra laundry; and her cuticle had grown ragged with a huge job of weeding to save day-labor while Edward got the hay in. "I'll just have to spend fifty cents on a manicure, or David'll get suspicious," she finally decided.

It was a venomous prank of fate to have added ten times the cost of the manicure in a smashed garage door. Her spirit was low as she left the scene of the wreckage and drove down the driveway. "Run help Edward with the chores!" she called back to Bobby—which was rather a shabby trick to play on both of them.

Jane, holding Matthew in her arms, was waiting at the front gate to flag her. "We could do with a pound of bacon, Mrs. Horneledge, and at the same time you could ask the butcher for some nice bones for soup. And mind he gives you them for nothing," she cautioned firmly. "You want them for the dogs."

It was apparently the immemorial custom of cooks to think that owning a big dog paid off a sort of life-annuity for soup. "Jane, the butcher's on to us," Claudia protested.

"Take the dogs in with you," Jane suggested cannily, "and it'll all seem natural-like. Besides," she added, "I always give them the bones afterward, and they're more tasty for having been with soup-greens."

"I like noodle soup," Matthew mentioned unexpectedly, with one of his infrequent excursions into clarity.

"Shhhh," said Claudia hastily, and glanced backward with a sense of guilt to see how Bluff and Bluster were taking the conversation. However, they seemed oblivious of any subterfuge, and sat gazing into space, thinking deeply of nothing at all—so deeply, indeed, that when Claudia started the car, they lurched forward across her shoulders, and remained there in absent contemplation until she drew up in front of Gloriana's Beauty Shoppe.

Nancy Riddale's station-wagon was parked directly next to her, with Nancy's liveried chauffeur and two fat cocker spaniels waiting patiently within. "There's something wrong with this picture," thought Claudia, as she rolled up the windows against four hundred pounds of dog-flesh. "The rich keep cockers, and the poor keep Danes." She paused to look back at them from the door of the shop, and sent forth a little prayer: "Oh, please, dear Lord, don't let us get so poor we can't afford to feed them—"

The shop reeked warmly of fresh paint and brilliantine. Gloriana had done everything over since Claudia's last visit. There was shiny new linoleum on the floor, and the woodwork was a cheery yellow instead of the old tired green. There was a new drying machine too, and under it sat Nancy, looking all her age, with her pinkish hair beneath a dun-colored veil, and wads of cotton sprouting out from under it. "Hello, darling!" she yelled, as she saw Claudia come in. "Come over for bridge tonight. . . . Oh, that's right, you don't play bridge. But come over anyway—I'm having a crowd up from town for the week-end."

"I don't think we can," Claudia evaded. "David has some work to do." (It was all he needed, to go over to Nancy's, who gave him a pain.)

Nancy compressed the youthless Cupid's bow of her thin lips. "You tell David for me, that he's working entirely too hard. He's a fool."

"Why?" asked Claudia, with her tongue going dry. "Don't you think he looks well?"

"I think he looks like the wrath of God," Nancy stated flatly. "I saw him at the station the other night, and I thought, 'Heavens—'"

The blood flowed away from Claudia's heart. She had asked for it, as David would say, and Nancy had given it to her. Her bones went to water. Nancy's words lent reality to the fear that lurked behind each waking hour. Suppose David didn't find his way out of the woods? The world was full of men who hadn't found their way. George Riddale had been one of them, so Nancy knew what she was talking about. "He drinks," people had said of him. And then two years ago, during the depression, he was found with a bullet through his poor head. . . . And now Nancy acted silly and tried to forget that he had done it in order that she might have his life-insurance.

"I'm ready for you, Mrs. Horneledge," Gloriana said.

CLAUDIA harnessed her unhappy thoughts to a manicure that had become grotesquely inconsequential. She sank into a chair.

Gloriana seated herself on the other side of the small table and lifted Claudia's hand for a brief inspection. "My, my, my!" she said.

"'My, my, my!' is right," Claudia listlessly agreed.

"We'll fix the naughty nails up all righty," Gloriana promised blithely, picking up her file. "Isn't it a peachy day?"

"Peachy," Claudia conceded.

"Shall I make them shorter?"

"No. Longer, please."

(Please turn to page 80)

HAVE YOU A RELIGION?

REDBOOK'S ENCORE OF THE MONTH

by

HENRY JAMES FORMAN

THE AUTHOR OF "HAVE YOU A RELIGION," A BOOK PUBLISHED BY FARRAR & RINEHART, INC., IS NOT A DIVINE, NEITHER PRIEST NOR CLERGYMAN, BUT AN ORDINARY LAYMAN WHO HAS REALIZED IN A LIFETIME OF GROPING AND EFFORT, THAT LIFE ON EARTH WITHOUT A RELIGION IS A CRIPPLED, MISERABLE LIFE. HE HAS COME TO BELIEVE THAT HOWEVER IMPORTANT ARE HYGIENES AND CLEANLINESS, ANTISEPTICS, INOCULATIONS, AND ALL THOSE THINGS WE HAVE ACCEPTED AS GOSPEL, THEY DO NOT COME WITHIN A MILLION MILES OF THAT SUPREME HYGIENE THAT WE CALL RELIGION.

HAVE YOU a religion?

If not, psychiatrists today will tell you that that is your greatest need.

Perhaps you think religion is of no use to you in this war-torn, strife-ridden, "realistic" world? You are wrong. Not only theologians and divines, but scientists and psychologists, are finding every day that we cannot live successfully on earth without it—without satisfying that instinctive urge to come in contact with the God dwelling in every one of us. That contact made is religion. Unmade, it leaves us empty, lopsided, and frustrated, a prey to unbalance, suffering, and failure.

A young man with his wife and two young children miserably trailing was walking desperately eastward toward the river. He was bent on committing suicide and taking the family he had ruined with him.

A young mechanic, or artisan, out of work and driven to despair by joblessness? A bum driven to the Jerry McAuley Mission for shelter and a meal, or a Salvation Army derelict? Not at all. This man was highly intelligent and well educated and he had held excellent positions. Yet in the most opulent city in America his household goods and furniture were on the sidewalk for nonpayment of rent. His pockets were empty. His wife and children were cold and hungry. In the midst of the riches of New York he had arrived at utter helplessness and hopelessness, and to his mind mass family suicide was the only way out.

This dark harrowing picture sounds like some crude melodrama of an earlier day. But it isn't. It actually happened in Manhattan only a few years ago.

The little children were so cold that their mother urged that they enter Grand Central Station to get warm—on the way to the river! Both her motherhood and her intuition recoiled from the desperate act to which her distraught husband was dragging them, and all her instincts fought for time.

Just before Grand Central Station, not a hundred yards, they passed a church, glowing with soft light through colored windows, its midweek service inviting the passerby. A better place this to get warm in than the railway terminal. They entered. People were giving what is called testimony experiences of what their religion had done and was doing for them, how it had lifted them out of sickness, misfortune, or despair, how it had brought them back to inward peace, back into the wholesome current of life and even to happiness.

The warmth, the patent sincerity of the words he heard, the glow of human beings flooded at least at that moment with the good will and unselfish love released by the sincerest gratitude, had its effect upon the clouded, tortured mind of the young husband and father, who only a few minutes earlier had seen nothing but death and extinction as the only cure for his ills. The pressure in his brain lightened.

Suddenly he rose up, and manfully, truthfully, mincing no words, he told his story. He told not only his story, but confessed also his tragic errand, and the strange, seemingly haphazard way by which he had been led to enter that particular assembly, actually his last rendezvous with hope. The audience listened rapt, spellbound. Some of them had had like experiences, however different the individual setting and circumstances. People moved close to him. They had been powerfully moved, and eager human spirits proffered help.

It need scarcely be said that for that man and his small family trouble was at an end. This is not a success story. We need not here dwell upon that young man's subsequent career, his rehabilitation, his moving into a very different climate of life. The point is that, out of the lowest depths of despondency, he stepped almost by accident from grim isolation onto the broad plateau of life, where human beings meet and recognize that we are all part one of another, that we are all one.

That recognition and that knowledge is the chief, if not the only, function of religion. For that young man and his family the switch had been thrown and he was once again in the full current of life.

A unique story, you say. How many such occurrences take place in a year? So many and diverse that I cannot hope to give you more than a sprinkling of them, and these only for the purpose of illustration. Psychiatrists, psychologists, clergymen, and some laymen who make a practice of helping people to regain their equilibrium, have records of thousands upon thousands of cases; and many, if not all the people they help, turn or return to religion.

There are many of us, I know, who still smile when seeking help from a clergyman is mentioned. And to be sure, there are clergymen and clergymen. The last place you might expect to meet a really able, dynamic, and thoroughly sympathetic man, well versed in human ills and human needs, is in one of those rich churches where the plant and structure alone runs into

millions of dollars. What can most of us ordinary people, suffering under the lashings of life, hope from such a source?

Well, I have one such man in mind who never refuses his help and advice to any who may seek it. I refer to Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. To him recently came a man who had grown completely cynical, which means coldly despairing, who had drunk up his last dollar and was about to commit suicide in the park. As a last touch of cynicism and irony he decided to interview this well-known minister of a famous church, to see what that much-quoted ecclesiastic had to say in a case like his. He told his story—not without a certain arrogance in his cynical smile. The famous divine heard him out with gravity and sympathy.

"Very well. I see your point of view," he said. "But now let me ask you a question. As an intelligent man, do you recognize that there is a power greater than yourself in the universe?"

"You mean God?"

"You need not call it God if you don't wish to. Call it Mind, or whatever you like. But definitely a power that is greater than you, greater than I, greater than anything or any person."

"Yes," said the would-be suicide. "I suppose I do."

"Very well—that power can help you, if you will use it."

And that man, who had come in feeling that nobody could tell him anything he had not already known and long since discounted, left Dr. Fosdick with the realization that the most important and the simplest secret of life had through all his years eluded him, but that now he could start afresh.

One man I know, a highly successful business man, who had himself come through failure and despair to his present place, and has even written books recounting his transit, has set aside one day of every week in which to help others less fortunate than himself. He does not, however, confine his help to one day a week. Every day and every hour he is on the alert for opportunities to help. Accosted one day in the street by a quite personable and healthy young man for the price of a meal, he stopped to chat with the petitioner.

"Would you mind telling me," he asked, "how you come to be doing this?"

The usual story followed of the loss of a job, the vanishing of small savings, the growing misery and despair, the shrinking into himself at this onslaught of events; finally, the desperate attempt to satisfy the pangs of hunger by the most humiliating means left to anyone with a shred of self-respect—begging in the street.

"No checks to put in the bank, nothing to draw on; that is your trouble, isn't it?"

The beggar smiled wanly.

"Very well. Then draw on those things that are unlimited: courage, cheerfulness, faith, and confidence. And God will do His part—He will honor those checks!"

"Will He?" said the beggar.

"He is doing it right now. How do you suppose He works—by raining silver dollars on your head? You'd be sorry if He did. I am one of His instruments. You are another. Come along to my office."

By a little help in a few days that young man was rehabilitated. Once again he was hopeful, cheerful, seeking work with a new zest. In a subway train he overheard two men talking about a rearrangement in their office force that would necessitate hiring another man. Before his new outlook such a thing as addressing those men would have been impossible for him. Now he quite cheerfully and frankly told them he could not help overhearing their conversation; that he was seeking employment, and that he felt certain he could do the work. His problem was soon solved.

Many a professional and business man today keeps some religious book, some favorite spiritual guide, locked in his desk drawer, and from time to time during the day, almost furtively, takes it up in order to change his thought, to relieve pressure, to dip into ideas that refresh and sustain and enable him to carry on without succumbing to worry and fatigue. Such men are fortunate. They have found the secret door that stands ajar to all who would enter. The majority still struggle blindly on, ignorant of what ails them.

A certain doctor, known locally in his city as a specialist in certain chronic diseases, was limiting his success by his coldness, brusqueness, and hard manner. The patients disliked him, the nurses hated him. Treatment by him was often regarded by his patients as a worse ordeal than the disease.

Then trouble came to him, domestic trouble of the most soul-searing variety, for it came through one of his children. It seemed to him that both his career and his private life were at an end. Then, suddenly, he found within himself the irresistible need of prayer. Friends who had vainly tried for some time to turn his interest to one of the groups engaged in reviving religious faith as a daily activity were now, to their surprise, successful. This man went to a meeting, listened to the experiences of others, and found as a result that his entire outlook had undergone a change. He realized that notwithstanding all his work and his recent suffering, he had not yet lived at all. The greatest single curative and life-giving force available had been omitted from his practice and existence.

At first those who came in daily contact with him could not believe he was the same man. Formerly cold, hard, caustic, and intolerant, he now appeared as a monument of patience, inexhaustible in kindness, sympathy, and warmth. A greater field for those attributes than the field of medicine can hardly be imagined, since here pain and human suffering are the constant attendants. At any rate, that doctor's life appeared to expand and grow daily richer. He had come in touch with a Power greater than himself or his skill—with the God within him. From all over the country, and even from foreign countries, people come to him to be treated. His name has in fact become generally associated with success in his field. And many a patient of his has improved or been cured physically only after having undergone a spiritual change, thanks to the inspiring faith and sincerity of that physician.

It is unfortunate that for most of us trouble is the usual gateway to a renewal or to the finding of religion. But in that at least the uses of adversity are inestimable. As Glenn Clark, the inspired college professor and athletic coach, puts it in *The Soul's Sincere Desire:*

"Troubles, misfortunes, disappointments, and handicaps, if they but throw us back upon God, if they merely give us opportunity of bringing into play our God-directed imagination and our heaven-blessed sense of humor, may become converted into marvelous good fortune. For trouble, if it merely turns us to God and hence renews our strength, ceases to be evil, and becomes good; it becomes the best thing that could possibly come to us, next to God Himself."

All these individuals, you may say, are either religious people, or divines, or people religiously disposed. But it is the same with the psychiatrists and their patients. Almost every psychiatrist will tell you of persons who came to him as cases of neuroses and psychoses, people on the edge of mental collapse, who could be cured and returned to normal life only by returning to their early or cradle religion, or adopting another religion, or creating one for themselves.

"Anyone who is truly religious," one of the foremost of American psychiatrists told the writer, "does not develop a neurosis—unless his religious self conflicts with his primitive nature and he cannot resolve the conflict. Then he has to come to the psychiatrist. Religion seems to be necessary for most people and is certainly compatible with mental health.

"Not long ago a woman came to me with a serious neurosis. Actually her clergyman brought her to me. Though a member of a church, she had an obsession of a pornographic nature which she believed the devil put into her mind. I told her it was no devil outside her, but something within herself. 'I don't care how you cure me, so long as you cure me,' she said. When her obsession was explained to her and it disappeared, she no longer believed in a personal devil, but her religion was certainly none the worse for it."

Dr. Ira S. Wile, a former New York Commissioner of Education, lecturer on the disorders of conduct, and a widely known and quoted authority, reported a similar experience. "Without being statistical," he said, "I have encouraged and helped many people to find a religion—either to find their way back to the religion they knew best or to create one of their own. *(Please turn to page 74)*

Suddenly he rose, and manfully told his story. . . . confessed his tragic errand.

MUCH BETTER Dead

The gifted author of "The Nutmeg Tree" proves in this delightful story that the British are still able not only to take it but to laugh at it as well.

by

MARGERY SHARP

Illustrated by MALVIN SINGER

"I'm not the sort of relative to do him credit. . . . I'm his brother Bert."

SHERRARD had never known Sir Benjamin Croye at all well; few people did, for the Grand Old Man of literature was heavily guarded by secretaries, agents and disciples. Sherrard used to encounter him occasionally in the London Library, more rarely at solemn dinners; only once had he crossed the threshold of the big, gloomy London house; but he had had a respect for the old man, and was therefore sorry to see in the paper the brief report of his death due to enemy action.

"In peace-time," reflected Sherrard, "they'd have buried him in the Abbey: not now. But I'll go to the funeral."

He looked at the paragraph again; no further information was given. He rang up the dead man's secretary, and learned that no funeral would in fact take place: the shelter in which Sir Benjamin and his household slept had suffered a direct hit, and Sir Benjamin's body was not identifiable. But there would be a memorial service, added the secretary efficiently, as soon as they got around to it.

Sherrard rang off, rather shaken. Sir Benjamin's later work might have fallen off, but his early books would live, for he had been able to write of plain people with plainness and love. He was a great man. His memorial service should have been a spontaneous act of homage. Now it was something to be got around to when his secretary and his publishers found time and an unbombed church.

During the next few days Sherrard thought about Croye's end a good deal, and was therefore all the more surprised to see him sitting on a bench near the allotments in Hyde Park.

There was no doubt about it: directly before him sat Sir Benjamin Croye, extraordinarily unkempt, and with a fortnight's growth of beard, but unmistakably Sir Benjamin.

"Good God!" cried Sherrard. "Croye!"

But the eye of Sir Benjamin, meeting his own, was unresponsive, even hostile. It was not, however, blank. Sir Benjamin's features were composed and serene. Except for his general dishevelment, he looked unusually well. Sherrard's mind, racing on after the initial shock, leaped to the only sane conclusion: the old man had never been in the shelter at all—only near enough to take the shock; he had somehow escaped, with the loss, not of his wits, but of his memory.

Sherrard hesitated. The obvious course was to get Sir Benjamin into a taxi and take him to a hospital. But how to set about it? By persuasion, naturally, rather than force. He must first renew acquaintance—or rather make it afresh. It seemed almost impious to accost the Grand Old Man of literature as one would a tramp, but no other method presented itself. A tramp was exactly what the Grand Old Man looked like. Sherrard sat down beside him and offered his cigarettes.

Like a bird before a plate of crumbs—desirous yet wary—Sir Benjamin considered them. They were good cigarettes. He took one.

"Take several," said Sherrard.

Sir Benjamin took four; three he stowed in a pocket, for the fourth he accepted a light. By all the rules of tramp etiquette, he was now under the obligation of entering into converse, and he seemed to feel this himself, for he almost immediately remarked that it was a fine day for the time of year.

"Very," agreed Sherrard; and paused.

Sir Benjamin's voice had been disconcerting: it was the same, yet not the same. The pontifical tones were less pontifical, less weighty; the perfect enunciation had somehow roughened. Sir Benjamin's voice, in fact, was not quite the high-grade article it used to be. "Very," repeated Sherrard. "The Park's a godsend. Do you live"—he suddenly saw a line of approach—"near here?"

"Not live," said Sir Benjamin. "Just staying. With the Catchpoles."

Sherrard mentally ran over the list of Sir Benjamin's intimates. The Catchpoles, so far as he knew, were not among them.

"Unusual name," he said aloud.

"And unusual people," said Sir Benjamin warmly. "Delightful. There's Mrs. C., who takes in washing; and two daughters, both with steadies in the Air Force; and an adopted son who is a fireman; and of course old Catchpole himself, who has had a most interesting career in the merchant service. Quite delightful, all of them."

"And they live?" prompted Sherrard.

"In the cellar of a demolished house. It's not very large, but their hospitality is Early Christian. I'd been bombed out, of course," added Sir Benjamin casually.

Sherrard started. If Sir Benjamin could remember being bombed, surely he must have other recollections as well? He could

There was no doubt about it: directly in front of him sat Sir Benjamin Croye, with a fortnight's growth of beard. "Good God!" cried Sherrard, "Croye!"

not have simply settled down, unquestioning, in the Catchpole bosom? But from Sir Benjamin's next words it seemed that that was precisely what he had done.

"Early Christian," he repeated thoughtfully. "They found me wandering in the streets, and they took me in. I was hungry, and they gave me food. I was in rags, and they clothed me—all without asking questions. I consider that very wonderful. They accepted me at my face value as a fairly amiable old codger, not quite right in his head, who was willing to lend a hand with the wash."

Sherrard was flummoxed. It was all very well to be indirectly rebuked for curiosity, but before the phenomenon of a Sir Benjamin raised from the dead—a Sir Benjamin, moreover, who appeared to be in full command of his wits but persisted in behaving like a tramp—curiosity would not be bridled. He had, besides, a strong and growing suspicion that he was being fooled.

"Look here—" began Sherrard firmly.

The old man held up his hand. It was a large hand, heavy-knuckled: in size, if not in texture, the hand of a countryman.

"Wait a bit," he said. "I know what you're thinkin'. You're wondering whether I know who I am. Well, I do. And what's more, young feller, I know who you *think* I am. You think I'm Sir Benjamin Croye."

He extinguished his cigarette, and placed the stub carefully in his pocket.

Sherrard's jaw dropped.

"Well, aren't you?" he asked stupidly.

"I am not. I'm his brother. I thought that was it." The old man examined Sherrard reflectively. "You look just the sort of chap he used to know," he mused. "Silk umbrella, good *(Please turn to page 62)*

BROAD and ALIEN is the World

By CIRO ALEGRÍA

Illustrated by TOM WEBB

Presenting a few excerpts from a powerful novel by a brilliant young Peruvian writer that won the first prize in the Latin American Novel Contest sponsored by Redbook Magazine and Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., Publishers. The contest was organized in all the Latin-American countries and in Puerto Rico with the assistance of the Division of Intellectual Coöperation of the Pan American Union. The extracts from the novels that won the second and third prizes will be published in early issues of Redbook.

BAD luck!

A dark lithe snake crossed the road, leaving behind, in the fine footworn dust, the faint channel of its trail. It passed very swiftly, like a black arrow shot from the bow of destiny, too fast for the Indian Rosendo Maqui to get out his machete. By the time the blade of steel gleamed in the air, the long burnished body of the serpent was slipping away into the bushes by the roadside.

Rosendo put his machete back into the leather sheath hanging from a narrow strap that showed dark against the red wool of his sash and stood there, not knowing what to do. He wanted to go on his way, but his feet felt heavy. He had had a fright. Then he noticed that the bushes formed a clump of undergrowth where the snake might well be hidden. He would have to get rid of the reptile and its sinister portent. That is the way to exorcise possible evil in the case of snakes or owls. He took off his poncho, to move more freely among the branches, and his leather sandals, to keep from making a noise. Then he stealthily circled the spot and quietly entered the bushes, machete in hand. If any of the villagers had seen him then, in his shirt-sleeves, as tense as a dog on a hot trail, they might have said:

"What's the old man doing there? Is he losing his good sense?"

Suddenly, a sparrow flew out and Rosendo saw the nest, resting in the fork of a branch, where two young ones displayed their triangular beaks and their shivering nakedness. That's where the snake must be, lying in wait for these helpless lives. Rosendo Maqui poked among the limbs with renewed zeal, but he could find no trace of the sly reptile. He came out of the thicket, sheathed his machete, put on the garments he had laid aside for the moment and went on his way.

Bad luck!

His mouth was dry; his temples throbbed, and he felt tired. Looking for the snake was nothing to tire him out, and as he thought it over, he felt afraid. Perhaps it was his heart that was feeling the burden. It had a foreboding, it knew, and was crushed with sorrow. He soon came to a dwindling brook that carried its transparent little current quietly along, and dipping the brim of his straw hat into it, he managed to collect enough water to satisfy his thirst. The long swallows of cool water refreshed him, and he continued his trip with lighter step. Thinking it over, he said to himself that what happened was that the snake had spied the nest of sparrows from some place on the slope, and crawled down to eat them. It just happened Rosendo was going by at that moment. That was all. Or maybe the wily thing, seeing him coming, had said:

"Here's a good chance to scare a Christian." But it's also true that man has a tendency to look on the bright side of things. Maybe what the snake meant to say was:

Behind him he could hear them saying: "We ought to be grateful that these don't know how to read and never find out anything."

"There goes a heedless Christian who doesn't want to see that misfortune is at hand. I'll go tell him."

That must be it, since he couldn't find the snake. A man can't go against fate.

Bad luck! Bad luck!

ROSENDO MAQUI was coming back from the hills where he had gone in search of some herbs the wise woman had ordered for his old wife. The truth is that he went also because he liked to test the strength of his muscles against the steep slopes, and then, once he had mastered them, to fill his eyes with horizons. He loved the broad spaces and the magnificent grandeur of the Andes. He rejoiced in the sight of snow-covered Urpillau, hoary and wise as an old Inca sage; rough, tempestuous Huarca, a warrior in perpetual struggle with the mist of the wind; serried Huillac, in which an Indian sleeps forever, face upward to the sky; crouching Puma, like a mountain lion poised to spring; pudgy Suni, of peaceful habits and somewhat ill at ease among its neighbors; pastoral Mamay, spread out in multicolored slopes of planted fields with hardly a rock showing from which to view the distance, and this one, and that one, and the other.

The Indian Rosendo attributed to them all the forms and intentions imaginable, and he spent long hours watching them. Deep within him, he believed that the Andes held the baffling secret of life. He gazed at them from one of the foothills of Rumi, a peak whose summit of blue rock thrust toward the sky like a lance. It was not so high as to be crowned with snow, nor so low as to make its ascent easy. Exhausted by the soaring force of its bold summit, Rumi flowed downward on both sides in blunt peaks that were easier to climb. *Rumi* means stone, and its high slopes were mottled with blue stones, almost black, like moles among the yellow rustling hayfields. Just as the severity of the peak softened into the lower hills, so


TONI
WEBB

the grim desolateness of its stones melted away on the slopes. These became clad, as they descended, in bushes, grassy patches, trees, and tillable fields. Down one of its sides descended a gentle ravine in all the rich beauty of its thick woods and its torrent of clear water. Rumi was both forbidding and gentle, stern and friendly, solemn and benign. The Indian Rosendo believed that he understood its physical and spiritual secrets as though they were his own. Or rather, those of his wife, for love is a stimulus to knowledge and possession. Except that his wife had grown old and sick, while Rumi was always the same, haloed by the prestige of immortality. And Rosendo Maqui perhaps thought, or rather, felt:

"Which is better, the earth or woman?"

He had never thought it through clearly, but he loved the earth very much. . . .

It was on his return from these hills that the snake had crossed his path with its augury of misfortune. The road wound in a wealth of curves, like another snake twisting down the slope. Rosendo Maqui, by looking hard, could make out the roofs of some of the houses. Suddenly the gentle oncoming wave of a ripe wheat-field stopped short before him, then began again in the distance, and came toward him once more with its soft rhythm.

The gentle undulation was an invitation to the eye, and the man sat down on a huge stone, which had stopped on a rise in the land as it fell from the heights. The wheatfield was turning yellow, though it was still green in patches. It looked like one of those strange lakes of the mountains, showing all the colors of the rainbow from the refraction of the light. The heavy stalks swayed gently, with a little crackle. And suddenly Rosendo felt that the weight had lifted from his heart, and that everything was beautiful and good like this waving field. This brought him serenity, and he decided that the omen was a forewarning of something inevitable to which the only response was resignation. Would it be the death of his wife? Or his own? After all, they were both very old, and it was time for them to die. Everybody's turn comes. Could it be that some ill was to befall the community? Possibly. Anyway, he had always tried to be a good mayor.

From where he was sitting at the moment he could see the village, the modest and strong center of the community of Rumi, owner of much land and cattle. The road dropped down into a hollow to enter the town through a double row of little houses pompously called Main Street. About the middle the street opened on one side into what was also known pompously as the Village Square. In the center of the square, shaded by an occasional tree, rose a sturdy little church. The houses had roofs of red tile or gray thatch, and the walls were yellow or violet or red, depending on the color of the clay with which they were stuccoed over. Each had its own garden patch in the back, sown to lima beans, cow-peas, vegetables, and bordered with leafy trees, prickly-pears and blue corn. The villagers of Rumi were content with their lot.

THIS is what Rosendo felt at this moment—felt rather than thought, although in the last analysis these things formed the substance of his thought—as he looked down on his native *lares* with satisfaction. On the rising slopes, to one side and the other of the road, the wheat waved lush and lusty. Beyond the rows of houses and their many-colored gardens, in a more sheltered spot, the corn rose tasseled and rustling. The sowing had been large, and the harvest would be good.

The Indian Rosendo Maqui squatted there like an ancient idol. His body was gnarled and brown as the *lloque*—of knotted, iron-hard trunk—because he was part plant, part man and part rock. Under his short nose showed thick lips set in an expression of serenity and firmness. Behind his hard, jutting cheekbones shone his eyes, dark quiet lakes. The eyebrows were like battlements. For many years, so many now that he could not remember them exactly, the villagers had kept him in the office of mayor, or head of the community, with the assistance of four selectmen who were not changed either. The village of Rumi said to itself, "The one who gives good advice today, will give good advice tomorrow," and left the best men in their posts. Rosendo Maqui had shown himself to be alert, and dependable, fair in his decisions, and prudent.

He liked to recall how he had become, first selectman and then mayor. A new field had been planted to wheat, and it came up so thick and grew so rank that the green of it looked almost blue. Then Rosendo went to the man who was mayor at that time.

"Taita," he said, "the wheat is growing so rank that it is going to fall over, and the grain will rot and be no good."

He carried her to the door of the church and called the mayor. Nobody knew her; nobody had ever seen her before.

The mayor had smiled but Rosendo persisted:

"Taita, if you are in doubt, let me save half of it."

He had to argue a long time. Finally the council accepted his plan, and half of the big wheat-field that the villagers had worked to plant was mowed down. As they bent over their scythes, looking browner than ever above the intense green of the wheat, they muttered:

"These are Rosendo's newfangled ideas."

"A waste of time," grumbled others.

But time had the last word. The mowed part came up again and stood erect. The untouched half, drunk with energy, grew top-heavy, toppled over, and lay flat on the ground. Then the villagers admitted he was right, saying:

"You know, we'll have to make Rosendo a selectman."

Rosendo smiled to himself, for he had once seen the same thing take place at the Sorave ranch.

HE gave good service when they made him selectman. He was active, and he liked to know everything that was going on, though he was always tactful about it.

And when the time came for old Ananias Challaya the Mayor to become silent forever beneath the earth, it was Rosendo Maqui who was elected to take his place. Ever since, his fame as an upright, fair-dealing man had grown, and he was always reëlected. The Indians for miles around talked of his good sense and his honesty, and country people often came from other places to have him decide their differences. The most famous was the decision he gave in the case of two farmers from the Llacta ranch. They both had black mares, and it happened that both of them, at almost the same time, foaled colts that looked just alike. They were two handsome, playful little animals, black too. And it happened that one of the colts suddenly died, perhaps from the kick of some irritable mare in the herd, and both men claimed the surviving colt. One accused the other of having used black arts to get the colt to go with the mare that was not its mother. And they went in search of justice to the wise mayor, Rosendo Maqui. He listened to both without moving a muscle, and weighed the claims and counter-claims. Finally he said, after ordering the colt to be shut up in the community stableyard:

"Take away your mares and come back tomorrow."

The next day the litigants returned, without the mares. Then stern Rosendo Maqui said sharply, "Bring the mares too," and he showed his annoyance at having to use more words than were necessary. The litigants returned with their mares, and the judge ordered them tied at points equidistant from the gate of the stable-yard, and he himself opened the gate to let the colt out. When the mares saw it, they both neighed at the same time; the colt stopped for a minute to look, then in swift decision galloped joyously toward one of the excited mothers. And Mayor Rosendo Maqui said solemnly to the owner:

"The colt is yours."

To the other he said in explanation:

"From the minute it is born, the colt knows its mother's neigh."

The loser was the one who had been accused of using witchcraft, and he refused to abide by the decision and carried the dispute before a circuit judge. When the judge had heard his account, he said:

"It is a decision worthy of Solomon."

Rosendo heard about it, and since he knew who Solomon was—who, by the way, is the most popular wise man in the whole world—it made him happy. Since then many, many years have gone by.

And lo, now it is Mayor Rosendo Maqui who has grown old in his turn. He continues there on his rock, beside the wheatfield, given over to his memories. His immobility makes him one with the rock, and both seem fused into a monolith. The afternoon is falling and the sun has a golden sheen. Below, in the village, the cowherd Inocencio shuts up the calves, and the mothers bemoan the separation with uneasy lowing. An Indian woman wearing a red skirt comes down a little path to the square. A woodcutter, bent beneath the weight of his load, goes down the middle of the road, and a horseman has stopped in front of Amaro Santos' house. The mayor deduces that it must be Amaro Santos himself, for he had borrowed a horse to do some errands in the near-by town. Now he gets off and walks slowly into the house. It is Amaro.

So life goes on just the same. Placid and tranquil. Another day is going by; tomorrow will come and will pass in turn, and the community of Rumi will remain the same, Rosendo says to himself.

It suddenly occurred to him that he was probably the only one who knew many matters dealing with the community. What if he should die suddenly? To be sure, beside the embers of the fire and of his failing memory, he had told many of the things that had happened, but not in order. He would do it soon, these nights when he sat beside the fire chewing his *coca*. His son Abram had

good sense, and the selectmen and Anselmo the harpist would hear him too. He had seen and heard many things. Time had wiped out the superfluous details, and things came back to him clearly, like those stylized drawings the native artists prick out on their smooth golden gourds. But some of the details had become too faint, and seemed to fade away, old age helping to wipe them out.

His first recollection—Rosendo tended to confuse his personal experiences with the general—was of an ear of corn. He was still a little child when his father handed it to him during the harvest, and he looked at it a long time, delighting in the rows of shining kernels. Beside him lay a bulging saddlebag. The saddlebag had fine red and blue stripes. Perhaps it was because these were the first colors he remembered that he loved them so much, and he always had them on his ponchos and blankets. He liked yellow too, no doubt because it was the same color as wheat and corn when they are ripe. To be sure, he liked black just as well, perhaps because it was like the mysterious vastness of the night. Rosendo's old head sought its reasons. Finally after a very careful analysis, he decided that he liked all the colors of the rainbow. Only the rainbow itself, so beautiful, was bad. If it got into the bodies of the villagers, they fell sick. Then the wise woman, Nasha Suro, would give them a ball of wool of seven colors to unravel, and then they would get well. Right now his old wife Pascuala was weaving him a saddlebag of many colors. She said:

"Bright colors, so I can see them; I can't see any more; I'm old now."

Nevertheless she had done a fine, even piece of work. She had taken very sick lately, and often said she was going to die. Wrapped up in a red handkerchief, hanging beside his machete, were the herbs the wise woman had prescribed: *huarajo, cola de caballo, supiquegna, culen.* The idea of death had grown in Pascuala since the night she dreamed she was walking behind her father, who was dead. When morning came, she said to her husband:

"I am going to die; my father came to get me last night."

Rosendo answered her, saying:

"Don't say such things. Who doesn't dream?" But his heart was full of sorrow and fear.

Theirs was a quiet affection. Now, that is. It was not always so. When they were young, they had loved the way the parched earth loves the water. He sought her, night after night, like a sweet fruit in the darkness, and at times in the midst of the fields, beneath the sun. . . . They had had four sons and three daughters. Abram, the oldest, was a skillful horseman; Pancho, the second, had a steady hand for the bulls; the next, Nicasio, carved wooden bowls and spoons like an artist; and the youngest, Evaristo, knew a little about making spades and plowshares. To be sure, these were their additional accomplishments. They were first and foremost farmers, and their life was linked to the land. They were all married and had their own houses. The daughters, Teresa, Otilia and Juanacha, married too, knew what a woman should know; they could spin, weave, cook, and, of course, bear strong children. There was also the half-breed Benito, raised as Rosendo's own.

The field of wheat waved on, ripe in the evening sun. One stalk is like another; and all together, they are pleasant to behold. One man is like another; and all together, they too are pleasant to behold. The history of Rosendo Maqui and his children was like that of each and every one of the other villagers in Rumi. But men have heads and hearts, thought Rosendo, and that makes the difference between them, while the wheat lives only through its roots.

Down below there was a town, and he was its mayor, and perhaps a doubtful future awaited them. Yesterday, today. The words teemed with years, with centuries.

Rosendo Maqui had never been able to understand the law clearly. To him it was a kind of shady, criminal sleight-of-hand trick. One day, for no good reason, a poll-tax law had come out by which the Indians, because they were Indians, had to pay a certain amount each year. Somebody by the name of "Castile" had once abolished it, together with the slavery of some poor black-skinned men whom the villagers of Rumi had never seen; but after the war it had been put back again. The villagers and the tenant-farmers said:

"It's not our fault that we're Indians. Aren't we men just the same?"

In Rumi the Indian Pillco swore like a mule-driver:

"Damn it, we'll have to paint ourselves white."

But nobody paid any attention to them and they all had to pay. And then one day, for no reason, either, the devilish law disappeared. There were some people in town who said they had done away with it, because a certain Atusparia and a certain Uchcu Pedro, both Indians, at the head of a great band of followers, had started a revolt. The ones who spread the story were clapped in jail. Who knows what really happened? But there were still plenty of laws. The government knows a lot. There were the taxes on salt, on *coca*, on matches, on corn-liquor, on sugar. They meant nothing to the rich, but a lot to the poor.

Rosendo despised the law. Which was the law that favored the Indian? Once he went into a store in the town at the very moment the marshal, the judge and some other gentlemen were there, talking. He bought a machete, and was just going out when they started talking about the Indians, and so he pretended something had happened to the strap of his sandal. He sat down on the doorstep, acting as though he were fixing it. Behind him he could hear them saying:

"Did you ever hear such nonsense? I've just seen it in today's paper. These Indians! What's all the excitement? They're talking in Congress about abolishing compulsory labor, and they're even talking about a minimum wage law. Some new Congressman trying to make a name for himself—that's what I think. It will never be more than a proposal. . . . Nevertheless, they're straws that show the way the wind blows. It wouldn't take much to make these,"—pointing to the absent-minded, absorbed Maqui—"start claiming their rights and getting ugly."

"Don't you believe it," said a cautious voice. "You see what is happening to the native communities, even though their rights are more or less acknowledged. My grand- *(Please turn to page 100)*

NATURE SHOULD BE *Ashamed* OF HERSELF

BY PARKE CUMMINGS

Illustrated by ALBERT DORNE

"WALK faster," said Casey. "You'll be late."

"What time does your watch say?" said Rourke.

"Five minutes of two. Your appointment's for two o'clock."

"Maybe he'll not be back from lunch, Casey. Dentists are slow eaters. Very apt to be a long time at their meals. Always telling folks to chew their food slowly, they are."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Casey. "The Doctor's never late!"

"Just as I thought. He eats too fast. A poor dentist he is, not practising what he preaches."

"Rourke, you exasperate me! He's a fine dentist. He's looked after my teeth for ten years. It's a favor I'm doing you, taking you to him."

"Look at that chef in the window," said Rourke. "Throwing those flapjacks up in the air and catching them."

"You've seen him plenty of times, Rourke."

"Never in better form, Casey. Never in my life. Look at that! Ten feet up in the air he threw it! A marvelous exhibition, Casey. The man has the soul of an artist."

"Come on," said Casey. "We must hurry."

"Supposing he threw it too high. Supposing he threw it so high it hit the ceiling. It might stick there, mightn't it?"

"Rourke! Who cares? Suppose it did? Come on!"

"Casey—it's a funny thing about my tooth. All yesterday and all this morning it ached something terrible. Right now it doesn't hurt at all. It's as good as new."

"It's not as good as new, Rourke. It needs attention."

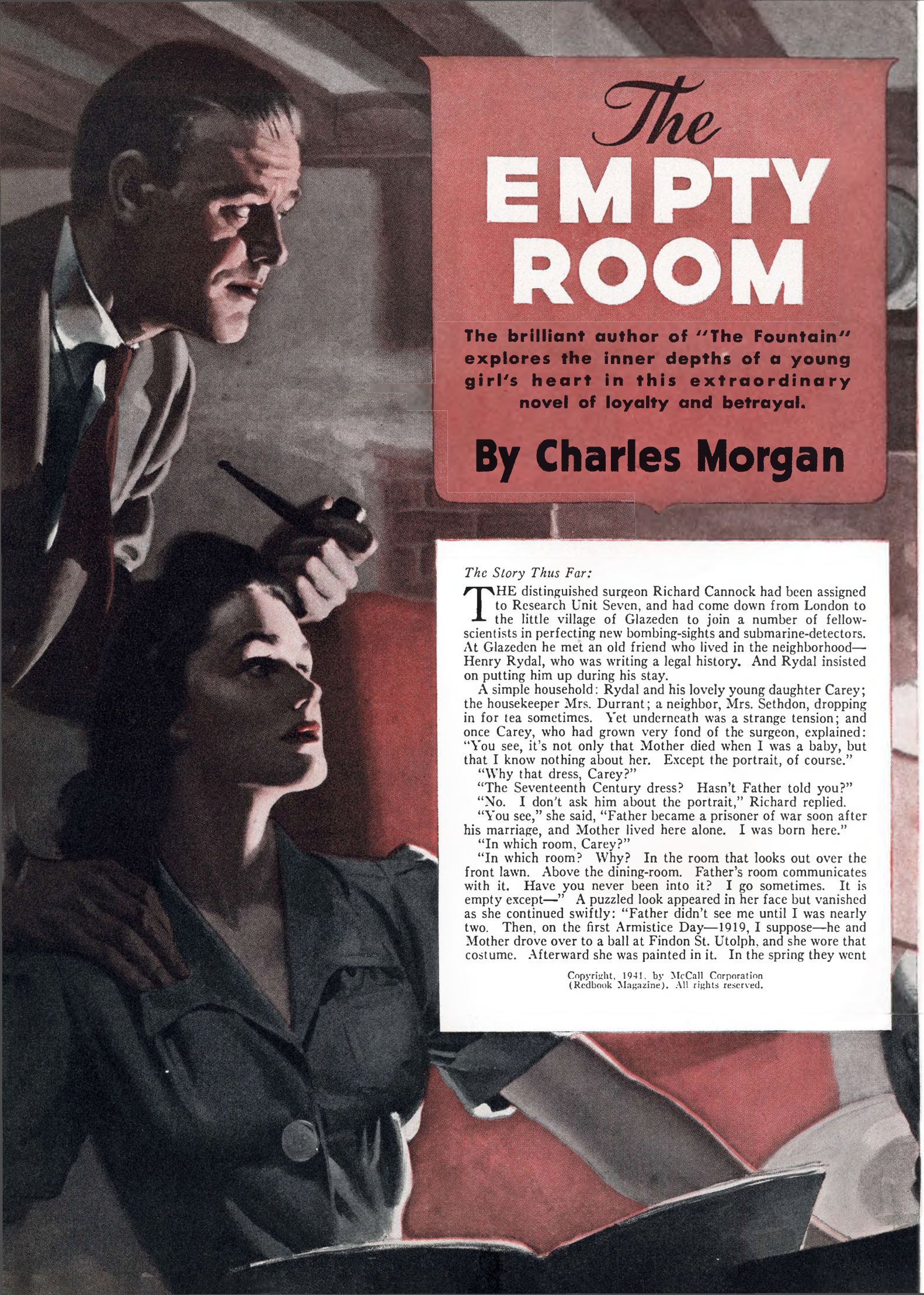
"Then why would it stop aching? It's cured itself. That's what it's done."

"Rubbish!" said Casey.

"No such thing," said Rourke. "Nature is wonderful. I cut my finger two weeks ago. A nasty cut it was. And six days later it was all healed. It was Nature did it. It's a mistake not leaving things to Nature, Casey, a very bad mistake. Look at my finger now—you can't even see the scar." *(Please turn to page 86)*

A SHORT SHORT STORY

"A powerful drill he has!" said Casey. "Do you hear it?" "Ow!" said Rourke.



The EMPTY ROOM

The brilliant author of "The Fountain" explores the inner depths of a young girl's heart in this extraordinary novel of loyalty and betrayal.

By Charles Morgan

The Story Thus Far:

THE distinguished surgeon Richard Cannock had been assigned to Research Unit Seven, and had come down from London to the little village of Glazeden to join a number of fellow-scientists in perfecting new bombing-sights and submarine-detectors. At Glazeden he met an old friend who lived in the neighborhood—Henry Rydal, who was writing a legal history. And Rydal insisted on putting him up during his stay.

A simple household: Rydal and his lovely young daughter Carey; the housekeeper Mrs. Durrant; a neighbor, Mrs. Sethdon, dropping in for tea sometimes. Yet underneath was a strange tension; and once Carey, who had grown very fond of the surgeon, explained: "You see, it's not only that Mother died when I was a baby, but that I know nothing about her. Except the portrait, of course."

"Why that dress, Carey?"

"The Seventeenth Century dress? Hasn't Father told you?"

"No. I don't ask him about the portrait," Richard replied.

"You see," she said, "Father became a prisoner of war soon after his marriage, and Mother lived here alone. I was born here."

"In which room, Carey?"

"In which room? Why? In the room that looks out over the front lawn. Above the dining-room. Father's room communicates with it. Have you never been into it? I go sometimes. It is empty except—" A puzzled look appeared in her face but vanished as she continued swiftly: "Father didn't see me until I was nearly two. Then, on the first Armistice Day—1919, I suppose—he and Mother drove over to a ball at Findon St. Utolph, and she wore that costume. Afterward she was painted in it. In the spring they went

to France for a holiday. She died there." *(The story continues in detail:)*

THE days that followed Germany's opening of the spring campaign of the year Forty gave to all personal experience a cutting edge that it had not had in England since the Armada was sighted. As soon as it became certain that the line was broken, that it could not be reformed, that Weygand could produce no effective counter-attack, that the British and Belgian armies with a part of the French were indeed cut off, there fell upon those summer days that intensity of observation which was given to the Elizabethans by the perilous uncertainty of their lives; and the more familiar the thing experienced—the steady chime of a clock, the heat of a sunlit wall under the hand, the sound of a distant train—the more highly was it charged by the extremity of danger. Every good thing became more precious; even things that were, in themselves, neither good nor bad—an account-book lying on the table, a packet of old letters in a drawer—became extraordinary because they were inanimate, because they had existed before the break and lay in their places, still unconscious of it. There was a stab of wonder in every carefree movement of a bird, in the stream's unbroken continuity, in the aloof and unswerving process of Nature.

At Glazeden, Richard and Flower, Chard and Walter Loose, chose, where they could, work that would throw them into company. It was Flower who had the rashness or the courage to say what was in all their minds: that they might be wasting their time. Before their labor came to maturity, the chance to use the instruments they were designing might be gone. No one denied it; it was evidently true; but they continued to work; for the events in Europe, which had given to private feeling a microscopic nearness and enlargement, had, at the same time, lengthened the perspective of impersonal endeavor. Because the security of tomorrow was gone, the long, binding compulsion of past and future took possession of the English mind. Not to yield ceased to be heroic, because to yield became impossible. The armies recovered from Dunkirk had lost their equipment; the Home Guard was an ungrown child; the coasts were unfortified; the Air Force was outnumbered; only the Navy remained. In country villages improvised barriers were thrown across the roads; signposts that might direct the enemy were torn down; and foreign observers smiled with good reason at the lateness and inadequacy of these preparations.

The English, too, smiled at them, but never as marks of an end. The threat was recognized, the probability even of great disaster, but never the finality of that disaster if it should come. There arose among the people a stubborn and ancestral madness which, carrying them beyond their urgent fear, enabled them to see these days as already in retrospect. They did not doubt that the time would come in which they or their children would say: "The enemy did not land," or, "The enemy landed but in the end we got rid of him." So they built their wooden barriers in West Sarley and Sarley Down, knowing they might fail before Saturday, but knowing also that this would not affect the issue in three or five or twenty or a hundred years. Because tomorrow was breaking like a tidal wave over their heads, they fell back upon their history.

In those weeks of stress, when the enemy was occupying the ports of France and stretching out toward the Seine, Richard had the consolation of working as a member of Research Unit Seven; Henry Rydal had not, and it was harder then to work alone than in company. Nevertheless he steadily pursued his task of legal history and shut himself into his library each morning at the same hour. "But sometimes," Carey told Richard, "Father comes out of the library as he never did before, and comes into the sitting-room or the garden—wherever I am—and works on his knee." This was the only outward sign that Rydal was feeling the strain. In the evenings, when the three of them were together and they heard the news bulletins and talked of the day's events, he neither concealed the perilous truth from himself nor was shaken by it.

Then, suddenly, he changed. In the early days of June, when the armies were coming out of Dunkirk, he went to London one morning and came back in the evening a different man.

Richard had chosen this day as his day off and blamed himself for having done so; but by the time he discovered that his host would be absent, the arrangement could not be changed. After an early breakfast, he walked to the garage with Rydal, saw him off on his way to the station, and returned to the lawn. There he read peacefully for a part of the morning, until Helen Sethdon came in through the gate in the wall. She would have left him undisturbed

He straightened himself to the rigidity of a man about to fall in some dreadful seizure. "Is it you, Carey?"

and gone on into the house to find Carey, but there was in him at that time a desire for companionship; all the morning Carey had not come out to the lawn as he had hoped, and he gave Mrs. Sethdon the chair beside his own. She asked what he was reading. He waved a hand over half a dozen books spread on the grass at his feet.

"Nothing very continuously. Anything to keep my nose out of a newspaper." He handed her an open book, marking a place with his thumb. "Look. Henry dug this out yesterday evening and read it to us—we had been talking about the possible length of the war. It is Drake's prayer on the day he sailed into Cadiz."

Mrs. Sethdon could not read without glasses. She returned the book to him, and he read:

"'O Lord God, when Thou givest to Thy servants to endeavor any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same, until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory; through Him that for the finishing of Thy work laid down His life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.'"

He was surprised by Mrs. Sethdon's comment. "Henry," she said, "has always been an extraordinary creature. He has a great and original candor. He faces facts, understands them, never distorts them or makes them *fit* his ideas. But it remains true that he is much less interested in facts for their own sake than as illustrations of ideas. In that, I have always imagined that Cecil Rhodes was like him—a man of action interested not in action but in the ideas behind action. That is why Henry is so calm in this crisis. No one else could write legal history at such a time." She spoke as if his calmness irritated her. "It has been like that all his life."

"Do you mean that he has always been calm?"

"Good heavens, no. Calm! I have seen him mad. But only when an idea has gone bad on him. Dunkirk, all that is happening, hasn't reversed or contradicted or perjured—'perjured' is his own word—his idea of the English people. On the contrary. Invasion wouldn't—even successful invasion. He doesn't claim that they are invincible." She closed her lips, smiled and added: "Only that they are immortal. The Continuing People—not the English only, but the French too, the Americans also, all free people; it is the absence of the will to liberty that kills—men, nations, women. So he says."

Richard's mind echoed the words: "men, nations, women." It took him a moment to remark their peculiar order. Chance, presumably. Anyhow, he didn't understand it, and let it go.

"You knew him," he asked, "in the last war?"

"A little. Chiefly afterward."

This was Richard's opportunity. "What was Mrs. Rydal like?"

"Extremely beautiful."

"I meant, in character. Her portrait is on the wall, but I have none in my mind."

"She wasn't easy to define," Mrs. Sethdon answered in the easy, conversational tone of one who wished it to be understood that nothing was being concealed. After this noncommittal statement, she picked up a book, let its pages turn under her thumb, and was clearly about to comment on it by way of diversion.

"It is an interesting face," Richard intervened.

"Which?"—as if she had forgotten.

"Mrs. Rydal's. . . . Why, I wonder, does Carey know so little about her mother?

"Naturally. She was a baby at the time."

"Still," Richard persisted, "there's usually a surviving legend."

Mrs. Sethdon shrugged her shoulders and twisted the rings on her neat, finely creased hand. "It distresses Henry to be reminded—"

"Of a fact? Her death is a fact. It is unlike him not to face it. After all," Richard added, "death isn't—what was the word?—isn't a 'perjury' of his idea of her; and I should have supposed that, the more because he loved her, he would have told Carey what songs her mother sang."

"But bless you, Mr. Cannock, why should he remember what her songs were?"

Though warned by a certain asperity in her tone that he was on dangerous ground—perhaps because he had been warned—Richard could not resist saying: "But why should he forget?"

"In any case," Mrs. Sethdon replied with urbane recovery of poise, "it isn't a subject of much importance," leaving Richard to tell himself, without conviction, that perhaps he was, after all, making a mountain out of a molehill. Mrs. Rydal had died nearly twenty years ago. Wasn't it natural that the memory of her should have faded? The explanation was, in common sense, more reasonable than the questioning in his mind, but the questioning persisted. He could not escape two facts: that Helen Sethdon did avoid, with evident embarrassment, the subject of Mrs. Rydal, and that Carey had seen nothing her mother had worn, no ring, no brooch, no piece of lace, nothing that had belonged to her, no word in her handwriting. This might have been unimportant if Carey herself had not been troubled by it, but he could not forget her hungry listening to his account of his own mother, or her expression of puzzled loss when she had said that she was without roots.

That afternoon, he had an inclination to report to her his failure with Mrs. Sethdon. He might say, "Well, it's true, Carey; she seems to have forgotten your mother's songs," but when these words had already taken shape in his mind, he decided not to speak them. Why? Because they would disturb her? Not for that reason only. He had to recognize that he avoided the subject for his own sake; in touching it, he did not know what it was he touched.

HE and Carey dined alone. There was no word from her father. This was unusual. The routine of his London visits was established, for he went to consult books, and libraries closed early; he usually returned by a train that enabled him to reach the house soon after seven. At half-past, Carey telephoned to the station. The train had not been late; it had come and gone; Mr. Rydal had not been on it. Carey rang for Mrs. Durrant, and said that she and Mr. Cannock would not wait. Mr. Rydal could now come only by the slow train; he would not reach the house until after ten.

The garden was warm after dinner, and so still that the flame under their coffee burned straight. Carey lay back in her chair, her face turned a little away so that less than her full profile was visible, and asked, as she had not before, what progress Richard was making at Glazeden. The nature, even the purpose, of his experiments was unknown to her, and for an instant he supposed with astonishment that she was about to put to him questions that he must not answer; but it was not so; she was genuinely incurious of secrets; the word "Glazeden" had fallen by chance; and it appeared to his surprise that all she wanted was that he should somehow talk of himself—past, present, future; it made no matter, so long as it was of himself that he talked.

Illustrated by WILLIAM REUSSWIG

While he obeyed, she watched him, smiles coming and going on her face, extremely various smiles, now of amusement, now of a compassionate tenderness that puzzled him, now—under eyes momentarily closed—of simple happiness; and when he was silent, there was between them an acceptance of the long interval so perfectly at ease, so intimate, that Richard, seeing under her fallen lashes the gleam of a tear, had no need to acknowledge it except by a touch of his hand on hers. Her eyes opened; her smile instantly returned.

"But it is, in a way, frightening," she said, "on this particular day of all days, to be happier than you have ever been."

He was always to recall, in the light of what followed, that these words, as though he had been a partaker of the thought from which they sprang, were at once fully comprehensible to him; he also had known that "this particular day" now over, and this crystal evening, were a point of departure to be, in the future, accurately remembered. He began deliberately to engrave upon his mind certain present details—the luminous plane of whiteness that a trick of the dusk had laid upon the side of Carey's throat, the smell of mown grass from the barrow the gardener had left, the shadow of the creeper about the dining-room window. He had risen as he touched her hand, and now stood in front of her chair, facing the house.

She asked: "What time is it?"

He answered: "Eight minutes to ten."

FROM his wrist-watch, his eyes moved on to the house again, first to the dining-room window, then to the window above it. All others in the house had been blacked out, but this had not, for the room was unoccupied; and the panes, curtainless, gave back to the rooky dusk a polished interior darkness. Within their frame appeared at that instant a human movement which his reason accounted for with the name of Mrs. Durrant, who, no doubt, had entered Mrs. Rydal's room to look for something there. But for what? Since Carey had spoken of it, he had visited the room; except that a round gilt mirror was still hanging above the mantelpiece, it was empty to the boards; and even if Mrs. Durrant had business in it, why at this hour and by what light? Nevertheless he did not doubt his eyes; someone had moved and gone; and he supported the comfortably rational explanation of "Mrs. Durrant" by saying to himself: "She will have forgotten that the windows are uncurtained; the silly woman will strike a light." But she did not; in his heart he had known that she would not; he stood at gaze, believing and not believing that she was there; and when again and yet again the interior darkness was crossed by a paler movement, now unquestionably not of Mrs. Durrant's heavy form, the rational explanation slid from him—that is to say, was not wrenched from him by any tremor of fear; and finding himself, on the third occasion, looking up into a girl's face, he recognized her without shock and without remembrance of her having been dead twenty years.

Her left hand traveled across her breast; it was laid on the opposite shoulder at the *(Please turn to page 64)*

"Well," she cried in a deep, penetrating voice, "you invited me. You made me come. There's a man too, you said."

The Last Night OF THE QUEEN

At twenty-three she was fat and old and pug-nosed.

by ANDREW GEER

Illustrated by MAURICE BOWER

Honolulu, T. H. 10 p.m.—Radio Press Service reports intercepting a distress call from the freighter *Baltic Queen*. The passenger liner *Capucine* is reported racing to the rescue.

THE *Baltic Queen* was a tub—one of those thirty-day jobs they built in 1918. At the last moment her plans had been altered, and eighteen feet cut from her length. She looked like a fat old woman pushing a bean with her nose; she was so pug-nosed there was no bow to speak of, and her fat belly sucked into an unlovely, unrakish point; but she was honest, with no vagaries or stubborn streaks.

From the first day of laying her keel, the old *Queen* was doomed—you never thought of her as ever having been young. So rushed had been her launching that she went forlornly down the ways unsponsored, carrying on her bow some faded bunting and a squirt of tobacco-juice from the man who knocked the last block loose.

The *Queen* had served adequately through the war, and then she spent ten years as a cargo-carrier in the Pacific. One day in November—her owners figured her unsafe through another winter—she was sent up the Sacramento River and left to rot on the mud-flats. For twelve years the *Queen* lay alongside others of her kind, and the only human companionship she knew was the tramping of a watchman's feet along her peeling decks, and the occasional visits from small boys playing pirate. One day tugs ranged alongside and yanked her from her mud-bed. Again she was to carry food to England.

They gave her sixteen days in drydock, where a few plates were replaced and a generous use of paint covered her infirmities. From drydock the *Queen* turned to Honolulu, but in the twelve years on the mud-flats she had lost four knots of speed; her top had been twelve, but now it was only eight, and she had a palsy about her when she did that. In Honolulu her crew walked off—the twelve-day crossing had been enough. Another crew was recruited—the lure, a fat war bonus.

For a captain they got Sherman Willby, a slim, sandy-haired youth of twenty-eight, made overly ambitious by an immoderate, blonde débutante from Baltimore. She was a *vivandière* of the sea, and he had met her on a cruise to Australia. To her, he was the handsomest, youngest officer on board ship, and her avaricious nature added him to her procession of escorts; to him, she was the sight of Polaris to a lost navigator. She let him believe their marriage depended on his getting a command. Young Willby jumped at the chance to leave his post as second officer aboard a Marrell Export Lines passenger ship—where because of his seduliy he would have had a command in ten years, a port captaincy in twenty—for a command of his own. Immediately he sent an exuberant radiogram to Baltimore.

The first officer—there were but two with Willby standing a regular watch—was a popeyed, lantern-jawed Assyrian who could hold no steady berth. His name was Luigi Pamcetto, and his talk was as licentious as his lips were weak. He had been born in the disease-haunted village of Beersheba, and by choice was content to remain its worst ambassador. He knew navigation right enough, and could work a ship; but in a pinch he would take the easy course without a second thought at deserting a shipmate.

The third officer—even the exigencies of war could not stretch his papers to second—was a foolhardy lad of twenty-one, Tom Racine by name. He was recently out of a nautical academy, and in his blood ran the ichor that had made Farragut, Jones and Dewey the sea-gods they were. In a shockingly heroic act he led eight of the deck gang forward to replace a cover on Number One hatch. He lost the battle, but the odds were overwhelming from the start, and failure foredoomed.

"Lost! Lost four men," he screamed, his eyes insane with fear. "Can't close it—d'ye hear? Can't close it!"

For bosun the *Queen* got Hard Luck Lammerdon, a man who had commanded the finest in the Pacific, but had run afoul of bad luck. He was the living symbol that men who follow the sea are courted by failure, jilted by peace, and marry loneliness. The crew was one that could be gotten together and cleared only in war time.

So here she was, the *Baltic Queen*, twenty-three years after a premature launching, loaded to the Plimsoll with a transshipment of wheat from Australia, tired and aching for the quiet of the mud-flats, and going into the fight for her life. She fought gallantly and might have won, but for an open forward hatch.

With Willby on the bridge, Pamcetto on the forepeak and Tom Racine on the fantail—it's giving the *Queen* the benefit to call her stern a fantail; by rights it was a poop, an unpretty one at that—the old girl was backed from the Honolulu docks and headed over the Great Circle route to the Panama Canal forty-six hundred miles away. It was like asking an asthmatic old woman to run the marathon.

They sailed on a halcyon day as auspicious as ever greeted a vessel on the beginning of a long voyage. The northeast trades were dying, and cumulus clouds heralded fair weather as the *Baltic Queen* labored on the camber of a green sea. Captain Willby, his thin lips bracketed by hard lines from the continued silence from Baltimore—they were under enforced radio silence, but messages could be received—went about the herculean task of shaking his crew down into some semblance of seagoing efficiency. He found Pamcetto a drunken shirker, Tom Racine willing to work the clock around, Lammerdon a fuddler with no authority over the deck-gang.

WILLBY called the crew to boat-drill twice daily and everlastingly kept the deck-gang at the job of bolstering the old ship. The *Queen* took kindly to the treatment, and began logging eight and a half knots, and held that pace until she caught bad weather off Salina Cruz.

The third day out, Willby called Tom Racine to his cabin. The youth reported, standing straight and proud in his new blues—he had changed hurriedly on receiving the call.

"Sit down, Tom. Have a smoke?"

"Thank you, sir."

The captain's cabin was an indifferent space, shabbily clothed with a built-in bunk under the side ports, a desk under the forward ones, and a peeling wicker settee with cracked leather cushions under the stern openings.

"Tom," Willby said, "we've our work cut out for us; we've a crew I wouldn't sign on a river barge in normal times. This is my first command, and I'll bring her through if I have to row her in." His eyes wandered to a picture of a thin-faced, cynical-mouthed girl on the desk. There was a fineness about the face because it was so thin; but the bones behind the pampered facial integument were coarse, and the years—and not too many—would shape it into a hard mask.

"I've my reason for being on this ship. You have yours—" He paused.

The youngster rubbed his hands together. "I've dreamed all my life of being in the Navy—I could out-run and out-jump anybody in high school, but Annapolis turned me down because of flat feet. When we get to England, with your permission, I'll try for the British Navy."

"You have it now; but to get there, we've got to slave." Willby jerked his head toward the bridge. "Pamcetto's no good. Since

meeting him, I've discovered there are three languages: English, profane, and Pamcetto's." A slight smile showed at the aptness of his remark. "It galls me to hear him ride you at mess."

"I can take care of myself, sir."

Willby waved his hand, dismissing the subject. "That's not why I called you in. On your off watch will you oversee Lammerdon and the deck gang? They won't push for him, and there are a thousand things to do before we meet the convoy. I'll stand a watch of yours and sleep in the chart-room, where I can see the squealer during Pamcetto's night watch. In Panama I'll try to sign on another deck officer; but God knows, I don't expect to find much of a man there—we'll have to work together as close as a squilgee and toggle."

That was not all he would do in Panama, he thought. He would telephone Baltimore. He must know. He had Sparks in the radio shack twelve hours a day awaiting his answer. Perhaps she was ill; perhaps she had been in an accident. He frowned down the disturbing thoughts.

"If Lammerdon could rise above his failures, I'd let him stand a watch."

Racine stood up, self-consciously straightening his uniform jacket. "If twenty hours a day'll put us through, that's my schedule." His lips parted in a confident little grin as he left to take over his midday watch.

TWENTY-ONE days from Honolulu, at three-thirty in the morning, Willby rose from his cot in the chart-room, and the first thing he saw as he went into the wheelhouse was the barometer—it was nearly as low as he had ever seen it.

"How long has the glass been falling?" he asked the helmsman.

"Started about an hour after we took the watch over."

Willby stepped to the bridge and found Pamcetto leaning negligently in the port wing. The officer turned red-shot eyes in his direction—eyes blurry, not from want of sleep, but from tilting a nocturnal bottle.

"The glass is low," Willby accused.

"I seen it," Pamcetto growled, his breath heavy, dank in the cool morning air.

"Tabasco's at this time of year are dirty."

"You tellin' me? I was in one 'bout six years back. She blew the guts out of us; the skipper lost his nerve, the yellow skunk. I took over and brought her into Acapulco and grounded her. What thanks did I get? He beached me."

Willby frowned, his eyes searching the heavens. The smoke slid from the stack, ducked down over the fantail, and spread out over the wake. Cirro-stratus clouds in a thin fibrous sheet blanketed the sky. Over the bow of the *Baltic Queen* an angry halo was arching the horizon where the sun was to come. He felt uneasy on the sign of things. If Pamcetto had called him, as he should have done, when the glass had first begun to fall, they might have turned out of the path of the storm; then, again, with all ships under radio silence, it would be difficult to fix the bearing of the storm-center.

Pamcetto stepped to the shadow of the deck-housing and measured eight strokes on the bell. From the forepeak came an echo, and the watch called: "Lights're bright, sir."

Racine came on the heels of the words. "G'morning," he greeted the two men.

"Seen the glass?" Willby asked, marveling at the youngster's freshness.

"Yes sir."

"We're in for a blow. I'll take your watch. You go forward and get the day-watch deck-gang out. Put extra lashings on the boats, deadlights on the ports, and cover the ventilators."

"Yes sir."

"Mr. Pamcetto, you and the carpenter check the hatch-covers."

"I've just stood a four-hour watch." The Assyrian's lantern jaw clicked shut.

Willby turned on the officer savagely. "By God, sir, you'll do as I say, or I'll throw you in the brig!"

"Yes—sir." It was the only time Pamcetto had ever used the respectful appellation to Willby, and surprise forced it from him. He turned on his heel and disappeared down the port companionway. Racine followed silently.

Satisfied the Assyrian would follow orders, Willby turned to the wheelhouse, where he asked the chief engineer to the bridge. He routed Forbes, the radio operator, from his bunk, and put him to searching for weather reports. Sparks wouldn't be so fagged, Willby reproached himself, if he hadn't been kept at the key in overlong shifts, waiting for word from Baltimore.

Willby returned to the bridge, pacing its length restlessly. It would be simple if he could only break radio silence and check Panama—Salina Cruz—and Coco Solo, and the Harvester four days behind him; he might skirt it. He faced the wind; the storm-center should be eight to ten points to his right, but that rule was counter to what his eyes told him. The fiery halo in the east with the wind from that direction failed to override the "bar of the cyclone" he could see forming on the northwest horizon.

The engineer appeared, gruff, in morning voice, his thin, gray hair pillow-awry.

"We're in for a blow, Mr. Hollister."

Hollister flourished an overhanging eyebrow. "I saw the glass."

"I've ordered the ventilators covered. Your gang will suffer from the heat, but it's best to be ready."

"Yes sir."

"How're things in your department?"

"We're doing all right. I'm getting a wallop out of this; I've been on the water forty years, and never out of sight of land. When they laid off the San Francisco ferries and pensioned me, I took a vacation—a trip to Honolulu; and here I am. I found out one thing,"—his big face became seamy with a wide grin,—"being chief of a freighter or a ferry-boat aint so different—most of the time you haven't time to see if you're out of sight of land or not." Sobering, "By the time we join the convoy, I'll have her up to nine and a half—maybe ten knots," he promised cautiously.

"Good! I wanted to let you know we'd shut off your air down below."

"We'll be all right."

When the engineer left, Willby went into the wheelhouse, looked at the glass again and checked its fall with previous readings. According to Piddington they were two hundred fifty miles from the storm-center. Again he checked with Forbes—no reports. When he came on the bridge, the sun was up, full blown, but shielded by an overhead that had become fuliginous—cumulo-nimbus in formation and breaking up in dirty gobs—and racing in opposite direction from a surface wind which was dying; and a swell was building in accord with the overhead. The air was oppressive, brooding, and it made sirocco moisture stand out and run over Willby though he did nothing but pace the bridge. The cargo-booms pointed rust-colored fingers at the sky. The sea was smooth but had the uneasy motion of water coming to a boil.

Tom Racine came up the companionway, sweating.

"All secure, sir."

"Where's Pamcetto?" Willby asked.

"With Chips."

"Better get some chow—while you have the chance." Willby didn't know why he added the last. He should be the one person not to admit danger, but he was filled with a queasy feeling of impending danger. "Have the steward bring me a pot of coffee."

"Yes sir."

For six hours Willby kept to the bridge, checking the falling glass. By now he was certain of the storm-center and the direc-

tion of movement of the storm—it was overtaking him from astern. All that could be done was to keep the *Baltic Queen* churning at her eight and a half knots, and keep her out of the forward quadrant of the dangerous semicircle. If the storm recurved violently from the equator, they would be hit by the full force of it—the "eye of the storm" would pass directly over them. Every man aboard felt the peril, knowing the ship was not up to running out of a storm or fighting a bad one for long; and they waited almost as men in a death-house.

A FORETELLER of the blow came when gusty breaths of air shook by them—this for more than an hour. It whined a little at first, as if in apology for what it was to do; then it came down like a drawn saber, and before breath was regained, the ruin of heavy artillery was on them. In the space of minutes vignetted waves were fretted, then turned to anger, and then berserk rage. To this part of the world had come chaos, soul-tearing, death-dealing chaos. The very force of it tore and hauled from the four directions of the compass at once. There was no rhythm, no regularity—the raging water came on them like a horde of demons. Then, joining powers, it came from the northwest with an overwhelming roar, hitting the freighter full on the stern. Following seas were overcoming the *Baltic Queen* as they would a water-soaked log.

When the storm struck, Willby was on the bridge with Lammerdon the bosun. The very force of the blow physically gagged and mentally benumbed. Willby grabbed the amidships stanchion and hung there blinded, almost torn from his support; and when he forced his eyes open, they were as wild as a child's awakening from a nightmare. He saw Hard Luck Lammerdon, water spilling off him, over him, his old eyes alive with terror; but methodically his jaws worked a cud of tobacco. His great hands—the fingers were curved like a four-pointed hook—found the rail, and he pulled himself alongside Willby. A giant sea overcame them from behind; and the forward boat on the port side—the *Queen* carried only three—went with a screech, broken lines and davits waving wild good-by. Lammerdon shook his head, hugging the rail.

"Turn her!" From the cords in his neck, Willby knew the bosun was shouting, but his voice came hollow and distant as children yelling in a rain-barrel. "Face it! Keep facing it—following sea—bad!"

Willby lunged from the wheelhouse door as a big one came on them again and overbore the vessel downward, and the *Baltic Queen* began to slip off to starboard, slowly, resignedly, as if never to return. Clawing wildly, Willby went to his knees, hitting his head on the binnacle. The wheelhouse was ankle deep with water, and on the surface floated cigarettes from stolen smokes, burnt matches; and an old woolen sock trailed a ravel of yarn toward the chartroom. The safety-light had jumped from the gimbal and smashed, leaving broken glass underfoot and a coat of kerosene on the brine.

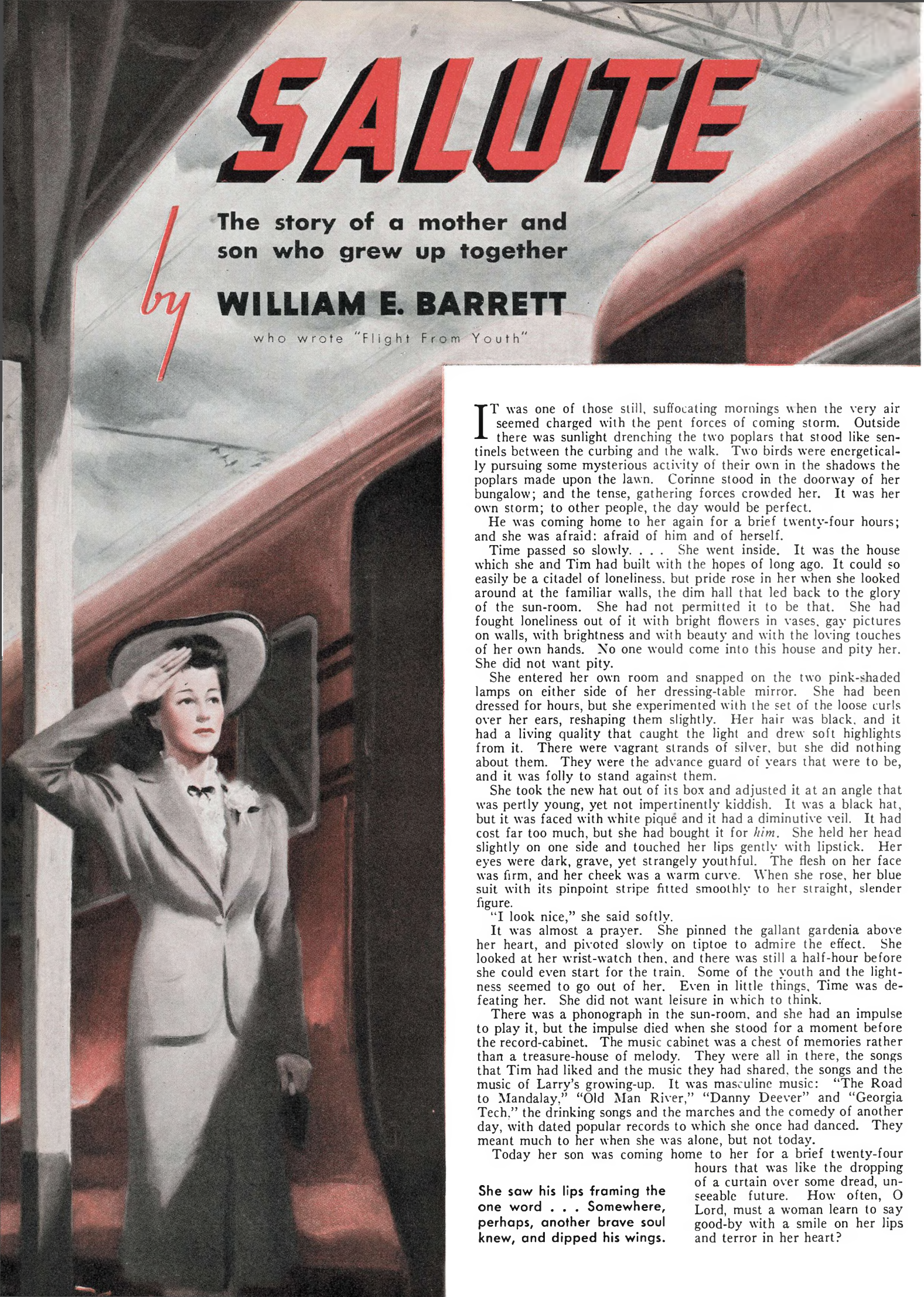
"Hard a-starboard," he roared in a foggy voice. He rose so that he could look into the face of the binnacle. "Course three fifteen."

The helmsman, his face the green of parched grass, moved over, and Racine took the wheel with him, and together they turned the *Baltic Queen*. The ship had been on a compass course of one twenty—and in the turn of one hundred ninety-five degrees ordered to fetch her into the blow, every man aboard thought of death when she was struck whilst broadside.

Turn her they did, but she was little better for it. When she cleared from the smothering wall of water, the forward cargo-booms were down, and they had taken the port well railing with them. With her eight knots down to six, the *Baltic Queen* was barely making headway. Headed into it, she did not wallow so, but the pounding she took up forward was worse.

Lammerdon *(Please turn to page 84)*

Willby turned on the officer savagely. "Sir, you'll do as I say, or I'll throw you in the brig!"



SALUTE

The story of a mother and son who grew up together

by **WILLIAM E. BARRETT**

who wrote "Flight From Youth"

IT was one of those still, suffocating mornings when the very air seemed charged with the pent forces of coming storm. Outside there was sunlight drenching the two poplars that stood like sentinels between the curbing and the walk. Two birds were energetically pursuing some mysterious activity of their own in the shadows the poplars made upon the lawn. Corinne stood in the doorway of her bungalow; and the tense, gathering forces crowded her. It was her own storm; to other people, the day would be perfect.

He was coming home to her again for a brief twenty-four hours; and she was afraid: afraid of him and of herself.

Time passed so slowly. . . . She went inside. It was the house which she and Tim had built with the hopes of long ago. It could so easily be a citadel of loneliness, but pride rose in her when she looked around at the familiar walls, the dim hall that led back to the glory of the sun-room. She had not permitted it to be that. She had fought loneliness out of it with bright flowers in vases, gay pictures on walls, with brightness and with beauty and with the loving touches of her own hands. No one would come into this house and pity her. She did not want pity.

She entered her own room and snapped on the two pink-shaded lamps on either side of her dressing-table mirror. She had been dressed for hours, but she experimented with the set of the loose curls over her ears, reshaping them slightly. Her hair was black, and it had a living quality that caught the light and drew soft highlights from it. There were vagrant strands of silver, but she did nothing about them. They were the advance guard of years that were to be, and it was folly to stand against them.

She took the new hat out of its box and adjusted it at an angle that was pertly young, yet not impertinently kiddish. It was a black hat, but it was faced with white piqué and it had a diminutive veil. It had cost far too much, but she had bought it for *him*. She held her head slightly on one side and touched her lips gently with lipstick. Her eyes were dark, grave, yet strangely youthful. The flesh on her face was firm, and her cheek was a warm curve. When she rose, her blue suit with its pinpoint stripe fitted smoothly to her straight, slender figure.

"I look nice," she said softly.

It was almost a prayer. She pinned the gallant gardenia above her heart, and pivoted slowly on tiptoe to admire the effect. She looked at her wrist-watch then, and there was still a half-hour before she could even start for the train. Some of the youth and the lightness seemed to go out of her. Even in little things, Time was defeating her. She did not want leisure in which to think.

There was a phonograph in the sun-room, and she had an impulse to play it, but the impulse died when she stood for a moment before the record-cabinet. The music cabinet was a chest of memories rather than a treasure-house of melody. They were all in there, the songs that Tim had liked and the music they had shared, the songs and the music of Larry's growing-up. It was masculine music: "The Road to Mandalay," "Old Man River," "Danny Deever" and "Georgia Tech," the drinking songs and the marches and the comedy of another day, with dated popular records to which she once had danced. They meant much to her when she was alone, but not today.

Today her son was coming home to her for a brief twenty-four hours that was like the dropping of a curtain over some dread, unseeable future. How often, O Lord, must a woman learn to say good-by with a smile on her lips and terror in her heart?

She saw his lips framing the one word . . . Somewhere, perhaps, another brave soul knew, and dipped his wings.

It seemed but a few days ago that she saw him off to school alone for the first time; a solemn, trudging little figure, too proud to look back at her or to wave good-by. Something that he once had been, went away from her forever that day, but something else that he had never been was born.

She had felt the strength of that something else on the night when Tim died. Larry, with the bewildered bravery of his twelve years, had held her in his arms, his own voice choking with the pledge that it uttered:

"I will take care of you, Precious, I will take care of you."

The words had echoed through her years. The son who was Tim's great blazing pride had become a man within a few short hours. Something soft in him went, but something gentle took its place. He had always called her "Precious," and he still did.

Her lips parted, and her eyes were wide now as the memories caught up with her. She had lost so many sons, she who had had only one.

He had been so tender to her when she sent him away to college, as though he understood, as perhaps he did, why she sent him out of the State instead of keeping him near to home. She had been afraid of her own weaknesses, her own essential femininity, and of what she might do to him. She had seen the softness come, and the little feminine streaks develop, in other boys who had been tied to their mother's apron-strings. She had wanted to preserve the rugged masculinity of Larry as much as she wanted to preserve his physical being, more even than she wanted to hold him close to herself.

"I have not always been petty and small," she said, "but now—"

The "now" terrified her, because the storm was gathering about her and she was changed inside. She had sent him away to the Army, to the terrifying adventure of flight, and it had been the hardest parting of all. Today he would be home. And tomorrow?

This time she had the feeling that it was forever. If he came back to her again, it would be with a final change in all that he had been—and he might not come back. She wanted to cling to him now, to rush into his arms when she saw him and let the tears flow freely, to hold him close and to go with him when he went, to wherever the trail might lead.

She was lonely and bereft, and with a cold feeling in her heart, she was conscious of the last desire of the vanquished soul. She wanted pity. She, who had never wanted it, who fought it like a tigress when it rose within her, was wanting it now.

The tall clock in the hallway was ticking noisily. She looked at her watch and her shoulders straightened. She stopped briefly before a mirror and patted her hat gently. She moistened her little finger and touched her lips with it. There were things in her own soul that terrified her; but it was time to go.

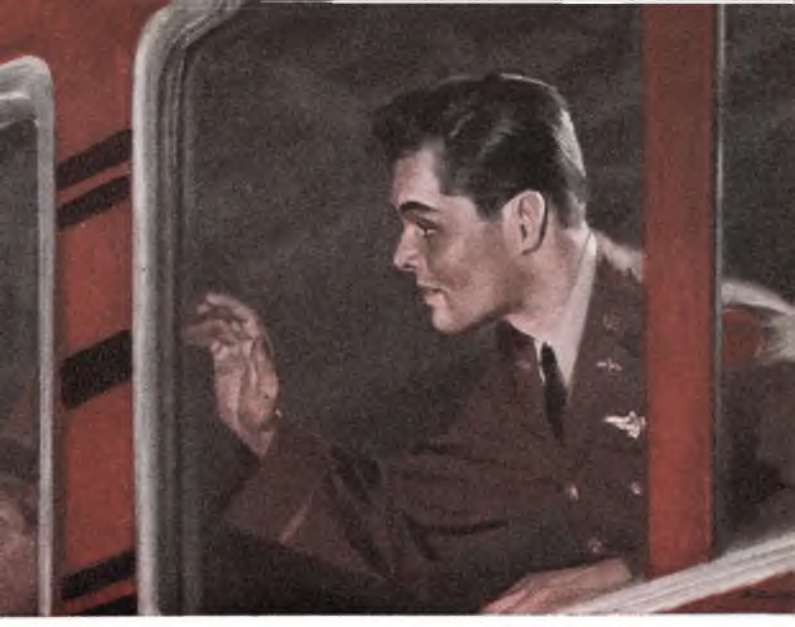
He came swinging down the station platform, six healthy, husky feet of him, with his cap slightly askew and a broad, beaming grin on his deeply tanned face. She saw the wings over his heart, the solidly packed width of shoulder and chest, the whole towering invincible structure of him; and then she was in his arms.

"Larry!"

He kissed her, and held her away from him with his hands on her slender shoulders. His eyes were the same clear, level blue that she had always known, and his delight in her was like Tim's delight in those days of the long ago.

"Precious, you look marvelous," he observed. "And the hat! Ummm."

"Like it?"



He had always noticed her hats. He swung her around and linked her arm in his as they moved down the platform. She skipped a trifle breathlessly to keep step with him.

"A hat like that would cause a commotion in Texas. I like the shoes, too. Just the right touch of frivolity about them."

He got a cab immediately, and he took care of everything, redcap, bag and driver, with a deft efficiency that did not leave Corinne for a moment uncared-for.

"We are going home first," he told her, "and I am going to let you mix me a drink; then we are going places."

She laughed with a sort of glad relief. It was comforting to be dominated for a change, and she was glad that she had kept him masculine. The weakness within her was still a crouching threat, but Larry was not letting it spring. These awkward first minutes after a long separation were passing swiftly. She looked up into his face, and his eyes met hers.

"It has been a long time, Precious," he said, "but you've stayed gorgeous."

She could not fail his pride in her. "You are rather irresistible yourself," she said. "The girls in Texas must have had a hard time."

His grin was a joy to look at; no reticences there. "I was pretty busy," he said, "but girls were the least of it."

SHE fingered the wings on his chest a little fearfully. "It must be very dangerous, Larry." She had not meant to say that, but it slipped out. He imprisoned her hand in his.

"It is wonderful," he said softly.

They pulled up before the house, and he commented upon her garden as though his going had been yesterday instead of nearly a year ago. Whatever he felt on coming back to the house where he lived and played, knew triumph and tragedy, he kept to himself. He neither sentimentalized nor stiffened; he merely accepted things as they were in a day that did not necessarily have a yesterday or a tomorrow.

"About that drink," he said, as he set his bags down in the room that had been his, and that was still marked by his personality. His eyes darted around the walls; to the pennants and the track-team pictures, the crossed foils and the boxing-gloves. A little vein on his jaw-line jumped, but his voice was lightly casual.

"Do you mind if I just take port, Larry?"

The asking of the question helped her to keep her poise. It kept her humble, too, at a moment when she was struggling against the temptation to forget everything except that she was a mother. His eyes smiled to hers.

"Sissy!" he said.

She broke the ice-cubes out of the refrigerator tray and mixed him a whisky and soda with a jigger and a half of whisky. He did not offer to help her, and it might have been because he knew that it was good for her then to have something to do; perhaps it was merely the man in him. She poured herself a glass of port, and carried the drinks into the sun-room. He was standing, as she had stood a short hour ago, before the phonograph; staring at it but making no move to turn it on. He looked so big and so frighteningly capable in his uniform with the highly polished Sam Browne belt and the silver wings.

"Here's how!" she said.

"To a beautiful woman!" he said.

She bit her lip. It was lovely, and it was flattering, and it was something so distinctly her own, this gay, brave, companionable

relationship with her son: but it was not what she wanted today. Some weak, pitiful, cowardly thing inside of her clamored for an orgy of sentimentality. She wanted him to call her "Mother" and to tell her that he had missed her. She wanted all the high-flown nonsense that is written on greeting-cards, a chance to cry and to be comforted.

"Nice drink," he said.

"I am out of practice."

She was recalling how difficult it had been for her to accept the fact for the first time that her son was a man, with a man's habits and faults and vices. Liquor had been the symbol of that transition. When she first realized that he did take a drink occasionally, she had faced a decision. She could preach against it, ignore it or make it possible for him to fit his habits into his home unquestioned. She had chosen the last alternative, and she had never regretted it. She had never known Larry to overindulge; so many of the boys with whom he had grown up, and who dared not drink at home, had disgraced themselves publicly more than once.

THEY chatted lightly about the small things that made up her life: the neighbors, the neighborhood, the people who had died or married or moved away. Suddenly Larry looked at his watch.

"Look, Precious," he said: "If you have a nice dinner dress, put it on. We are going dinner-dancing."

"No, Larry!" It was a genuine protest. "There are so many people you ought to see. One or two girls, too. You remember—"

He shook his head, smiling. "No sale. I planned this party."

She went with him, of course, and the dinner-dress was a smooth sheath of soft blue that billowed at the ankles and clung to the graceful curves that still were hers: her symbol of conquest over appetite and indolence.

She moved proudly in his arms when they danced, and she laughed across the table at him when he flattered her absurdly or told of some incident of Randolph Field or Kelly, where he had won his wings.

"I feel like a cheat, monopolizing you," she said.

"Why not? We grew up together, didn't we?"

That expressed it so perfectly, the pattern of the life that she had made for Larry and for herself when Tim was called away. She had not brought Larry up; she had let him grow, and she had tried to grow with him, to grow into understanding and tolerance and wisdom. She had neither asked nor expected perfection from him, and as a result, he had given her complete honesty.

"Tell me about the girls in Texas, Larry," she said. "Were any of them nice?"

"Quite a few of them were." He shrugged gently. "We did not think too much about them. A cadet cannot marry, not even when he gets his reserve commission. I sidestepped anything serious. Most of us did."

The woman in Corinne would not let it go at that. There was a dreadful curiosity in her mind, a fierce desire to move into the remote crannies of her son's life, an urge to flaunt her own tolerance even at the cost of pain.

"Affairs, Larry?" she said lightly.

His eyes were level, candid, inscrutable. "Is that ethical, Precious?"

She winced, and for a split second her heart hung suspended; then she shook her head and smiled with her lips.

"No. It is the old woman in me. You had better take me home."

"We are going to dance," he said.

They danced again on a floor that was crowded and close; heavy with the mystery of youth and desire and jungle rhythm. Corinne felt old and tired and strangely empty. There had never been room in her life for another man in the place Tim had vacated. Something had died with him, and the carefully groomed, exquisitely slender Corinne was a sham, a ghost clothed in flesh; living for moments in which her son was proud of her, keeping a tryst with Tim in all the secret places of her heart.

She knew now that she was going to break; that she was done with being a good sport and a gallant soul. She was going to break tonight when Larry took her home. She was going to be just another mother; pitiful and clinging and possessive and weak.

She was going to bathe him in her tears and throw herself on his mercy. She had a little income from the policies upon which she had been paying for years. She had already spoken to an agent about selling the house. Larry was going to Denver for a while, he said, then probably to Alaska or the Philippines. So be it! Where he went, she could go. There was nothing to hold her here. If he could help her just a little from his quarter's allowance, she could make out. She was going to make him ask her to go, make him want her. After all, she was his mother, and he would not have her always.

"White buffaloes," she said. "Sometimes they are sheep," he said. "Look!" She braced her body as they dived.

He took her home; and for a moment, he towered over her: brave and stalwart and frightening in his uniform.

"Look, Precious," he said: "I want you to get a good sleep. I've planned a surprise for you in the morning."

"A surprise, Larry?" Her eyes widened with the instinctive reaction to memories. Tim had teased her thus—and Larry. "What is it?"

He shook his head gravely. "Have you forgotten the rules? Surprises have to be dreamed on."

Her eyes were wet, and suddenly he crushed her in his arms, kissing her. It was the time to break, but there were more rules marching with the memories than the rule about surprises.

In her own room she sat helplessly on the bed and wondered why the tears would not come. They wet her eyes and clung to her lashes, but they would not flow.

"Tomorrow," she said, "tomorrow! I cannot let him go."

Tomorrow was ushered in by a fanfare of phone-calls. People who had expected to see Larry the night before, particularly girls, were on the line in a steady stream. He took one call munching on a piece of toast and winking occasionally at Corinne. This was home and the people that he had known; he was friendly but untouched.

"We've got to get away from this," he said. "Let's go. Wear something sport and careless."

He was wearing slacks and a heavy khaki shirt himself, running his hand through his hair in the gesture that she remembered as characteristic of him when he was harassed. Something inside of her kept scolding that time was short and that he would be leaving at four o'clock. There was no setting for a dramatic moment however in an atmosphere of a jingling phone. Out alone with him, it would be different. She hurried into a yellow sweater and a short pleated skirt.

"This is much too young for me," she whispered to herself, "I will have to adopt quieter things when I go with him."

Her image in the mirror challenged her verdict, and she had a moment of panic. If she once retreated before the years, could she ever stop? Would they not engulf her then and roll her back to a rocking-chair beside a hearth? An image of Whistler's "Mother" rose before her. She had always considered it the pinnacle of human futility; sweet sadness waiting patiently for extinction!

SHE donned a careless-looking felt and pressed it carefully with her finger-tips until she had achieved the perfect effect of artful informality. She could hear Larry pacing impatiently in the next room. She did not want to keep him waiting. Not today.

He looked up when she entered the room, and there was frank admiration in his glance. "Lord, Lord!" he said. "If you could teach what you know to these little would-be glamour girls, how hard it would be on the troops!"

She felt a warm glow go through her, and she laughed softly. "In other words, I'm a phony."

"You know the art of being a woman," he said.

They rode out a new white road, and she had a premonition of where he was taking her. She did not want to go, and all of the baffled urgency of last night rose in her.

"Larry," she said, "I do not want this to come to an end."

Her voice was close to tears, and she needed only one small cue to launch her on the rôle of mother. Her throat was dry and aching, the road before her eyes a symbol of the long journey into loneliness that lay ahead of her. Larry looked toward her for a split second, then back to the road.

"Lovely things never reach an end, Precious," he said; "they merely change."

"I do not want them to change."

He made no immediate reply to that. The airport spread before them at the bend of the road, and he turned the wheel deftly. They rolled, nose-on, to the fence and stopped. The airport manager was evidently expecting them. Corinne saw him advancing on the car behind a wide grin. Larry slid out from under the wheel.

"You are going for a hop, Precious," he said.

Her eyes were wide with fright. "No, Larry. I wouldn't think of it. I've never—"

"It is time that you did. —Hi, Steve!"

The airport manager had his hand outstretched. "Nice to see you, Larry. I've got a ship ready for you. Not as much snort as you're accustomed to, but it is a nice little kite." *(Please turn to page 78)*

U.S.—Today

and a family like yours —or the one next door.

by HENRIETTA RIPPERGER

I held Dick off and looked at

IN this family it's always been the rule that the big ones help the little ones. That's what Ed taught the children. Today he himself was put into a situation where he had to decide whether or not to live up to the rule, and it was a hard choice to make.

It all began as pure happiness, however. We were at supper when the phone rang. There was the usual scramble; no amount of orders that Norah is to answer when we are at meals does any good. Babs is sixteen, and so is always sure it's for her, but Freddy and Charles, our little English boy, who are nine and ten, have friends too. And anyway they're as inquisitive as puppies, and at the first whirr of the bell they're off like players sliding for the home plate. They came right back, however. It was for me; long distance, the Army camp calling. In a minute Dick's warm voice saying hello, and how would I like it if he came home for a couple of days' furlough? (That should have told me something, but it didn't.) Also Vic could get leave. "Us privates get furloughs, but officers get leaves," and Vic would like to come along. I said we'd be delighted to have him, and then Dick went on: "Say, Mother, remember a girl named Eileen? She was in my office in New York. I thought maybe I'd ask her too. . . . Yeah, she'll come. . . . No, I'll get in touch with her. By the way, I sent a line to Dad at the office. Don't worry about anything. See you very soon, dear. Good night."

I put down the phone and went back to the table.

"Who's coming?" Babs said. "Oh, Moms, is it Vic? I wrote him to."

"Who's the woman?" Freddy asked. "I suppose just another of those girls that's crazy about Dick."

Before I could frame an answer, everybody was leaving the table. There was a program they wanted to hear. I sat at my place, feeling rather than thinking that there was something Dick might have said and hadn't. Norah came in and began to clear away.

"You'd better take your day off beginning as soon as the breakfast dishes are done tomorrow," I said. "There won't be much chance to rest after that."

Norah stopped with a fruit-dish in her hand. It was clear that she had overheard the news.

"Thank you. I will, then," she said. "But I was thinking I'd make a batch of cookies first."

Dick had mentioned them in his last letter as "Norah's brand."

"Fine," I said. "Get your list. We may as well plan now for the next few days."

The uneasy feeling I had persisted: a strange girl, the first real furlough, his writing Ed at the office, which was unusual. But getting down to housekeeping reassured me. It's always that way in a home; there's the next thing to be done, and you do it, and it gives you the feeling that nothing can ever change. Besides, no matter what, Dick would be here soon; I could see for myself how he looked, and get an armful of him. We'd all be happy, and that would be that.

Late the next afternoon I stopped up in Babs' room to see if the day-bed was properly made for Eileen, and whether Babs had left her a bureau-drawer or two, and closet space. My mind was on the girl. I wondered if Dick was serious. It hardly seemed as if he would have brought her way out here to us unless he were; was she enough of a person for him, and would she fit in with our family? Suddenly I heard Ed downstairs.

"Yoo-hoo—where are you? I've got a letter here from Dick." He came up and dropped into Babs' armchair and then jumped up again. "What on earth is that?" he asked. He picked up a pink plush rabbit. "Isn't Babs ever going to grow up? Come on, let's go downstairs where we can be comfortable."

He took out the letter. It seemed there was a reason for the furlough. The boys were being allowed to visit their families, because in a few days they were to leave for Texas. Texas! Across the continent! This wasn't fun; this was good-by.

"And so," Ed said, "I thought maybe I'd do something for the kids; I thought maybe we'd take them on a party, a real blow-out." He tried to make his voice sound casual; instead, it was grave. "These things don't happen often, and I thought we'd do it up brown. I'll order dinner in advance for the six of us: Dick and the girl, Babs and Vic, and you and me. Would you like that, dear?"

"Of course, I'd love it," I said, "if—But let's do it, anyway."

"I know," he said; "it's going to set us back plenty. But they're pretty nice kids; we can't tell what's ahead for them, and I'd like to give them a good send-off." He pulled out his watch. "Almost time to go down to the station," he said. He went after the car, taking the boys along.

Before I knew it, they were back. Charles and Freddy dashed in first, lugging the bags, and went tumbling up the stairs with them.

"Here, give me hers," I heard Freddy say, "because I *may* marry her myself when I grow up—if Dick doesn't."

The others came up the steps; before me stood a girl with wistful gray eyes, a wide sweet mouth, and a thin tallish figure topped with curls. Like Charles, she had a fragile quality. I found myself kissing her very gently, as one does a lovely child. Then there was Vic, with his brilliant eyes and smile and his sure manner, and last of all, Dick. We hugged each other, and he freed his arms to put one around Eileen and one around Babs. When Dick gets home, he romps. It isn't that he does it physically, but his heart romps, the way a big dog jumps around trying to welcome everybody at once. I held him off and looked at him. He was heavier, browner, more smoothly tanned, tougher somehow, the way hickory is tough. But he was the

him. He was heavier, browner, tougher somehow, the way hickory is tough. But he was the same boy.

same boy. I turned and led them into the living-room.

Dinner that night was a field-day for all of us. Dick told us about the blue denim suits they got for fatigue duty, such as cleaning up, and cutting wood for fences, and about the man who, getting them in addition to his khaki, said, "All this, and denim too?" And the friendly "looie" who would send over word: "Inspection coming. If you've lost anything, don't report it; borrow it from somebody else." And the old-time Army sergeant who cautioned the new recruits always to be nicely shaved because they must not only look well "in the distant" but near to, "in case General Drum comes around for inspection."

Vic described with gusto the recreation halls, the Broadway talent among the enlisted men putting on nightly shows, the cloth-of-silver curtains, and the professionals who had been put into semi-permanent jobs at the recreation hall. He promised to take Babs to the Officers Club. "We can sit on the back lawn under the colored umbrellas and wave at Dick in the Service Club across the road. That's where the privates are," he added; "but of course you and I wouldn't know any of them."

Eileen looked up with a hurt expression in her eyes as if Dick had been slighted. ("She really loves him," I thought with a pang.) And then realizing Vic was just having his little joke, she began rather hurriedly to tell us about the changes at the office, how everyone missed Dick, and yet someone had taken his desk, and the water had just sort of closed up over his place. Dick looked pleased, but thoughtful.

"Yeah," he said, "they say it's easier fitting into the Army than it is fitting back into a job when you get out."

WHILE we were talking, Babs never took her eyes off Vic. Dick kept putting his arm on the back of Eileen's chair, and leaning over from time to time to see if she was all right; our children are the out-going kind; you can see their every feeling. But Eileen was reserved; she made an effort to keep her eyes off Dick; and, I thought, had probably put up many a stiff fight with herself to keep her mind off him, too. Vic easily dominated the table-talk; he was used to prestige, with girls as well as soldiers. Freddy and Charles quietly packed away their food and listened. I looked across at Ed, so comfortingly grown-up that he could forget himself in the interests of these youngsters. I saw he liked Eileen; I liked her too. She added something to the family, like the last delicate ingredient that gives a dish its flavor. I wondered if Dick was tied up to her, and whether he would talk to us about it.

After supper the four youngsters left for the movies. (We knew they would have cooked up something for that night, so Ed had planned his party for the following, which was to be their last one at home.) Freddy and Charles obviously felt left out, so I suggested to Ed that we go around to a neighborhood movie for the early show, and we did. There was a lot of love in it and they complained, but there was flying and shooting too, and they liked that, and came home content to turn in. I set the alarm-clock and put it in the hall. This is a system I worked out long ago with Dick. He tells me when he'll be in, and I set the alarm for fifteen or twenty minutes later. When he comes in, he turns it off and I sleep right through. If he shouldn't come in,—there have been two or three times when he was late,—*I'd* turn it off and begin to worry. Even then, I'm saved an hour or so in advance *(Please turn to page 77)*

Anything CAN HAPPEN

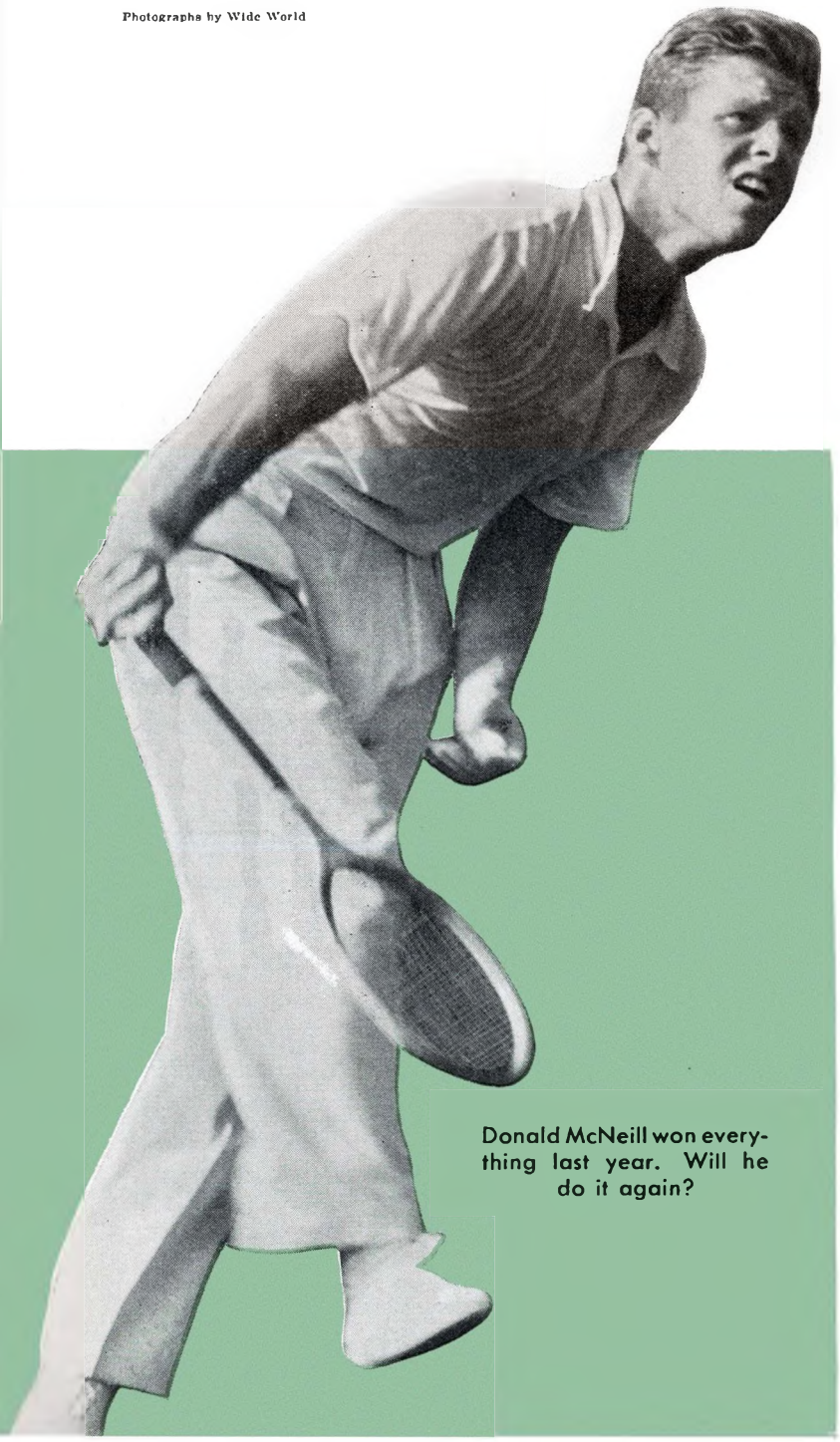
"ANYTHING can happen in golf." We accept that statement, when champions topple for reasons that don't have such drastic results in other sports, because it is so obvious that nerves and weather conditions can play havoc in this sport. Even we who know little of golf can understand how a high wind may shorten the long driver's game and turn fortune in favor of the short game; how nerves, shattered by innumerable disturbances during the comparatively long periods between strokes, can add up to give credence to the statement and minimize surprise when a "dark horse" wins a golf tournament.

But in tennis the public has come to believe that results run pretty true to form. They have seen the same names so often among the winners of the major tournaments that it is hard for people to believe "anything can happen in tennis" too. Yet the records show that aside from the Bobby Joneses and the Donald Budges, the players of both games are equally victimized by the vagaries of fortune. And, as a rule, the tennis upsets are more dramatic than the golf shocks.

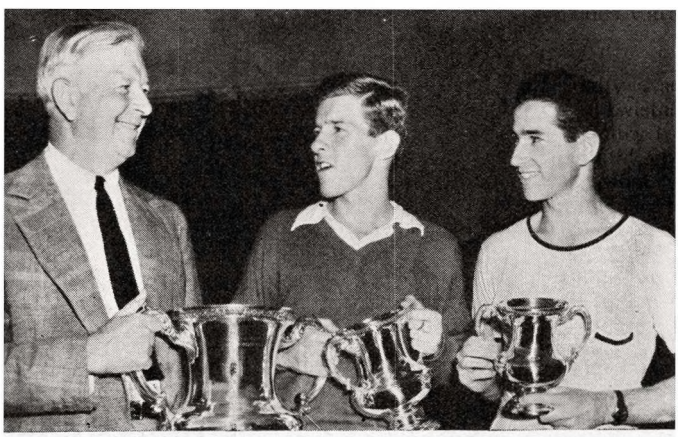
Let's look at some of the famous tennis surprises:

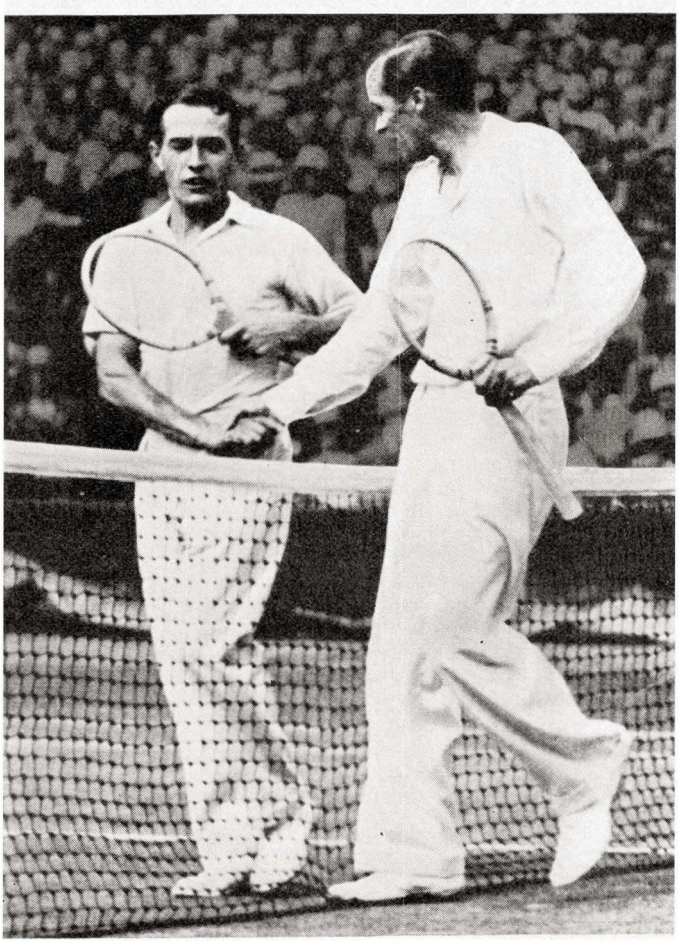
The one that comes to mind first as the most startling and inexplicable is the Bill Tilden and Henri Cochet semi-final match at Wimbledon in 1927. Tilden was making a real bid for the championship, and it didn't seem possible that anyone was sufficiently powerful, skillful or accurate to stem the tide of his game. He had

Photographs by Wide World



Donald McNeill won everything last year. Will he do it again?





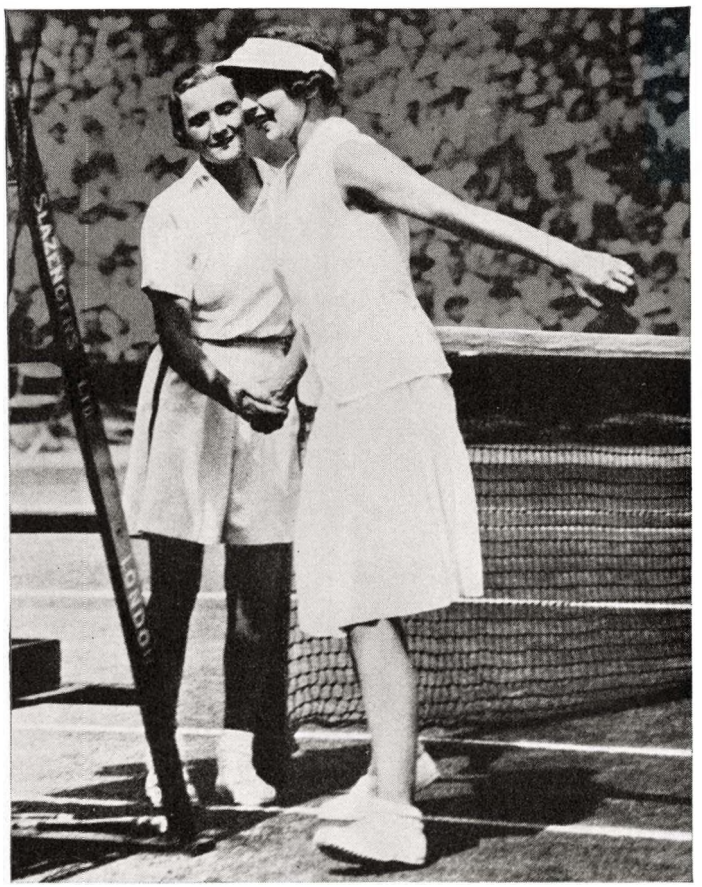
Above: McNeill and Bobby Riggs (the runner-up in 1940). Below: Tilden and Cochet, the perennial finalists in the 1920's.

IN TENNIS

What makes tennis the most thrilling sport in the world? The very uncertainty of the game, says one of the greatest champions of them all.

by

HELEN HULL JACOBS



Helen Wills Moody, staging the most sensational comeback in her career (Wimbledon, 1935), shakes hands with Helen Jacobs.

been in great form all season, and this was to be the climax. For nearly three sets, in his match against the then leading French player, he could do no wrong. Cochet, playing with every weapon of attack and defense at his command, looked like someone Bill had graciously taken on for a tennis lesson. Shots streamed in incessant and incredible angles from Tilden's racket—slice, drive and lob had Cochet panting for breath. At 6-2, 6-1, 5-1, 30-15—two points from match—the gallery made all the familiar gestures of preparing to leave. Tilden had played the greatest tennis of his long career, and everyone was predicting that his form would hold and he would win his second Wimbledon championship in the final next day.

Then something happened. Without warning, in the most mysterious fashion, Tilden seemed incapable of winning another important point. In rapid succession Cochet rolled up game after game, taking the third set 7-5, and leading in the fourth. The bewildered spectators sat forward, waiting for Tilden to regain his concentration, for it seemed impossible that this could be anything but a temporary lapse.

They waited in vain as shot after shot left the American's racket without his accustomed control or confident power. Tilden's bewilderment was no less intense and obvious than the onlookers', which made it clear that this was no mere lack of concentration. Here was a great game going suddenly awry for no conceivable reason. At the end of the match, which Cochet won, 2-6, 1-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-3, the gallery sat in stunned silence, and then one began to hear all sorts of attempts to explain it. King Alfonso of Spain had arrived at 5-1 in the third set, and Bill had decided to let him see some of the match. But Bill didn't know he was there. . . . A group of Hindus hypnotized Bill. As he said: "If they did, I didn't know it. But they certainly did a swell job." The only plausible explanation was the heat; but—tennis followers are still trying to explain that match.

By a strange quirk of fate Bill and Frank Hunter gave Cochet, with his partner Brugnon, a taste of his own medicine in the doubles final the next day. The French team led two sets to love, 5-3, 40-15 on Cochet's service, then split wide open, ably assisted by the well-known Hunter-Tilden determination and a natural desire for revenge. . . .

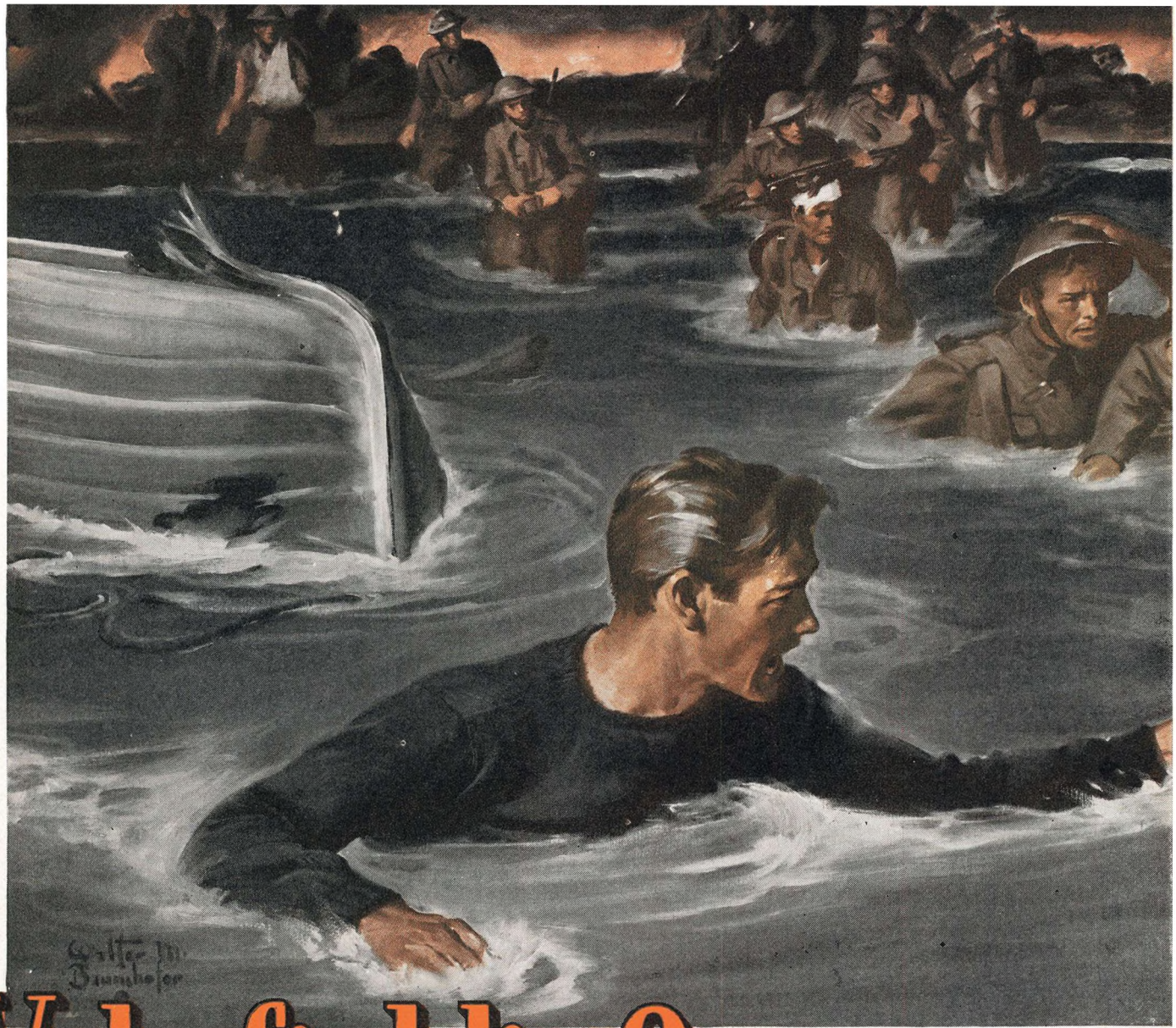
In 1935, the Forest Hills gallery was witness to an upset that the wildest prognosticator would hardly have dared to predict. Fred Perry had won Wimbledon that year for the second time in succession, and in winning, had left no doubt that he had few equals as a superb athlete and a master of the rising ball and the tactics such tennis demands. Not since Cochet had anyone played with such speed, or forced opponents by everlastingly hurrying them, into such maddening errors. Never had anyone seemed to get quicker to the net or to dare, with success, such tantalizing angles. When Fred Perry met Wilmer Allison in the final of the American championships, there were many who hoped the thirty-year-old Texan would perform a miracle of sport and win, but few who conceded him a chance. They thought Allison had slowed down and couldn't stand the pace. He didn't have the defense to withstand Perry's withering attack, and his own attack would make little impression on Perry, whose anticipation was as highly developed as his mechanical skill.

When the match was two sets old, and Allison had driven and volleyed and lobbed Perry off his feet, everyone's hat was off to the American. He had made a grand showing, and need not feel badly when Perry recovered his touch and began to do some blasting of his own. Instead of recovering his touch, Perry lost his balance, going for a shot wide to his forehand. He fell heavily, injuring his side, but even at that continued to play well enough to beat most players. Allison was having his day, and no one could deny that it was his superb driving and smashing, his punishing service and infallible volleying that beat Perry in three sets. Nor could anyone deny that on this day, for some reason impossible to fathom, Fred Perry never reached the great form that preceded and followed this match. One had come to expect such brilliance of him, one was so accustomed to his raking drives taking their toll, that it was impossible to decide where the blame for his own errors lay. It was just one of those days seldom associated with Fred Perry; and one of those days which Allison was not destined to see again.

SEVERAL times I have been the victim of such matches myself. Generally, I know why I have been beaten, whether because of superior play of my opponent, or because of costly errors on my own part. But there is one match I played which I have never been able to explain. At Wimbledon in 1931, I had what I considered my first good chance to win the tournament. I felt that there were only two players to beat—Betty Nuthall, who was then at her height, and Cilli Aussem, the German player who had won so consistently in Europe.

In the quarter-final round I was lucky enough to win a hard-fought two-set match from Betty Nuthall, and I must confess that after that match I thought that I was finally going to realize an ambition of long standing. With utter confidence I broke a rigid training-rule the night of that match and went out to dine and dance till very late. In my imagination the next match was already won, for Dorothy Round and Hilde Krawinkel, who were playing for the place opposite me, were then little known to me.

When I watched the last part of their match, I was certain that I had not overestimated my chances. Hilde Krawinkel, with her unorthodox, unimaginative but very steady *(Please turn to page 75)*



Wakefield's Course

The inhabitants of Jalna keep their rendezvous with destiny in this final installment of the new novel.

by

MAZO de la ROCHE

Illustrated by WALTER BAUMHOFER

The Story Thus Far:

EAGER for success as an actor, Wakefield Whiteoak, youngest of the house, had gone to London, where he was living with his brother Finch—who had fled from his too-demanding wife Sarah and was bent on a career as a concert musician. And then one day their Irish cousin Paris Court came to see them with a typical scheme: he knew of a horse, a marvelous young race-horse in Ireland called Johnny the Bird, that could be bought at a reasonable price and would give their brother Renny (the head of the family back in Jalna and a devoted horse-breeder) his longed-for chance to win an important race. . . . Wakefield and Finch went to Ireland to see the horse. They stayed with Paris' father Malahide Court; and after their return to London, Wakefield wrote to Renny in Canada:

"Finch and Sarah have come together again! She was waiting for him at Cousin Malahide's, and he wasn't proof against that something in her which first fascinated him. . . . Rehearsals begin tomorrow morning. Did I tell you that I have met a charming young actress named Molly Bevencroft?"

Renny went to Ireland, taking his young daughter Adeline with him. As his wife Alayne had foreseen, he bought the horse. His Irish cousin Paris Court came back to Jalna with him for a visit; and a further family exchange was arranged when old Dermot Court in Ireland, whose own sons were dead, invited Piers' oldest boy Maurice—nicknamed Mooey—to visit him.

"Renny!" shouted Wakefield. Renny looked at him dazedly. "Renny, don't you know me? Bring him to the yacht, men!"

The play in London made a hit, and Finch got a job with it too. During a holiday Wakefield went with Molly to visit her unusual family in Wales. A little later the play was put on in New York and made a success; now the Christmas holidays allowed Wakefield to take Molly to visit his family at Jalna. There had been some changes: Ernest's wife Harriet had died; and Sarah had gone to Vaughanlands to have her baby.

Now moreover, there came other and heartbreaking changes. For Renny discovered that Molly was his own daughter, offspring of a liaison with Chris Dayborn, an unhappily married young woman who had helped her husband school horses for Renny. As such, Molly was Wakefield's niece; and their marriage was of course impossible. . . . Now too the war came home to Jalna; for Piers joined up; and that old warhorse Renny too. Finch was disqualified because of his eyes. *(The story continues in detail:)*

IT was a time of such upheaval at Jalna that Piers' going overseas was not such a shock to the household as might have been feared. It was not till he had actually departed that the full force of the blow was felt. Then it really was a blow. His going was so sudden, so inexorable, that nothing that might follow seemed impossible. Sometimes in the minds of the old uncles and Meg and Pheasant and Alayne, one disaster after another loomed as probable.

The next to leave were Renny and Rags. It was now the first of March. Renny had so recently been in England that it seemed as though he were merely making another visit. The name of Johnny the Bird once more appeared in conversation. The Vaughans and Pheasant and her boys spent much of their time at Jalna. Like their mother, the uncles wanted the young people about them. Alayne lived in a kind of dream. She had felt strangely moved in parting with Piers. Now in taking leave of Renny, her heart of hearts, she felt dreamlike and almost detached. She did not think, "He will come back" or "He will not come back." Her mind was not capable of such surmise. She only noticed the little things about him she had always loved. She could scarcely take her eyes off him. The passion of her earliest love for him tormented her; yet it was the passion of a dream.

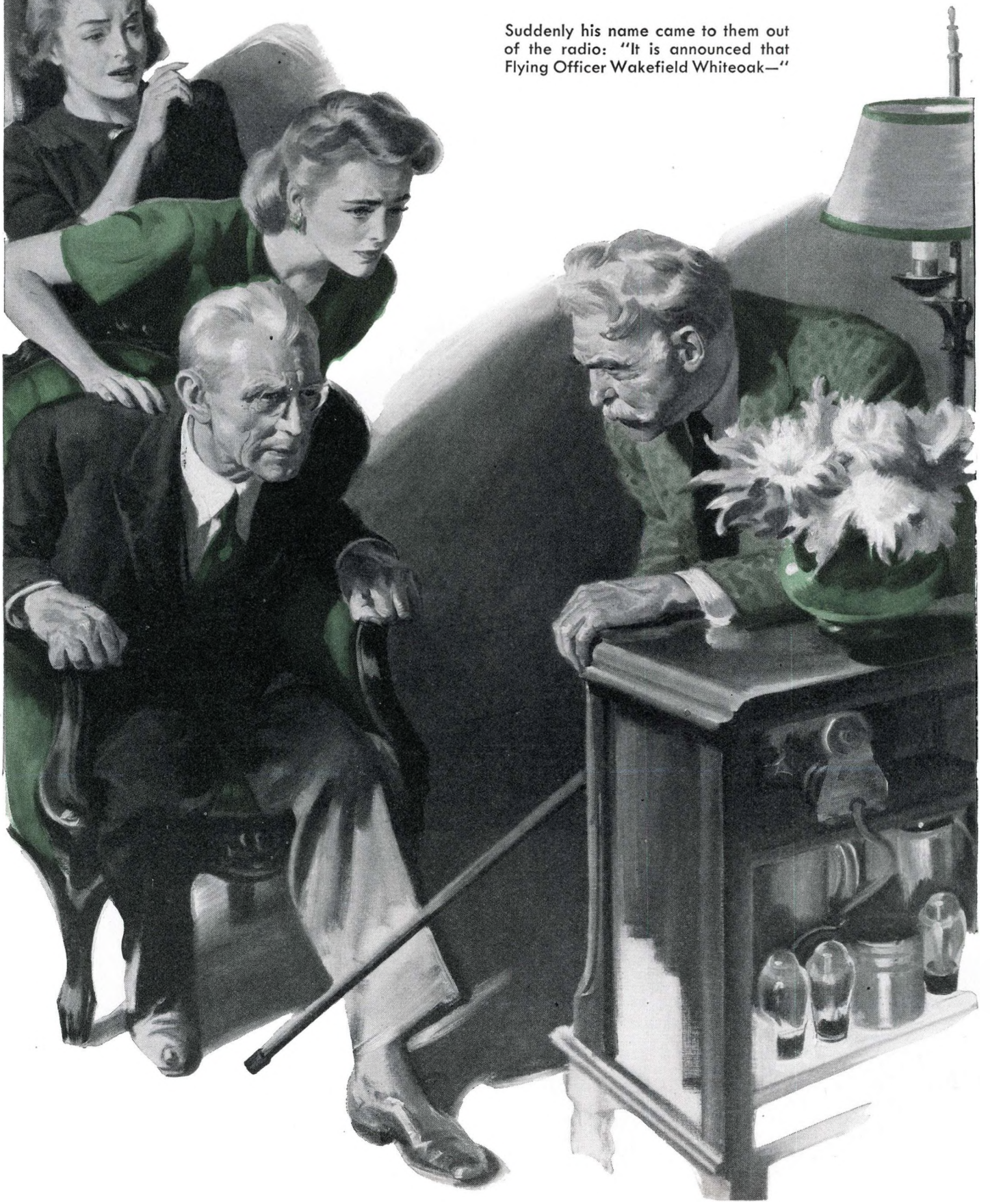
On his part he felt a constant gratitude toward her for the way she had borne the news of Molly's parentage. Things might have been so bad between them, but they were in truth happier than ever. He would sit beside her, holding her hand in his strong fingers, giving her directions as to what should be done in the stables about this or that, in certain eventualities—just as though she understood.

It was the first time he had ever talked to her of his horses, in that earnest familiar way, as though he were confident of her understanding and sympathizing. She knew that in doing this, he was showing his gratitude to her, throwing open that door of his other life. She was touched. But then—everything he did in these days touched her. There seemed a pathos and finality in all his acts, as though they were last rites before a sacrifice. Sometimes she felt like crying out that he ought not to leave her. He had fought in one war. His brothers were to fight in this. Let that be enough. Sometimes she was almost angered by the loyalty of this young country to the Motherland. Why should all these men be in training for a war in Europe? It might be better, she thought, if there were more hard-headed materialism and less idealism of a bygone generation. But there were other times when she too was carried on the tide and felt herself heart and soul in the struggle.

To Wakefield, it was a relief to have Renny out of the house. Renny's look of concern whenever his eyes rested on him had been

more of an irritation than a support to Wakefield. Renny could not come near him without touching him, as though to reassure himself that Wake was still his boy. But Wakefield did not want to be touched. He shied off like a nervous horse from all physical contacts. In the darkness of night he remembered the feel of Molly's arms, the caress of her lips; but in the daytime he wanted no one to touch him; and when once he had a glimpse of Molly in the road, he turned abruptly into the fields to avoid her. They had not met since the arrival at Jalna of her stepsisters.

In these last days at home, Paris Court was Wake's most congenial companion. Since he had disclosed the secret of Molly's birth to Finch, he could not be with Finch without a desire further to unburden himself. Yet what he most wanted was to close the door of his past. Now he avoided what formerly had attracted him. He had always loved to talk, but now he was



Suddenly his name came to them out of the radio: "It is announced that Flying Officer Wakefield Whiteoak—"

silent for hours together. He had always, when at Jalna, spent much time with his uncles, delighting in their reminiscences of the past and their old-world atmosphere. Now he avoided them, and they were hurt. He had always been a playfellow to the children, but now they instinctively kept out of his way. He no longer knew whether he was Catholic or Protestant, and did not care. But he did like Paris Court's carefree, worldly companionship. Paris was out for a good time in this life, and did not much care how or where he got it, or at whose expense. He had enjoyed his stay at Jalna, but was quite willing to leave it. One winter in that climate was enough for him. He had come to Canada, not with the intention but in the pleasant hope of finding a rich wife. He had met only one rich young woman, Ada Leigh, the sister of Sarah's first husband. He talked of her incessantly to Wakefield, making graceless jokes concerning his hopes. When almost at the last Paris proposed and to his amazement was accepted, Wakefield felt the first pleasure he had experienced since the blow had fallen on him and Molly.

As for Sarah, Parry's distant cousin, it delighted her to think that two Courts were to possess the Leighs' wealth. She and Paris threw their arms about each other and danced triumphantly round the drawing-room at Jalna.

The marriage followed quickly, and from then on Paris bore himself with the dignity of a married man, and a warm one at that!

THE day before leaving, Wakefield wrote a short letter to Molly and posted it at the railway station:

I cannot leave without saying good-by to you, yet I cannot bring myself to meet you. I dare not risk the comfort of a single touch from your hand or a word from your mouth. The ocean will part us, but it is no wider than the gulf that has already come between us. I pray that you do not feel—no, I don't pray—I shall never pray again! But I hope from the depths of my heart that you don't feel as shipwrecked as I do. I think you are steadier and more sane than I. Perhaps some day you will find another man you can love, but I do not believe you will find one to love you more deeply than I did—and do. Darling Molly!

Wakefield.

When Wakefield and Paris were gone, Finch found himself the only one of the brothers at home. It was a strange sensation for him to go to Piers' house and see only Pheasant, Nook and Philip. Surely at any moment the door would open and Piers would march in. But no, Piers had marched away to the war, in a private's uniform. It was like him to choose that shortest way of having his fling at the enemy. It was strange to go to Jalna and find only the uncles and Alayne and the children, to know that those three strange girls, with whom he had crossed the ocean, were installed in the house where Uncle Ernest and Aunt Harriet, such a short while ago, had had their home. Perhaps strangest of all was the returning to Vaughanlands to find Sarah utterly engrossed by her son, watching the first dawning of his intelligence, his first reaching out to her breast, with a sensuous delight.

At times when Finch saw her curl herself about the child like a supple Persian cat about her young, saw the concentrated gaze in her greenish eyes, where no white but only the iris showed, he felt a sardonic amusement. He had become, in the hour of her delivery, no more than the father of her child, the instrument by means of which she had reached her pinnacle of bliss. She had always been indolent, but now she was satisfied to recline motionless and watch the child by the hour. She no longer wanted new clothes for herself. Everything was lavished on him. She embroidered his initials, surrounded by wreaths of flowers, on his cot coverings. She bought him a silver porringer lined with gold, with his name engraved and the Court and Whiteoak crests emblazoned on either side. She looked on the other seven children of the family as nobodies and paupers as compared to him. It was not long before she had offended Meg, and Vaughanlands became too small to contain the two of them.

Finch was puzzled as to where he should install her, for he was determined to go back to England and do his share in the war if not in actual fighting. He had, since his return, given a number of recitals in the border cities of the United States and in Canada. He had given them with less nervous strain than ever before, but his heart had never been so little in his work. He felt strangely free and light. He was filled with wonder when he saw Sarah with her child, and remembered how she had enchained him in her passion. He had struggled in the chains of her desire, but now he was freed. She was as placid toward him as the waterlily toward the pool on which it floats—except where the child was concerned.

"I pity you," Meg would exclaim, "when that boy of yours is older. He's going to be the worst spoilt child on earth!"

Alayne solved the difficulty by suggesting that Pheasant should come with her boys to stay at Jalna. She had always been fond of Pheasant, and she loved little Nook. Then Sarah could take Pheasant's house till Piers' return. The rental would be a godsend to Pheasant.

Everyone fell in with this plan, and it was made the easier because Miss Pink had lately opened a small school which Pheasant's boys, Alayne's children and Roma could attend and be comfortably out of the way for the greater part of each day.

Finch had much time to himself in these days. He found pleasure in wandering about the countryside and in the woods, eagerly noting each fragile evidence of spring, the red leaf-buds of the maples, the catkins in the ravine and the joyful release of the stream. Scarcely a day passed when he did not go to the fox-farm. He would spend hours with the sisters, finding their company oddly congenial. He was determined to break down Marian's shyness, and counted it a triumph when she would laugh at some story of his boyhood or sit near the piano when he played. Sometimes he stayed to tea, then Molly would return from the town and join the group about the piano.

One day he found Molly there when he arrived. They were in terrible distress. A cablegram had come telling of Christopher's death. He had been killed in an airplane accident while training.

The four sisters did not seem able to take in the full meaning of the news. They were numbed and bewildered by it. But at the sight of Finch, they ran to him and clung about him, weeping. He put his arms about them, tears filling his own eyes, and tried to comfort them. But in the midst of his emotion he was startled by the electric thrill in his nerves when he felt Marian's slender body inside the circle of his arm. She lay against his breast, sobbing in complete forgetfulness of herself. He found himself pressing his lips to the silken fairness of her hair, calling her Marian, she calling him Finch. He felt shaken and strangely elated.

He had to be away for several days because of a recital, and when he returned to the fox-farm found Molly there, instead of at work as usual. She met him calmly. She said:

"I've had an offer from Hollywood."

"You have! But it's not the first, is it?"

"No. Wake and I had offers when we were in New York, but we didn't want to go. Now I'm sure it's the best thing to do. You see, I must earn money, and I should make quite a lot. Then too, the English actors out there give benefits for the British Red Cross. I can help England in that way. I want terribly to help. I want to go away from here and try to forget—all that has happened. I want to work hard and make money and forget—if I can." She looked with proud sorrow into Finch's eyes. "I've lost both Christopher and Wakefield. There's nothing left but work."

"Will your sisters be all right without you?"

"Quite. Everything is new and wonderful to them here. I want to do the best I can with—my life—to be worthy of Christopher and Wake. They're both gone, but I haven't really lost them. They still live in my heart."

GOING home, Finch thought of Wakefield. There was something selfish, he thought, something self-centered, even cruel, in the way Wakefield had behaved toward Molly. He tried to picture what he himself would have done in Wakefield's place. For one thing, he thought, he would have tried to do more to soften the blow for her. Wakefield had behaved, he began to feel, as though his own suffering were by far the greater. He had gone away without seeing her. He had behaved toward Renny as though Renny had done him a deliberate wrong. . . . Perhaps he was being unjust to Wakefield. He knew in his heart that he had always been jealous of him, of Wake's position in the family as opposed to his own. "Little play-actor!" he had often said of him in the old days.

Suddenly Finch stopped stock-still in the path. He had been struck by the remembrance of the nervous breakdown he had had a few years ago. He knew that he had made the household miserable because of his own wretchedness. Had he ever given a thought to the suffering of those about him? He could not remember having done so. Wake was not inflicting his unhappiness on the family. He was going forth to fight, perhaps to die. One thing was certain: He and Wake were not made of the stuff of Renny and Piers. Nor even of Eden. Even Eden! Why, Eden had borne one blow after another from fate and no one had heard him complain.

Thinking of Eden, he began to run, as though to escape. He ran through the twilight like a long lank ghost, past the lights of Jalna to Piers' house. Inside the door, he hesitated and listened. Sarah was playing an Irish air on her violin. The smell of fresh-baked bread came from the kitchen.

ON the calendar spring was named, but no one could name her in the open. It was April, cold and wet. Four people sat about the open fire in the sitting-room. It was a shabby but comfortable room, and its coziness recommended itself to them, especially in this backward spring. Birch logs burned on the hearth, and Nicholas' favorite chair was drawn close to the blaze. He was cramming tobacco into the bowl of his pipe. Alayne and Ernest had divided the morning paper between them. She had just been reading aloud of the fall of Copenhagen. Pheasant was in the window-seat, knitting a pullover for Piers. The door opened, and Mrs. Wragge brought in the post.

"Letters from England," she announced, handing them to Alayne. "I've one too, from me 'usband. Now we'll know all the detiles of the race. It made me 'eart pound just to see the envelope." She breathed heavily as she left the room.

Ernest leaned forward to peer at the addresses.

"Anything for me?"

"No, Uncle Ernest. There are just two. One for Pheasant, from Piers." Alayne gave it to Pheasant. "And one for me, from Renny."

"To think," boomed Nicholas, "that he would win the race! What a triumph! I'd have given a great deal to have been there to see it. Read out the letter, Alayne."

She opened it with a paper-knife and four closely written sheets of notepaper were disclosed.

"By Jove," said Nicholas, "that's a long letter for him."

"But what news!" exclaimed Ernest.

"Piers' letter is about the race too," said Pheasant.

The letter began: "My own darling wife," but she read it "Dear Alayne:

"I was delighted to get your united cablegram of congratulation. It was a good thought to send it, because it made me feel how happy you all are about Johnny the Bird's victory. I got hold of Piers and managed to wangle a few days' leave for him. So I was able to see Johnny the Bird in action before the great moment. I was very glad to see him, and it almost seemed that he recognized me. To tell you the truth, I forgot all about the war for a few days, also other troubles. And even now I can't help being very happy. Johnny the Bird showed himself in fine fettle. . . .

"The prize money will certainly be acceptable. . . . Piers was simply hilarious, and I never saw him—"

Alayne stopped abruptly.

Pheasant leaned forward. "Yes?" she said. "Go on. He says he never saw Piers—"

"'Gladder,'" finished Alayne, lamely.

"Drunker!" shouted Ernest. "And I don't blame him. I'd have got drunk too."

Nicholas patted Pheasant's hand, "Read Piers' letter, my girl, and see what he had to say for himself."

"Perhaps Alayne has more to read."

"The rest of the letter is purely personal," said Alayne, glancing over the last page.

Nicholas sat beaming through tobacco-smoke. "What a triumph!" he said. "What a triumph for the Jalna stables! And to think I was against his buying that horse!"

"Shall I read Piers' letter?" asked Pheasant.

"Yes, do."

She read aloud:

"'Dearest Pheasant: I promised you that I would go to Ireland to see young Maurice at the first opportunity. Well, Cousin Dermot wrote he was bringing him to England for the race. However, Dermot was laid up with lumbago and couldn't come. So I went to Ireland two days before the race. It was a pity I had such a short time to stay, for I enjoyed it thoroughly, and so did Mooey enjoy having me. You would be very glad you let him go for this visit if you could see him. I've never seen him look so well. He had a fine color in his cheeks, and he's grown much taller. It's easy to see that he's the apple of the old man's eye. It's going to be a wonderful thing for Mooey. Well, my wish is to get a crack at the Huns. If all goes well, I expect to leave for France in a few days. By the time you get this I'll be in the thick of it.

"'My love to all at home and don't worry.

"'Your loving Piers.'"

"I'm so glad about Mooey," said Alayne.

"And so am I," said Nicholas.

"A very nice letter," added Ernest.

Pheasant drew a deep breath. "Yes. Very nice!" She rose with the letter pressed between her hands. "I've things to do upstairs." She left the room, walking rather uncertainly.

"Poor little Pheasant," said Alayne. "It's hard for her, parting with both Mooey and Piers and not knowing when she'll see either of them again."

"Yes, indeed," agreed Ernest. "Piers has probably been in France for a fortnight, in the thick of it."

Nicholas puffed silently at his pipe.

The door opened, and Mrs. Wragge appeared. She held a telegram in her hand. She looked anxious.

"It's for Mrs. Piers," she said, in a whisper.

"Good God!" exclaimed Nicholas. "Something's happened to Piers!"

"Who is to open the telegram?" asked Ernest, turning ashen.

"I will," said Alayne. She took the yellow paper from Mrs. Wragge and held it in tense fingers.

"Would it be about Johnny the Bird, perhaps?" asked Nicholas. "Surely it's not bad news."

Ernest rose and gripped the back of his chair in his hands. "We had better hear the worst," he said.

Alayne read: "'Regret to inform you that Private Piers Whiteoak is missing.'"

"Read it again," said Nicholas. "I don't take it in."

She read it again.

Chapter Twenty-four

SIX weeks later Finch and Wakefield were dining together in a small restaurant. Finch had arrived from Canada, and Wakefield was on leave. Their meeting was a happier one than, at their last, Finch would have thought possible. He could not keep his eyes off Wakefield, wondering what was in his heart. Wake looked handsome in the R. A. F. uniform, and he was full—even a little boastful—of the excitements and hazards of his training.

They were a great contrast as they sat at table, their faces lighted by the amber glow from the table lamp. Finch's movements were hesitating, often awkward. He slumped in his chair, or raised himself suddenly, straightened his shoulders, and turned his eyes toward the black-curtained window as though he longed to see the sky. He was obviously hungry, and ate what was put before him without a discriminating glance. Yet there was something arresting about him that made people turn to give him a second look. Wakefield sat as though unconscious of his body. His movements were swift and sure, with the studied assurance of the actor. He ate less than Finch, but ate it with more relish. His eyes saw everything that went on in the room. Taciturnity and melancholy seemed to have left him. He looked lively, hard and reckless.

An orchestra was playing, and there was some desultory dancing. There would be much more later. There was a strained excitement in the air.

"There's a very attractive girl over there," said Wakefield. "I've met her. Would you like to dance?"

Finch shook his head. "Gosh, no! I've no heart for anything like that. Not since we heard about Piers."

Wakefield's eyes darkened, but he gave a little laugh. "Well—we may as well enjoy ourselves while we're here. It probably won't be for long."

"Do you think there's a chance that he's living?"

"Not the slightest. As far as I can find out, his unit was practically blown to pieces. Let's have a *liqueur*. What would you like?"

"You choose. I like anything."

Wakefield ordered Benedictine with their coffee. He was really grown up, Finch thought, with more poise than he himself would ever have. He sipped the *liqueur* and then said, in a low voice:

"It was a terrible time at Jalna. Pheasant is heart-broken. The uncles took it very hard too."

Wakefield moved uneasily in his chair. "I know. I know. Let's not talk about it."

Finch persisted: "Piers was always the strongest of us all. I just can't believe in this."

"I tell you I don't want to talk about it!" exclaimed Wake. "I've got to keep my nerve for flying. I've no time for worry about Piers. I worry more about Renny. God knows where he is! Somewhere—in that ghastly retreat! To think of four hundred thousand of them—cut off over there—fighting for their lives! They've no chance. They'll be annihilated."

Finch raised his glass in a shaking hand and took a gulp. Wakefield's swift change from reckless liveliness, to this passionate outburst of apprehension for Renny, had made Finch almost lose his self-control. The lights in the room shook. The music became a frightening drone.

But the *liqueur* steadied him. He was able to answer quietly enough: "Perhaps something will happen. A miracle—"

(Please turn to page 93)

"Keep your hands outside the coat!" Radell snapped. "And come on."

HIS MISTAKE

told in very few words

by DUANE DECKER

Illustrated by FREDERIC ANDERSON

RIORDAN ran out of gas about twenty minutes after he had chucked the main highway for the rutty dirt road. He snarled as he looked at the gas gauge—it was cockeyed; it still registered a third full. Riordan hadn't known about that. He'd only swiped the car an hour before.

It was still rolling, so he steered it, angrily, off the road onto a little cowpath that was handy. When it rocked to a dead halt, he got out and shoved it farther along the slight down-grade until it was well screened from the road by trees and brush. Then he looked around.

Thick woods. No voices, no people, no cars. A million birds made shrill piping noises everywhere, but outside of that, there was just a monotonous quiet. Riordan scowled at nature's glories. He wanted most of all to lie down, to sleep for a good long time; twenty hours of hard driving, car-switching and cop-dodging had made triggers of his nerves.

But he had another twenty miles to cover yet. Twenty miles to Enbridge and Joe's Place. At Joe's Place he could sleep and feel safe for the first time since sticking up the night clerk at the hotel back in Springfield.

Suddenly the boom of a gun broke the quiet. Riordan grabbed instantly for his automatic. That had been a shotgun discharge. It had gone off somewhere the other side of the road, and not very deep in the woods.

"Now I wonder—" Riordan thought.

He beat it across the road and slid through a thicket. At the other side of the thicket he found himself near the edge of a clearing. And right there he saw the hunter.

The hunter was holding a mass of shell-torn feathers in his hand. He stood near the center of the clearing. He was wearing a peaked hunter's cap, a khaki hunting-coat with big vents in the side, khaki breeches and puttees. The shotgun was packed snugly under his crooked right arm.

That gave Riordan a wonderful idea, and he gloated, under his breath. The way he was dressed right now, he realized, was dangerous: double breasted chalk-striped suit, homburg hat, spats—Riordan looked like Broadway, top to bottom. And that was bad, because hicks would notice him too much if he bummed a ride in to Enbridge. A smart-looking guy stood out in a place like this where everybody was a rube. Rubes, Riordan thought contemptuously, were always suspicious of other people who didn't look like rubes too.

But if he were dressed in a hunting outfit, then, getting through to Enbridge—and Joe's Place—would be a cinch. Another thing about rubes was that they didn't make trouble for their own kind. "With that hunting outfit," Riordan thought, "I can stroll down the road and bum a ride easily."

The hunter's back was turned, and so he hadn't seen Riordan. Silently, Riordan darted across the clearing, holding his breath as he got close. It was a break for him that the hunter had just brought a bird down—he was busy, looking it over carefully.

As Riordan got to a point close behind the hunter's back, he raised his automatic aloft. Then he brought it down hard, with no warning but the sharp swish of air.

The hunter toppled like a tenpin. And then Riordan wasted no time. He removed the hunting outfit, took off his own natty suit and began to climb into the khaki clothes. *(Please turn to page 99)*

All joined in the sinister chorus—"*Pretty Soft!*"

PRETTY

The confession of a man who used to think he could fill any of his friends' jobs with his eyes closed.

THE other fellow's job is always much easier than our own. We believe, while we are working our fingers and brains to the bone, that all our friends are sitting around in jobs which require nothing more than plenty of nerve and a good-looking receptionist.

An artist nourishes the notion that a business executive's only justification for his high rating in the income-tax brackets is a trick talent for looking important. And a business man believes that an artist is a weird creature who leisurely tosses gobs of paint at a canvas with a lazy thoughtlessness and indirection.

While I was still in a delirium of youthful ambition, and working at the rate of eighteen hours a day, the two words I heard most frequently were "*Pretty soft!*" There seemed to be a continual parade of leering banshees passing my desk all day pouring those two words into my ear—"*Pretty soft!*" Janitors, insurance men, reporters, advertising-solicitors, prize-fighters, politicians—all joined that sinister chorus—"*Pretty soft.*" I seemed to be the only one in the whole world holding down a soft job. Anybody could sit down at my drawing-board and do what I was doing. The only credit they gave me was that I got there first.

The truth of the matter was that I was working so hard I did not have the energy or the inclination to explain how much of myself I had to put into my work: How the actual drawing was the least part of the job. How I lay awake half the night thinking of ideas. How I had to seek out all sorts of people—dopes, bores, egomaniacs, hypochondriacs, nuts—to get a line on human nature to give a note of authenticity to my crazy humor. All this, to say nothing of the number of references I had to consult so as not to be at the mercy of ruthless readers who were always looking for a slip-up in facts.

Members of the Pretty-Soft Club hadn't the vaguest notion of the elements that went into the creation of a cartoon. And I saw no reason to enlighten them. In fact, I felt somewhat superior myself. To me, *their* "work" looked like some childish task that is given to inmates of a home for mentally deficient during their hours of recreation. I could fill their jobs with my eyes closed and one hand tied behind my back. A short course in a night school for morons, and I'd be ready for *their* battle of life. . . .

When my oldest son, Tommy, awoke at noon last Christmas day and inspected his new portable phonograph and squash racket, his mother was shocked at the scabrous state of his hair. It was growing thickly over his collarbone, giving the back of his neck a weedy appearance. She had been after him for a week to get a haircut. He was going to a dance with a very special date this Christmas night, and it became suddenly urgent that he look his best. He realized the overgrown state of his neck when Mother held up a mirror. "Gee," he said, "I look like a bad lie on a golf course!"

He dressed quickly and announced that he was going out to get a haircut. The futility of this resolution did not dawn on us until he was already out in the hall waiting for the elevator. Barbershops were not open on Sundays or holidays. I called him back and told him that getting a haircut on Christmas day was something like getting an honest statement from Goebbels. It was next to impossible.

But Mother suggested that we try, anyway—we could call up our regular barber on the chance that he might have come into the shop to give one of the other barbers a shampoo. "Barbers can do anything they want to other barbers on Sundays and holidays," she said, "provided they do not break any of the union rules." We dialed our barber's number, but there was no answer. Then we started to think of all the barbers in New York. There was Mother's hairdresser, Peter. There were shops in the Grand Central and Pennsylvania depots—also in all the large hotels and clubs. We even thought of a barber we once saw shaving a sick friend in Lenox Hill Hospital. We began to call them up.

It was a forbidding list, but Mother, fortunately, loves to telephone. She goes to sleep at night with the receiver on her pillow. She calls up her friends at six in the morning and awakens them with a smile (her smile, not theirs). In all the years we have been married I have never gotten anything but a busy signal when I tried to call my home. If during the day I felt a sudden craving for split-pea soup for dinner, I had to send the cook a telegram.

Well, Mother phoned exactly twenty-seven barbers without rounding up a single one. As you can imagine, this took some time, and as the number of failures continued to pile up, an atmosphere of panic developed. Tommy took another look in the mirror and said he now looked like a Yorkshire poodle.

A most natural solution suddenly came to my mind. Why hadn't I thought of it before? I'd trim Tommy's hair myself! Barbers didn't have to know anything! Nobody had to know anything! Wasn't that proven to me very early in my career?

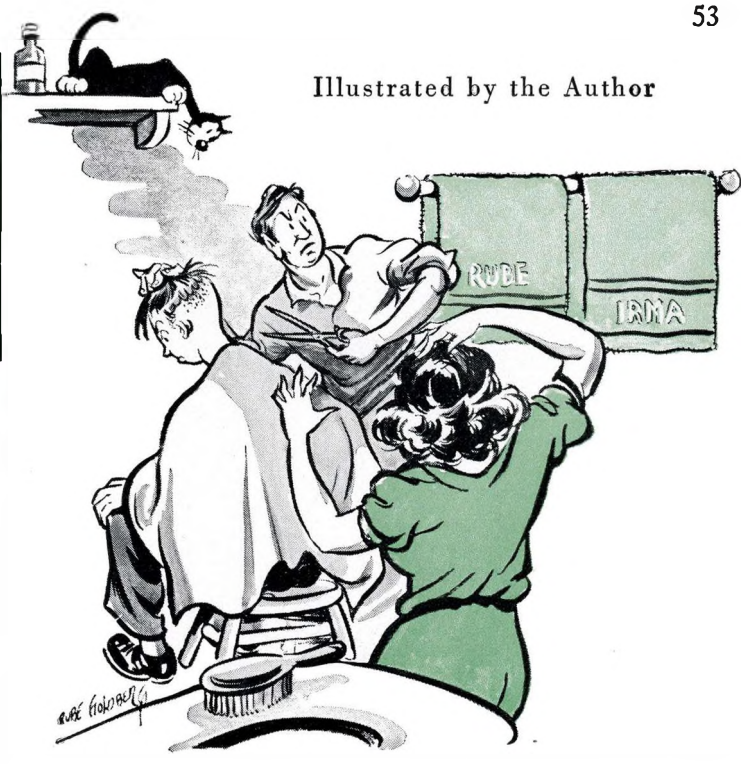
Looking at Tommy with my most paternal smile to inspire his confidence, I said: "It really doesn't look so bad on top. It's only a bit scraggly in the back. Get me the scissors. I'll fix it up."

Mother gave me that familiar look of apprehension which I had come to recognize whenever I started to open a can or hang a picture. But this did not deter me. Haircutting was different.

Mother phoned exactly twenty-seven barbers.

SOFT *by* Rube Goldberg

Illustrated by the Author



Taking a disgusted look at the back of Tommy's neck, she said: "A moth could have done better!"

Tommy looked concerned. Respectfully but firmly, he said: "Don't bother, Pop. I'll go to the dance the way it is. The fellows in the movies don't have their hair clipped in the back any more."

But I couldn't be put off. I now had an uncontrollable urge to trim the hair at the back of Tommy's neck. It was like wanting to touch wet paint or taste a new drink at the Beachcomber's. I had never cut hair before. Why should I be deprived of this simple enjoyment, when idiots like barbers were allowed to do it as much as they liked?

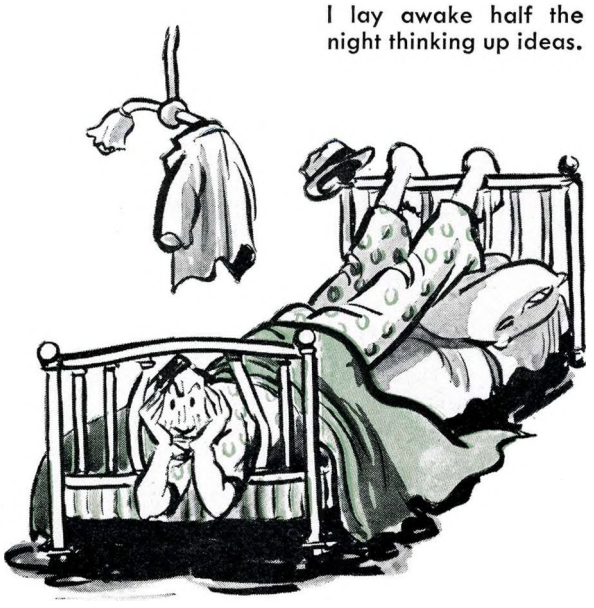
Maybe it was the gleam in my eye or the commanding note in my voice that caused Tommy to submit. But he went quietly into the bathroom with me, and I went to work with the greatest nonchalance. *Snip, snip, snip* went the scissors. I thought of the way Charley held the comb when I had watched him cutting my own hair in the barber-shop mirror. I recalled the short crisp clicks of the scissors as they glided softly over my own scruff. I hummed a few snatches of song with the joy of one in the midst of a new and thrilling experience. But this joy was all too brief. The scissors did not respond to my fingers as snappily as it did to Charley's. The wisps of hair did not float to the floor in silky wraithlike flight as they had done in the barber-shop. In fact, the immediate result seemed far from satisfactory. For some inexplicable reason the base of Tommy's skull began to take on the scalloped contour of a summer awning.

I seemed to be digging rather than cutting. I found out, much to my surprise, that once you cut off hair, you can't put it back on again. Tommy started to get nervous. I started to get nervous. The job got more botchy. Instead of having a fine upstanding boy for a son, I now had a plucked chicken. I began to realize that I myself was a dead pigeon!

Suddenly Tommy jumped out of his chair and shouted: "For God's sake, Pop, quit it!" Mother came running into the bathroom. Of course she knew what was the matter. Taking a deliberate, disgusted look at the back of Tommy's neck, she said: "A moth could have done better!"

I tried to blame it on the scissors and the light, and the fact that Tommy wiggled. But I knew in my heart it was me—me, the jerk who looked with disdain upon all other jerks. Me, the idiot who thought all barbers were idiots. Tommy was ruined.

I lay awake half the night thinking up ideas.



Just then Georgie, our younger son, came crawling out of his room. He asked drowsily: "What goes on?" We explained what had happened. The condition of Tommy's neck was mute evidence of the tragedy that had entered our home on this peaceful Christmas day. Georgie was now fully awake. He suggested (either because he felt sorry for Tommy or me or both of us): "There must be a barber loose somewhere in New York today. Leave it to me. I'll find one!"

He hurried into his clothes without even looking at his own gifts under the tree, went downstairs and jumped into his runabout, which fortunately had been standing out in front of the house all night. We leaned far out the window and waved good luck to him as he drove off. I wanted to jump, but Mother grabbed me.

Georgie was gone about an hour. During that time I carefully avoided Tommy and Mother. I locked myself in the library and picked up a book. It happened to be Anton P. Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." It was just my bad luck that *Uncle Vanya* needed a haircut. I kept staring ahead of me and listening. I heard the leering banshees saying, "Pretty soft!" and I heard myself answering them with the same two mocking words. It seemed ages. Finally the house phone rang, and I rushed out to answer it. It was Georgie, talking from the lobby downstairs. His voice sounded tired and had the unmistakable note of defeat.

"I've been all over town," he said. "I went up and down Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway and over to Madison and Lexington and Third. The shops are all closed tighter than a drum. I tried a lot of hotels, too. But they told me it was no use. There isn't a barber available in the whole of New York. Too bad."

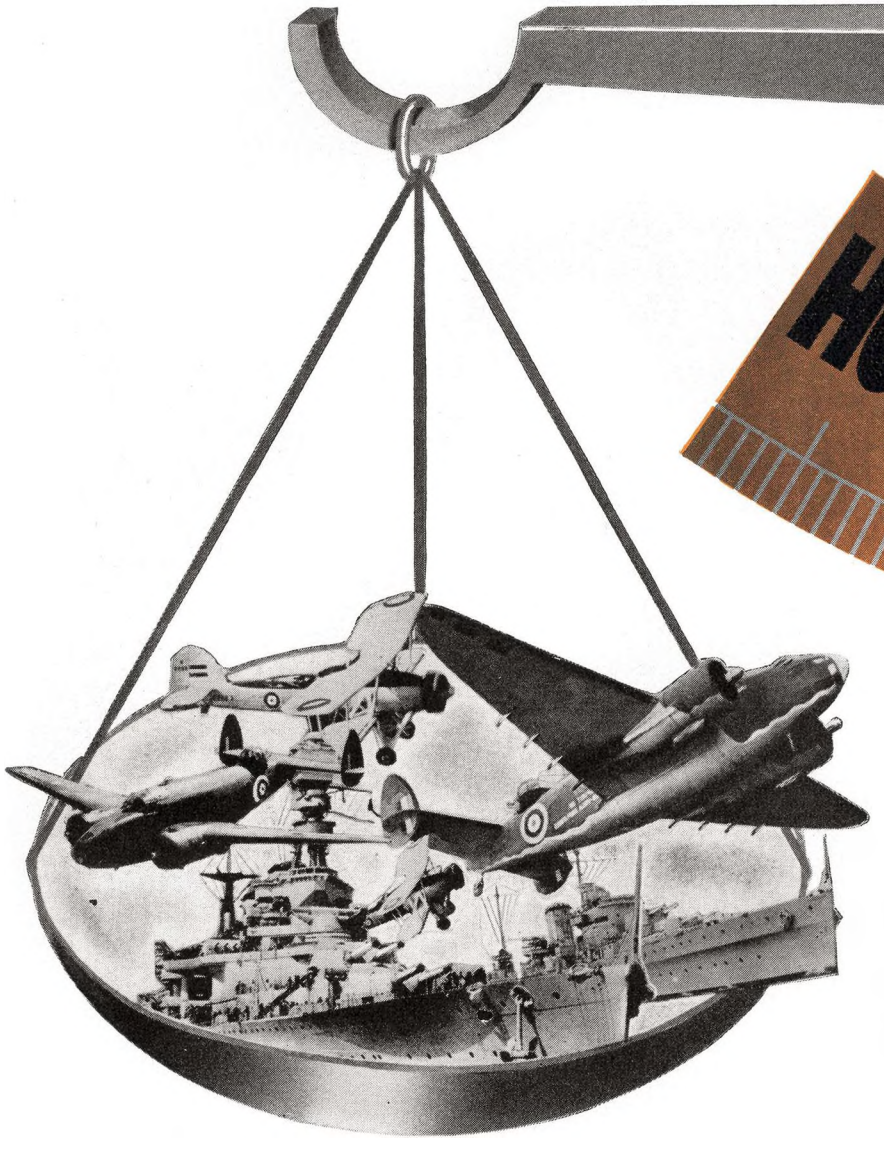
I CRAWLED back into the library, afraid to face Tommy and Mother with the awful truth. I did not pick up a book this time. I picked up a long paper-cutter. It had a knifelike edge. It wouldn't take more than a few seconds. *Scrunch,* and it would be all over. I saw the headlines in the morning paper: "MIDDLE-AGED MAN TAKES LIFE . . . . despondent . . . . worked as cartoonist but wanted to be a barber."

Then the front door opened, and I heard a babble of conversation. I went out cautiously, and there was Georgie with our uniformed doorman. Georgie was shouting: "Mother, look what I found. He heard me talking on the house phone downstairs, and said he used to be a barber! He's just filling in as a doorman until he can get a job at his own trade. We're saved!"

The doorman took Tommy into the bathroom and evened up the boy's hair in the back. He trimmed it around the ears. It was beautiful. I gave him two dollars.

I thought of the doorman all the rest of the day and dreamed of him that night. Two dollars wasn't enough! There are no such words as *"Pretty soft!"*

WHERE ARE WE



HOW LONG WILL

WE ASKED THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN ALMOST UNCANNILY CORRECT IN IMPORTANT PREDICTIONS. HERE'S HIS ANSWER.

HOW long will the war last?

If you ask the question in Germany, it will call forth an astonished look, and invariably a quick, unhesitating response: "It will be over this Christmas." In England the reply to the same query will be a long, inscrutable stare through narrowed lids, followed by a noncommittal, "Oh, it'll take quite a bit."

Somewhere between "Christmas" and that "quite a bit" lies the real answer to the question.

No one in the whole wide world, of course, can definitely say he knows the exact answer. Not even Hitler or Churchill could be much more precise than the man in London's street. Yet I believe that, without infringing on the domain of prophets or crystal-gazers, one can—provided one divests oneself completely of emotional wishful thinking—reach some definite conclusions as to the length of the war. I believe that a sufficient number of incontrovertible facts is known to all of us to enable us to draw some logical conclusions. The war has already revealed enough indisputable verities to justify at least an attempt to apply the rules of deductive reasoning to the question of its duration.

Let us consider the three possibilities for the outcome of the war: A decisive victory by Germany and her allies; a decisive victory by England and her allies; or a stalemate between the two.

Can Hitler score a decisive victory?

In order to achieve a clean-cut triumph, Hitler would have to subdue Russia, carry out a successful invasion of the British Isles, prevent the British government and fleet from continuing the war from the Empire's dominions, colonies and mandated territories, and finally, force the surrender of the United States. But the mere defeat of Russia will not suffice for him. He must annihilate the Soviets and completely remove them as a military threat. It will not be enough for him to smash England. He must virtually gag every Englishman, occupy Canada and Australia, dismantle their war industries and destroy every single British naval and aerial base on the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Mediterranean.

Hitler cannot claim victory until he has obtained full industrial control over the United States, in order to prevent the building up of an American war-machine that might challenge his domination. He can have no hope for peace on his terms until he has rendered impotent all the anti-Nazi forces in both the Eastern and the Western hemispheres. In other words, Hitler is in the position of a murderer who cannot enjoy the fruits of his crimes until he has killed off the last policeman on his trail.

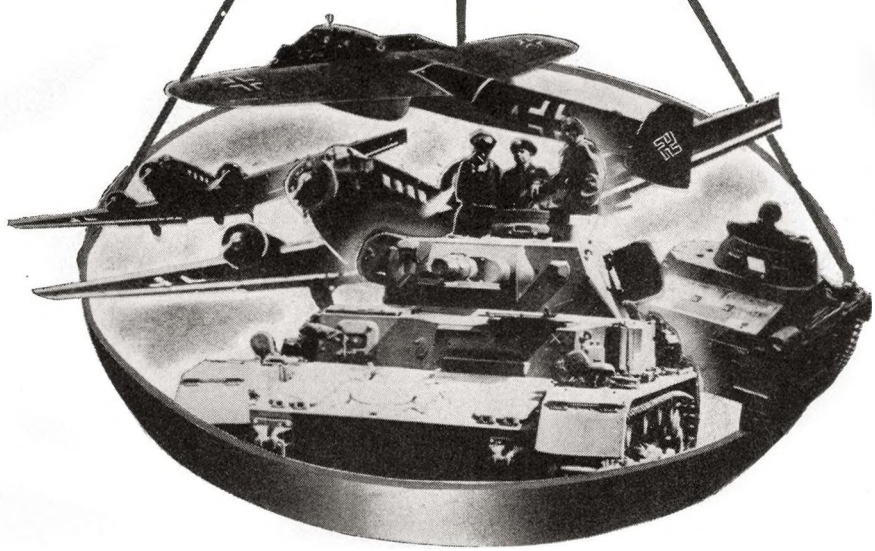
The carrying out of so gigantic a program, executed by a series of *blitz* moves such as his successive assaults on the European countries and Russia, lies entirely within the realm of possibility. But it would demand a minimum of three years, devoted not so much to the actual fighting as to the organization of each campaign and the subsequent consolidation of conquered territories.

Can England and her allies win a decisive military victory?

Her task is both simpler and more difficult than that of Germany.

GOING AND WHY?

THE WAR LAST?



By

PIERRE VAN PAASSEN

Author of those sensational best sellers "Days of Our Years" and "The Time Is Now"

It is simpler because Britain does not have to conquer and hold new continents, occupy and police thousands of square miles, subjugate millions of recalcitrant people. All she needs do is to defeat Hitler. It is more difficult, however, because England has no offensive war-machine today. Still, there is an articulate British military leadership that firmly believes in the feasibility of a British invasion of France and a subsequent march into Germany. To achieve this, an air-borne mechanized army would have to be built and organized. Gliders and parachutes would drop men, while special planes (already under construction) would land fully manned light and heavy tanks at strategic points behind the German lines in France. Protected by a ceiling of thousands of bombing and fighting planes, the mechanized British units would drive the Germans back, and with the help of the civilian population of the now occupied areas, rout them into frantic flight.

That is the British plan for a decisive victory, reduced to non-technical language. But even the most optimistic English leaders admit that the execution of this strategy would require from two to three years of preparation.

Is a stalemate between England and Germany possible?

England, backed by the industrial and human resources of the United States, can prevent a decisive German victory almost *ad infinitum* (unless Britain's present War Cabinet, headed by Winston Churchill, gives way to an appeasement leadership—a development which, although highly unlikely, cannot be entirely eliminated as a possibility). On the other hand, Hitler, if he succeeds in organizing the vast resources of a defeated Russia, could defy Great Britain's economic blockade for an unlimited period. The position of the two opposing forces would then be such that each would have the power to nullify the other's efforts to deal the decisive blow. England, aided by American production, would replace the shipping lost through Nazi submarines, while a huge air-fleet would gradually bring her impregnability. Germany, again, would at all times be able to replenish her war equipment sufficiently to carry on a defensive campaign. From a coldly military viewpoint, therefore, a stalemate stretching over the next four years is by no means impossible.

What does our balance sheet show?

It appears that a German-administered knock-out blow in about three years is still possible. But we find also that a decisive British victory within almost the same period cannot be ruled out, and that a third possibility, of a stalemate lasting four years, definitely remains within the realm of reality. All this, strangely enough, but quite logically, adds up to a Hitler collapse in about six years from now.

Here are the reasons:

(1) Hitler, in order to win, must conquer the United States as well as the rest of the world. I do not think he can do this as long as President Roosevelt's policy and defense program prevail. That means he is stopped for the next *(Please turn to page 87)*

WANTED—

More and better jobs than ever before

WHERE ARE WE GOING AND WHY?

Six million new workmen must be found by us by the end of 1942. About one million must be trained to supervise, plan for and direct the others. Thus the war is creating new opportunities for our youth.

By
CHARLES HURD

IT is a curious fact that the same emergency which forces the United States to go on a war footing is producing a greater immediate opportunity for youth than anything that has ever happened in the history of the United States.

War today is a contest of industries, of vast organization and vast production. The fact is becoming clearer that it is fought in the factories, at work-benches and on drafting-boards, more than in the air or on land or on the sea. For each soldier, sailor and aviator, there must be eighteen civilians supplying him with arms and munitions and clothes and all the tools of warfare.

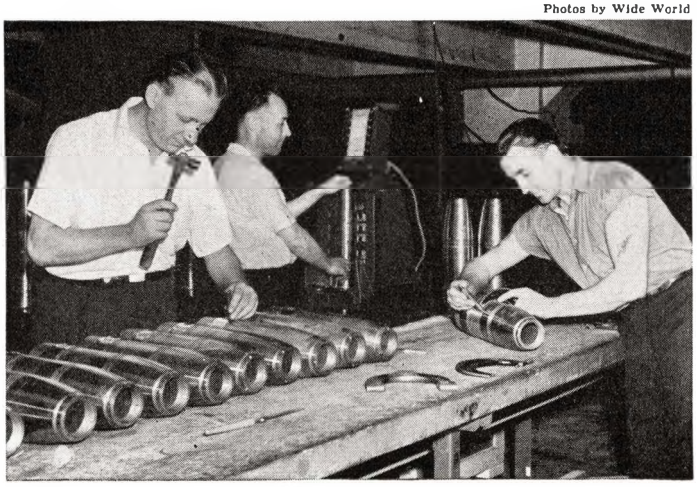
Whether a country actually is at war, or whether it is preparing its strength to meet any challenge, makes very little difference. The needs are the same, as we see each day with announcements of new contracts, new programs, new priorities. The needs are for trained men and specialized machines, and most of all there is the need for capable brains and hands, for strength and the eager flexibility of youth.

If this country's "youth" consists of its men from seventeen to thirty-five years of age, the number in the armed services is a small minority. That minority, by its training in crafts and discipline, is receiving a special kind of opportunity.

What of the other millions?

The simplest reply is that life is opening to them a page of opportunity such as never before was written in this or any other country. The United States has had its stages of development by the opening of new frontiers. It has developed new cycles of endeavor in every generation since the Civil War. But never before has it created opportunity for youth in such variety, and literally given youth the means to fit himself for it. There is no promise in this opportunity that youths will become millionaires with little work. There is no ironbound guarantee for the future. In fact, there are no "cushy" jobs. The thing offered is more substantial than such promises—the offer to youth is one of opportunity to get a toe-hold on life.

Photos by Wide World



Inspecting shells at Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia.

Final inspection of mortar field-guns at Watervliet, New York.

A MILLION MORE SUPERVISORS

As recently as two years ago the million young men who came of age each year were new liabilities in a disorganized social system. Most trades were closed to them. College graduates often found the local filling-station or the corner drug-store offering the best opportunity available. Such work made their expensive training and hard study a joke. Today the country still has a disorganized economy to consider, but that is a matter for the future. Now it is the land of opportunity for youth, particularly for educated or trained youth.

For those who have no training, there are opportunities to get it in capsule form, and to step after a few months into jobs once reserved for men with college degrees in engineering and technical subjects. Careers again are waiting to be made, by the thousand and the hundreds of thousands.

As always, the greatest opportunities are open to the best-trained young men. But the important thing is that there is opportunity in some degree for every youth, if he is reasonably intelligent, eager to learn, and endowed with the capability to absorb training and discipline in a hurry, but thoroughly.

The industrial program is so new that its size is hard to comprehend, but conservative persons estimate that six million new workmen must be found by the end of 1942. Of these six million, about one million must be trained to supervise, plan for and direct the others. Each of the five million must have some training for the job he is to fill. Untrained hands are useless in the modern industrial age. In 1941 training goes hand in hand with opportunity.

Only one-fifth of the forty billions of dollars authorized for defense has been expended, and that mostly for land and things which were on hand. Only one-third of the contracts have been let, and many of these are for factories and shipyards and machines not yet designed, let alone built. Nevertheless, almost every man capable today of being a superintendent or an inspector or a foreman or a supervisor is at work, and usually working overtime. Productive brains have been spread to the maximum. Here is where the prime opportunity for youth exists.

Relatively few of the men who will direct the enlarged program will come from among older workmen. These generally have found their level of efficiency. The new technicians and engineers must be developed.

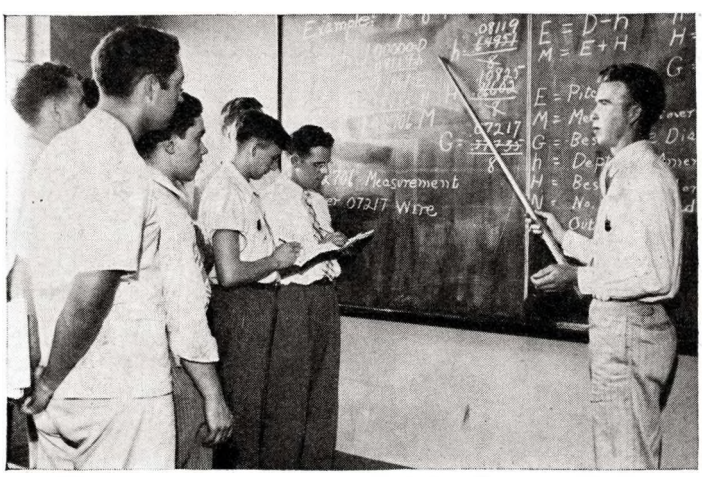
A country which needs a million new industrial bosses must create them almost overnight, because the only regular source of supply of new production engineers has been for many years the annual graduating classes of the scientific and technical schools. These schools produce each year between twelve thousand and fourteen thousand graduates. That is the current supply available in a year when the defense program needs hundreds of thousands.

Purdue University furnishes an example of this need. As long ago as last December, representatives of industries began interviewing members of the class graduated in June. To this one university went representatives of 193 industries. Army and Navy officers were there too, offering commissions with active duty commencing immediately after graduation. Every graduate of Purdue had a wide range of jobs open to him. This was not exceptional; it was typical of all engineering schools.

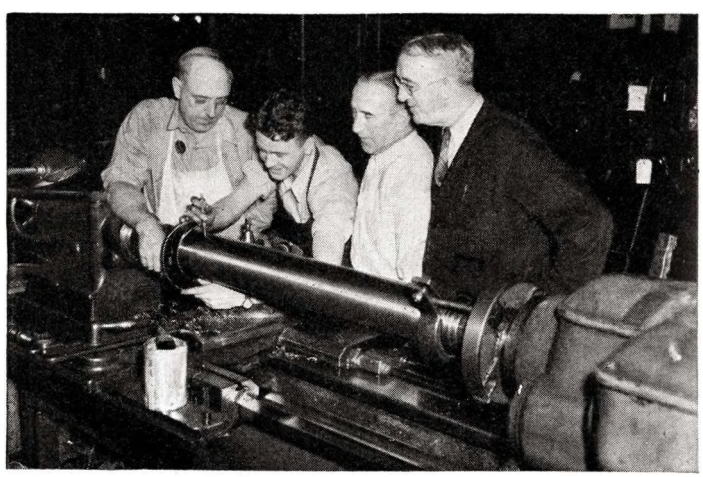
These graduates of engineering schools get the cream of the opportunities, but they are spread so thinly as hardly to make a dent in them. Dr. R. A. Seaton, Director of Engineering Defense Training, of the Office of Education, estimates that between one-half and two-thirds of the current crop of university engineering graduates have gone into the armed services alone.

The Army and the Navy need trained technical men in great numbers. But so do the Maritime Commission, the aircraft industry, the new ammunition factories and almost every type of machinery manufacturer.

FOR every technical expert in the Army, manufacturers supplying the Army need from three to six men of the same type. The Ordnance Bureau of the Army, which handles only the guns and ammunition, notified educational authorities that it needed for its expanded work 295 ammunition- *(Please turn to page 91)*



Future machinists attending school at the Rock Island Arsenal.



Watertown arsenal workers speed up production of big guns.

William L. Batt, Deputy Director of Production.

YOUR THREE NEW BOSSES

Charles B. Henderson, Chairman of the Board of the R.F.C.

They will decide more and more things for you which you used to decide for yourself.

WHERE ARE WE GOING AND WHY?

By **WILLIAM HARD**

SOME people think that our national defense effort will give us a permanent governmentalism. They think that the government will take over all business and operate it, and that we shall end up with a dictatorship and a totalitarian state.

It becomes interesting, then, to look at the men who have been placed in key positions in our national defense effort in Washington. Three among the most outstanding of them are here portrayed, in their characters and in their views and tendencies. One of them comes from business, one from regular Democratic Party politics, one from the Rooseveltian personal brain-trust. All are in vitally strategic posts. Together they give the reader a significant insight into what is going on and into what it is going on *toward*.

William L. Batt

MR. BATT is Deputy Director of Production in the Office of Production Management, which handles the civilian side of our effort to produce the war goods that will down Hitler. He stands very high in Washington, and seems likely to stand higher and higher. He is approved and admired by both the Old Dealers and the New Dealers.

He comes from business and comes with a great record of business success. He long has been head of that eminent manufacturing concern in Philadelphia called SKF Industries. It makes anti-friction bearings for wheels and for just about all other things that go round. Without frivolousness it can be said that Mr. Batt himself is an anti-friction apparatus. He goes round and round amicably and patiently and cheerfully with all the contrary sorts of people that Washington contains.

The New Dealers like him because he was the first distinguished business man to see and say that "'business as usual' is over," and that this country, in order to down Hitler, must make a really "all out" effort. Months and months ago he said to an audience of fellow business men:

"Industry is not without blame. We industrialists have been thinking of national defense on too small a scale. We have been thinking also of the possibility of 'lost markets' after the present national defense effort is past. Let me tell you that a lost market is of no consequence in comparison with the possible loss of the present battle. For what is that battle? It is a battle to assure the continuation of free enterprise, practiced by a free people in a free country. Let us be bold. The public in the end will never forgive us if we now are timid."

Mr. Batt was, and is, an evangelist to business men who are taking national defense half-heartedly. The New Dealers applaud him on that point; and they applaud him also on his support of collective bargaining for labor. He tells business men that the National Labor Relations Act may be modified but will not be repealed, and that collective bargaining is here to stay. He even goes farther. He says:

"The workingman is beginning to acquire a certain right against arbitrary discharge. He is beginning to acquire a certain right to his job, as if it were property. Well! If to that sense of property in a job we can tie a sense of responsibility for doing the job well, we shall perhaps all be better off. A sense of property, a sense of ownership, a sense of possession, is the solidest basis for a successful and happy country."

That is bold New Dealism. But Mr. Batt is also bold Old Dealism. He tells his New Deal colleagues flatly that the Government in Washington in recent years "has gravely discouraged the initiative and adventurousness that used to be so characteristic of American management." He tells them also that certain New Deal laws and certain New Deal orations "have frightened our investors out of putting their money into the development and expansion of industry and employment."

Nor does he hesitate to rebuke labor when labor plays off-side. He has said:

"I am a friend of labor; and for that very reason, I see with regret that certain unwise labor leadership is trying to capitalize on the present national emergency. . . . I wholly approve of the action of Mr. Leon Henderson of the Office of Price Administration in putting a ceiling on prices that threaten to rise unduly. But I also believe that when labor puts its wage-price up, it should be just as fully accountable to the Office of Price Administration as the business men are who fix the final selling prices of goods."

Now is this man an Old Dealer or a New Dealer? I think that in him—and in other men of more or less the same type in Washington—we begin to see an era in which the Old Deal and the New Deal will be merged again into a common Americanism.

Mr. Batt himself is a well-nigh perfect specimen of the common general un-class-conscious American. He was born on a little farm in southern Indiana. He worked

on that farm all through his earliest boyhood. His family moved ultimately into northern Indiana, to the town of Lafayette, the seat of Purdue University. His father there became a railroad shop foreman. Young Bill went to school in the daytime and worked in the shops at night. He would be so tired that when he went to see the little girl who is now Mrs. Batt he once fell unromantically but appealingly asleep on the porch. He believed in working; and he believed that working would get you somewhere. When asked to write a motto in guest-books, he would always scrawl: *"I have important business, the tide whereof is now."*

Out of the tide in the railroad shops he swam up into the tide in the Purdue University engineering shops. He was already a mechanic. In 1907 he was graduated from Purdue with an engineering degree. He was offered a job in Philadelphia. He went. It was the first time he had ever been in a Pullman car.

He learned in Philadelphia that you had to have evening clothes. He bought a complete outfit, including a top hat, and stood in front of a mirror and made a photograph of himself to send to the folks back home to prove his acquisition of metropolitan trappings. Then he looked for some place to go to in them.

He loves to toil, but he loves also to circulate among people. That is a basic reason why he is making good in Washington. In Philadelphia he soon became a top executive, first for the Hess-Bright Company and then for SKF Industries. He never got pompous. One of the owners of SKF said:

"We trust him; because, when he makes a mistake, we learn of it first from him." He remains truly modest. He will say:

"I have only a common mediocre mind. I listen to people, and they give me ideas, and then perhaps I grasp one of the ideas and start battling for it."

This passion of his for learning from people made him very active in business committees of numerous sorts outside his regular daily SKF job. He became President of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He became chairman of the trade association of the whole anti-friction-bearing industry. He became a member of the Resolutions Committee of the National Association of Manufacturers. He became Chairman of the Board of the American Management Association. He became Chairman of the Business Advisory Council of the United States Department of Commerce. These and many other similar experiences in committee work prepared him admirably for his present duties in that vast phase of public life in Washington called the Office of Production Management.

A top executive in private business can *order*. A man in the public service has to *"clear"* and *"check"* with other men. Public life is committee work all day long. Bill Batt is a practiced adept at it. He can "clear" and "check" hour after hour with not a riffle on the surface of his placidity. He says rather inelegantly but very aptly: "Just give a boil long enough, and it will break." He has thus become one of the main meeting-grounds of the thoughts of the Old Dealers and of the thoughts of the New Dealers in Washington.

And to what vision do those combined thoughts bring him? As he labors in his really very lofty governmental station toward making this country readier and readier for successful defense, what does he see for us after the emergency is over? Is he despondent? He is *not*.

He says, though, first, that we must *plan* our future and that we must begin our planning *now*. He has given his full support to Congressman Voorhis' far-reaching proposal for a Planning Commission *now* to make researches and suggestions for our post-war governmental and industrial policies.

But what sort of planning? Here we come to the inmost core of the whole matter. Batt says:

"Economic planning tied up to political control can never be successful in a democratic country. It is business itself that has to plan. It can be helped by government; but it is business itself that must and will make a planned use of facts and figures in order to give us a complete use of the whole man-power and the whole machine-power of the whole American nation."

In that philosophy you see the Old Deal and the New Deal brought together. Planning? Yes. But not just by government. Planning *by all of us* in a democratic collaboration of all elements, public and private.

And with what results? Mr. Batt, after his business experience and after his governmental experience, has just as much faith as when he used to write in guest-books: *"The tide is now."* He says:

"If we tackle the problem of peace with an energy comparable to that which we are now devoting to the opposite process, we can get a price structure which will reach a vast untouched reserve of potential consumers of the good things of life, and we can build up a standard of living the like of which has never been seen in the world before."

When you meet the pessimists, remember also Bill Batt, who is in a good spot for training a telescope on what is to come.

Charles B. Henderson

A LITTLE while ago Mr. Henderson, at the age of sixty-eight, came to a new phase in his long career in private business and in public life, and was chosen to be Chairman of the Board of the world's most

Photos by Harris & Ewing and Wide World

Leon Henderson, head of the Office of Price Administration.

important public bank: The United States Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Since its origin in 1932 it has done a business of eleven billion dollars. It makes almost any private bank look pretty puny. It could go a long way, if it chose to do so, toward making public banking instead of private banking the energizing force in the credit economy of our country.

Mr. Henderson has been a member of its Board of Directors since 1934. He was appointed by his old personal friend and old political associate, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Yet nobody has ever been known to call him a New Dealer. He is a Democrat, all right. He was a Democratic district attorney back in Nevada long ago. He was also a Democratic member of the Nevada legislature. He has been also a Democratic United States Senator. That was in the days just after World War I. It was then that he came to know Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He went with Roosevelt to the 1920 Democratic National Convention, when Roosevelt was nominated for Vice President. He campaigned for Roosevelt for President in 1932. He is an enthusiastic Roosevelt man. Yet he is no New Dealer at all.

It is not generally recognized that Mr. Roosevelt has appointed plenty of non-New-Dealers to office. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation is a conspicuous case in point. Mr. Roosevelt has made many appointments to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Board of Directors. Not once has he appointed a man who could be regarded as a true blown-in-the-bottle brain-trust New Dealer. The consequence is that the R. F. C. has never conducted any crusades. It just conducts a business—a public business, but a business, strictly.

Mr. Henderson explains the central part of this R. F. C. business by reminiscing about Nevada.

"My father, Jefferson Henderson," he says, "started a bank in Elko, Nevada, in 1880. In 1852 he had helped drive a herd of cattle all the way from Kentucky to California. He knew all about cattle; and his bank was largely a bank for lending money to cattle-men.

"Well, the winter of 1890 was terrific. The cattle froze dead on the ranges. In the spring the cattle-men began to come into my father's bank, and they all said:

"'Jeff, here's everything I have left. Take it. I can't pay.'

"But my father said: 'What good is anything to a cattle bank unless there are cattle on the ranges? Keep what you have. I'll go see some big bankers in San Francisco.'

"So he went to San Francisco and saw the big bankers, and came back with money and lent it to the cattle-men to go to Texas and buy new cattle and bring them back to Nevada. Which they did. And in about ten years they had thousands and thousands and thousands of cattle, and were out of debt to my father.

"Now that little story," says Mr. Henderson, "is the same thing as R. F. C.'s big story. Our vital job in the R. F. C. is to provide fresh funds to help private business recover from disaster, and resume being business, and resume being profitable."

Mr. Henderson has keen blue cattle-range eyes and a large hearty out-doors laugh. He went from Nevada to the University of Michigan and then became a

lawyer. He also served in the Spanish War in Torrey's Rough Riders. But he went back to Nevada and became part-owner of twenty thousand cattle and forty thousand sheep. He and his partners showed themselves shrewd.

The problem was to prevent other owners of sheep from encroaching on the range on which their cattle were feeding. Sheep will graze grass to its roots. Cattle leave the grass higher. The sheep-men want to get that better grass for their sheep. This problem had never been solved. Cattle-men killed sheepmen and sheepmen killed cattle-men in the course of invasions of cattle territory by the sheep flocks.

Mr. Henderson and his partners solved the problem deftly and neatly. They pastured their sheep in a wide circle all around their cattle range; and when strange sheep-men approached that circle with their sheep they saw it already browsed to the ground by the Henderson sheep and they turned away and went elsewhere. There is nothing much about the practical tricks of business that needs to be explained to Mr. Henderson.

Now, on top of all the ordinary gigantic business of the R. F. C., Mr. Henderson has to take on an even more gigantic load of national defense lending and of national defense buying and selling. The R. F. C. today has four large-scale national defense subsidiaries: the Metals Reserve Company; the Rubber Reserve Company; the Defense Supplies Company; and the Defense Plant Company.

The Metals Reserve Company has made commitments of $618,000,000 for the purchase of such strategic metals and minerals as antimony from Mexico, asbestos from South Africa, bauxite (for aluminum) from the Dutch East Indies, beryl ores from the Argentine, cadmium from Australia, chromium from Turkey, industrial diamonds from Brazil, iridium from Russia, lead from Peru, mica from Madagascar, tin from Nigeria, tungsten from China. Mr. Henderson has had special charge of the work of the Metals Reserve Company. He will soon be the greatest international collector of metals that the world has ever known.

Meanwhile the R. F. C.'s Rubber Reserve Company has made commitments of $211,000,000 for importations of rubber; and its Defense Supplies Company has made commitments of $110,000,000 for importations of such things as wool from Australia and nitrate of soda from Chile; and its Defense Plant Company (as I write these words) has made commitments of $1,752,000,000 in all sorts of sums to all sorts of enterprises, ranging from $31,000,000 to the General Electric Company for building equipment to make aircraft engines, all the way down to $45,000 to the Moser Jewel Company to make jewel bearings for aircraft instruments. Soon the total of national defense commitments by the R. F. C. will be more than *three billion dollars.*

Now, it is easy to see that these colossal investments in materials and plants could easily be made the engine for introducing more and more government control into private business operations. That is what many people fear will happen. But it will not. Mr. Henderson's policy, like the policy of his predecessors Jesse Jones and Emil Schram, is not to press government deeper and deeper into business. It is to take government out of business just as rapidly as possible.

MR. HENDERSON is never happier than when he is pointing to the records of the R. F. C. in dealing with private banks.

"Look," he will say, picking up the figures from his desk: "we had to buy preferred stock and debentures and capital notes to the extent of $1,169,000,000 in 6,096 banks because those banks were in distress. But we have got completely out of 2,291 of those banks already; we have sold $714,000,000 of our bank investments to private interests; we have got down to only $455,000,000 of such investments in only 3,805 banks. And we are going to keep up the process until we have no such investments in any banks whatsoever, and all the banks in the whole United States, so far as we are concerned, are standing on their own feet.

"And further," says Mr. Henderson, "in regard to our national defense commitments, we shall follow the same road. We have to intervene for the moment; because the Government alone has the extensive funds necessary; but whatever materials we buy we shall sell to private people as fast as we can; and whatever loans we make for new plants, we shall never use to make those plants into government plants in competition with private plants. On the contrary, we shall do our best to get our money back and leave the plants clear of all government obligation."

This spurt of national defense, however, will some day pass. The R. F. C. will remain as a peace-time public bank, the country's potentially most powerful and dominant bank. Will it be used to take us into the "social revolution" that so many people anticipate and dread? I asked Mr. Henderson that question. He gave me a carefully considered reply. It is this:

"The Reconstruction Finance Corporation believes in private enterprise in the field of finance. We are friendly to private enterprise, and we seek always to make it stronger. We help to revive private financial institutions that are in trouble. We help private investors to put funds into private banking reorganizations. If a citizen can get credit at a reasonable rate from a private bank, we are not interested in making any loan to him. We do not compete with the private banking system. We only supplement it. We step in only when the private banking system, for one reason or another, cannot do the job. Our policy is based on the conviction that this country will always be a private-enterprise country."

Not much "social revolution" there! Where, then, is this new "social revolution" in Washington? It is nowhere. The old and the new in Washington, I repeat, are merging not into a new revolution but into a new stability. *(Please turn to page 88)*

Book Suggestions for October

by HARRY HANSEN

FOR Americans of today, Lincoln's period is both romantic and inspiring. The principles for which its soldiers fought were identical with the freedom guaranteed by founders of the Republic. Today we refresh ourselves at this fount of Americanism, while we see its characters as picturesque. Margaret Leech had both these elements in mind when she investigated the life of Washington, D. C., during the Civil War. That is why "Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865," serves a double purpose.

It deals with both principles and people. Here are Lincoln, worrying over the reverses of the Army of the Potomac, but moving slowly to extend the emergency powers of the President; General McClellan, too cautious in his opposition to Lee, yet working loyally to help his successor, Burnside, take command of his army; old General Winfield Scott, veteran of other battles, putting his faith in the new capital; a whole galaxy of military officers, statesmen, politicians, leaders of the American people in a time of crisis. A book that describes the social as well as the political life of Washington and makes us aware what great issues had to be met twenty-four hours of every day.

I am happy to recommend "Reveille in Washington." There is a big slice of history in it; yet it is not difficult to read.

Among the commendable books that describe the bravery and exploits of the individual fighter in this war are two worth your attention. One is "The Airmen Speak," a collection of seventy-five testimonies by men of the R. A. F. The other is "Fishermen at War," by Leo Walmsley, describing the hard work of the trawlers and the fishermen of England in minesweeping and coast patrol. These are natural, unaffected accounts of the courageous defense of Britain.

"Reveille in Washington" is published by Harper & Bros. at $3.50; "The Airmen Speak" by Doubleday, Doran & Co., at $2.50; "Fishermen at War" by Doubleday, Doran & Co., at $2.50.

This noted critic will briefly review in each issue the recently published book he deems the most interesting

We bet you've never tried America's oldest mixed drink

IF you've never tried a cold Toddy, maybe it's our fault.

You see, we've frequently described the virtues of the *hot* Toddy. But we've somehow overlooked telling you what a soul-satisfying drink its older brother—the *cold* Whiskey Toddy—can be!

In a way, though, you who are about to enjoy this grand drink for the very first time are especially fortunate...

For today there awaits you a very special whiskey... a Four Roses finer than any whiskey we have ever made or known... a superb Four Roses that endows a Toddy with almost breath-taking magnificence!

So, follow faithfully the simple directions given below and discover this time-honored drink for yourself!

How to make a Four Roses cold Whiskey Toddy

Into a large Toddy glass put a scant teaspoonful of sugar, one jigger of water, and a twist of lemon peel. Now pour in two brimming jiggers of Four Roses. Add a lump of ice, stir gently ...and savor to the full the surpassing flavor, the mellow perfection, of this majestic drink... a drink with not a single frill to dim the luster of Four Roses' brilliance!

FOUR ROSES

Four Roses is a blend of straight whiskies—90 proof. The straight whiskies in Four Roses are 5 years or more old. Frankfort Distilleries, Inc., Louisville & Baltimore

MUCH BETTER DEAD

(Continued from page 23)

shoes, general air of respectability. Ever been to jail?"

"No," said Sherrard.

"There you are," said the old man.

Across Sherrard's bewilderment flashed a momentary annoyance. He was a good twenty years younger than most of Sir Benjamin's circle; and no man likes to be described as respectable.

"I didn't know," he said suspiciously, "that Sir Benjamin had a brother."

"Naturally. I'm not the sort of relative to do him credit. But there it is: I'm his brother Bert."

NOW, there are occasions when the telling of a thumping lie brings with it an especial light-heartedness, a release from moral bonds: and as the old man now stretched out his legs, stuck his hands in his pockets and began to whistle, this peculiar free-and-easy mood was very marked. Sherrard was almost sure he was lying. On the other hand, free-and-easiness was so alien to the whole personality of Sir Benjamin, that Sherrard could not bring himself to believe in a Sir Benjamin who stretched out his legs, stuck his hands in his pockets, and whistled. Sherrard was thus left, so to speak, in the air. He had been bombed out himself only a few nights previously; and he seriously began to wonder whether he were suffering from delayed shock.

"The white flower of a blameless life," remarked his companion suddenly. "Poor Ben had a whole conservatoryful. Just the thing for funerals."

"You know, then," said Sherrard, "that he's dead?"

"Saw it in the papers."

"You don't seem much distressed."

"Certainly not. Best thing that could happen to the old ass."

"Sir Benjamin," said Sherrard, annoyed, "was a great figure." Had he stopped to think, he would have found himself in the peculiar position of championing a man who might or might not be dead, but who if alive was quite possibly the man he was rebuking. "A great figure," he reiterated, "at the height of his powers—"

"Nonsense. He was practically senile."

"At any rate, he still filled an important position; he led an interesting life—"

"Ever go to his Sunday Evenings?"

"Once," said Sherrard.

The old man nodded grimly.

"Too much even for you, eh? You were right. They were like gatherings of the embalmed. If any of the living strayed in, the dead froze them out." He turned, and laid one of his big hands on Sherrard's arm. "But it wasn't poor old Ben's fault," he said earnestly. "Ben liked youngsters, always did. He'd have liked a bit of music, maybe a game of cards. But the corpses were too much for him. They'd got in first, and staked their graves." He sighed. "It's an awful thing to be buried before you're dead, and that's what happened to Ben. Only instead of daisies, he pushed up bad novels—thus providin' for the upkeep of the vault."

"You paint," said Sherrard, "a very gloomy picture."

"I'm telling the truth as I know it," said the old man sharply. "I don't *blame* Ben. I don't blame him in the least. He was making money, d'you see; and once a man starts to make money, he finds himself surrounded by a whole heap of people urgin' him to make more. Presenting it as a duty. He's got to look after 'em. He's got to look after his damned property."

Sherrard was struck by an interesting complication.

"Speaking of property, where does it go? To yourself, by any chance?"

The old man looked genuinely horrified.

"It does not, young feller. It all goes to the Government—cash and copyrights and the ruined halls of Clarke Street. Have you seen 'em?"

Sherrard nodded. He had paid a pious visit to a heap of rubble.

"It was a fine house in its way," he said.

"It was a *damnable* house," corrected the old man. "Ben bought it to please his wife, and after she died, he never had the strength of mind to get rid of it. It had furniture in it—good furniture, that had to be looked after; and silver that had to be insured. It had to be run, and his sisters-in-law came to run it for him. They had companions, and dogs. Ben paid the bills. I tell you, when I saw that big wonderful heap of ruins, I thought: 'Tune your harp, old chap, you're free of property.'"

Sherrard was silent. He had the odd impression that he was listening to a justification both of the dead and of the living. He felt the big hand tighten on his arm.

"You don't know," said the old man earnestly, "what his life was like. Property wasn't even the worst of it. Everything conspired against him. He used to go to dinners—guest of honor—and lay down the law afterwards. That's very bad for a man. No one ever argued with him, or told him he was an old fool. That's bad for a man too—and worse for his work. If ever he wrote a poor book, —and lately he wrote nothing else, *and* he knew it,—the critics hushed it up under layers of respectful twaddle. He was swaddled in twaddle till he could neither breathe nor work—far less enjoy himself. And don't ask me why he stood it, because there's no answer. You might as well ask the horse between the shafts why he doesn't kick the cart to pieces. . . . The cart's smashed now, thank God; but it took a bomb to do it."

There was a considerable pause. For some minutes they both sat without speaking, Sherrard digesting what he had heard, the old man staring angrily at the ground. Then suddenly the latter moved; his expression changed; his eye had been caught by a small object lying underneath the seat. He stooped, fished up a cigarette-end, and placed it in his pocket. It was this action—the unselfconsciousness of it, the air of habit—which finally convinced Sherrard that Sir Benjamin Croye was indeed dead.

"Bert Croye," he said aloud.

The old man looked up with a pleased smile.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Sherrard. "For you have to live!"

The smile broadened.

"Certainly I shall live. I intend to live very well. When I leave the Catchpoles, I shall go up and down the country a little, visiting friends. I don't know them yet, but I shall find 'em. I'll take a job now and then, I dare say—night watchman, jobbing gardener. Life's very interesting."

"In wartime," said Sherrard, "it is also complicated. Your identity-card, for instance—"

With a candid glance the old man pulled one out of his pocket. It described him as John Pascroft, of 15 Mill Street, Rotherhithe.

"Left behind by a friend of Mrs. Catchpole's," he explained. "Got his gas-mask and ration-card as well. He's on a mine-sweeper, so *he* won't want 'em."

"It's a criminal offence," said Sherrard, "but I don't suppose that worries you. Money?"

"Two pound ten. I still had my wrist-watch. And you needn't put your hand in your pocket; naked I came into the world, and pretty well I did for myself; naked I'll start again." He stood up, fingering his stubble of beard. "Another week," he said; "then I'm off."

Sherrard stood up also, and held out his hand. But the new-born John Pascroft did not appear to notice it. He had seen another cigarette-end, a good one, farther along the path.

"They're getting rare," he said, over his shoulder. "When you throw one away, young feller, always pick a dry spot."

Such were the last recorded words of either Sir Benjamin Croye or Sir Benjamin Croye's brother. If not particularly elevating, they were at least practical, and Sherrard very much regretted that they would never (in the circumstances) take their place in the appropriate anthology.

SOME months afterward a friend of Sherrard's who was an editor showed him a holograph manuscript of about five pages. It described two men walking along a country road arguing as to who should pay for drinks when they reached a pub. That was all: it would have been completely trivial, but for the fact that you could smell the night air and knew the men from boyhood.

"Who does it remind you of?" asked the editor.

"No one," lied Sherrard. "It's too good."

"Then you've a short memory. Remember old Croye's early stuff? It's got the same innocence. Like a bird in the hedge watching the people go by. Only, a bird wouldn't understand 'em."

"Are you going to publish it?"

"Certainly I am. It's by a fellow called Pascroft, and I tried to get hold of him; but he just wrote a rude letter asking for payment by postal order, or the manuscript back." The editor looked thoughtful. "An extraordinarily rude letter," he repeated. "It began, 'My good Twaddler—' In fact, if the stuff hadn't been so blazing fine, I'd have told Mr. Pascroft to go to hell."

"That's no use," said Sherrard absently. "He knows the way out."

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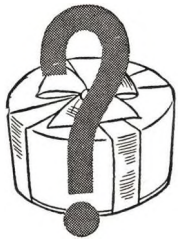

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THE EMPTY ROOM

(Continued from page 33)

naked curve of the throat springing, and moved and moved there, the fingers gripping and releasing, as though, hesitant and lost and seeking, she found reassurance in this touch upon herself. The hand fell away; first head, then body, was turned away; she moved, was gone—gone, for the word *vanished* did not in his mind apply to her; he had as yet no sense of her being spectral, only of having seen what was naturally there if you had eyes to see it; and her disappearance from his sight gave him nothing at first but the plainly consequent thought that, since she had turned to her right, she was moving from window to door. A little twist of passage from the door of that room would bring her to the stair-head. It was the imagining of her on the stairs that pierced him at last.

He saw her as wandering there, her hand flat, feeling the dark wall; and what possessed him was neither dread of her approach—even though she should emerge into the garden—nor any chill of visitation from the grave, for death had no part in his thought of her, but compassion for her evident and extreme loneliness, for an anguish of the soul in her that he felt but could not define—for her lostness, he might have said; and this compassion, which had the character of love itself, and burned him and drew the night air in sudden gusts to the back of his throat, he felt not for the sake of her likeness to Carey, nor for her own personal sake, but—and here he was caught in the icy wonder of being invaded and possessed by a spirit external to his critical self—for the sake of her assured redemption. Whatever sin she had committed or was about to commit was already pardoned, though she did not know it, with the sins of the whole world; whatever she had done or might do was not to be condemned; what she had lost was found; but she was wandering on the stair; he could not tell her this, and suddenly he lost his own sense of it; he began to disbelieve what he had seen and known; his heart was emptied out as though he had been walking on the water and were now sinking.

Carey had remarked nothing in his stillness and silence. She rose and said that if they walked a little way down the lane, they would meet her father's car returning, and lifted her hand toward his arm, assuming that he would come with her across the lawn; but he could not; he put his arms about her and held her as though she had been dead and were alive again, then stood away and led her toward the house. "Let us go in and wait for your father there." She followed him through the door by which he had first entered the house and into the little hall at the foot of the stairs where, on that winter's night, Rydal had called out: "Carey, we have a guest." And now Richard opened its door that Carey might go in ahead of him. When he followed, none but she was there. She seated herself on the piano-stool and looked up at him, her breath calm, her eyes steady.

"Richard, what are you looking for?"

He answered a different question: "This quiet, empty room!"

"Empty," she repeated, and turning to the piano, struck a chord on it and listened, and struck another and listened; then began to sing. Suddenly, through the open window on her left hand, from behind the heavy curtains that masked it, Henry Rydal's voice interrupted them, crying:

"Who is that singing? Answer! Who is it?"

The latch of the outer door was violently lifted; he came, with a stooping plunge, from the hall into the room, and there straightened himself to the rigidity of a man about to fall in some dreadful seizure; his heels were raised from the ground; his neck was stretched from his collar; his fingers dragged at the loosened ends of his tie.

"It is you, Carey!"

"Yes, Father; who else should it be?"

He took her hands and held them against his face. Having gazed at her long and searchingly, he said: "I am sorry, my darling. I heard the music as I crossed the lawn. I didn't know—it didn't enter my mind. . . . I have been—" At this he broke off, stared at Richard, then turned to Carey again. "I have been occupied—" But he had forgotten what he was about to say, and ended with a gesture of helplessness.

He was persuaded to sit down. Richard went into the dining-room and returned with brandy. Henry Rydal took it and drank.

"Well, what news from Glazeden?"

"I haven't been there. You remember, it was my day off."

Rydal shook his head. "I am tired, that's all. Sit here, Carey. . . . No, here, close to me. . . . I shall be all right in a minute. What was that song?"

She told him. He shook his head and made no answer. "Of course you are right," he said at last. "Of course it was you singing."

FROM that day, Rydal's visits to London became more frequent. He would go twice or three times in a week, but never on two days consecutively; nor was he absent at night. He was in a condition of profound disquiet. For a great part of the time his intellect was as clear and his talk as energetic as in the past, but his mind would swerve from his subject, he would lose his thread without seeming even to be aware that he had lost it, and lapse abruptly into silence. He was as much dependent on Carey as he had been, hungry for her companionship and appeased by it; but sometimes, in the midst of conversation with her, his expression changed in response to an obscure shifting of the plane of his thought, and he became curious of her face and stared into it as though he were unsure of her identity. Then, like one who is awakened violently from a dream, he would say, "Carey?" with an interrogative note, and she would answer, "Yes, Father—Carey," and take his hand to reassure him.

At first she made light of the change and would say only that her father was overtired. When Richard asked, "What is happening in London? What is troubling him there?" she said: "Why? His going to London has nothing to do with it!" And he knew that she believed this to be

true. Nevertheless, three evenings later, she did say to her father:

"Don't go to London tomorrow."

"Why not?"

"Because you are tired. You will make yourself ill. Stay here and be peaceful."

Unexpectedly he consented, but next morning had forgotten his consent; he came to breakfast in clothes he would not wear unless he were going to London; and Carey's protest was thrust aside.

"How can I get on with my work, child, if I haven't the books?" And he began to explain, with the elaborate plausibility of a lie, that he had reached a stage of his work at which references not available at home were continually needed. Carey knew that he was lying but would not admit it, and there stood between her and Richard a subject on which neither could speak openly to the other.

IT was Mrs. Sethdon who unexpectedly invited Richard's opinion. On two evenings she had been in the house by chance when Rydal returned from London and had without comment observed the change in him; on a third she came deliberately, and when night was falling, asked Richard to walk across the fields with her. She had the abrupt way of Englishwomen made confident by their breeding, and the knowledge that to plunge for the truth is often the surest way of surprising it.

"Well," she said, "what do you make of it?"

"Of Henry?"

"But of course."

"I had hoped you would instruct me."

"And why? I don't live in the house. You do."

"Mrs. Sethdon," Richard replied, "why should we fence with each other? You remember that morning on which I asked you what songs Mrs. Rydal sang, and you wouldn't tell me?"

"Couldn't," she said, "—not *wouldn't.* Why should you think otherwise?"

"As you please. Then we can't help each other."

His firmness shook her. "Genuinely and truly," she asserted, "I don't understand. What has this—what has Henry's present behavior—to do with the songs his wife sang or didn't sing?"

Richard told her of the occasion on which Carey had been at the piano, singing, and her father had burst into the room, and had—he paused for the phrase that should communicate to Mrs. Sethdon what he himself had felt.

"What?" she asked.

"He didn't recognize her."

"Didn't recognize Carey?"

"It wasn't," Richard said, "that he didn't recognize her features, of course. It was the oddest thing to stand there and watch them as I did—to feel his mind working. He knew her—and didn't know her." The effort needed to make himself say more was so great that Richard fell back upon a smooth formality of words, an easy flatness. "I received the impression," he said, "that Henry expected to find someone else, and the shock of finding— Well," he added with a grin of relief, "sherry and vermouth: They look alike, but their flavors are different. You pour out what you suppose to be a glass of sherry. You put it to your lips with the expectation of sherry in your mind. And it isn't. And the other taste—"

Mrs. Sethdon let his words fall into silence. They had passed through the open meadows into the wood that was an approach to her garden. Beyond the trees' darkness Richard would have turned back, but she invited him into her house and lighted an oil lamp in her drawing-room.

"MR. CANNOCK," she began, "there is a reason that we should be frank with each other.

"Until lately that house was one of the happiest—no, perhaps not the *happiest;* Henry has never been happy since he lost Venetia—but certainly one of the most peaceful I have ever known. Now that is changed. It affects me because I love the girl. Do you resent my saying that I believe it affects you for the same reason? In any case," she pursued steadily before he had time to answer, "it affects you because the girl loves you. You know that? Or are you blind to it?"

"What she feels for me," Richard answered, "is, quite rightly, the affection of—"

"No," Mrs. Sethdon interrupted, "not 'of a child,' if that is what you were going to say."

"Very well," he answered with a smile, "what I was going to say was, perhaps, foolish. The truth is harder. Carey is a woman—grant that—and I won't make a parade of saying that a man is necessarily ruled out because he happens to be more than twenty years older than she is. But I am ruled out nevertheless."

"By what?"

"Quite simply, Mrs. Sethdon, by her goodness."

"'Goodness'? That's a plain word not often used plainly. Are you so evil, then?"

"No, but I am skeptical. I am set. She has a special innocence. I don't know how to put it, except by saying that she has a quiet mind, an inward peace that continually renews her. I have not. I should have to be reborn, and I have become incapable of it. As for my loving her, or her loving me, the word has so many meanings that it's best in our case not to speak it; it would have different meanings for her and for me. No," he repeated, "the thing is impossible. Not for the obvious conventional reasons. Not because I am 'too old for her.' Not because she is 'too good for me.' I haven't that kind of modesty. But I have become incapable of miracles, and hers are ahead of her."

Mrs. Sethdon raised her head to continue the argument, then forebore. The mind, she knew, is often bound by what the lips speak; she did not wish this man, whom she liked and who so evidently lacked the self-confidence that makes easy the offering and acceptance of love, to make his own way more difficult. Her feeling was that Carey, though certainly she had more than affection for him, might prove, in the end, not "to love him enough"—by which she meant not enough to enable him to yield himself to love. He was the type, she thought, that needs to be thawed out; for in spite of her intelligence, she had a habit of thinking in types, of putting mankind into neat categories, and she had failed to discern that what held Richard back was by no means a need to be thawed, but a genuinely intuitive fear that the resulting avalanche might sweep Carey out of herself, out of her quietness of mind, into—what? He didn't know. In this, as nowadays in so much else, he didn't see the end of the tunnel.

"The odd thing is," he said, "that I can't for the life of me remember how we came to be talking of that rather unprofitable subject."

"The point is this," Mrs. Sethdon answered: "Whatever it is that is happening to Henry is affecting Carey. And Carey, as you yourself said just now, has —you called it 'an inward peace,' I think. Am I right?"

Richard answered, "Yes," smiling at her tone's brisk repudiation of personal responsibility for the phrase.

"Very well. Now, it needs a great deal to disturb that 'inward peace.' She's extraordinary in that way. Happenings that would throw other people out of their stride don't affect her—"

"Unless," Richard interrupted, "they are concerned with her mother."

"Really, Mr. Cannock, you have an obsession about her mother. Something in London is upsetting Henry; something, as far as one can judge, that happens each time he goes there. How can it conceivably have anything to do with Venetia?"

"And yet," Richard answered, "it has, you know."

"What grounds have you for that?"

He was determined now, and pursued her steadily. "First, the effect on Carey. Then the pretty obvious one that, when Henry's at his worst—for example, when he came in that evening of which I told you, and found that it was Carey who had been singing—there is always a confusion of the same kind, a half-and-half confusion of identity. Isn't it clear that Mrs. Rydal is pressing on his mind?" He looked Mrs. Sethdon full in the face and came out with: "Whatever happens in London reminds him of her."

Mrs. Sethdon, who did not easily flinch, turned clean away. With her back to him, she said: "That is impossible." Then, facing him again, she added: "You must put that from your mind. You must put it altogether from your mind."

"And the alternative?"

"To be frank—some woman?"

Richard answered: "You don't believe that."

"No," she admitted. "You are right. I don't."

IT is always hard to know when and under what impulse a suspicion first presented itself. Certainly it was not until now that Richard, in his mind, gave word and recognition to the idea, of which he was never afterward able to trace the precise origin, that Henry Rydal had killed his wife. That once accepted, everything suddenly fell into place, everything plausibly explained itself: his avoidance of the subject, the fascination the portrait had for him, his compensating love of Carey, his delight and agony in her resemblance to the woman who was dead. It was natural that he should wish to put away every remembrance of her—her handwriting, her jewels, her lace, all that had been hers except the portrait—the single, self-tormenting, inescapable exception. Mrs. Sethdon's reticence, if she was shielding him for his sake or her own or Carey's, was natural too. And now, in London, the truth was threatening him. Begging, bribing, concealing, he was at the

mercy of one or more than one who knew and could prove it. Everything fitted except one thing—Henry Rydal's own nature, the extraordinary gentleness and refinement of it. Thinking of his friend, Richard would have liked to believe him incapable of murder; yet now, in bitter reason, he accepted the possibility. The look of fear in Mrs. Sethdon's face endorsed it.

WHILE Richard was working in the laboratory next day, Flower was moved to throw in scornful comment on the surrender of France, for Flower had a dislike of the French, and their refusal of the Prime Minister's offer of union with England had been a relief to him.

"Lord," he said, "if they'd accepted, we should have been in a pretty mess! It's like a man who offers marriage to try to keep his girl when she is ratting. When she *has* ratted, he offers up little prayers of thanksgiving at breakfast each morning. I knew a man once who—"

But that story, like Mamilius', was never told. Flower chattered in an undertone when work was going smoothly; encountering a difficulty, he sucked in his underlip, gripped it with his teeth, and attacked his problem in stubborn silence. Long afterward he came up to breathe and gasped out:

"Anyhow, there's one thing about it: no one can say this time that we fought to the last Frenchman."

"No," said Richard, "that at least is true."

"And what isn't, Mr. Cannock?"

"What you implied—that we are well rid of France. We may win the war without her, which will be good for our pride; but if we try to make a peace without her, Europe will be like a university that has turned itself into a technical training college."

When work was over, Richard found Henry Rydal in the anteroom, and on their way home together spoke to him of France and of Flower's attitude of mind.

"I know, I know," Rydal said. "But the real question, in the end, isn't one of political advantage or national pride. The root question isn't whether France is whipped but whether, in the end, she learns to kiss the rod and begins to whine and to sentimentalize her surrender—not whether she loses her liberty for the time being, but whether she tries to justify herself by repudiating it. Comfort, order, babies, nests—all the German sentimentalities of cannon-fodder or, if you like, every woman's excuse for selling herself —when Vichy begins to yap about those things and about the generosity of her captor, then even France will begin to stink in the grave!"

What Rydal said was not inconsistent with his former way of thought; he had always believed passionately in the independence of the French genius and spoken of France as if she were a woman of high mettle ultimately incapable of betraying the principle of her own freedom; but now his manner of speech, even on this subject, had in it a new wildness, a note of bitterness foreign to him; and Richard was glad, when they reached the Water House, to find Carey awaiting them. But she herself had less influence on her father than in the past. At dinner, he asked suddenly what day it was—Tuesday?

"Tuesday," she said.

"Then I must go to London tomorrow."

He said it with a little sigh of extreme weariness; then, the decision made, visibly commanded himself for his daughter's sake to escape from his obsession, and plunged into a discussion of the book he had seen open beside her chair in the sitting-room—Shorthouse's "John Inglesant." Why had she chosen that?

"Do you remember," she said, "you read it aloud to me—it must have been two years ago? Why do you never read aloud any more?"

"I will, my dear, if it would please you."

"But you must enjoy it too!"

He replied, as though he were speaking of something lost beyond hope of recovery: "I think I should. It's a peaceful thing to do. The trouble is: one can't have long gaps; reading aloud ought to be pretty regular."

"Why should it not be?" she answered. "Begin tonight."

Richard had seldom felt so affectionate an admiration for his friend as he did that evening while they sat first in the garden, later in the lamplit room, and that quiet, lively voice read the opening of "Inglesant." Once, Rydal turned two pages together and overran the break in sense without being aware of it until half a dozen lines had been read; then, making neither comment nor apology, turned back patiently and continued. Once, near the end of the evening, he let his eyes come up and said:

"I have not told you, Carey: We took this book to France with us, your mother and I, the last time we were together."

RICHARD had never before heard him speak in this way; it might be the beginning of relief if he could talk of Mrs. Rydal to Carey; but he said no more; he picked up the volume again and pursued his reading. Richard had ceased to listen. He was watching Carey's face. She was lying on the floor, a cushion under her elbows, her head supported by her hands, staring at the empty hearth. A minute, perhaps more than a minute, had passed before she interrupted:

"Then this is the third time you have read 'Inglesant' aloud—if you read it aloud to her."

"We didn't finish it," Rydal answered. His eyes returned to the book, but he did not read for a little while. Then suddenly he went on:

"'And sitting down, he drew Johnny on his knee, and taking from his pocket a small book, he said: "Here, my friend, let us see how you can read this." It was the Phaedo of Plato, which Johnny knew nearly by heart, and he immediately began, with almost breathless rapidity, to construe with, here and there, considerable freedom, till the gentleman stopped him with a laugh. "Gently, gently, my friend. I saw you were a scholar but—"'"

Richard was listening now, and as he listened, he became aware that the chair opposite Henry Rydal's, which, while he was intent upon Carey's face, had lain a little beyond the angle of his vision, was occupied. He turned his head and saw there the girl who had looked down upon him from the window, seated with her hands folded in her lap and her head bent forward as though she had long been listening. The effect upon him was not of shock but of a natural continuity and repose. Carey at this moment turned in the direction of the chair, but there was no change in her expression; she saw nothing. The reading continued up to the end of the second chaper, where the boy, standing at the gateway of the Priory, looked after his father and *Eustace* as they rode up the hill. At this Henry Rydal closed the book; and Richard, his eyes returning to the opposite chair, found it empty, as it had certainly been when they came in from the garden.

NEXT evening the reading pitiably broke down. After his return from London and before dinner, Rydal took Carey by the arm and paced up and down the lawn with her, holding her upper arm by reason of his height, holding and pressing it as though he were striving to communicate to her some desperate appeal. But his head was turned away; he said nothing; and when she spoke, gave replies that linked verbally with her questions but did not answer them. At dinner, the subject of France having arisen, he had exclaimed with a ferocity evidently personal: "People can't be saved who won't save themselves!" And when Carey asked, would he be at home tomorrow, he had answered, "Yes, yes, I shall be at home," and had looked round the room as though it were a prison.

That he was now faced by some final decision Richard could not doubt. Tomorrow or the next day, he said to himself, the issue would be forced, and he determined to make—at whatever risk of interference—an attempt to help. Tomorrow morning he would go to Glazeden an hour later than usual; he would choose the time when Henry ordinarily walked in the garden before settling down in his library, and would say in effect: "Tell me. Even if I can do no good, it will make it easier to tell some human being." Perhaps the opportunity to say this might come before the morning if Henry loitered after Carey had gone to bed, and Richard began to turn over in his mind what advice he could give, what advice it was possible to give, to a man who was persuaded to confess himself a murderer. How strange, how impossible it was, that such a confession should be made in this house, which had once seemed to him the most peaceful in the world!

After dinner Carey, with steady determination, took "Inglesant" from its shelf and laid it on her father's knee. Obediently he began to read the third chapter, telling how the *Father Sancta Clara*, by his teaching, gained in influence over the boy.

"'He read the classics, making them not dead school-books, but the most human utterances that living men ever spoke. . . . . He led him, step by step, through that noble resolve by which Socrates—at frightful odds and with all ordinary experience against him—maintains the advantage to be derived from truth; he pointed out—'"

The book was lowered. Rydal's hands were spread out over the open pages, and he gazed at the chair opposite him.

"Not tonight, Carey," he said; "nothing comes tonight."

He rose, kissed her, touched Richard on the shoulder and said good-night. Carey put her arm in his and went to the door with him.

"Will you turn out the lamps when you come?" she said to Richard. "I shall not come down again." But after an interval of nearly half an hour she reappeared and stood by the fireplace.

"He will say nothing."

"Have you been with him all this time?"

She shook her head. "Not at first. I went to my own room—then to his. As I expected, he was awake, still dressed, sitting at his small writing-table bolt upright, his hands on it, like a blind man reading Braille. He said: 'What is it, Carey?' I said—I'm not sure of the words—I said wasn't I of any use to him? Couldn't I be? He took my hand and held it, but without looking at me. At last he said: 'Not in this. Not yet. Go to bed, my dear. There's nothing I can tell you yet, because I myself don't know.' I said: 'Then, Father, it is true—something dreadful is happening?' Then he did look at me and answered: 'Nothing may happen. I am afraid nothing will.'"

"'I am *afraid* nothing will'?" Richard echoed. "Were those his words?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"I just went away," Carey answered. "I came down here. I'm frightened, Richard. What shall I do? . . . Oh, there was one other thing he said. As I was going out of the door, he said: 'I shall go to London again tomorrow.' I think he had that moment made up his mind. Then—I suppose my face must have troubled him—he made a little forward movement; I thought he was coming across the room to me; but he didn't. 'I'm sorry, Carey,' he said. 'But perhaps this is the end. After this, one way or the other, probably I sha'n't go to London again.'"

When she had told this, Carey knelt on the floor beside Richard's chair and took his hand between hers.

"Carey," he said, "what is it you are frightened of—what precisely, I mean?"

Her voice was low, tense.

"For him. I feel—when he goes to London—I feel he is terribly alone and—"

"Nothing more definite?"

She was silent. Because he believed that her suspicion was the same as his, because neither could communicate it to the other, he felt divided from her as if by a wall of glass. Wishing to comfort her, he could find no words of reassurance; the intimacy that had existed between them was frozen; and when she rose to her feet, said good-night and went from the room, he let her go.

FOR a long time he did not move. At last, deciding to go to bed, he extinguished the lamps, first in the sitting-room, then in the hall. He was now in darkness and put his hand in his pocket for a torch. There was none there. Remembering that he had left his torch in the pocket of a light overcoat that he had brought home that day from Glazeden, he went into the closet under the reverse of the stairs in which the coat was hanging. While he was fumbling in the darkness, there was a footstep on the stairs immediately above his head, and an intuition stilled him.

The footsteps, which he knew to be Henry Rydal's, were slow and cautious. As they advanced beyond the turn of the stairs, a hand brushed along the wall that was common to staircase and closet. Richard imagined Henry as feeling his way in

the dark, and did not stir. The door to the sitting-room was opened; there was no sound of its being closed again; and Richard knew certainly that, if ever he would have been right to disclose his presence, the moment of possible disclosure was past. He could not follow Henry into the darkness of the sitting-room; nor could he leave the closet and go upstairs without risk of intolerable encounter.

From the sitting-room there came now and then a sound which seemed to be that of furniture being moved; then, after a period of blankness, a returning footfall. It was slower and heavier than formerly; it labored on the stairs, as though each step were being deliberately planted; it halted—there was an interval of silence—then continued with the same laborious deliberation. It was not until after this that Richard's mind was icily flooded with the knowledge that Henry Rydal had in his arms some heavy burden which could not easily be carried through the narrow passage of the stairs. To know this and yet to have no assurance of what was being carried; to see—as if there were no dividing wall—Rydal's great height stooping forward, eyes shut against the dark, his lips opened for breath as he strained to his task, and yet to be able to imagine, as enclosed and supported by his arms, no specified thing, cast upon Richard, in the clearness of apprehension which this experience had given him, the contrary stress and entanglement of a dream.

When at last the staircase was ascended, he listened in expectation of the footsteps' continuing in the first-floor passage which led to Rydal's own room, but they ceased; Rydal was waiting and resting; but the time of waiting contradicted this belief—no man could stand so long with a heavy burden laid across his arms; and suddenly it was borne in upon Richard that the ascent had been continued; Rydal had proceeded up another flight that led to the attic only. Presently his lightened footstep was again to be heard as he went to his bedroom. His task had been accomplished, his burden set down.

Richard went at once into the sitting-room and examined it under the beam of his torch. It was almost a shock to find nothing visibly disturbed; if furniture had, indeed, been moved, it had been replaced. "John Inglesant" lay open at the abandoned page. Richard picked it up, laid in a wooden spill to mark the place, closed it, and as he laid it down again, observed, in the torch's accidental sweep, that the music stool was gone. For a moment he was helplessly at a loss; there was no reason, only something remotely farcical and inexplicable, in this trivial disappearance; but his curiosity leaped again when he saw what the piano had almost concealed—that the stool, which was very low and stood on gilt legs of wood deeply carved, had been slid under the piano and beyond it, and now stood against the wall. His gaze and torch-beam, traveling up from it together, came upon a rectangle of unfaded wallpaper from which Mrs. Rydal's portrait had been taken away.

IN the morning, when Carey and Richard came to breakfast, Henry Rydal was not in the dining-room.

"If he has overslept," Carey said, "and if he is going to London, I ought to wake him."

She was about to go to her father's room, when Richard stopped her.

"I will go."

"Why?"

"I will go," he repeated.

No one was in Rydal's room. Before returning to Carey, Richard walked out to the garage. She saw him pass the open window of the dining-room, but asked no question. Only Richard's car was in the garage. He returned to the house. The telephone was in the dining-room, and he must use it in Carey's presence. He telephoned to the station-master. Mr. Rydal had gone up by the early train. His car was in the station yard.

"Carey," Richard said, "have you been into the sitting-room this morning?"

She looked at him, bewildered. "No. Not yet. Why?"

"Your mother's portrait has gone. Your father came down last night and took it away."

Carey shook her head slowly; her lips trembled. Struggling for control, she lost it; tears rolled down her cheeks, and she flung up her arm to cover them.

"Carey!" he said; but before he could come to her, she was gone from the room, and he found her standing before the place where the portrait had been. There, her arm, when he touched it, was rigid; her whole body was taut; until suddenly, with a little panting cry, she relaxed and turned to him, and leaned against him, and shook and shook as though in the agony of a fever.

He held her fast, saying nothing. When she was again mistress of herself, she said: "Must you go to work today?"

"I must, Carey."

She nodded. "Of course you must."

"If I can, I'll come back early."

At that she smiled and said: "It will be a long time."

HE left Glazeden at twenty minutes before six o'clock, not for the sake of his promise to Carey, but because his work released him. A stubborn difficulty that had long stood in the way of the development of his fighter-sight, the Paramount, had been overcome. The overcoming of it had been by a method of new principle, not of device; and the principle, when his mind grasped at it, appeared suddenly to be applicable not to his Paramount alone, but to the instruments for submarine detection then in use. He had sent at once for Chard and told him what he had hit upon. Chard listened to his outline, fired by the idea implied in it, and squared himself at Richard's table to examine his drawings and calculations; the thing was promising enough to keep them all night at the exploration of it. But Chard wrenched himself from the drawing under his hand and pushed back his chair.

"Leave it for tonight. Let's sleep on it. Better come to it fresh in the morning."

Richard had nodded. "Good," he said. "So be it. But it's something to sleep on, Chard, I do believe."

Chard grinned. "Probably. One never knows. May be a snag somewhere. Usually is when one gets one's tail up about an idea."

This was at half-past five. Ten minutes later Richard climbed into his car, the glow of attainment upon him, wrapped in the haze that excludes everything but the new idea at its center, altogether in the

happy mood, familiar since he was a boy, of wishing to be home to brood upon a secret triumph. Then he remembered suddenly to what he might be returning at the Water House. The recollection touched him with the gnawing distress there is sometimes in waking from the reality of a happy and lucid dream to the unreality of life's confused anxieties. At his table with Chard, working upon a problem of science which had not been made by its naval purpose any less a problem of science, he had forgotten the insane, persistent ruin of civilization. Now a sense of barrenness and dust, of a spreading evil at once stupid and malicious, returned to him with the impact, to which in a long war men become vulnerable, of spiritual despair.

For this, he knew, there was no remedy in optimism or avoidances; there was a palliative in courage, but no more; there was no remedy but in quietness of spirit, for to the spirit that is quiet, a natural refreshment comes as to a body that sleeps, but not otherwise. Despair is a disease, an insomnia of the soul that forbids its own healing; but the quiet of others may give to one in the grip of it an opportunity to be healed. This quiet Richard had found at the Water House when he had first gone there; it had comforted and enthralled him; he had loved Carey because of it; now, in her, it was threatened at its source.

In that dark moment, driving through the sunlight of the July evening, thinking of Henry Rydal and the misery that overhung him and must soon declare its nature, Richard was visited by that most bitter of all terrors—the terror not of a single thing that may be defined and encountered, but of the disintegration of life's good, of a perceived mockery in its smiling appearances. So great was the desolate chill of this contradiction, that he stopped his car and watched the good things of the earth—the sun, the lengthening shadows, the cheerful hopping of birds in the hedgerow, the curving of grasses in the little breeze—with a sense of their not belonging to him. Even the recollection of his day's work and his conversation with Chard, which now slid back into his mind, was barren of comfort. He put away the thought of his emptied triumph as he might have put away a consolatory hand; then observed, as a spectator, that his car was standing at the roadside, and slid in his clutch and drove on.

AT least there was left to him a power of control in the presence of others; he believed, when he found Carey in the garden, that he communicated to her none of his mood; instead, he told her he had had a good day at Glazeden, that he had seen his way through a difficulty which had long stood in the way of progress; and she said: "Oh, Richard, I am glad! You have always your work to hold on to. When other things go wrong, that stands."

"Yes," he answered; but he was repeating a formula from the past; it had been true of him once, and had survived so much that he had believed it would always be true.

"You say it doubtfully," she said. "Isn't it still true?"

They went together to the familiar place by the stream, carrying with them the decanter of sherry for the reassurance

there was in preserving the old routine; and it was not until they had for some time been seated there that Carey broke through the surface of conversation and said:

"In places where one has been happy, it's harder than anything on earth to endure being unhappy as we are now! . . . I know you are unhappy, Richard. I'm not sure that I know why. You are his friend, but you can't love him as I do. He has been my life. Any good there is in me is—is called out by the good in him. Without him—I mean if he is broken, if—"

"I too feel that, in my own way, Carey. through you, perhaps. This place has been a heaven to me. It was sanity, goodness, peace—everything I seemed to have lost."

"And now have lost again?" she answered. Then her voice hardened and quickened. "It's odd. We sit here. We pretend to each other that Father may come by the earlier train. He may be here in ten minutes! But we know he won't be. Then Mrs. Durrant will ring the bell. We shall go in to dinner. And we shall pretend that he will come by the later train. But we know he won't. He will never come. The thing has happened. I know. He has been taken away. Father has been taken away! Why? Whatever he did in the past, to punish him now is only revenge. It does no good. It's meaningless as a deterrent. Oh, poor Father!" she cried. "Whatever it was he did, he had outgrown it! We had made a new life together. He was a new man. He *had* been born again—sanity, goodness, peace: like you, everything he seemed to have lost. And now she drags him back into her grave."

The last sentence was spoken with a bitterness that contradicted all his previous knowledge of Carey; and she followed it, before he could answer, with a fierce, passionate question: "Why don't you speak the truth? You believe it too. You believe he killed my mother." Then she covered her face and said in her own voice, quietly: "That is why I am mad! That is why I burn inside and can do no good! I hate *her* for it. Do you understand? She has taken him away to the hell where she is. I know that is mad and wicked. I hear my own voice say it, and I know. But all his life, all the years I remember, he has been learning to be at peace *from* her, and now it is all ruined. As if she were alive, she has him again. . . . Well, let us go in. Why should we sit here?"

"Perhaps we are both wrong," Richard said. "Perhaps he will come back."

"Do you believe it?" she asked. "No. . . . Oh, Richard, I'm sorry. Hatred is vile and barren and useless. Anyhow, she is dead."

MRS. DURRANT, uncertain of Rydal's coming, had kept back dinner; it was not ready yet. Richard and Carey went into the sitting-room to wait. Carey knelt on the window seat, looking out onto the lawn, and Richard stood behind her. On their left, Mrs. Durrant was to be seen now and then, moving in and out of the dining-room; on their right, the old red brick of the garden wall, where the shadow of the house did not reach it, glowed in the late sun. The church clock struck half-past seven. Richard had turned back into the room when he heard the creak of the gate, and swung to the window again.

"Is that your father?"

"Yes," she answered. Then, in a shuddering undertone: "Oh, my God! My God!"

Rydal had held the gate open, and a woman had entered after him. She came in almost furtively, hesitated, took in the house with a sweeping glance, then came forward with a defiant swagger:

"Well," she cried in a deep, penetrating voice, "you invited me. You made me come. On your own head be it! There's a man too, you said. I shall do better with the man."

Rydal advanced quickly and took her arm. "Go slow, Venetia. Go slow a bit at first."

She answered with anger at once wheedling and imperious. "What do you mean? That I am not to have a drink?"

"I wasn't talking about drink."

"You were. . . . About what, then?"

He said nothing, but turned to gaze into her face as he walked across the lawn beside her.

She was a woman still conspicuously beautiful, but the sag of ill-health had loosened the flesh of her cheeks, her eyes were heavy, their lashes greased together into little black curving sticks, their upper lids shiny; her slim body was not fattened, but it was blunted; its suppleness was gone; there was a harsh glitter in the show of her teeth when she laughed. And now, at some thought within her, she laughed a thick, gusty laugh; then ceased, frightened, and there crept into her expression the absurd pathos of a clown denied his applause.

SHE and Henry came into the house. Carey did not move. Presently they came into the room.

"This is your mother, Carey. I have brought her home."

Mrs. Rydal would have kissed her, but Carey stood away and answered her father.

"What room is she to have?"

"My own room, I suppose," Mrs. Rydal intervened. "Or is it yours now?"

"No, it is not mine. It is empty. There is no furniture in it. I will have the bed made in the Pink Room. If you will come up with me, I will take you to my own room meanwhile."

Rydal introduced Richard, and Mrs. Rydal gave him her hand.

"Did you too suppose that I was dead? And even now, Carey stares at me as if she were seeing a ghost. What are we, Carey—friends or enemies?"

Carey, pale and rigid, stood gazing, not at the newcomer but at her father, and Richard, to comfort her, said: "In any case, Carey, he is safe."

"Oh, no," she answered, her eyes moving to her mother's face, "oh, no, he is not safe."

"Poor Henry thinks he is going to reform me and make me into a good woman again. . . . It's quite useless," Mrs. Rydal says a little later. And from this point the story moves inexorably to its dramatic dénouement. In our November issue.

Redbook's FILM SELECTIONS for all the Family

LADY BE GOOD

WITH nothing of the original left but the title and two memorable songs, "Lady Be Good" has returned to the screen as one of the sprightliest and more enjoyable events of the season. It is fun —only that and nothing more. But what more could anyone want? With Ann Sothern, Robert Young and Eleanor Powell, supported by such experts as Lionel Barrymore, Red Skelton, Virginia O'Brien and a long list of other delightful people, its plot matters little. The humor and the music (George and Ira Gershwin's "Lady Be Good" and "Fascinating Rhythm") provoke mellow thoughts. (Metro)

ALMOST AN ANGEL

DEANNA DURBIN is grown up and there's no sense in pretending otherwise. In her newest film, "Almost an Angel," her romance is almost as solid and exciting as any embarked upon by, say, Joan Crawford. It is a *Cinderella* tale, which Miss Durbin plays to perfection, wherein she falls in love with Robert Cummings, as son of Charles Laughton, and is opposed by Margaret Tallichet. But she gets her man in approved fashion. It is a tuneful, pleasant, romantic picture, performed by a splendid cast, with Deanna as a hat-check girl who has to pose as the fiancée of a millionaire. The boy's father (Laughton) is so delighted with her that he decides to postpone dying. (Universal)

ICECAPADES

THERE isn't a serious thought or a significant word in "Icecapades;" it is filled with spectacular skating and buoyant, sometimes bombastic, comedy. And what could be more welcome during the dog-days of 1941? Some of the best skating seen on the screen is done by Dorothy Lewis, of the St. Regis' Iridium Room in New York, and members of the "Icecapades" troupe. (Republic)

LITTLE FOXES

(Continued from page 10)

family; but *Regina's* hatred kills him before he can accomplish it. In spite of this, with his death *Alexandra* departs, leaving her mother and the rest of the rapacious brood to torment one another.

Bitingly, cleverly, the Biblical verse is illustrated: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes."

Although Miss Davis is the star, the story is not hers alone. It could not be what it is without her superb performance, but neither could it claim a place among Hollywood's finer things without the skill of the other actors, and without Wyler's direction.

Goldwyn drew on Tallulah Bankhead's company for many of the other cast-members. Dingle and Reid, the brothers, and Duryea, the son, are magnificent; unfortunately they depict people you have met, with their greed, their hypocrisy and their complete absence of conscience.

Another recruit from the stage is Patricia Collinge, who continues her rôle as the bewildered, pathetic fragment of the gentle South, *Birdie Hubbard.* She knows the future faced by *Alexandra,* for it is the same future she faced, and she aids *Horace* in convincing the girl that she must escape.

An important member of the troupe is Teresa Wright of the "Life with Father" company on Broadway. This is her first picture, and should launch her on a splendid screen career, for she is a charming, gracious person, and convincingly plays *Alexandra,* a lamb in a den of wolves. Opposite her in a rôle written for the picture is Richard Carlson, and the romance between the two gives a warmth and brightness to the film that lifts it above the sordidness of the original.

Herbert Marshall as the husband has his best rôle in a long time. In the gang of petty thieves, he alone has retained his integrity. In his shrewd kindliness he is a match for the grasping, avaricious *Regina.* Death alone prevents him from completely circumventing her.

The cast is rounded out by the completely despicable *Leo,* played on both stage and screen by Duryea, who is a welcome addition to the town's portrayers of venal and weak men, and by John Marriott, who was *Cal, Horace's* servant in the play, and Jessie Grayson, the mammy in whose protection *Alexandra* is left.

Wyler has directed with his usual brilliance. So expertly is the story told, so deft is the action, that his accomplished hand is evident in every scene.

"The Little Foxes" is Goldwyn's first film in over a year, and his first under his new association with R.K.O. since he left United Artists. Whether it is the greatest he has ever made is a matter of opinion. But it is adult, intelligent and beautiful; it will entertain everyone who sees it.

HAVE YOU A RELIGION?

(Continued from page 21)

"Many human beings, if not all, need a center for their lives, a force greater than themselves to rely on, to lean upon, to have faith in.

"A Freudian would say the need is for something to take the place of the authority and omnipotence their father had for them when they were children. Jung would say it is something far more instinctive and deep-seated than that. But in any case, the need for religion is very great in a great many people, and there is nothing in science against it. . . .

"Only recently I helped a young man make a religion for himself. As a student of science he had lost all his faith and belief in religion. Then his mother died. He had been greatly attached to her, and he became a prey to grief and worry, which affected his mind. He would never again see his mother, since, as he then believed, all ends in death."

"Why," Dr. Wile asked him, "do you no longer believe in a hereafter?"

"Because I can't prove it."

"Can you prove that there is no hereafter?"

"'No," the young scientist was forced to admit.

"Then don't you see that even according to your so-called scientific view, the two cancel each other? You have just as sound and logical a right to believe as to disbelieve. And from every other point of view it is infinitely better for you to believe."

With the clarification of his outlook the young man worked out a religion for himself which effected his cure. . . .

Almost numberless are the cases in which men and women as remote as you can imagine from religious ties or influences have found their way to religion, to the healing of their minds and lives. Many have recorded their experiences in writing, for that, at least, is one instance in which man wants to share the benefit he has received. . . .

All the signposts on the road of our present-day life point to religion as the indispensable necessity. It was not always so. There were times when signposts were hardly necessary. Religion was a matter of course. Everyone had an early training in some religion, and most people practiced it. But the chaotic mental and spiritual conditions that swept into our lives during the more recent decades, with the all but overwhelming development of science, the machine, and technology generally, have swept large numbers of people into the unbalance which is so alarming a fact today.

"I have yet to meet the psychiatrist," observed Marie B. Ray in *Two Lifetimes in One,* her recent popular book on fatigue, "who does not base his cure on the inculcation of moral principles, on ethics. No evangelist could preach more earnestly the necessity of the good life. He insists . . . that we substitute new and better standards of conduct for the shaky ones that are breaking down under us and causing our collapse."

Collapse! That is the key to our troubles and our weakness. And not the divine or the religionist alone, but the psychologist, the psychiatrist, has all but turned evangelist.

Before the clergyman of today there is the stupendous task, not in the field of dogma and ceremonialism, but in his new capacity as a psychologist, to help his flock in centering their lives. His need is to help them clarify their psychic life spiritually. Many Protestant clergymen, Jung complains, are still insufficiently equipped for the urgent task. Many more, however, are equipped than were twenty years ago, or even ten years ago. Often the clergyman is still needed even after the psychiatrist gets through.

TAKE this case in the experience of a widely known New York pastor. A certain man of high professional standing and personal character, quite happily married, had allowed himself to drift into infidelity. He could not explain his aberration, since he loved his wife and did not care for the other woman. In general he "was not that sort of man." Willingly and earnestly he put himself into the hands of a psychiatrist and, finally, his particular sexual tangle was straightened out. But for his wife there was still the painful scar remaining. She could not bring herself to live with her husband again. Then it was they appealed to the clergyman. He listened to both those tortured people sympathetically.

"Stand up, both of you," he told them. "Now give me your wedding ring," he said to the wife. "Take this," he told her husband, "and put it on her finger." Once again he consecrated their marriage, once more he united them sacramentally —and then the scar was healed. . . .

"It is indeed high time," as Jung observes, "for the clergyman and the psychiatrist to join forces to meet this great spiritual task"—that is, to meet the urgent psychic and religious needs of today.

To a certain extent that is already happening. As Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick recently told the writer, "if I were not a clergyman, I would rather be a psychiatrist than anything else."

But in a measure, he, as well as many another able and progressive clergyman, *is* a psychiatrist. He has to be, for numerous are the spiritual problems, which means largely psychic problems, presented to him by his parishioners and even by total strangers every day. As yet, however, the number of such clerics is far too small. Hence the amazing growth of creeds like Christian Science, Theosophy, New Thought, Unity, all in their various ways combining psychology with religion. And we see the phenomenon of a single church in New York, led by Dr. Emmet Fox, filling the Manhattan Opera House every Sunday with five thousand people, who no longer feel at home in their cradle religions, or who crave interpretation of religious truths in current psychological terms. The constructive side of religion is the side stressed in these new creeds, and the opening words of Dr. Fox's

prayer are, "God is the only presence in this room; all the rest is but shadow. God does not create evil: only our wrong thinking makes it so." . . . His followers are in every state in the Union, and his constant teaching is that the problems of security, health, and happiness, are primarily—he would say, exclusively—inner, spiritual problems, and every human being, who "is a child of God," can solve them successfully, by the right mental attitude, the right kind of prayer, and the consciousness of God within and without. . . .

But whether new or old, the aim and goal of religion is one: to remove barriers that keep mankind apart and prevent the formation of that brotherhood which every great religious founder has urged. That is why dictators cannot tolerate religion. Their aim is to separate their own from the rest of the world, to become the only source of power and law. The founders also taught that in our individual lives religion is supremely prophylactic, really a system of warding off and healing the psychic, if not the physical, ills we are all heir to, especially under pressure. And to this, modern psychology, like a prodigal son returned, is now agreeing. We are coming to realize that with all our progress in healing and hygienes we have turned away from, or neglected, the greatest hygiene of them all. Hence the emptiness and the progressive darkening of our lives without religion.

Always a necessity, religion is today indispensable—the single hope and single way to inner peace, stability, and harmony.

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN TENNIS

(Continued from page 45)

game, was pat-balling Dorothy Round out of the tournament. It was easy to see that Dorothy was so irritated with the sort of game she was being forced to play that concentration and patience and strokes had gone. I remember talking with someone quite seriously during the match about how I ought to play Cilli Aussem, without drawing forth any indication of criticism, for no one thought that Hilde could stand up against any sort of attack or variety of shot.

The next day Hilde and I played. I won the first set 6-3 without very much exertion, and led 5-1, 30-15 in the second. The pat-ball tactics had not upset my game, and I was full of confidence. But at this point things began to happen. Try as I would, I couldn't get to match point. It didn't seem to me that Hilde played any differently or any steadier, but I couldn't win the game points. I'd struggle and run and fight for a lead, get it, and then lose it. I tried rushing the net to finish off the rallies, but where before I had succeeded, something always went amiss now. A tantalizing lob would sail over my head and land on the baseline. Overeager, I would come up on too short a shot. Anyhow, I lost that set 10-8 and the last 6-0!

To say that I was chastened after that match is to put it very mildly. I felt incredibly stupid to think that my years of experience had served me so poorly. From then on, I *knew* that anything could happen in tennis!

In spite of this discomforting knowledge, I participated in several more matches that had the same bewildering results for myself. The next was against Helen Moody in the 1935 Wimbledon final, played on the same court where I had learned my first lesson. This time, in contrast to the other, I started badly, losing the first set 6-3 and giving every evidence of losing the second the same way. Then suddenly I came to life, made a succession of shots that surprised even myself and won the second set 6-3. From there I went to 5-2, 40-30 with the certainty that this time I couldn't fail. As soon as possible I entrenched myself at the net, and saw the chance I had been waiting for when Helen gave me a short lob from way out of court. I prepared to smash the ball into the stands, if possible, to avoid her long reach. But the ball dropped more quickly than I had anticipated. When I was able to hit it, it was neither at smashing nor volleying height, and I stroked it slowly into the net.

Never again did I reach match point, though I came close to it, and games were bitterly fought. It seemed to me that I played as well as I had right along, though my concentration, after that match point, was not all that it might have been. Helen, as tired as I, did not produce anything sensational, unless it was her rigid courage and determination to make no errors from then on. She won the last set 7-5, and I was left to wonder what had happened. Controversy raged over the reason for my defeat when victory had seemed inevitable. Some attributed it to discouragement after having missed my smash for the match; others attributed it to a "not-up" decision given against me when I led 30-15 at 5-2. Neither of these things had sufficient effect upon me to alter the course of the match. Whatever was the real reason for my defeat, I frankly do not know.

Bobby Riggs must have felt this way during the last three sets of his final match against Don McNeill in the American Championships last year. For two sets everyone agreed that this was the all-time high in disappointing men's-final matches. Don McNeill, who was capable of such powerful and persevering tennis, who had won Newport against as strong a field as had gathered anywhere that year, and who had never given a really poor performance, was playing like an erratic newcomer on the stadium court for the first time. The score was not as one-sided as it ought to have been, considering the errors that came from McNeill's racket, but Riggs is apt to be careless against an opponent who is off-form.

Anyhow, the match went dully on its way, everyone waiting for the inevitable finish, when suddenly McNeill, who had put away just one volley and one forehand in the whole first set, began to find his touch on the court slowed by rain of the previous day. Drive after drive dropped at Riggs' feet as he ran in toward the net; volleys raked the corners; services came so fast from McNeill's racket they were hard to follow with the eye. He won the third set, and the fourth. The fifth developed into one of the most exciting, daring and fastest sets I have ever seen. Constant attack, miracles of redemption, angles that seemed impossible to achieve electrified the onlookers, until few were aware that the shots Riggs missed were those he most likely would have made had he been pressed from the beginning, as he had been, earlier in the season against Frank Kovacs.

It didn't seem possible that in one match a player of McNeill's experience and class could produce tennis of two such utterly different calibers. It was enough to unsettle anyone, even a player with Riggs' power of concentration. It reminded me, in reverse, of the time Mrs. Holcroft-Watson led Helen Moody 5-0 in the first set of a Wightman Cup match at Wimbledon, and then blew up, resembling a secondary-school player for the remainder of the match.

Don started wild as a March hare and ended playing the greatest tennis of his life, dethroning the champion and taking the highest tennis glory in the country into his capable hands. Of all the bewildered people at Forest Hills that day, none was more bewildered than the ex-champion. Game, as always, to the very end, Riggs lost like a champion. But he had only the vaguest inkling of what had happened. One guess, a reasonable and probably correct one, was that McNeill's play was so bad in the first two sets that Riggs let up and never was able to regain his concentration. There were some who felt that Don was so nervous in his first national championship final that it took him two sets to produce the tennis that would have beaten Riggs from the beginning. Personally, I think Riggs himself might have reached far greater heights had he been pressed early in the match. He might have produced the tennis that won from an inspired Kovacs at Seabright in July of that year.

In 1938 I played a final match against Alice Marble in the National Championships that still leaves a question mark in my mind. I don't suppose anyone has ever played with less confidence and skill in a championship final than I did in losing the first set 6-0. Alice had a good deal to do with driving me into errors before I found my touch, range or anything else. But I had stood up before under equal pace. It looked as if I were never going to get started before the match was over. Almost as quickly as she had won the first set, Alice went to 5-3, 30-15 on my service—two points for the match. What happened to me then, I don't know, except that I left no chance untaken. No risk, whether passing-shot or finely angled volley was too great to take when I had everything to gain and nothing to lose. I think the shock of seeing me hit a few balls in succession in court unnerved Alice long enough for me to win the second set.

When we came back to court after the rest, I went quickly to 3-1. Perhaps I may be pardoned for thinking that I had the match under control. But although I was playing with increasing confidence, I never added another game to my score. When the match was over, I remember sitting down in the stadium locker-room trying to figure out what had happened. I couldn't feel badly about losing, because I had really enjoyed the match, as I had enjoyed all of them against Alice. She was stimulating and interesting to play, as no other opponent I can remember was. But this match, unlike others against her, leaves me to this day without the slightest idea what happened to change its course.

I think every first-class player's career is punctuated with such experiences. In my own case, those I have related were preceded by the oddest in result that I have ever played or witnessed. It took place at the Point Judith Tennis Club at Narragansett Pier in 1924. George Lee Lambert and I were playing in the finals of the mixed doubles tournament. George and I lost the first set 6-0 in about ten minutes, and were down 5-0, 40-0 in the second and last set. Since the match seemed to be all over but the shouting, George and I decided to have a good wallop at the ball when we returned service. George had the first wallop. His shot was an ace. I had the next, and mine was a clean winner. It was George's turn again, and he hit the ball so hard he forced an error. From then on we never looked back, and from two completely bewildered adversaries we won the second and third sets and my first mixed-doubles tournament in the East. Small wonder that I have never been able to convince myself since then that it was useless to fight.

When anyone tries to tell me that tennis runs pretty true to form, I think of all these matches, and more; and I know that it is the very uncertainty of the game, the fact that "anything *can* happen in tennis," that makes it the most thrilling sport in the world—that makes the veterans, like myself, reluctant to face the day when they can only share these thrills from the sidelines.

U. S.—TODAY

(Continued from page 43)

of wondering whether there's been an accident; and ninety-nine times out of a hundred it means I never worry at all.

I awoke when they came in, however; it would have been impossible not to hear them. They were harmonizing softly in the lower hall, before coming up to bed, and making silly jokes like, "What do you do?" "I make trunks; it's an empty life!" I heard them coming upstairs and calling "Good night," and Freddy saying, "Keep quiet, will yuh? You're waking up Rags." And of course Dick forgot the alarm, had to go down, stop it, and do a lot of explaining. But finally the whole household fell asleep.

The next morning there were some things the boys wanted to buy, and while they were out, Babs took Eileen over to her school. So it happened that Dick came home and up to my room, and I did have a few minutes alone with him.

"That's a nice girl, Dick," I said.

"Like her?" He brightened.

"She's awfully fond of you," I added.

He moved his shoulders uneasily.

"I know," he said. "This is kind of in the nature of a good-by party."

"Really?" I said. "Nobody would guess it; I'm sure she hasn't."

"Well," he said, "how can I make any plans? Thirty dollars a month! If we do come back, we'll have to start at the bottom looking for jobs again. I guess girls will have to wait. It's tough."

"Yes, dear," I said, "but don't *you* be. I don't know how you stand with her, but if you do care about her, she ought to be given a chance to wait for you if she wants to; I mean, it would help to know that she was a part of your life-plans."

"I suppose so," he said. "Trouble is, I haven't any life-plans."

Suddenly, to my own surprise, my heart was on Eileen's side.

"Just don't be careless, if you really care about her, and run the risk of losing her," I said.

He did not answer, but he gave me a quick glance as if the idea that he might lose her was a new one.

"We'll wait and see how it works out," he said.

"Things don't work out," I said. "People work them."

"Oh, well, as Vic says, the Army takes care of the girl question." He tried to sound very nonchalant.

"Vic is different," I answered. "He has a different attitude from you and your father. You're not the kind of men who kiss their girls good-by and go on to others somewhere else. Don't let them change you from what you really are. Somebody said about your Daddy that he was like an apple, sweetest near the core."

Dick laughed. "I bet it was you," he said. But he put an arm across my shoulder and gave me a hug as he went out.

IN the very late afternoon we all got together in the living-room. It would have been almost our dinner-time (sometimes we still call it supper because the younger children do), and Ed was ready to issue his invitation.

"How would you all like to go to the High Hat House for dinner?" he asked.

The High Hat is the swankiest place anywhere around here, with marvelous steaks and broiled lobsters and wonderful music, and a roof garden where you dance. Well, of course, everybody would adore to, and Dad was a prince. Babs said he always had the most wonderful ideas— "And just at the right moment," Dick added, flipping a lone quarter into the air. And Eileen called Ed a lamb.

"Well, then," he said, "go get prettied up, and don't be long about it. We might as well have all the party that's coming to us."

I had just finished my hair and was zipping on the black crêpe which is my evening uniform, when the door opened and Ed came in. He held a telegram in his hand. I wasn't alarmed, with all the family home and accounted for, until I looked up and saw his serious face.

"It's from Ann," he said. "Her husband has just been hurt in an accident."

Ann is his youngest sister, the baby of his family and his especial care. I remembered his telling me how when they were in swimming, he was always watching to see if that little head was above water and safely near the float. Business kept Ann and her husband on the move; now they were in Detroit and really quite alone.

"Poor Ann," I said. I hesitated. "Do we have to tell the children right away? After all, the boys are leaving for a long time. It seems as if it wouldn't be heartless to let them have their fun."

"It isn't that," he said. He handed me the telegram. "He may die in a few hours. Of course I *could* take the early morning train." He put a hand on my shoulder as if to steady himself. "After all, we ought to think of the boys too."

I said nothing.

"I know, I ought to go right now," he said. Then: "I think I'll see how Dick feels about it."

He called Dick into the room and told him the situation. Dick's young face fell, and then set into a new stern line.

"I guess that's what you call in the line of duty," he said. "Well, we'll have to pass up the party this time."

"That's the way I see it," Ed said, "but I'm glad you do too. You go right ahead without me, though, and have your celebration," he added.

BUT Dick was pulling a timetable from his pocket.

"We'll stick with you," he said. He studied the folder. "We three can leave on the same train and get dinner aboard. And the New York Express comes through just ahead of it, if Eileen wants to make it. Say, I'd better tell them before they get all dolled up in gold braid and frou-frous."

I packed Ed's bag and tucked some bills in my evening purse. Ed brought the car around, and I got in front with him. The two men and girls piled into the back. I could feel their dejection as if it were my own—and a little of it was! Eileen looked suspiciously near to tears as she said good-by. She kissed both Ed and me. Dick disappeared with her on the other side of the station. He came back only after the train had pulled out. He did not get in again, but stood moodily by the car, staring down the tracks. I noticed that something he wore on his uniform lapel was gone; he must have torn it off and given it to Eileen. The incoming train whistled. He kissed me thoughtfully.

"I'll write you about things," he said.

The three men got aboard. I saw Dick leaning to wave at a window, and Vic's face over his shoulder; and at the vestibule door Ed, who has never yet failed to turn and smile as he goes.

"Well, toots," I said at last, for there had been no sound from the back seat, "how about getting in front with me?"

Babs was out and in again in a second.

"Oh, Moms," she said, "it seems as if every time people do what's right, it means some man goes away and leaves you!"

"Yes, it does," I said.

"The Army just puts up Order 33520 and breaks your heart," she went on. "It doesn't care."

"No," I said, "it doesn't."

"Moms," she asked at last, "do you think I could be in love?"

"You might," I considered. "But maybe the uniform has something to do with it, too. Don't you think so?"

"I don't know," she answered. "It feels like the real thing. It's very hurting."

I looked at her in the dim light. She looked lovely in her summer dress and soft coat—and very young.

"Let's not go right home," I said. "Let's you and me have a party. Would you like to have dinner with me at the hotel? We could sit right down and eat through all the courses from fruit-cup to chocolate parfait and coffee."

She sat up suddenly and patted her hair.

"Can we have the big dinner?" she asked. "That would be the nuts!" She leaned against me. "Oh, Moms, you're the most comforting person."

I started the car.

SALUTE

(Continued from page 41)

Corinne was trembling as Larry helped her out. It was all so casual and taken for granted that it would be absurd for her to protest in the presence of these flying-men. Steve's eyes on Larry held such undisguised envy that any weakness on her part would be in the nature of letting Larry down. Steve had spent his life in aviation, but he was married and had two children; there would be no spectacular, distant scenes of adventure for him.

They were walking toward the concrete apron. Three or four mechanical dragonflies buzzed around in the sun-warmed sky above them. A little yellow plane with an absurdly wide wing stood on the line with its propeller ticking over gently. Larry smiled broadly when he saw it.

"That's more peacock than eagle, Precious," he said, "but you'll have a ride."

Corinne found her voice, thin and lost and frightened but still surprisingly under control. "Peacocks do not fly, Larry," she said, "or do they?"

Larry shrugged. "I pass. Maybe they don't. My biology or zoology or whatever covers peacocks had huge gaps in it."

He walked around the little ship with narrowed, thoughtful eyes. Occasionally he touched something experimentally. Steve turned to Corinne.

"You always know whether a man is a pilot or not by the way he takes his introduction to a new ship."

"My goodness! Do they all sort of sniff at a new ship like that?"

Corinne hardly knew that she had spoken. Steve chuckled. "That's good," he said. "*Sniffing* describes it. A good pilot never takes anyone's word about a ship."

Larry had rejoined them, and he was care-free and at ease again. "Let's go, Precious," he said.

He helped her up into a tiny cabin that had a comfortable reclining bucket seat facing an instrument panel slightly more complicated than those of an automobile. She found her breath for one final, whispered protest.

"Larry, please—"

"Don't be silly," he said.

He slid in behind a wheel that was set on a movable column. His hand found the throttle, and the song of the engine deepened. Corinne clenched her hands into tight fists in momentary terror. She expected to be immediately whisked off into space, but nothing happened. Larry turned and smiled at her. He moved the wheel forward and back and to either side, leaning out to observe the effect on the control surfaces. Satisfied at length, he pulled the cabin door shut.

"Fasten your belt," he said. "This way."

He reached over and fastened it for her, a wide web belt that fitted snugly but not too tight.

"Automobiles should have these too, the way some people drive," he said.

He adjusted his own belt, touched the throttle again, and they were moving. They taxied down the field and turned into the wind. The ship seemed to pause there tensely like a runner on a mark. Larry smiled reassuringly at Corinne.

"Relax!" he said.

The engine sang with power, and they were moving like a gay arrow across the field. Corinne had traveled faster in an automobile, but at the moment she was beyond that realization. She closed her eyes momentarily, opened them and gasped. A hangar roof was going by beneath her. There had been no sudden wrench such as she had expected, no appreciable sensation at all at the moment of take-off. They were climbing straight, and then the plane seemed almost to stop. She heard the engines labor, and there was a momentary sinking sensation in her stomach such as she had experienced at times in elevators. The wing on her side of the ship was up, and they were turning.

They banked back across the field, toy buildings in a world that was flattened out in miniature, and there was no sensation at all save of release. Corinne moistened her lips with the tip of her tongue, and her body untensed.

"Okay now to loosen your belt. Like it?"

Larry was relaxed on his side of the cockpit. He was looking at her with amusement in his eyes. Corinne unfastened the clamp on the safety-belt.

"I don't know," she said. "I am still frightened."

"Uh-huh. You are still thinking of danger. Let's get some other things to think about."

The earth spread out beneath them: low blue hills in the distance, the buildings of the city clinging together as though for mutual support, the country beyond the airport a series of checkered fields. The little plane seemed to hang in the sky while the panorama below was moved along upon some invisible conveyor. Larry dropped the right wing slightly.

"Look!" he said. "The show place."

It was the home of the wealthiest man in town; the family was in a state tradition, and the house a show-place on a hill. Corinne strained her eyes overside, but the massed pattern of trees and roofs and ribbon roads meant nothing to her save just that: a mass pattern.

"Catch the sun-flash on the chromium."

SHE heard Larry's voice, and almost immediately she saw the roof. It covered a great white house, and there had been many jokes about the chromium trimmings that he had added to it. Those trimmings caught the light now and located the house for her. Without that absurd touch, it would have stood out no more than the humblest house in town.

They were climbing toward a rolling mass of cloud ahead. In a surprisingly short space of time they were above those clouds: a white mass stretching for miles in all directions, yet broken into individual units that were amazingly alike.

"Buffaloes," she said, "white buffaloes with their heads down."

They seemed to be in motion while the plane stood still; a spectral herd moving in clouds of blue-gray dust to some buffalo Valhalla in the sky. Larry was smiling very gently now.

"Sometimes they are sheep," he said. "Look!"

He dropped the nose; Corinne braced herself, her whole body, as they dived. The absurdly solemn herd of white buffalo became an Arctic waste toward which they plunged. There was an instant of collision without impact, a gray darkness like that of a suddenly encountered tunnel, and then bright sunlight again with mystical towers and minarets rising to either side of the little ship that had become suddenly a magic carpet.

"You used to read me stories about all this, but you did not know that it was *this*. It was Bagdad and Samarkand and all the glamorous East—not something just above our own home. Remember?"

Remember? Oh, yes. And how well! The way he had huddled close to her with his curly head against her breast while she read to him. He was hers, then, all hers.

"And now I am his. Our rôles are reversed."

The thought came to her with a sense of shock. She had taken his boyish mind into worlds of wonder, and now he was taking her where wonder dwelt in the wide sky above the drab and the dull and the mediocre world of men. His lips were

slightly parted, and he was not looking at her. Under the gentle touch of his hands, the plane was a living thing, darting in and out of cañons crammed with blue hush, climbing the hills of a pure dream world that vanished to a touch.

"This is it," he said, "the life that frightened you."

She wanted to cry aloud at the beauty of it, the freedom of movement, the escape from all restraints. Her right hand made a fist, and she pounded her knee. "Beautiful things do not end," he had told her; "they merely change." And she had been afraid of change.

Suddenly, solemnly, she was aware of Tim. Somewhere out here, or beyond it where the vaster wonders were, Tim was waiting. She would go on and on upon the wings of change, and beauty would never abandon her, never retreat because she had abandoned it. It was all a matter of keeping faith, of knowing that it was true. Larry had had to show her, because she was weak. Without seeing, she would not have believed.

She looked at him again, at the strong features, the deft capable hands. She had dreamed once that those hands would be the hands of a great concert pianist. It was the beauty that she knew, and she had clung to it. What beauty did music hold that matched what Larry had in the hands that piloted a ship of the sky?

They were coming back to the field. The cloud-pack was behind them, and the precise patterns of conventional living spread beneath their wings. Larry was looking at her, but he did not speak. She knew then that under all of the gay persiflage, he was inarticulate. He had spoken to her in a thousand ways, but not with words.

They settled toward the field, and she saw the flag flying from the pole where the Government was training young men in primary flight. The yellow plane headed toward the pole, and then, gracefully and solemnly, the wings dipped.

She looked at Larry, and his was the face of a soldier at attention with the flag passing by. He was a soldier in the new world of wings, and free soul that he was in the wide reaches of the sky, he too came to salute at the symbol of his country's glory.

She knew, then, beyond all argument that she was saying good-by to him again. She had to be big to deserve him, to deserve the man that he was and the cause to which he was dedicated. He deserved more from her than tears. He would never fly from any post with the knowledge that a mother's fears were riding with him to steal his courage or unnerve his hand.

The wheels touched, and they rolled gently to the line.

"Larry," she said, "it was wonderful."

AT four, when his train moved slowly out, she stood on the platform. Her eyes were dry, and she held her chin firmly high. She saw his face at the window, and her hand came up to the brim of her felt in salute.

Somewhere, perhaps, another brave soul knew, and dipped his wings.

CLAUDIA BLAMES IT ON THE STARS

(Continued from page 17)

"Okie-doke," Gloriana chirped, and then blinked.

"That'll teach her!" reflected Claudia grimly.

She reached for a near-by pile of magazines. It was virtually the same pile she had gone through last season—thumbed and dirty, and mostly about hygiene. She picked one up anyway, and held it in front of her. At least it would act as a barrier to further conversation.

But Gloriana was not so easily discouraged. "Have you seen the new magazine on astrology?" she queried pleasantly.

"The new what?"

For answer, Gloriana opened the small drawer in the table and withdrew a crisp, thick pamphlet labeled: *"Universal and Individual Astrology."*

"Go on, look through it if you want," she offered. "There's a whole year's forecast for Gemini. What's your sign?"

"I don't know," said Claudia. "I only know I was born in December."

"What day?"

"The twenty-third."

"That's Capricorn; it's the sign of the Goat."

"Oh," said Claudia without enthusiasm.

"But aren't you *interested* in astrology?" Gloriana queried in amazement.

"I'm afraid I don't know much about it, really."

"I live by it," said Gloriana simply. "That's why I did the shop over. Gemini people have an awful battle with themselves and with the world. But it's going to end up to be a good year, provided we fight with the current and not against it. Uranus and Saturn are going to remain until May, 1942, but anyway we're standing on the threshold of achievement, it says. . . . Excuse me a minute; I think Mrs. Riddale is dry—"

It was Claudia's turn to blink. Perhaps Gloriana was an intellectual giant disguised by a permanent wave and a small high giggle. At any rate, she lost no time in turning the pages of the book to Gemini, and found her interest definitely engaged when she discovered that David, born May 26th, shared the sign of the Twins with Gloriana. "He'll be charmed," she thought. "I must tell him."

"I just had my full horoscope done," Nancy called as Gloriana removed a myriad of invisible hairpins from her scalp. "A marvelous new woman. The best I ever had. A hundred dollars. But it was worth it; she told me everything that ever happened—I'll give you her name and address, Claudia, if you want."

"Don't bother. I'm afraid I'll just have to remember what's happened to me all by myself. It's cheaper."

"Same here," said Gloriana, giggling. "Anyway, that little book, for a quarter, tells me everything I want to know. I look at it every morning before I go to work."

"What'd it say today?" asked Claudia, feeling that she was getting something for nothing, for David.

"It said," repeated Gloriana glibly: *"'Curb irritability. Avoid depression. Evening favorable to romance and pleasure.'"*

"Always grateful for small favors," Claudia murmured.

WHEN Nancy finally left the shop, she was glad. She picked up the book again and turned to the chapter on Capricorn. "Let's see what my fortune is for today," she said gayly, in much the same tone as she would use to humor Bobby. How nice if her evening, too, was to bring romance and pleasure. It was high time for David to come out of his shell and act human for a change.

"Cooperate with business associates—" No, that was yesterday. And she'd certainly done that too, what with breaking her back on that weeding job.

"Today's Wednesday," said Gloriana. "What does it say for you?"

Claudia read it through twice before she answered. It said nothing about love or romance, but it was awfully coincidental, none the less: *"Avoid accidents. Keep out of cars. Guard against deception. Wait for developments."*

"I don't believe so much in that accident business," Gloriana reassured her.

"Don't you?" Claudia asked in an odd voice. Gloriana evidently didn't know that if she'd got hold of this twenty-five-cent book in time, she'd have saved the price of a garage door. And as for the deception—if it wasn't deception to deceive a butcher into donating dog-bones for family use, then Claudia didn't know the meaning of the word. It was simply uncanny. She wondered what the book would say about last Sunday, and eagerly ran her finger up the page to find it. But Gloriana interrupted her to say, "Soak the other hand, please," and unfortunately, she didn't have any hands left, to hold the page.

"Where can I get one of these books?" she asked.

"In the druggist's right next door."

Claudia tried to sound nonchalant. "I don't suppose there's really anything to this business—"

"There's a lot to it," Gloriana passionately averred. "It's very scientific. Why, take Hitler, even! He wouldn't make a move without consulting his astrologist. Everyone knows that."

"I didn't know it," said Claudia meekly. "What about Roosevelt?"

"I couldn't say about Roosevelt," Gloriana admitted. "But I wouldn't be surprised."

When Claudia got home, the first thing Jane asked was: "Where's the bones?"

"I didn't stop for them," said Claudia. "I was in a hurry to get home."

She rushed upstairs to her room. In a few minutes Jane followed. "Oh," she said, when she saw Claudia reading a book, "I thought maybe you didn't feel good—"

"I feel fine," said Claudia.

"Matthew cut his finger," Jane continued, "but it was a clean cut, and I bandaged it up. Do you want to see it?"

"Later," said Claudia.

"Your sister-in-law phoned—"

"If it's nothing important, tell me afterward," Claudia entreated.

At that point Jane seemed to gather that her presence was unwanted. She turned hesitantly at the threshold. "Lunch is on the table," she mentioned diffidently.

Claudia closed the book with a sigh. "I'll be right down," she said.

There was even less privacy after lunch. Edward wanted her to look at some new shrubs that weren't doing as well as they ought, and the vacuum man came about the vacuum, and Jane needed some moral support on the matter of disposing of a batch of Matthew's outgrown rompers. It was almost four o'clock before she managed to escape to her room again. She closed the door and sat down to read. A knock sounded. She thrust the book behind her and called, "Come in," trying to sound pleasant about it, because she knew it was Jane.

Jane said: "I hate to disturb you again, Mrs. Horneledge, but you didn't bring the bacon for supper, and kidneys don't taste like anything without bacon."

Claudia was filled with regret. "Oh, Lord, that's true. Well, I'll pick some up on my way to the station for Mr. Horneledge."

Jane was pacified, but not satisfied. She also looked a little puzzled. Claudia didn't blame her. "If Bobby ever acted the way I'm acting, I'd investigate," she told herself.

The end of it was that she locked herself in the bathroom to avoid a conversation with the lightning-rod man, who had to go up to the attic, to get out on the roof. He was a lonely man, and talkative. "This is very smart of me," said Claudia, thrusting the bolt firmly into place. "I should have done it long ago."

In a little while she heard Bobby on the stairs. She heard him go from one room to another. There wasn't any urgency in his footsteps; he merely wanted to see her. However, she remained perversely silent, hoping he would go outdoors to look for her. But a kind of sixth sense led him to the bathroom. He banged on the door.

"Mother!" He banged again. "Mother!"

"What *is* it?" she cried hoarsely.

"Are you in there?"

"Where do you think I am? Run in the garden and play!"

"I want to wait until you come out!"

"It makes me nervous. I said run out and play!"

"I did play. I want to talk to you!"

"What about?"

It was obvious that there was little, if anything on his mind. It was merely the magnet-like attraction that her presence seemed to possess for everyone in the house. "I'm not talking!" she announced with stark finality. "I'm busy!"

"What are you doing?" he demanded distrustfully.

She threw her eyes to heaven, and her voice grated. "Sitting on the edge of the bathtub reading a book!"

"Oh," said Bobby.

SHE drove to the station in a daze, feeling a different person—light and free, no longer earth-bound. It was a revelation suddenly to realize that everything you did and everything you didn't do was directed by the planets. Take this morning for example: There was no need to rake herself over the coals for smashing the garage door; she'd simply been a tool in

the hands of Jupiter. The difficulty, of course, would lie in getting David to accept that fact, for she had an uncomfortable foreboding that the very word *astrology* would act as a red flag before a bull—particularly if he knew that she had picked it up in the local beauty shop. "I'll have to be damn' tactful," she thought, for the important thing was to make him understand that in relation to himself, his troubles were as good as over. It was as impossible for him not to go through what he was going through, as for the stars to stop in their courses. It was a kind of test that the heavens had set for him; and according to his horoscope, it was part of the making of his soul, and he would emerge a finer, bigger person from these months of trial and conflict. "He'll never believe it," she decided morosely.

NEVERTHELESS, she could hardly wait for the train. She tooted the horn, and he saw the car. Her heart turned sick. Stars or no stars, he looked tired and discouraged, and his step lacked the spring with which he used to hurry toward her. Sometimes, if he were in a particularly abandoned mood, he'd walk bowlegged, or pull his hat down over his ears like an old peddler. It was a long while, she reflected, since he had clowned like that.

They kissed out of the window, and then she started to move over to her seat. "Don't bother to move; you may drive," he said, and got in the other side.

She thought she must be dreaming, for in all the years they'd been married, he'd never once said, out of pure volition: "You may drive."

"Don't you feel well?" she asked him anxiously.

"I feel all right. Go ahead."

She thought: "He must be so tired, he doesn't care whether he lives or dies."

She stepped on the starter and released the clutch, devoutly hoping that all the accidents in her horoscope were over for that day. Now was the time to put her best foot forward, to show him that she was a good driver—cautious, smooth and considerate of her motor. The only trouble was that she drove so carefully that she stalled once or twice. He wasn't very nice about it, either. "Don't let your motor die; get a move on—you're not going to a funeral; *step* on it!" he adjured her sharply.

It was all she could do not to throw the car in his face. But she remembered that he was not to blame. *"Curb irritability. Avoid depression. Evening brings romance and pleasure."* She said patiently, "I'm sorry I stalled, dear. I'll try not to do it again."

He looked at her suspiciously. "What's the matter, don't *you* feel well?"

"I never felt better." She laughed lightly. "Did you know your sign was the Twins?"

"One of me is plenty," he said sourly. "What'd you do all day?"

"Had a manicure. Met Nancy Riddale—"

"That idiot woman!" he broke in.

She saw her chance go out the window. "Aren't you ashamed to be so intolerant!" she chided him.

"No, I'm not ashamed! Why should I be ashamed?"

"Shhh—don't lose your temper. She's really very nice. She asked us over tonight, for a party."

"Oh, she did, did she?"

"I said we wouldn't go," Claudia assured him hastily. "Did you have a hard day?"

"Pretty. . . . Ghastly news in the papers."

"Oh, dear."

"How's everything at home? Kids all right?"

"Fine."

"Here. I'll drive."

He reached for the emergency brake, pulled her over his knees and settled himself in the driver's seat.

"He feels better," Claudia concluded, with mingled relief and resentment. "What's the matter? I was driving perfectly!" she protested indignantly.

"Too perfectly. . . . Edward take Majesty?"

"Late this afternoon. Why'd he wait so long?"

"He knows his cows," said David, and lapsed into silence. She glanced at his profile, strong and a little forbidding at the moment. "I'd better not say anything at all until after supper," she made up her mind. The thing was, however, to keep him from seeing the garage door until she'd had a chance to explain about the stars. She wanted to use the door as an asset, and not as a liability.

"I'll take the car around to the garage, and you go on up and relax before dinner," she suggested as they came in view of the house.

"No, I want to see Edward a minute."

Courage deserted her. There was no law that she had to be at his side when he discovered the damage. "Then I'll get out in front," she said. "I want to give Jane this bacon. . . . But I wish you'd kiss me first," she added wistfully.

Absently he dropped a light peck against her cheek. "That was no kiss," she grumbled.

"Go on, run along—"

"Stop talking to me as if I were Bobby!"

For answer he gave her a whack across the rear. "It'll be the last friendly gesture he'll make for some time," she thought ruefully.

She didn't want Bobby to hear any words, so she sent him to scrub some ink off his fingers when she heard David coming up the stairs.

"Don't argue. You'll say hello to Daddy when you're nice and clean," she ordained sternly. "Now march. Not another word out of you."

Bobby marched, feeling that there was deep injustice in the world. Claudia prayed that the worst would be over when he returned. "Those hands have to be white as snow before you come back!" she called after him. Then she disappeared into her closet, and was slipping into a hostess coat as David entered.

"Nice job you did with the garage door," he remarked at once.

"What?"

"You heard me."

"Oh. The garage door. I suppose you think I really did that?"

"I don't think—I *know!* I recognized your fine handiwork in every splinter."

"Please don't be so sardonic—so high and mighty. And reserve your judgment. You don't actually know the first thing about it."

"Did you or did you not crash into it?"

"In a manner of speaking, yes; in a manner of speaking, no."

"I'm in no mood for riddles."

She took a deep breath and came brazenly out with it. "Ever hear of astrology?" she asked him.

He looked at her. "My God!" he said merely.

"Don't 'my God' me," she flared, throwing tact and discretion to the winds. "It wasn't my fault! If you don't believe me, read this!"

She picked up the magazine from the table, already opened to the page whereon her daily horoscope was heavily underscored, and thrust it at him. He took it like a slow-motion picture, and read it aloud, giving each word its measured due. *"Avoid accidents. Keep out of cars. Guard against deception. Wait for developments."* His voice came to an end, and he just stood there, staring at her.

"You believe this damned nonsense?" he asked her incredulously. "You actually *believe* it?"

"I suppose you're too good to believe in astrology?"

"Yes, I'm too good!" he agreed, as if he were proud to flaunt the fact.

"Hitler believes in it!" she threw at him defiantly.

"'Hitler believes in it,'" he repeated ironically. "Since when are you and Hitler chums?"

"We're not chums!" she denied with fury. "But that man's done some pretty tall stepping—you have to admit it yourself; and he's used his stars to help him!"

David snorted and said something rude and unsavory under his breath. Claudia got the general gist of it, but it was hard to believe that it was so. "Anyway," she went on breathlessly, "a lot of manly American bankers and lawyers and theatrical producers simply swear by their horoscopes. And as for your own horoscope, my dear fellow—well, just wait till you read it!"

"I'll wait a long time, my child." He put the book gently upon the table. "A very long time, indeed."

She could have wept with frustration and rage. She'd known it would be this way. "You and your mind!" she sputtered. "Your beautiful, wonderful strong-minded mind! I could wring its neck!"

"Listen," he broke in—not too harshly, but not too pleasantly either. "I'm dog-tired, and your gabbling annoys me."

SHE bit her lips to keep from talking back to him. He really was tired; she could see that. So tired that he could hardly eat his supper, though he was fond of kidneys, as a rule.

"I'm going up for my pipe," he said, after he had drunk two cups of black coffee.

"Let me get it for you," she offered eagerly.

"No, thanks. You couldn't find the one I want."

Jane came in to clear the table. "Mr. David hardly touched his plate," she mourned. "Such nice kidneys. He'll run himself down if he keeps up this way."

"I know he will," said Claudia unhappily. "I'm worried to death about him."

"It doesn't pay to worry," said Jane. "Everything comes out like it should be, in the end—"

Claudia threw a quick glance at her. For a brief moment she thought she detected a glint of horoscope in Jane's serene dark eyes, but she couldn't be sure. Believing in the stars was probably something that wise people kept unto themselves. "Anyway," she thought, "I'll have the book down here just in case he does let me read some of the things aloud to him."

She ran upstairs for it. She looked on the table where she had left it. It was gone. Could Bobby have taken it? She walked into the nursery. Bobby was in bed, staring at the ceiling. "You didn't see a book, did you, dear?"

"That little book you were reading?"

"Yes. Where is it?"

"I saw Daddy take it in the bathroom."

"Oh," said Claudia.

For the second time in the past weeks wisdom visited at her shoulder. She went down to the living-room and sat quietly on the sofa, and waited. Minutes passed. And then finally she heard the latch on the bathroom door click, and open. David's step, quick and alive, sounded on the boards above her head. He was going back to the bedroom. He was whistling, too. She could scarcely believe her ears —he hadn't whistled for ages.

HE came down at last, packing his pipe with tobacco. He halted behind her and nuzzled his nose into the back of her neck, in his old way. "Want to go to that Riddale woman's party?" he asked her.

She turned to stare at him. He looked clear and relaxed, and ten years younger. "You've had a rotten time sticking in the house these past weeks," he answered her unspoken question.

"I like sticking in the house," she said.

He bent and kissed her again. It was a real kiss, with romance and pleasure creeping into it. His horoscope was working, though he didn't know it.

"I love you, you little damn' fool," he muttered, out of the clear blue.

Her heart sang. There was a look about him that made her know that he was emerging from the dark woods into the sunlight and air. Never mind what had led him there; never mind whence the lift had come—it was enough that it had happened.

"I love you too," she said, out of the depths of her rejoicing soul.

He sat down on the sofa beside her and pulled her over to his lap. "Look," he said, "you don't really believe in that damned astrological nonsense, do you? Nine-tenths of it is just coincidence."

She quelled the impulse to question him about the other tenth. "Of course I don't believe in it," she guilelessly agreed.

He seemed relieved. "Want to go to a movie?"

"I don't think so."

"I'll take you. I'm not tired."

"I'd really rather stay home, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind." He kissed her long and hard, as if he'd just got home from a long journey.

"What do you want to do—read?" he asked her huskily.

"No," she said. "I read enough. Now I'm just going to—await developments."

THE LAST NIGHT OF THE QUEEN

(Continued from page 37)

fought his way in, his jaw slack and chattering, and on his heels a thrice-recruited seventh wave swept them and burst every glass in the wheelhouse, leaving the room a shambles and knee-deep with brine that fought its way into the chart-room and on aft into the alleyway and radio shack. It left Racine alone at the wheel; the helmsman, cut fiercely across the face from flying glass, was on his knees, red-stained hands across his face.

Willby, his hands wrapped around the engine-room telegraph, for the first time looked at Tom Racine. The boy was at the wheel, legs wide-spread, on his face an expression of complete abandonment, almost of joy, at this tremendous battle. It heartened Willby to see him; it gave him hope. He saw the youngster release one hand from the wheel to reach back and grasp the seaman by the shoulder and shake the man roughly, jerking him to his feet and into position at the wheel.

"No time to dog it!" he roared, shaking the man again. The seaman's hands left his face. He turned his head and forced a macabre grin at the officer.

ON the pitch of the vessel, Willby staggered into the chart-room, to find Lammerdon clinging to the table, staring at the chart fixed on its surface.

"Where's Pamcetto?" he yelled. Shouting with an open-throated roar was necessary if one wished to be heard.

Lammerdon shook his head.

"Find him. . . . Report."

The bosun turned aft toward the radio shack and the inside companionway that led down to the galley and messroom below. He was back almost at once.

"Steward says Chips—Pamcetto—drunk—threw bottle when he went to fo'c'stle."

This was a reflection on himself, Willby thought. He had forgotten the Assyrian since sending him down to check the hatches. He wondered if the job had been done.

"Get tarps, boards—close wheelhouse."

Lammerdon nodded, and responded with amazing alacrity. In the next forty minutes he had eight of the deck-gang topside, and the wheelhouse somewhat protected from the lash of water that was as cutting as driven sand.

But still the wind came on and on, until the very force of it—whether a man was below-deck in the engine-room or on the bridge—brought a gorge of terror in one's throat. Tons and tons of water fell on them and fought for escape from the decks on which it had so eagerly pounced. The scuppers were choked, drowned; and the water spilled over the hatches, among the winches and over the rail—only to be thrown back again in ever greater torrents. It was an insane, incoherent world, filled with all the depravities and cruelties of a weather god gone wholly mad.

With the struggle to live so great, defeat and death seemed easy. The hopeless battle stripped from the weak the frail armor of courage with which they cloaked themselves; from the strong it drained the will, like the silent seeping of oil; and when it was gone, there was only the thin coating of pride left, and wearing at it was the bitter feeling of impotency, the sag of tired muscles, and the desire to let go and with blasphemous rage shout the screaming wind back into the heavens whence it came. The mind choked on any thought of the future, and was tormented by a longing for a quiet littoral, verdant hills and sunshine.

For five hours Tom Racine and the injured seaman—the cut had coagulated into a livid red smear—fought the storm from the partly protected wheelhouse. Willby bolstered eight of the deck-crew Lammerdon held in readiness in the messroom, by appearing among them, cool and confident. Five had refused to leave the fo'c'stle where they sat in a drunken huddle with Pamcetto and Chips. Willby knew he could not force an issue with the mutineers now; it would mean a fight, and more men put out of service. . . .

The last of the boats was gone. Three of the twelve ventilators remained; the nine that were down, left gaping holes. The fo'c'stle was afloat, and the engine-room ankle deep, and the stack had a drunken slant to port. Willby had the ventilator-holes closed with the exception of the fo'c'stle. Let the mutineers do their own repairing!

Racine eased the ship over the lesser waves and fought grimly through the big ones; if he suffered doubts, they were not visible. From the wheelhouse could be seen the ruin of what had once been a ship when she came on the crests; but for the most part under them was a three-island ship—the forepeak, the amidships section, and the fantail. In between these points the ship was awash; and when the larger seas came, they lost the forepeak to view, and with it most of the middeck housing. Thus they rode it out; and for a time—just before sundown—they came into a period of comparative calm, where the well-deck of the vessel was visible for long minutes. Willby ordered Racine's wheelmate below for coffee, if it was available, and had another man come up.

"We've licked it!" Racine shouted exultantly.

Willby shook his head. For the first time he was conscious of physical fatigue seeping into his spirit. The fight had been too hard, too long—he had been on the bridge over twelve hours—to respond to Racine's boyish enthusiasm. Mutely he regarded the bow of his vessel and the seas ahead.

Springing onto the bridge, he shouted: "Don't! *Don't!*"

Pamcetto, white-faced from drink, was standing in the fo'c'stle entrance to the well-deck. He heard the warning, and staggered onto the deck. He paused midway across the deck to shake his fist at the bridge.

"Look! God, man, look!" And Willby pointed at a great wall of water coming on them.

The Assyrian turned and saw; his aggressive fist lost its defiance; and turning, he ran for the shelter he had departed. He tripped over a snake of torn boom rigging. The *Baltic Queen* rose on the upgradient of the giant, and seemed for a moment as if to ride over it; but halfway up, her nose dug in, and she was struck a stunning blow and tossed like a chip of wood into a trough, where she heeled over with a deadly lethargy and was buried to her bridge. Willby saved himself with a desperate grab as he slewed toward the starboard rail. Racine fought to get her head up-wind again.

The storm was back with added fury from its respite; and when the well-deck did clear, only the stumps of cargo-booms and mast showed. . . .

The night was a wrathful counterpart of the day, and the darkness brought new terrors; it brought the *Baltic Queen* groaning up against walls of water that could not be seen nor anticipated. Two hours of this, and Number Three hatch gave. Racine led the deck-gang aft. Stringing safety-lines, they replaced the cover. No men were lost, though it left them exhausted, and with courage drained. When Racine returned to the wheelhouse, his oilskins were torn and he was white-faced with fatigue.

"All secure, sir," he gasped.

Willby nodded. It filled him with misgivings to see the storm at last taking its toll from Racine. For the first time he thought of the radio shack and a message to the world. Was it come to that? Had he been a fool not to have sent for aid before this? His stubble-covered jaw worked. Nothing vital had happened to the ship, he told himself; they were torn and rent, but the *Baltic Queen* still had her throbbing heart turning over, and she was meeting the storm nearly as strongly as in the beginning.

But he was in command. Twenty-four men lived on his decision—no, there were twenty-three. Pamcetto was gone. The drunken slob! And Willby felt a twinge that it was the only obituary he could give the man.

It was then that Willby saw something else—how long it had been going on, he had no way of knowing: when the ship did settle into moments of baffled steadiness, the wash on the pilot-house deck sought the port bulkhead. She was listing! It was pronounced; that meant her plates were broaching. He wondered if Racine noticed it. The boy was wedged in a corner, grasping at time to regain his strength.

He called the engine-room and masked his face against Hollister's report. The pumps were lagging. The engineer was rigging another.

THE minutes ticked by with halting slowness. The *Baltic Queen* shuddered and rolled, was thrust sharply aside into troughs to be swept all over by the next sea. Above the blast of the storm they heard a new sound; it came dolefully and with regularity: *Boom, boom*—the ship pointed her nose downward—*boom, boom.* Willby could feel every man in the pilot-house listening—counting the dirgelike tone. The bow of the *Baltic Queen* rose—*boom, boom.*

"Anchor-chain—chain locker," Lammerdon shouted from the wheel. "Pounding skin of ship."

Willby looked his thanks at the old fellow's back. Experience told; without the bosun's judgment, he might have sent men into danger. He realized then, that

nine-tenths of all navigation problems can be learned from books; but it is the unaccountable one-tenth that only time can teach. He was turning toward the radio shack when the seaman with the cut face burst into the room.

"Number One hatch — gone!" he screamed, his facial distortion working the wound open.

"I've got it." Racine sprang from his corner. Willby grabbed him.

"We'll turn her stern-to." He took Lammerdon's helper from the wheel and sent him with the officer, and placed himself alongside the older seaman. Ringing for full speed, they threw her over hard.

Drunkenly the *Baltic Queen* responded —already she felt nose-heavy with the water she had taken on the grain below-decks. Willby and Lammerdon, hypersensitive to the storm at their backs, fought to keep it dead abaft. A sidewash at this time would mean death to the men in the well. *Boom, boom,* went the old ship as she sped down into a trough. Hollister was at the throttle to keep her from racing her screw off when her stern came out of water on the crests. Without time for signals, the engine-room and topside synchronized their actions, but in the darkness their judgments were faulty. The throttle kept her for too long down a steep slope, and she buried her nose—a berserk burster hit her on the tail and turned her, and its brother overcame her. Willby heard the old man at his side groan as they strove to straighten her; his heart stopped when the wild cries of men reached him above the storm.

WILLBY half turned from the wheel, to see a seaman weakly holding to the door-frame. His sou'wester was gone; his oilskins were in shreds, and his face and hands covered with brine and blood. His jaw was slack, his head palsied from shock.

"Lost! Lost four men," he screamed, his eyes insane with fear. "Can't close it —d'ye hear? Can't close the damn' thing!"

Willby sprang to him, lifted him into the chart-room and onto the cot.

"Mr. Racine?"

"Overside—three others. We had it—that broadside did it." The fellow was crying weakly, tears cutting a wavering path down the grime and blood on his face.

Tom Racine gone! The very thought filled Willby with a melancholia that robbed him of certainty, initiative. It was then he knew that it was over. No number of men could remedy the Assyrian's negligence. He knew it was useless to ask men to follow him into the well. He began to curse Pamcetto; he continued to mouth horrible imprecations as he weaved his way down the alleyway to the radio shack.

As he entered, Forbes handed him a sheet of yellow paper. "Just came in," he said.

Willby read: "MISS WERBERLANE NOT HOME. SMITH."

Miss Werberlane not home! It took time for the message to penetrate; it took time to jerk himself from the present to the past. Twenty-eight days, and the butler tells him she is not home. He knew it was a lie. The ripple of pain he suffered was gone as quickly as that of a pebble in the storm-swept sea. He crumpled the paper into a ball and dropped it

at his feet. It danced about on the restless waters, then swooped to port as a big one came in and the deck sought to change places with the bulkhead.

He gave the order; and the operator, with headphones pinched tight against his ears, his face green under the faltering overhead light, worked his key; each gesture of his wrist a prayer. At his elbow Willby watched.

"Can't you raise anyone?" he asked after a time.

The operator looked over his shoulder, his fingers mechanically keeping to their task. "I heard the *Capucine* just before I got your message. They flashed San Francisco. They've sheared a port propeller."

"Where is she?"

Forbes read from the pad at his elbow: "Fourteen thirty-one north—ninety-five fifty west—they report a northeast nine blow."

Mentally Willby figured. Over a hundred miles. "Try again, keep trying." He beat the counter with his fist.

"I am trying! I've been trying. I hear them—they don't hear me. There's lots of static down here." Tears splashed down Forbes' face, and he turned away in embarrassment at his weakness.

"That's all there's left to do," Willby said, not unkindly. "They'll have to come through the depression area to get to us." This was added more to himself than to the operator.

Forbes turned, his eyes clear. "I'm not yellow, Captain, but it seems so damned hopeless."

A terrific sea drove down on the *Baltic Queen.* With a prolongation of fury that would drown violent thunder, it struck. She wallowed, the open hatch driven under water, slobbered full, straining the watertight doors and bulkhead between One and Two holds. *Boom, boom,* mourned the *Baltic Queen,* louder now that she was nose-heavy and mortally hurt. The overhead lights flickered, steadied. A bottle of ink jumped from its retaining well and crashed into the outboard bulkhead, vomiting a slowly widening dark circle into the wash underfoot. Slowly, but without life, the ship came back.

"That's my only bottle of ink." Forbes stopped short at the inanity of his remark. He commenced to laugh, his voice high, his shoulders shaking.

"Hold it!" Willby's fingers dug brutally into his arm.

"Yes sir." The spasm passed. He lifted his eyes to the Chelsea clock. "A silent period's coming. I'll try again."

"S O S de GMDM Baltic Queen. . . . 12.45 North Latitude. . . . 96.35 West Longitude. Foundering."

"Oh, God! Won't someone pick me up," Forbes prayed audibly. Again the key chattered. *"S O S de GMDM Baltic Queen 12.45 North Latitude. . . . 96.35 West Longitude. Foundering."*

Faintly at first it came, then stronger—*"GMDM de WDOS. . . . S.S. Capucine 14.31 North Latitude. . . . 95.50 West Longitude. Coming. Send dashes 375 KC'S, thirty minute intervals for radio direction bearings. Hammond."*

Forbes ripped the message from the typewriter and handed it to Willby. "They're coming!" he shouted. "They're coming—"

"Ask them how long—"

Again the urgent supplication went from the sinking *Baltic Queen.* Brief and swift came the answer. Willby leaned over Forbes' shoulder and watched the words form under the clicking keys. Eight hours! And he knew it was a death-sentence set in the type of an old typewriter. The *Queen* was done. She was suffering a series of concussions, and her response to each was slower.

"They'll be here at daylight," he said, knowing his face betrayed his thoughts to the youngster.

"Daylight? God—oh, God—will day ever come?" His eyes tore an answer from Willby, and not knowing what he said, he heard himself repeating over and over: "It will be a race between the sun-dial and hour-glass—it will be a race between the sun-dial and hour-glass—"

San Francisco, 6:20 A.M.—Radio Press Service reports, from the passenger liner *Capucine,* the loss of the *Baltic Queen* with all on board.

NATURE SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF HERSELF

(Continued from page 29)

"I don't want to look at your finger! I'm telling you a tooth is not like a finger, Rourke. Nature can't be curing a tooth. Only a dentist can fix a tooth."

"Nature," Rourke grumbled, "should be ashamed of herself."

"That's neither here nor there."

"If I had all the money I wanted," said Rourke, "I'd buy a car just like that one."

"Never mind the car, Rourke."

"A beautiful car it is, and a beautiful salesroom too, with all those fancy rugs and those vases full of flowers. How many cylinders would that car be having? Sixteen?"

"I don't know," said Casey.

"It would use a lot of gas if the car had sixteen cylinders. But perhaps it only has eight. We can go in and ask the salesman."

"No!" said Casey. "It's nearly two o'clock."

"No great matter if we're a few minutes late."

"Plenty of matter, Rourke! The dentist is a busy man. If you're late, he'll treat some other patient. It might be a long time before he could give you another appointment. Maybe a week or two."

"His office," said Rourke, "is two blocks down on Templeton Street?"

"That's right."

"I turn to the left at the cigar-store?"

"That's right, Rourke. And what would you be driving at?"

"It proves," said Rourke, "that I know how to get there by myself. There's no need of you coming with me any further, Casey. You're a busy man. You'll be having lots to do."

"I'm not busy now. I'm taking the afternoon off."

"It's likely that your old lady could find work for you to do around the house. I'll be saying good-by to you. I'll be going the rest of the way by myself."

"Oh, no, you'll not!" said Casey. "I'll be going with you. I'll be seeing that you get to your appointment. It's a friendly turn I'm doing you—for your own good."

"Friendly! Encouraging the dentist to pull a fine tooth out of my head!"

"Rourke, likely as not he won't pull the tooth. Maybe it only needs filling."

"I know," said Rourke. "Using that terrible drill."

"Very likely," said Casey.

"LOOK," said Rourke. "They're going to put up a new building here."

"That's right. They're working on the excavation."

"Interesting work, Casey. We can watch it for a while."

"Sure," said Casey. "No harm if we're a few minutes late. Look at the man drilling a hole in that rock. A big powerful drill he has. Do you hear it?"

"Ow!" said Rourke.

"What's the matter, Rourke?"

"My tooth! All of a sudden it started aching again. Come on, Casey. Hurry!"

"Do you not want to watch the man drilling?" said Casey.

"No, Casey! I do not! Come on."

"A skillful worker he is, Rourke."

"Come on, Casey! Don't be delaying. Have you not told me we'll be late?"

"Such a fine excavation," said Casey. "A pity we had to leave it."

"Here's Templeton Street," said Rourke.

"That's right, and here's the professional building."

"What! Why would it be on the corner? Why couldn't it be down the street a way?"

"How should I know that?" said Casey. "Which elevator do we take?"

"No elevator. The office is on the ground floor. It's this door right here."

"Disgraceful!" said Rourke. "I'd be expecting him to have an office on the top floor—an office with a fine view over the River. Too near to the entrance of the building it is, Casey. Much too near."

"It's just right," said Casey, "giving the likes of you no chance to change their mind in the elevator. Sit down, Rourke."

"What time does your watch say, Casey?"

"Quarter past two."

"A pity," said Rourke. "We're late in spite of all the hurrying we did. I'll have to have an appointment next week."

"No," said Casey. "We're right on time. My watch is fifteen minutes fast."

"Fifteen minutes fast! Casey, you've had that watch seven years, and this is the first time it was ever fast."

"A curious coincidence."

"Damn' curious!" said Rourke.

"Rourke! Mind your language, and get to your feet like a gentleman! Here's the doctor's assistant come to take you in to him. And now, Rourke, while you're busy with the doctor, I'll be strolling back to watch them working on that excavation. I'll be seeing you later."

"Stand close to where they're working," said Rourke, "and maybe you'll see them blasting with dynamite. Stand as close as you can get."

HOW LONG WILL THE WAR LAST?

(Continued from page 55)

three years—the time in which he has to win.

(2) While Hitler has been winning one *blitz* battle after another, he has been unable to defeat England. As a matter of fact, not only has he been prevented from occupying one inch of British territory, but England has actually expanded her holdings by the conquest of Ethiopia and Syria.

(3) After two years of war, England has, despite the collapse of France, immeasurably improved her military and political position by her virtual alliance with the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(4) Hitler had promised the German people victory in 1940, following the sensational *blitz* defeat of France. Now they have been assured that peace will be theirs in 1941. Instead of peace, however, the German people will during the next few years have to bear the burden of a continually more intensive war. Psychologically, therefore, they are unquestionably at a disadvantage as compared to the British.

(5) The American production of war materials for Britain is daily narrowing down the air superiority of the Germans over the English. By 1943 Britain should enjoy a marked superiority in quality and quantity of bombers and fighting-planes.

(6) Hitler had hoped to rally all Europe against England. When he failed, he tried to achieve a Nazi unification of Europe through a "holy crusade" against the Bolsheviks. Now that this also has come to naught, he faces the problem of a Europe chafing under his Gestapo yoke and requiring unremittent watchfulness.

(7) A three or four years' stalemate would be the prelude to a steady, even if almost imperceptibly slow, cracking of the German morale, because after five years of victorious battles, peace would not yet be in sight. Germany would then begin to experience an increasing shortage of man-power, oil, food and faith. Experts calculate that if imperial Germany was unable to withstand a stalemate after four years of war, Hitler's superior organization will last an extra four years at the utmost.

AFTER two years of *Blitzkrieg*, Germany's position shapes up as follows: Hitler, although much stronger than the rest of the world after having defeated France in the West and Russia's Red armies in the East, is still headed nowhere if the Churchill-Roosevelt defensive initiative is maintained. He is now more entangled than ever before. His armies are, without counting Russian territory, occupying some seven hundred thousand square miles of foreign lands. His Gestapo police must keep watch over a hundred and ten million conquered people.

While the Nazi army communiqués daily report more and more astounding triumphs, the German people are living under rigid wartime conditions, with food and every normal commodity strictly rationed. Every human being in Germany who can move a limb is mobilized for military, police or industrial warfare.

This armed camp of eighty million Germans, effectively equipped and splendidly organized, holds sway over more than two hundred million Europeans, millions whom Germany hopes partly to browbeat into producing labor, and partly to force to participate in her fighting action. Besides, Hitler believes, rightly or wrongly, that the nearly one hundred million inhabitants of the Japanese Empire will have to support his war whenever he cracks the whip. Facing Hitler's staggering power is England, with a population of only forty-six million. But that England is backed by an Empire of four hundred and fifty million, and aided by a United States of a hundred and thirty million. Counterbalancing the highly speculative participation of Nippon's strength on Germany's side, are over four hundred million Chinese who for more than four years have been resisting Japan's military power.

It will be noted that I have not said a word about the nearly two hundred million Russians, who, although losing battle after battle, may prove as stubborn a threat to Hitler as the Chinese are to Japan. Nor have I viewed the United States as anything but an arsenal of supply to Great Britain. Yet it is not impossible that America may before long, for purely defensive reasons, have to become an active fighting partner of Eng land.

Hitler's military, political and productive powers have very nearly risen to their climactic height. He has practically reached his zenith. From now on, he can only decline, or at best maintain his fantastic pace. England, on the other hand, is not yet in her full stride.

In about a year, when England will have a sufficient number of long-range bombers, she will extend her air attacks to the more distant German arteries of communication, such as Vienna, Linz, the trans-shipping ports Passau and Regensburg on the Danube, and the Danubian loading ports of Oltenitsa, Giurgu and Orsova. In other words, as the economist J. Kronstein succinctly expresses it, the R.A.F. will concentrate its attacks on those German targets which, if destroyed, will "cause the greatest possible disruption in Germany's industrial districts, and on those routes and means of transport carrying goods normally imported by sea, thus linking bombing operations with the British naval blockade."

The British naval blockade has failed as a decisive war measure against Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe. Yet it would be stupid indeed to believe the German propaganda claim that it has had no effect whatsoever. The truth is that Germany is to an enormous degree dependent on her synthetic *Ersatz* output. The production of *Ersatz* rubber, of aluminum to replace copper, and of other such essentials requires skilled labor that siphons off a substantial portion of the manpower needed for military purposes. More and more foreign workers from Holland, Belgium and France, not counting the prisoners of war, have to be impressed into industrial work. It goes without saying that the amount of sabotage is rapidly increasing. Nor can the fuel shortage, a direct result of the British naval blockade, any longer be hidden in Germany. All this definitely spells a weakening of Germany's domestic front.

Great Britain, without a continental army, is succeeding in forcing Hitler to fight her type of battle, namely, an economic war in which productive power will ultimately win. British strategy has managed to stall Hitler's mechanized units in so far as British territory is concerned. England is paving the way for a new type of warfare, a war fought almost exclusively in the air, in which she can definitely count on an eventual physical superiority.

All these considerations may of course be upset by some unexpected event—such as a revolution in Germany, which is entirely possible if something happens to the Fuehrer, or if the United States should enter the war. But in the meanwhile Britain, after two years of war, is fast reducing Hitler's threat to a stalemate. And in due time, but not more than six years, this will mean the collapse of Germany and her dream of world domination. This outcome, however, is possible only if America will supply Britain with the necessary military and naval weapons and, if need be, man power, that will enable her to withstand and gradually to immobilize Hitler's onslaught on the remaining democracies.

YOUR THREE NEW BOSSES

(Continued from page 60)

LEON HENDERSON

MR. LEON HENDERSON is no relation to Charles B. Henderson. He is the one Rooseveltian brain-truster who has survived now into a post of high administrative authority. As head of the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, he has Washington's most difficult and delicate economic job. Through his controls of prices he will profoundly influence the cost of living in every home in America. What sort of economic "Roosevelt Revolution" will he try to operate?

We have to begin with a very odd fact: Henderson did not come to Washington as a Rooseveltian brain-truster: he came as a critic of one of Mr. Roosevelt's most cherished creations, the N. R. A.

It was in 1934. Henderson was representing an organization of consumers. He did not like the way in which the N. R. A. codes in many cases permitted arbitrary fixings of prices to the disadvantage of consumers. He thought then, as he thinks now, that arbitrary non-competitive fixings of prices are just about the chief cause of depressions and unemployment and widespread poverty.

He expounded these views to the N. R. A.'s loud-languaged boss, General Hugh Johnson. In ten minutes he proved that he could be louder and lurider than the General himself, and could dent more tables with his fists. The General at once gave him an N. R. A. job in which he could produce cascades of statistics and geysers of boiling protests on behalf of consumers and their pocketbooks.

It is to be noted that Henderson arrived in Washington talking prices. He has been talking prices ever since. His

present job as Price Administrator is a job for which he has been in training for seven years.

It is also to be noted that he never at any time associated himself with the "planning" school of thought among the brain-trusters. He felt that they were trying to tie government and business too closely together. He said: "I want the Government and the economic system to remain separate units." Throughout the N. R. A. days he fought against a dominating governmentalism. This did not get him very far into the New Deal bosom at that time.

WHEN the N. R. A. was sunk, so was Henderson—temporarily. He started grabbing at rafts. He found one in the office of the Senate Committee on Manufacturers, where he became an "economic adviser" and studied prices some more. He found a second raft in 1936 in the Democratic National Committee, where he became an "economic adviser" for the Democratic presidential campaign speakers, and strove to keep them accurate in their price orations. Then, after the campaign was over, he found a third raft in the Works Progress Administration, where he became an "economic adviser" to Harry Hopkins and spent his time producing volcanic memoranda that spread hot lava around in governmental quarters, but that remained totally unknown to the general public. Henderson was obscure.

Then, in 1937, he leaped into fame at one bound. He wrote a memorandum—entitled "Boom and Bust"—in which he prophesied that the rising prosperity of the early part of 1937 would be changed into a new depression before the year was out. He also made several public speeches in which he uttered the same prediction. Everybody was incredulous. But sure enough, right along came the new depression on perfect schedule. Henderson's reputation now flooded the whole of Washington, including the White House. He became, at last, one of the innermost Rooseveltian brain-trusters and Washington's supreme economic crystal-gazer. As he himself put it, "my guesstimates seem to be good."

He also instantly became a sort of saga. His characteristics acquired legendary proportions. It was reported in an old biography of him that at a football game he tossed an annoying drunk over a parapet and was hurled into jail by the three policemen on whom the drunk had landed.

It was reported that at Swarthmore College, as an undergraduate, he had cultivated fourteen simultaneous sources of income, such as running an apple-and-candy store, and sending college news to newspapers, and doing stenography for other students, and digging in gardens, and selling Christmas-cards, and looking after babies when their mothers were out, and playing professional baseball and basket-ball and football under an assumed name.

It was reported that at Swarthmore his temper was so violent that when he was disciplined in the course of a basket-ball game and told to surrender his uniform, he stripped himself of it on the spot and strode off the floor in the costume of pure unfallen Adam.

Henderson obligingly lived up to this reputation. He was expected to sling insolent photographers out of his Washington home and office; and he did. He was expected to wear the town's most disheveled and hideously crumpled clothes; and he did. He coöperated. He loved the part that the newspaper boys were writing for him. It was a "natural." He was supposed to wise-crack at press conferences. Very well!

Question: "Mr. Henderson, what do you think of the Administration's pump-priming?"

Answer: "You can't prime a pump with an eye-dropper."

Just like that! Till everybody, just on seeing him, would begin to smile. He is the only brain-truster who ever made Washington laugh and think both.

His thoughts remained fixed centrally on prices. He had taught at Swarthmore College and at the Wharton School in the University of Pennsylvania and at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. The son of a father who had been a factory-worker, a small farmer, and a fire-warden at Millville, New Jersey, he had beaten his way up into education and scholarship by severe, even if jocular, struggles. He was tough-fibered, and continues to be so. His idealism springs out of the soil of harsh facts. And the harshest of those facts are prices, prices, prices.

IT was through them he made his romantically successful prediction of the economic collapse of the last part of 1937.

He observed that profits were increasing. He observed that savings were in-

creasing. He observed that those profits and savings were being largely withdrawn from the purchasing of goods. How, then, were these goods to be sold in their total volume to the salary workers and the wage workers? Only by reducing their prices. But their prices were not being reduced. They were being raised. Many of them were being raised by "monopolistic devices." They were being raised destructively to business. So were some wages.

Henderson spoke utterly outrightly.

"The building-materials manufacturers and dealers and the building trades unions," he said, "have up-priced themselves out of their market."

Events proved him abundantly right.

Henderson believes in *free* enterprise. He believes in *competition.* He believes that we get ahead through *more* goods and *better* goods at *lower* prices. And what are those beliefs? They are the beliefs expressed every year by the National Association of Manufacturers in their December manifestoes.

Henderson's only peculiarity is that he wants to see manufacturers believe those things in all the other months of the year, too. He thinks that the biggest danger to free enterprise is some of the enterprisers themselves. Once, in the N. R. A. days, when certain manufacturers and certain dealers were trying to use their codes to diminish competition and to prevent prices from going down to their natural competitive level, Henderson said to them:

"Gentlemen, you capitalists are trying to assassinate capitalism. I intend to protect it."

He has since said:

"I think that the competitive system is the American choice and the American purpose. I think that government regulation, as a *substitute* for private competition, is a bad last resort. I think that the proper function of government is to strive to make private competition work effectively and beneficially in as large an area of our national economy as possible. I do not like *controls.* I want *expansions.* I want a bigger and bigger volume of goods and services for all consumers, at prices that will make that volume grow bigger and bigger and bigger all the time. I think that the policies of government should be vigorously directed toward that end."

Naturally, in the present period of national defense emergency, Mr. Henderson, as price administrator, will be obliged to use government as a supreme price-regulator. But he will always use it toward as much maintaining of competition as possible, and toward as much resuming of it as possible when the emergency is over. He is therefore the top paradox in President Roosevelt's career as an employer of brain-trusters. . . .

President Roosevelt once remarked that Adam Smith was dead. He meant that the sort of free-enterprise capitalism advocated in Adam Smith's epochal book on "The Wealth of Nations" (published in 1776) was now sinking into its grave. Today, in Leon Henderson, he has for his chief brain-truster a tough guy who jauntily remarks:

"Me and Adam Smith are in agreement. Me and the St. Peter of capitalism are buddies."

It is a laugh, but it makes sense.

SERGEANT YORK

(Continued from page 11)

garrulous. "It was kind of natural," he said.

It is difficult to decide who is entitled to the greatest share of credit for "Sergeant York." That Gary Cooper delivers the greatest performance of his career is conceded by everyone; but then, there are many others who help lift "Sergeant York" above the average of just a money-making picture. Jesse Lasky and Hal B. Wallis spared no effort in recreating the unique background of the Tennessee mountains. Howard Hawks, the director, succeeded in maintaining such a magnificent, ever-increasing pace throughout the picture that, although it is a long picture (running time two hours and twenty minutes) you leave the theater thinking that the whole thing lasted not more than forty or fifty minutes. Abem Finkel, Harry Chandlee, Howard Koch and John Huston, the authors of the screen play, must have a very keen ear for the mountain speech. At no time does the dialogue sound like a Hollywoodite's idea of the Tennessee lingo.

And then, there are the members of the supporting cast: Margaret Wycherly, who plays the all-understanding, long-suffering mother of *Alvin York;* Walter Brennan *(Pastor Rosier Pile),* Joan Leslie *(York's* sweetheart), also Dickie Moore *(George York)* and many many others. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts will have quite a problem on its hands next February when it comes to choosing the actor and the actress responsible for the outstanding supporting performances of the year. Almost every member of the cast of "Sergeant York" deserves it.

Don't let anyone tell you that "Sergeant York" is a propaganda picture. At no time is there any display of canned patriotism; at no time do the producers indulge in that waving of the flag which is so characteristic of some of the Broadway playwrights who discovered the United States rather late in their lives.

The experts predict that "Sergeant York" will gross more money than any other picture since "Gone With The Wind." They ought to know. One thing is certain: few pictures since "Gone With The Wind" have provided more entertainment than "Sergeant York." It contains as many laughs as "Hellzapoppin," and then again it has as many tense dramatic moments as, say, "Big Parade."

All of the above sounds like a rave. The editors of REDBOOK plead guilty; they are raving about "Sergeant York"; and that is why they decided to disagree with Mr. Churchill. There is, however, a certain connection between his selection and ours. Gary Cooper, the star of "Sergeant York," was "borrowed" by its producers (Warner Brothers) from Samuel Goldwyn; Bette Davis, star of "The Little Foxes," was "borrowed" by its producer (Samuel Goldwyn) from Warner Brothers. This ought to make all parties concerned extremely happy.

WANTED—A MILLION SUPERVISORS

(Continued from page 57)

inspectors, 5,060 inspectors of ordnance materiel, and 2,350 inspectors of explosives.

The Maritime Commission, in its task of building a "bridge of ships" across the Atlantic Ocean, estimated that it would need by Sept. 1, 1942, some three hundred thousand new workers, of whom fifteen thousand must be trained technical experts and supervisors.

There must be a technical expert for each ten men working in the average aircraft factory. Since there are relatively few aëronautical engineers, this industry has hired regular civil engineers and made them over into aircraft specialists. In many cases no school has taught the intricate requirements of some specialized defense operations. One recent course for metallurgical specialists, given in Pittsburgh, included among those enrolled in it eighteen men who held Ph.D. degrees.

If the need for trained specialists seems exaggerated, look at what the Civil Service Commission had to do to comb the field for marine draftsmen and engineers. The maximum age limit for hiring Civil Service workers always has been forty-five years. For these specialists, it raised the age limit to seventy years.

Since these things have occurred before the program really is started, it is hard to exaggerate the ultimate need.

Ask the men responsible for producing the American war-machine where trained men are needed most, and they will point to a list of more than two hundred sciences, many of them unheard of only ten years ago. They will add that there are as many as thirty branches in some of these sciences, each a fascinating field for study.

The best specialists in these fields are the young men with a long background of inquisitive study in classroom and laboratory. But time cannot wait on them. There must be quick, intensive training for wholesale numbers of young men.

As early as May 31, the Office of Education reported that 59,615 youths actually were working in special training courses started only last January. Other courses to accommodate more than fifty-three thousand others were getting under way. Add about seven thousand more for each week since that date, and you will approximate today's total. This is the miracle of opportunity.

These youths in the special courses are those who in most cases would not have had, under other circumstances, a chance for a good or exciting job. They have ready-made opportunities their fathers never imagined.

THIS is a form of mass-production. It is not, however, slap-dash education. It simply is fast. It represents training in fundamentals without trimmings. It is given by the highest type of instructors in schools of the first rank.

In these special courses, full-time students learn a specialty and move into a job in ninety days. The part-time students, who make up between eighty and ninety per cent of the whole number, attend classes fifteen hours a week for five months.

This educational work, it should be remembered, has no connection with relief or with the National Youth Administration. It costs nothing, however, except for pencils and notebooks and perhaps some schoolbooks. The Government pays for the instruction and laboratory and other facilities.

The only requirements for entrance to these special courses are a high-school education or its equivalent, and the ability to convince examiners that the applicant has the stuff to make the grade. There is no gambling on boys who "think they might like it" or consider it fun. Every man enrolled in one of these classes is there because industry needs him desperately. This is the only source for most of the million bosses and technical experts who will be needed in the next eighteen months.

What do the schools teach in these courses that have no regard for normal school terms, or vacations, or football teams? What do they offer to youth?

They teach the two hundred technical subjects in most of their varieties. Instructors often have resigned themselves to eighteen-hour days for the balance of

the emergency. Many universities already have organized classes in widely separated centers.

The University of California, at Berkeley, is a leading example of development in this new method of specialized education. It conducts the new type of courses in Burbank, Downey, Inglewood, Los Angeles, Mare Island, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Monica and Westwood. That includes most of California.

The University of California covers the widest field and widest range of courses of any school known at this writing. It offers fifty courses approved by the Office of Education, with high specialization in airplane engineers to feed the great aviation factories of the West. But it also offers many other specialties.

There are thirty primary courses in aëronautics alone. Under that heading alone are aërodynamics, all kinds of design, inspections, lofting, materials and processes, power-plant installations, structural design and metallurgy, to name only part of the list.

In a few months a youth can learn enough of one of these subjects to get a job in the country's fastest-growing industry. Once in a job, he can go on learning and progress toward an indefinite future opportunity. Two years ago the average youth could not have got even an interview with the personnel manager of an aircraft factory.

Or is a young man interested in ships? Then there is naval architecture and marine design offered in courses, and a hundred specialties connected with one of the romantic professions of all history.

Perhaps his interest lies in the new field of plastics. There are primary courses to put him into the midst of this field of research and development.

The field of internal combustion engines is as new in its modern developments as it was when Henry Ford built his first car. There is a fascinating inter-connection between industrial chemistry and the wholesale development of explosives.

It is almost literally true that the chap with a high-school diploma, some native intelligence and typical American drive, can pick his hobby and find a way to follow it in some productive field.

The opportunities necessarily have some connection with defense activities in the various regions. Shipbuilding is a booming business at coastal ports, and in the Rocky Mountains mining engineers are needed rather than ship-fitters.

BUT what of plain "Joe Spivak"—of the millions of Joe Spivaks and "John Smiths" from the farms and cities who have no high school certificate and no "equivalent" for it in experience?

Their opportunity is great, and probably greater in proportion to the meager lot they have faced in the past twelve years. Not all of them will get good jobs with high pay. Not all of them can qualify for anything more than routine work, any more than all of the more fortunate youths can measure up to opportunities open in the higher brackets. But many of them will.

As was remarked earlier, this new defense industry needs five times as many of the fictitious Joe Spivaks as it does of the boys who have had better advantages. To Joe Spivak it offers the highest basic wages ever paid in this country's history, and opportunity to get ahead.

Industrial employment agents, the State employment services, the National Youth Administration, and again the Office of Education, all are looking for the bright Joe Spivaks and laying plans to help them get the big chance.

The training is proceeding in every city, and is being carried into the rural areas. In Hartford, Conn., a center for manufacturing airplane engines and machine guns and machine tools, the writer watched the operations of schools in which plant foremen have been made instructors. The students are youths who, but for the war, might today be on relief rolls.

In St. Louis, a city of an entirely different type, where defense rapidly is becoming a major industry, the writer saw how industry and the C.I.O. and A.F.L. labor leaders have joined with eminent educational specialists to develop the means whereby Joe Spivak can get his chance. Several of the vocational schools in St. Louis operate literally twenty-four hours a day.

Statistics on this work are less complete than in the field of technical training, because so often the work is local. This program is known to have progressed, none the less, into the training of a second half-million of ambitious youths.

SO much for the present opportunity. It exists. But what of the future?

In preparing this article, the writer asked that question of a great many people, particularly the business and industrial leaders who have come to Washington to help develop the defense program. Their replies fitted into a rather general pattern, as they speculated on a future of which no one can be certain.

These men pointed out that there never has been a clear-cut future for any generation, whether there was war or peace. Some of them cited the good-time predictions made in 1928 as an antidote for the gloomy predictions of today's pessimists. On one thing they all agreed—that nothing has shown as clearly as the current war the need for trained workers, whether these men work with their heads or their hands or a combination of both.

There are two principal jobs facing the people of the United States:

One, the important immediate thing, is to bring defense production to a level greater than that of any combination of powers which may threaten the United States. The other, and probably the more difficult, is to evolve an industrial program that will make it possible for this country in a post-war world to hold on to, and to improve, the progress it already has made.

To a certain degree these are political problems, but politics can do no more than provide an encouragement, or an atmosphere, in the world. The work itself is the task of engineers and technicians and trained workmen. It is easy to enter that field now. Later on, the field may become highly competitive and difficult.

That is where the training and adaptability of today's youth will count, both for the country and for the individuals themselves. In the end, any opportunity must go to the best-trained and most enthusiastic man.

WAKEFIELD'S COURSE

(Continued from page 50)

Wakefield interrupted: "I'm done with miracles. One happened to me. Wasn't it a miracle that Molly and I should come together? A hell of a miracle! No—nothing can save them. They'll be blown to pieces. We've seen the last of Renny."

The girl Wakefield had pointed out rose from her seat and, passing through the dancers, came to their table. She was strongly made, with waving dark hair, wide-open hazel eyes and a rich color in cheeks and lips. Her voice was deep and rather husky, but agreeable.

The brothers rose, and Wakefield introduced Finch to the girl.

"But I can remember only your Christian name," he said to her. "It's Val, isn't it?"

"Yes; and that's enough for tonight. May I sit with you? I've something terribly important in my mind."

They all sat down.

"Have a *liqueur?*" asked Wakefield.

"Thanks. Now, you know this appalling retreat that's going on in France. I've an idea. I thought of it as soon as you came in, and I've been working it out in my mind ever since."

"Yes?" Wakefield's eager eyes were on her face.

"The Admiralty has sent out an order for every sort of craft on the South Coast. They're going to save these men. Not just a few thousands of them, but as many as is humanly possible. My brother-in-law is over there. Well, he owns a yacht. It's a motor yacht. It's at his summer place near Ramsgate. What I want is to go on it myself and help with the rescue work. But I need a couple of men with me, and I wondered if you—"

"I'd like nothing better," said Wakefield. "What about you, Finch?"

"I'm your man," said Finch. He rose, a little unsteadily, to his feet.

"But will they let a girl go into this?" asked Wakefield.

"I'll put on some of my brother-in-law's things. I make a first-rate boy. What about you? How long is your leave?"

"Three days."

"Can we go now? I've a car outside."

In ten minutes they were on their way.

IT was dark in the cottage. Val turned on the light in the living-room.

"Wait here," she said, "and I'll tell my sister." She ran upstairs. After a little she came down with her sister, Mrs. Williams, who bore no resemblance to her, but was small and delicate-looking. She carried a bundle of clothes.

"These are old yachting things of my husband's," she said. "You'd better change into them and have some sleep and get an early start. I'll have breakfast for you."

They changed and lay down in two small rooms next each other. They could smell the sea and hear its low murmur. The *liqueur* had had its effect on Finch, and he dropped off quickly. But Wakefield lay thinking for a long while. He felt that he had had only a short sleep when a knocking on the door woke him. Val was there, wearing duck trousers, a dark blue jersey and tweed jacket. She had cropped her hair and pulled a soft hat low over her eyes.

"How do I look?" she asked.

"I'd never have guessed you were a girl," said Wake. Then he added: "But you shouldn't do this. It's going to be terribly dangerous. Do you understand that we'll be shelled? I think Finch and I—"

She interrupted: "What do you know about the yacht? Or the coast?"

"I'm afraid—nothing."

"Besides, I want to go. I want it more than anything on earth. Come down and have breakfast."

They collected Finch and went downstairs. Mrs. Williams had bacon and eggs waiting. She fluttered about them nervously, and when they left, followed them to the beach, a fragile but courageous little figure. They rode out to the launch in a dinghy and set about preparing it for the voyage down channel. Finch had a strange feeling of hilarity, mingled with a sinking at the stomach. Val had a chart open in front of her. She was self-possessed, wasting no words. They found themselves joining craft of all sorts. Yachts, fishing-boats, tugs, even canoes, all bound on the same mission.

There was almost a crush at Ramsgate. Owners of all manner of craft were crowd-

ing about, getting directions. They were given rifles and life-belts, shrapnel helmets and first-aid outfit. They were told to go to La Panne, to arrive there next day at daybreak if possible.

Across the Channel the motley flotilla set out. For a while it was peaceful, and they had a strange holiday feeling, mingled with a piercing sense of great adventure and impending tragedy. Finch felt light and strong, as though he never could be tired again. Wakefield sat beside Val, learning how to handle the yacht. Suddenly she exclaimed:

"Look!"

In the distance they saw planes fighting, two falling into the sea, but too far away to make out their nationality. A little farther on a British fighter streamed above them toward England, with smoke pouring from her, enveloping her. Then a German bomber, flying toward France pursued by British planes, unloaded her bombs. The bombs fell in front of the yacht. It rocked horribly. The three clung to their seats with frightened grins on their faces. Finch was tumbled to the deck.

"Gosh!" he got out as he picked himself up. "It's really beginning."

All about them dead fish, big and little, rose and turned up their bellies. Millions of fish were on the surface of the sea, glistening in the pale sunlight. The planes disappeared, and there was quiet again. Then they saw a launch overturned in the distance, but they could not go to her help.

"Were you much frightened, Val?" asked Wakefield.

"Terribly. But I'd not turn back for anything. Did you say you had one brother over there, or two?" she asked.

"Two. One missing. The other—in that hell!" answered Wake.

"I imagine you're pretty fond of that brother."

"Yes. He's older than we are. He's been like a father to us. He was through the last war. Got the D.S.O."

"I do hope he'll be saved!"

"And your brother-in-law too."

"Yes. Jack's a dear. He's everything to my sister."

Wake put up his hand. "Listen!" They could hear the deep thunder of the barrage from the French coast.

On and on the strange raggle-taggle of the crusading flotilla moved. Another air attack came. A Messerschmitt fell into the sea not a mile away. When she hit the water, she exploded. Two small boats were overturned. Half their occupants were saved. The three felt that they were going through an initiation of horror for what lay ahead.

A slender new moon appeared on the horizon. The breeze fell, and the sea was calm. In the distance they could see Dunkirk ablaze against the sky. Sometimes the blaze was low and sullen like smoldering hate. Sometimes it leaped upward in volcanic fury when a shell burst in its midst. As though to take part in some mad spectacle, all the little craft hastened forward, little paddle steamers from the Thames, barges, wherries, lifeboats, motorboats. The moon, glancing between the clouds, revealed them to each other. The single purpose in the minds of those who manned them, drew them onward like a compelling magnet.

Wakefield said: "You'd better lie down and sleep, Val. Finch and I can get on all right."

"I'm not sleepy."

"But you will be tomorrow—if you don't sleep tonight. There's a hard day ahead."

"I couldn't possibly sleep."

"Then curl up and rest."

She did, tucking a battered cretonne cushion beneath her head.

After a little, she slept.

"It was luck, coming across her, wasn't it?" said Finch.

"Great luck," Wakefield agreed.

DAWN came slowly; in its misty light they saw the quiet water with its burden of little boats. Dead fishes slithered along the side of the yacht. A thick black pall of smoke, now and again shot with flame, drifted above Dunkirk. Val was steering again, her hat drawn over her eyes. She was following a motorboat that was towing a string of eight wherries. She could see that the man in command was about seventy, and delicate-looking. Several other elderly men were with him. Suddenly she cried out in horror:

"Look! In the water!"

She pointed, and they saw the bodies of men in uniform slithering alongside, just like the fishes.

"It's all right," said Wakefield. "It's all right, Val. Don't be frightened."

The east was growing pink. Now they could see what was going on. There was an air attack over Dunkirk, and shell-fire. A black throng of men was on the beach. They could see enemy airplanes attacking them. They could see planes dropping bombs on ships loading troops alongside the jetty. Val steered the yacht in the wake of the motorboat, heading for a beach near Dunkirk.

All instinct for self-preservation, even all thought, was drained from them. They became mere empty vessels for the purpose of rescue. The girl felt mostly a dogged resolve to steer the yacht efficiently in these shallows, among the bodies of the men who had been machine-gunned while they were wading out into the water to safety. The bodies of the men looked strangely peaceful and remote. All their agony was over. A big hospital ship loomed near by. Finch saw a plane hovering above it, machine-gunning it.

Wakefield's eyes were on the foreshore, which was alive with men. There were shell-craters there among the sand dunes, and the men came running, stumbling from among these, toward the boats.

Wake kept the engine working. They were in four feet of water. Soldiers were clambering into the wherries. Then, horribly, one of the wherries was struck by a shell. After the explosion, the moment's chaos, the three in the yacht steadied themselves, held themselves ready for the soldiers who came splashing toward them. Their faces showed what they had been through, but they came splashing through the water, heaving each other onto the yacht, packing themselves in as though they would sink her by their weight.

Finch and Wakefield searched every face, looking for Renny. Then the yacht staggered with her load to the nearest ship and delivered the men into it. Then back to the shallows, where more men came running to meet them, plunging

through the water, pushing aside the floating bodies of their dead comrades, holding out their arms to grasp the side of the yacht, begging for a drink of water.

The sun came out hot. There was a glare on the water that made Finch's eyes ache. He was conscious of a pain in the back of his neck. But these did not matter. All that mattered was to load the little yacht, which had been built to carry a dozen people, with fifty or sixty soldiers, till she was just able to stagger to the nearest ship. It filled him with a terrible rage to see that ship attacked by enemy planes. He could not understand Wake's cold resolute calm. He worked like a machine, and the girl with him.

So the day passed.

NOW and again Wakefield gave an anxious glance at Finch.

"Better try to sleep," he said. "It's quieter now. Tomorrow you'll need all your strength."

"What about you and that girl?"

"We're all right. You rest for a while."

"All right." He fell, almost in a heap, in a corner of the cabin and slept.

"He looks awful," said Val.

"He's not very strong. He had a serious illness. Gosh, is there a drop in that teapot?"

She squeezed out half a cup of tea for him.

"Thanks. It tastes good. You ought to rest too. Please do."

"Don't worry about me. I'm tough."

"You're the bravest girl I've ever seen."

"I could do anything with you beside me," she said. "I don't mean that I'm in love with you. I only mean that you're that sort of man."

He gave a short laugh and turned away.

They worked all night, in the illumination of Dunkirk, in the light of the young moon, in the chaos of bursting shells, in monotonous, deafening gunfire. The soldiers wading out to meet them seemed endless. Drenched with salt water, bloodstained, exhausted, they clambered over the sides of the yacht and begged for water. When daylight came, the scene was revealed in all its dreadful activity. Many more small boats had arrived from England. They added their fresh vigor to the work. They were new targets for the planes. The launch and her train of wherries were hard at it, the old men and the young boys straining their loins side by side.

Finch had slept for four hours. Now he felt a new strength in him. He and Wakefield made the girl rest. She lay like a child, her head pillowed on her arm, and slept fitfully through the thunder of explosions, the roar of planes and the shouts of men. It was as though some monstrous female were spawning them there, in endless monotony. The sun blazed out, hot and cruel, blistering their faces, bringing delirium to the wounded. The two opposing forces, the volunteers from England and the Germans, fought for the soldiers, who had become passive objects of the struggle.

Wakefield seemed made of steel. Time ceased to exist for him. Once he wondered if his leave were up and what would be said to him when he went back. Val worked at his side, no one suspecting that she was a girl. Once, at some ghastly sight, she all but fainted. He steadied her in his arms.

"It's all right," he whispered. "Shut your eyes."

In a few moments she resumed work.

They asked the soldiers for news of Renny or her brother-in-law. None had heard of them till, late in the day, one said he knew Captain Williams, and had seen him killed.

"Jack's dead," she said to Wakefield.

"I'm sorry for that."

She answered, in an almost matter-of-fact voice:

"Well, I sha'n't have to worry about him any more."

It was on the third day that they found Renny. They had almost ceased to think of him. Their senses were dulled by exhaustion. Then Wakefield saw an officer, supported by two soldiers, wading toward one of the wherries. One of the rowers was an old man whose face had become skull-like from fatigue. He looked like Charon at his task of rowing the dead across the River Styx.

WAKEFIELD would not have specially noticed the wounded man but for the color of his hair. It was a peculiar dark red. He, and the two who supported him, were up to their armpits in water.

"Renny!" shouted Wakefield, and he leaped overboard and waded toward him.

Renny looked at him, dazed.

"Renny, don't you know me? It's Wake! Bring him to the yacht, men!"

Renny turned obediently and waded with difficulty to the yacht. They heaved

him over the side, and laid him on the deck. His bloodshot eyes looked inquiringly out of his sun-scorched face at his brothers.

"Hullo, kids," he said.

Wakefield pillowed his head on his knee.

"Oh, Renny, are you much hurt?"

"I don't know. Not killed, anyhow. Have you any water?"

They gave him the last of the water.

They had taken him to the hospital ship and were on their way back when a bursting shell made several holes in the yacht. She was no longer fit for the work. They turned her homeward, toward England. They could reach England safely if the sea did not rise. If it rose, they would be lost. But the miracle of the calm waters continued. The sky clouded, and a gentle rain fell. The three, looking old and worn in their youth, left the hell of bombing and machine-gunning behind and turned back toward the island fortress. They turned their faces up to the rain, and their ears drank in the silence broken only by the crying of gulls.

Chapter Twenty-five

IT was October again, and Nicholas was again taking his morning exercise in the kitchen garden. He found this the most sheltered spot when autumn came, and he had got one of the men to make a seat for him in the sunniest corner, for his gouty leg needed frequent rest. But he was not going to sit down on it yet. He would take three more turns round the garden. He put back his broad shoulders and raised his head to drink in the pungent sweetness of the air. Dead leaves were being burned somewhere near by, and there was the pleasant scent of herbs and the tang of the tomato plants. They had yielded a poor crop this season, and the tomatoes were small and sour. Now that he came to think of it, none of the fruit had been as good as usual. A fungus growth had ruined the plums. There had been few damsons for his favorite jam. As for the apples, they were a disgrace to Jalna. What would Piers have said of them!

At the thought of Piers, a well of thanksgiving rose in his breast. It had been today week that the letter had come —that letter which had changed Jalna from a house of mourning to one of thanksgiving. The sight of his handwriting on the envelope had been a shock. Nicholas himself had carried it to Pheasant. "A letter for you, my dear. I'm afraid it has been held up all these months." A letter from the dead, that's what he had thought it was. With a frozen look on her little face, she had torn it open, stared at it unbelievingly a space —then cried out, "Piers is alive, Uncle Nick!" and fainted.

Alive he was, in a prison camp somewhere in Austria. The letter had been brief, merely stating that he was well but a prisoner, and sending his love to all at home. Of course he hadn't been allowed to write any more. It had made Nicholas and Ernest feel ten years younger. Now they were better able to bear the anxiety over Renny and Wakefield. Well, Renny was recovered from his wound and back with his regiment again. Little Wake had brought down, God only knew how many, German planes. It was a good thing that Finch had been sent home. He had done his share in rescuing air-raid victims in London, seen sights that had almost been more than he could bear. He'd never quite recovered from that terrible time at Dunkirk. Well, he would regain his strength at home, and it was grand to have him come in every day for a talk. He and that wife of his seemed more normal in their attitude toward each other —if you could call it normal to show an increasing indifference toward each other. Sarah was indifferent to everyone but her baby. And how she was spoiling the little beggar! Already, at ten months, he was a tyrant. And he was the image of Sarah's father.

There was Finch now—coming toward the kitchen garden, looking more natural, too—not so gaunt and nervous. Nicholas waved his stick.

"Hi, Finch! Come and see me!"

Finch came up, grinning. "Hullo, Uncle Nick. How are you this morning?"

"Pretty fair. Pretty fair. Oh, I've much to be thankful for. I've a new lease of life since Piers' letter came." He took Finch's arm gladly, and they walked on down the garden.

Pheasant appeared on the path, one of her sons by either hand. The boys were growing fast. They were in happy Saturday mood and very conscious of their mother's mood of exquisite relief. Pheasant raised her face to the tranquil blue of the Indian Summer sky, smiling and holding fast the little hands.

"Just see the asparagus bed," said Nicholas. "I've never known it prettier. And by Jove, it's an old one! It's been there as long as I can remember."

"That was one crop that was good this year," said Pheasant.

"That asparagus bed," said Nicholas, "makes me think of what life was when I was a young fellow. I don't know why—but it does."

"I think I know," said Pheasant. "There's a radiance about it. When you look at it, you feel a kind of goodness in the earth and air."

"In those days," said Nicholas, seating himself on his bench, "nothing seemed too good to be possible."

"It's different today," said Finch. "Nothing seems to be too bad to be possible."

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Pheasant. "I do so want to believe in good! And I do. I feel that I am helping Piers when I believe that. I should think you'd believe it too, Finch, after what happened at Dunkirk. I've heard you say it was like a miracle."

Finch's mind flew back to the agonizing struggle, the ultimate achievement of those days. The scene came before his eyes, blotting out the garden, the blazing maple trees, the old man on the bench, with the little boy on either side of him. He saw Wakefield himself, the girl, striving together in a kind of trance. He saw the thronging soldiers wading through the shallows, the blazing town, the dying. He remembered how, when they had reached England, they had steered the almost sinking yacht to her moorings and had half-staggered up the hill toward Val's sister's house. They had not been able to find it in the rubble that had been made of the little seaside resort in their absence. The sister had been killed. Finch had not seen Val after that, but he knew Wakefield had.

After a little he left the others and went down into the ravine. He crossed the bridge and saw how the watercress fairly impeded the progress of the stream, it had grown so thick. Its glossy leaves had a rich greenness in this, its second crop. But the bullrushes had burst open, and their bright down floated on the quiet air. He had a sensuous pleasure in shuffling through the dead leaves up the path toward the fox farm. The leaves were scarlet and gold and mahogany. They were crisp, not damp and sodden as autumn leaves were in milder climates, and a strange sweet scent rose from them.

At the top he saw Marian Bevencroft walking ahead of him, carrying a basket of watercress she had gathered from the stream.

They had now reached a point in friendship where he could count on a swift glance from her and even a half-smile, but he took care not to thrust himself on her. He stepped on a dry branch, and its breaking made her start and look round. Her body swayed, as though in indecision. She took two steps forward, then stopped. Finch walked slowly toward her. He thought:

"How lovely she is! And what a handicap she's under!" He liked the straight fair fringe of her hair that almost touched her eyebrows. But he would have liked to lift the fringe and uncover the high white forehead beneath. As he came up to her, he asked:

"Have you heard from Molly, lately?"

"We had a letter this morning."

"Oh. She's still working hard on the picture, I suppose."

"Yes. She loves the work."

"And how are you others getting on?"

"We're very happy." She appeared to gather all her strength for the question: "And you? Are you getting better?"

"Oh, yes. I'm pretty fit now, though my eyes still trouble me. When they're recovered, I'm going on a tour. I want to make money for the air-raid sufferers. I saw for myself what they go through, you know."

"Yes?" But he perceived that he had brought no picture of suffering to her. Her eyes were on his face with an odd questioning look.

"Will you sit down here a little while?" he asked, indicating a fallen maple. It had been blown over in a gale more than a month ago, but still it had drawn on the store of sap that was in it and hid its misfortune from its leaves. Now, prone as it was, it was gorgeous in its scarlet and gold, and had kept its foliage longer than any of the other trees, being sheltered in its lowly position. The nest of a small bird still nestled on one of its boughs, and a faint essence of bird-song seemed to enliven it.

WITHOUT a word Marian put down the basket of watercress and sat herself on the trunk of the tree beside him.

"Why, your feet are wet!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. I was so eager to get the cress I walked right into the stream without thinking."

"I believe you are very impulsive," he said.

"Yes. I have to guard against it."

He thought this over, wondering what she meant. Then he said: "I think it might be better for you to let yourself go."

"Oh, no. I must never do that!" She twisted her long slender fingers together. "It would never do. It's Gemmel, you see, who tortures us—first me, and now even Garda. . . . She can't do things herself, and she's always talking—talking about them. . . . She tries to drive us to do things we oughtn't to. She's always wondering and guessing, and now that Molly's away and Garda is growing up, it's worse. I can't tell you what it's like."

Finch listened to this outburst with a strange throbbing in his pulses. He had always been struck by a sense of mystery in the three sisters, particularly in Gemmel. But what did it mean? He had a sense of shame that this disclosure of Marian's should stir him in this particular way. Perhaps he was too vulnerable to emotion. . . . Suddenly, and scarcely conscious of what he did, he dropped to his knees beside Marian and laid his head in her lap.

HE did not know what he expected her to do. She was like a frozen stream whose character he could only guess. He felt dizzy from the throbbing of his pulses. He would not be surprised if she cast his head from her lap with the same swiftness with which she might cast aside undesired fruit which had fallen there.

He felt a secret joy when, instead of a rebuff, she laid her hands on his head. They fluttered over it as though in fear, then rested there, caressing his hair, stroking his cheek.

"Oh, Marian," he whispered. "You're not afraid of me any longer!"

"No. I'm not afraid."

He raised his face to hers, and she bent over him, but she did not kiss him. Nor did he desire her to. What had happened was enough. They did not belong to each other, nor could they ever. But it was joy enough for the time that the icy barrier of her shyness had melted and they could be friends.

They heard Garda's voice.

"Marian!" she called. "Are you there?" Marian stood up. Finch slid on to the fallen tree.

"Marian, I've something to tell you!"

Garda ran toward them, her face glowing with excitement and happiness. The change had done wonders for her. She was becoming a lovely young girl. As she came up, her eyes were bright with curiosity. There was a glint of malice in them too, as though she were treasuring something she had seen.

"What do you suppose?" she said. "Mrs. Whiteoak has been to see us, and brought us a basket of purple grapes and a huge bunch of chrysanthemums! Do come and see! She was so sweet and kind! You can see her through the trees, if you look, going down the path." She pointed to Alayne's lonely figure descending by another path into the ravine.

ALAYNE had drawn on an old cardigan of Renny's for warmth. It clung about her, emanating the scent of his tobacco and a certain essence of his vitality. She thrust her hands into the pockets and walked back toward Jalna. She had enjoyed her walk. It was an exercise she had never much cared for, but now she made up her mind to do more of it. Tomorrow she would go to the stables—and every day after—so that she might send Renny first-hand news of his horses. She would find out things for herself and send them on to him. Perhaps, if she wore this cardigan of his, the horses would feel friendly to her—even feel some connection between her and him. She would begin riding again—go out riding with Adeline. That would be great news for him. In a strange, subtle way she felt that, in doing these things to please him, she was protecting him.

She found Nicholas and Ernest in the sitting-room, trying to get the news on the radio. Their two gray heads were close together in front of it, while strange unwanted cries, grunts and squawkings came from its interior.

Nicholas heaved himself closer. "Let me try! You seem always to think I can't get anything."

"Well, Nick, you can't do anything that I'm not doing."

"Get out of the way, and I'll show you."

"What are you trying to get?" asked Alayne.

"The news from England," answered Ernest. He looked at his watch. "It's quite time for it."

At last Nicholas gave an exclamation of triumph. "Ha, here we are! Your watch must have been fast, Ernie."

Pheasant slipped into the room. The four listened to the calm recital of air raids and air battles. Their minds were on young Wakefield, who such a short

while ago had been a mischievous small boy, a sensitive adolescent, in this room. Now, somewhere over there, he was sailing in the skies, in daily hazard of his life. Suddenly, startlingly, his name came to them out of the radio. They were frozen to attention. What was the voice saying?

"It is announced that Flying Officer Wakefield Whiteoak—"

Nicholas' large eyes were fixed in apprehension on the radio. Ernest gripped the arms of his chair. Pheasant closed her eyes, and her lips moved. The color fled from Alayne's face. All this in a breath! Then the cool buoyant voice continued:

"—Wakefield Whiteoak, a young Canadian flyer, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantly flying a badly damaged plane back to England after taking part in a raid over Germany. The King personally presented the Cross."

The news went on, but no one heard it. This was enough. This terror—this relief! An electric thrill of pride and relief went through the room. They looked at each other, making incoherent sounds to express their emotions. Ernest's eyes were full of tears.

"Wonderful! Wonderful! I was never so—" He could say no more.

"To think of little Wake!" cried Pheasant. "Oh, won't Renny—"

"I'm glad. I'm glad," said Alayne. "It will be a great help to Wake."

Nicholas was struggling to get to his feet. "Heave me up out of here," he demanded. "Got to be on my feet." His untidy gray hair on end, his heavy shoulders seeming too weighty for the power in his legs, he stumped about the room.

Adeline must have heard something of the excitement. She came to the doorway and demanded:

"What has happened?"

Nicholas turned himself about and faced her. He said in a sonorous voice:

"Adeline, this is a proud day for us. Your Uncle Wakefield has won the Distinguished Flying Cross. It's been presented to him by the King. Tell her the very words of the announcer, Ernest. I can't remember 'em."

Ernest repeated the words. The grown-ups listened as though they too heard them for the first time.

Adeline's eyes were like stars.

"Oh, good!" she said. "Oh, good!"

"I tell you," said Nicholas, still in his deepest voice, "we shall beat Hitler. With men like ours—we shall beat Hitler. With a leader like ours, nothing can defeat us. What did he say? 'Long, dark months of trial and tribulation lie before us. . . . Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey, hardship our garment, constancy and valor our only shield.' Grand words, eh?"

"How well you remember them, Uncle Nick," said Pheasant.

"And yet he says his memory is failing!" said Ernest, very proud of his brother.

NICHOLAS threw up his leonine old head and went on:

"'We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air—'"

"Aye," said Ernest grimly, "in the *air,* by God!"

Nicholas fixed his eyes on Adeline and went on: "'We shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.'"

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Ernest, as though the noble words were Nicholas' own.

"You've put me off!" declared Nicholas. "You've put me completely off. I can't remember another word of it."

"Oh, yes, you can, Uncle Nick," said Pheasant. "Please, do! It's grand."

He ran his hands through his hair. "'This Island,'" he muttered, "'subjugated or starving. . . . Then our Empire across the seas . . . armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until, in God's good time . . . in God's good time. . .'" He could not finish. His voice was shaking. "Adeline," he said, "the future lies with you children. You must remember this day and—pledge yourself, yes—pledge yourself—"

"I will, Uncle Nick."

Alayne brought in the decanter of sherry and they drank to Wakefield. Nicholas was tired. He dropped heavily into his chair.

ADELINE went again into the hall. She found Archer there, staring up at the grandfather clock. He had opened its door and was holding the pendulum motionless.

"If you stop the clock," he said, "you stop time, don't you? I need never go to bed."

She removed his hand sternly from the pendulum. "Let it go. You can't stop it. No matter what you do. We need it."

"What good is it to us?"

"It's no good, but we've got to have it. Archie, come upstairs with me."

"Where?"

"To Daddy's room."

She took him by the hand and led him up to Renny's room. She closed the door.

"Archie," she said, "we may have to fight. Uncle Nick says so. We may have to fight—just like Daddy."

"Have they killed Daddy?"

"No, no, but we children may have to fight too, and I think we'd better begin training. Look here."

She climbed on to a chair and took down two double-barreled rifles from the wall. She placed one of these in Archer's hands. He took it as though this was what he had been waiting for, for years.

She opened the window wide. The rich-colored autumn landscape lay before them in peace and majesty. The window faced the east.

"This is the direction they'd come from," she said. "Because England's over there. Now rest your gun across the sill, Archie, and I'll be on the lookout. When I see them coming, I'll tell you and we'll fire. We'll shoot them as they come out of the woods, and we'll *never* surrender."

He drew his high white forehead into a frown and fixed his piercing gaze on the blue horizon. His small grimy hands gripped the rifle. Adeline's expression was one of watchful courage. The dark red hair framing her face was bright in the sunshine. She felt inside her a gathering strength.

THE END

OUR READERS SPEAK

(Continued from page 6)

illustrator, that Violet is twelve years old, not six, and that twelve-year-olds don't wear dresses above their knees, and come up to a normal man's elbow. Realistic, well-drawn illustrations do much toward contributing to the enjoyment of a story, and it would help if the illustrator would read the story first, and then draw the character.

Lorraine B. Kalman,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dear Sir:

Give us something a little more natural than a pre-adolescent schoolgirl ("confidently expecting a bosom any day now"!) arranging honeymoon accommodations for her paternal parent and aiding him in remarrying his first wife.

I have read REDBOOK for years and "Quiet Wedding" by Whitfield Cook in the July issue is the poorest thing I've ever read in it.

Max Dingus,
Munday, Texas.

Dear Sir:

And now again I must thank you for another REDBOOK character. This time it's *Violet*. In her I see half a dozen of the town's brats all rolled into one. Her antics seem both to delight and infuriate me. One minute I'm ready to hug her, and the next I can't understand why her father doesn't strangle her and be done with it. Nevertheless, whether she's good or bad, she always remains interesting, and she makes mighty fine reading.

Rosalyn Ross,
Rockaway, L. I., New York.

HIS MISTAKE

(Continued from page 51)

Everything fitted pretty well—both men were about the same height.

But through the trees, the rising hum of a motor sounded. Riordan stiffened as he heard the car stop. It was almost abreast, though hidden by trees and brush. Whoever was driving that car had heard the report of the shotgun too!

With a frenzied burst of speed Riordan got the puttees fastened. Then he hastily smudged his face with a small clod of dirt, picked up the shotgun and the dead bird—it was a pheasant—and raced through the woods toward the road.

He heard steps coming toward him, and his heart began to pound. He had to intercept whoever it was, before the unconscious body of the hunter was seen.

RIORDAN had slowed to a walk when he and the stranger sighted each other. Waving his shotgun in friendly fashion, Riordan saw the man's answering salute.

The man was about forty years old, lean and tall. Riordan breathed easy—this was no cop; this was just a simple-looking rube. With his own khaki hunting outfit, and the shotgun and the bird, Riordan felt the boldness of assurance. He grinned.

"Hello," he said.

The hick nodded. "I thought I heard a shotgun—"

"You sure did," Riordan said affably. Then he swung the pheasant out, at arm's-length. The hick looked it over. "Hunting has been good," Riordan said.

"It's a nice bird," the hick said. "Just bag him?"

Riordan nodded. "Yeah. Say—you driving in to Enbridge?"

"Uh-huh."

"Will you give me a lift in?"

"Sure. Come on."

The hick's name, it developed, was Radell. And as Radell's car carried them nearer and nearer to Enbridge, Riordan felt a growing elation—very soon he'd reach Joe's Place, and safety. . . .

It was hardly more than a half hour when they got to the outskirts of Enbridge. Radell followed a trolley line that apparently led to the center of town.

"Just drop me off anywhere," Riordan said casually.

Radell nodded. Three blocks farther, he stopped the car at the curb. With the pheasant in one hand and the shotgun in the other, Riordan hopped out. As he started to turn, he heard Radell's voice:

"Drop that shotgun, fellah."

Riordan was looking straight into the muzzle of an automatic. He dropped the shotgun, cursing himself for having shoved his own automatic deep inside the big vent in the hunting coat. When he tried, desperately, to reach for it, Radell snapped:

"Keep your hands outside the coat! And come on."

For the first time Riordan saw that the police station was only twenty or thirty yards up the street.

Inside the station, at the desk, Riordan stood stiffly. The long nervous strain, the fatigue were adding up. But he wasn't through yet.

Then Radell spoke to the desk sergeant. "Jim, I got this guy out in Dibble's woods—"

The desk sergeant had leaned far forward, staring intently at Riordan. Riordan returned the stare as coolly as he could. The desk sergeant straightened up, reached behind him and picked up a placard with a picture on it. He examined that, then held it out, for Riordan's inspection.

"Any argument about that being you—before you changed your alias to Riordan?" he asked.

The picture was one of him, all right. Listed below it was a fairly complete list of his stick-ups, scattered over a patchwork of States.

"We got an alarm on you, right after you pulled the Springfield job," the desk sergeant said. He stood up, handcuffs in his hand.

"Riordan" realized, then, that he was through. His shoulders sagged, and he dropped into a chair. He didn't see the look that crossed the face of Radell, who was looking at the picture. Not until Riordan felt the cold contact of the sergeant's handcuffs on his wrists did he look up.

"I didn't think you knew me," Riordan said bitterly.

"I didn't," Radell said. He opened his coat and showed his badge. "I'm the game warden. You had a pheasant. You admitted you shot it. The season's closed on pheasants. If you had been an outsider—looked like a city fellow—then I wouldn't have hauled you in, maybe. But I sized you up right away as a native. So there wasn't any excuse for your not knowing the game-laws around here. That's why I had to bring you in."

BROAD AND ALIEN IS THE WORLD

(Continued from page 28)

mother used to say: 'It's one thing to rope a horse and another to ride him.'" There was loud approving laughter. "Nevertheless," the cautious voice went on, "these are advances. . . . We ought to be grateful that these,"—pointing to the indifferent one again—"don't know how to read and never find out anything. Otherwise, you'd soon see."

"In that case," spoke up the marshal, "we'd have to use a firm hand, my friends." There was a whispering, followed by a meaningful silence; and then Rosendo heard heavy footsteps behind him. Somebody tapped him on the shoulder with a cane, making him turn around. He saw the marshal, who said in an overbearing tone: "What are you doing there, pretending to be asleep? That's no place to sit."

Rosendo Maqui fastened on the sandal he had been fixing, and went slowly up the street. Now there was an example of what was going on, and the Indians so ignorant they knew nothing about it. Stubborn mules! When little girls were clumsy with the spindle and could not spin a smooth thread from their wool, their mothers beat their hands with thistle switches until they bled. The miraculous plant worked wonders! It turned them into excellent spinners. Rosendo grinned broadly: that's what they should do to the students. A good thwack on the head, and let's go right on reading, writing and counting. Naturally, one thwack wouldn't be enough; it would take a lot of them. He had a thick bundle of papers which bore witness to the community's legal existence. He would roll them up into a kind of club. "Line up, villagers, now you're going to get an education." *Thump, thump, thump, thump,* and there they were all educated.

Rosendo Maqui stopped smiling.

NOW, wrapped in the beautiful fragile brightness of afternoon, the gnawing presentiment of ill-omen set a certain vague pain bubbling in Rosendo's breast again. Nevertheless the growing and rustling ripeness of the wheat and the might that emanated from the earth were a hymn to life. Caught between a wave of doubt and a wave of wheat, of fleeting colors and penetrating odors, Rosendo Maqui held fast to the truth of the earth, and it was easy for him to think that nothing bad would happen. The law was a plague, but Rumi had withstood other plagues. It had done it with those that came in the form of sickness. True, they had carried off many villagers, and the work of digging graves had been steady, and the weeping of the women had been heartbreaking; but those who got up from bed or weathered the storm began life again with renewed strength. As time

went by, the memory of the death toll became like a vague nightmare.

Sad and far-off days! Three times in his own lifetime Maqui had seen smallpox come, do its devastating work, and leave. Those who had it the first time consoled themselves with the thought that they would never get it again. Oh, the doctors! Among other cases, there was that of a girl, nice-looking, she was, too, who had smallpox three times. Fate sent typhus. Twice it smote more fiercely than the smallpox. The villagers died, one after the other, and the living, burning with the raging fever, had hardly strength to bury them. Nobody even thought of sitting at night with the dead. With a great effort, they carried the dead to the graveyard as quickly as they could, to keep the disease from spreading. The Indian Pillco, always grumbling and standing up for his rights, complained about what had not yet happened.

"Who's going to bury the ones that die last?" he growled. "It would be better to die right away and not be left lying around."

And he did die; but Fate probably did not do that to please him, but because it was tired of his impudence.

THERE were odd cases during the typhus epidemic. The strangest was the man who came back to life. An Indian who had been sick for many days suddenly began to gasp, then lost consciousness and died. He got as stiff as a dead person can get. Naturally, his wife cried. The gravediggers came, wrapped him in his blankets, put him on a stretcher called a *quirma*, and carried him to the cemetery. They hadn't dug down more than three feet when a fierce storm began. With the lightning flashing around them and gusts of water lashing them, they thrust the corpse in the ground, threw a few shovelfuls of dirt over it and left, planning to return the next day and bury it properly. They didn't get a chance to.

About midnight the widow, who was asleep with her two little children, heard a knocking on the door. A hollow, doleful voice called her by her name:

"Micaela, Micaela, open the door."

In spite of everything the woman recognized the voice, and she almost fainted. She thought it was the dead man in torment. She began to pray out loud, and the children woke up and started to cry. The anguished plea went on outside:

"Micaela, it's me! Open up!"

Of course she knew who it was: the dead man. Two women who were sitting up with a sick man in a near-by house came out when they heard the noise.

"Who's there?" asked one of them.

"It's me," answered the dead man.

The women went into a panic and began to run, and didn't stop until they reached Rosendo's house. They woke him up and told him that the man who had died that afternoon was in torment and had come to get his wife. They had seen and heard him. There he was, in his underclothes, calling poor Micaela and trying to get into his house. Maqui, who on this occasion was mayor of the living and the dead, assuming his fullest authority, went to see what was going on. The women kept at a safe distance behind him. Would he try to persuade the dead man to go back to the graveyard and not take anybody with him? As they came nearer, they could hear the living corpse crying out:

"Micaela, open up!"

She had stopped praying and was screaming:

"Help, *help!*"

As soon as he saw the mayor, the outcast came toward him:

"Rosendo, *Taita* Rosendo, tell my wife I'm not dead, I'm alive."

There was, undoubtedly, a sound of the other world in his voice. Rosendo put his hands on his shoulders, and even in the darkness he could take in the tragic expression of the face distorted by suffering. He quieted him a little, and the man told his story. He had come to, and felt chilled to the bone. He stretched out his arms, and touched mud, and he felt it on his face, too. Terrified, he felt around all sides, and a strong smell of death came to him, as though there were a corpse beside him. He was in a grave. He jumped up in one terrified bound and climbed out. All around him were wooden crosses, and a little farther off the stone wall of the graveyard. His screech of fright died in his throat, and he ran away as fast as he could go. . . . Outside the cemetery, his weakened legs could carry him no farther and he fell down. With a great effort he managed to get to his feet, and with slow and faltering step, reach his house. That was all.

The mayor put his arm around his waist, and having given the frightened wife time to calm down a little, led the man to the door. There the mayor himself called to the woman, who lighted a candle and fearfully opened the heavy walnut door. Micaela was very pale, and the tallow candle shook in her hand. The children looked on with eyes as big as saucers. The man walked in, and without a word, lay down on one of the two beds in the room. He seemed to be holding himself back. Perhaps he wanted to talk or cry. His wife covered him over with blankets, and the mayor sat down by the head of the bed. Meantime, the two women who had called Rosendo had gone home and came back with a drink of brandy and other things. The man drank greedily. Rosendo Maqui patted him affectionately on the shoulder, saying:

"Now relax and go to sleep. These are sufferings we have to bear."

His wife spread her tenderness like a blanket over his feet. Little by little the harassed man grew calmer, and finally he fell into a sound sleep. He did not die. He got over the typhus, but not the grave. The darkness of night set his nerves aquiver, and he feared sleep like death. But when harvest-time came around, and life held out handfuls of good things, he got well of the grave too, and lived as before. But only for a short time. The plague had carried off many of the reapers, and those who were left had to work hard. He spurred on his companions:

"Gather in the harvest, gather in the harvest; we have to live."

And his eyes sparkled with happiness.

But his heart had been weakened by the sickness, and one day it stopped, and the man fell crushed under the heavy sack of grain he was carrying. This time he died for good. Rosendo Maqui tried to recall his name, which flitted just be-

(Continued on page 106)

THE AMERICAN WAY

by ANGELO PATRI

BOYS and girls of this blessed land, I have a word for your ears which I hope you will hear and heed.

The life you live today was passed on to you by men and women who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to win it for you. You are free to go and come at will; you speak your minds openly; you are free to follow your conscience; you are secure in your person and property; you can choose your work; you have a voice in your government and the power to make your voice heard; you are that proudest of God's creatures, freemen.

These high privileges are yours because your forefathers dedicated themselves to the task of making this a free land for freemen, and willingly paid the price in exile, loneliness, labor, pain and death. Their way of life, now yours, was founded on certain truths which they held to be fundamental.

They feared God and Him only. They carried the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other, and they knew thoroughly and well the need for and the use of both.

They served truth rigorously. In their dealings with others, their word, once passed, was a sacred pledge that death alone could absolve.

They helped each other loyally. One man's need was the concern of all, to be relieved by a common effort, cheerfully, wholeheartedly, brother to brother.

They had great faith: faith in God, faith in each other, faith in their ideal. They knew how to work, how to suffer, how to endure for love's sake. They lived the hard way, because they lived for something greater, finer, nobler than themselves.

But this, you say, is a changing world; and I detect in your voice a suggestion of, "Water under the bridge." Don't be deceived. This is a changing world. It always has been and always must be, because life is growth, and growth is change. But don't forget that growth must be based on the things that endure, or it withers before it gets a start.

Life depends on the relationships between men. The life of freemen must rest on the truth that is between them. If that true and honorable relation which enables man and man, governed and governor, to see clearly the heart of each, is blighted by deception and sullied by dishonor, the people perish as Ananias and Sapphira perished, because the truth was not in them.

Don't be misled by the talkers. Look at their deeds. What of human liberties, of human decencies, is in the deeds of those who would forsake God, deny truth, betray loyalties, enslave peoples? What is the purpose of those who promise you paradise without labor, gain without sacrifice, ease without pain? Are you still children, to be bought with sweets? Better the bittersweet of truth, so wholesome to your souls!

The American way of life, your way, was wrested from tyranny by labor, loyalty and sacrifice. Hold to it, and in your turn, pay its price. Quit ye like American men and women, valiant for truth and freedom.

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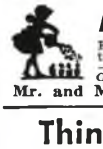

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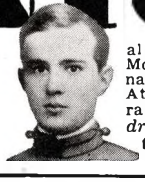

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(Continued from page 101)

yond his reach like a firefly in the night. He did recall that his two children grew up and were big enough to work when the "Blues" came along and carried them off. That was another plague. For a long time there had been talk about a war with Chile. People said Chile had won. The villagers didn't see the war, because it never came their way. Once they did hear that a General Caceres, a very important officer, had passed close by with his men. They also heard that he had met up with Chile on the plain of Huamachuco, and a fierce battle was fought there, and Caceres lost. Years ago, one clear morning, Rosendo Maqui had managed to make out, far away, almost lost on the horizon, a mass of snow which they said was Huaillillas. Over that way was Huamacucho. Far, far away. The villagers had believed that Chile was a general until the damned Blues came. Their captain heard them talking once about General Chile, and he growled:

"You ignorant fools, Chile is a country, and the people there are the Chileans, just the same as Peru is a country and we are Peruvians. You Indians are as dumb as animals."

The animals were the soldiers, and hungry ones too. The captain of the Blues had said to him:

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(Continued on page 108)

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By Martin J. Rennell, Manager Tremblean Hall

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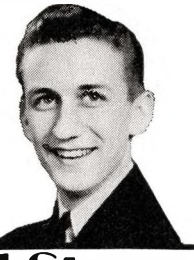

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(Continued from page 106)

Reds. Or there might be both groups in the same town. They lay in ambush waiting to kill one another. And they descended on the villages and communities like a hailstorm on a sprouting field. Long live Caceres! Hooray for Iglesias! That was fine for them. Groups of fifty, a hundred or two hundred men commanded by a captain or a major or a colonel. They got to Rumi, too. The officer in charge was an unpleasant-looking and worse-tempered, white man. His orderly was a big half-breed whose jaw always bulged with a great wad of coca; he was dubbed Coca Wad.

One day Coca Wad lined up all the young men of the village and picked out the strongest of them for orderlies. They were to look after the officers' horses.

On one happy yet calamitous day the Reds came. At full gallop, those on horseback. On a dead run, those on foot. "Long live Caceres!" They had red like blood on their hats and sleeves. The Blues called and encouraged each other with shouts:

"We must defend the square," said the Major.

"Let us defend it," bellowed Coca Wad.

Rosendo Maqui thought to himself, "What square?" and wished they would all go to the square and get killed. The Reds advanced amidst smoke and gunfire.

A Blue began to ring the church bell. The Major and Coca Wad divided their followers. One group was to get on top of the houses. The others were to barricade themselves behind the stone fences. A few, the bravest, were to get into the trees. All this took place on the side of the village next to the road along which the Reds were coming.

"Long live Caceres! Death to the traitors! Long live Iglesias! Long live the Fatherland!"

Why were they talking like that? A thick hail of bullets received the riders when they got within range. Some fell face downward on the ground; others managed to dismount. The latter scurried for shelter behind rocks or hills, and began a steady fire. The infantry had come up by this time, and began to close in on the flanks, firing all the time. Some of the Blues dropped out of the trees; others were silenced behind the stone walls. A group of Reds got to the church and took it by stabbing in the back two Blues who were watching the road. Then Coca Wad, who had been up in a tree, realized that they were going to be surrounded, and gave the order to retreat.

No denying he was brave, for he stayed there with ten men until all the others had retired, shooting anyone who tried to approach them. The Major and the main body of the Blues, who were now partly red with blood, ran to take refuge behind a hill, where they waited for the orderlies to bring up the horses. Coca Wad and his ten men joined them, and not a moment too soon, for the Reds had mounted and were galloping toward them waving their swords. But the road ran through a narrow defile, and the pursuit was not very successful, for they brought back only two prisoners.

ROSENDO MAQUI saw the whole thing from a spot not far from where he was now sitting. As soon as he had seen the Reds approaching in the distance, he had said to himself, "Just what am I doing here?" and he climbed up the side of the hill to a clump of bushes from which he could watch and not be seen. The other villagers, except the orderlies, hid in their houses.

When Maqui came down, a smell of blood and gunpowder hung over the village. Micaela, the widow of the man who had come back to life, was screaming, "My sons, my sons, where are my sons?" like the mothers of the other boys. Just then the two riders came up with their prisoners, who said that when the Major saw that they had extra horses because of the men who had been killed, he ordered all those who were with him to mount, and left only five horses for Coca Wad and his men. That was why there weren't horses enough for the last ones, and two were taken prisoner. The mothers swore and cried and begged the leader of the Reds to shoot the prisoners, and all the wounded Blues who were being brought up then by Indians and soldiers in hand seats and on the stretcher they used at funerals. The wounded made no outcry, and they and the prisoners watched the enemy commander with sad, intent eyes. The mothers kept screaming.

"Shoot them, shoot them."

The Captain lighted a cigarette. The Indians crowded around him, forming a dense mass. Micaela screamed at the commander, who looked on indifferently, and she threw herself on one of the wounded, like an enraged puma, her nails revealing her intention of tearing out his throat. When they pulled her back, her face was smeared with blood and she gave one hair-raising shriek before she fell over in a faint.

The Reds stayed in Rumi a week, eating as many sheep and cows as the Blues. When they went away, they left four of the wounded behind.

But it was not only wounded, calamities, and disagreeable memories that the soldiers left behind in Rumi. They left offspring too. Nature was stronger than the girls' protests, and in due time they bore the children of strangers. Their fathers, gone for good, perhaps killed in the civil wars, would never see them. There was one case that only Rosendo knew about. An Indian, who had been away from the community while the soldiers were there, found his wife pregnant when he got back. He went to consult Maqui, who said to him:

"This has happened through no fault of hers, and you should not repudiate nor humiliate the poor woman. The child ought to bear your name." And so it was. In the case of the single girls, matters were more complicated. The young men did not want to marry them. Maqui said over and over: "This attitude is unjust. It is not their fault." And one by one, they finally got married off.

Dusk was slowly falling. The wheatfield was a rippling lake of dark waters, and in the hollow the village had disappeared as though swallowed by an abyss.

Maqui looked sadly down on his village. The fires were burning brightly, and their ruddy gleam lightened the desolation of the darkness which had taken possession of heaven and earth, extinguishing the flames of twilight that had lingered on the hilltops. Just like this, the dwellers of Callari had lighted their hearth fires and then had gone to sleep, to awaken and repeat the days and nights and the days, on through time. Until, all of a sudden. . . . Then what is Fate? Only the obscure forces of God, the saints and the earth can explain certain things, in the case of groups of people as well as individuals. One morning Benito Castro was chasing a wild yearling that had got away from him into the brush of the ravine. And what did he find? Nothing more or less than a corpse, the fresh corpse of a woman. He put her over his shoulder, carried her to the door of the church, and called the mayor. Rosendo examined her and could find no wound or any sign of violence. Rosendo rang the bell and the villagers assembled. The dead woman was young, well-built and pretty, and wore an orange-colored skirt, a white blouse embroidered in red and a black shawl. Nobody knew her; nobody had ever seen her. They sat up with the corpse, and after the judge of the district had come and signed the death-certificate, they buried her. The villagers who traveled around reported the death wherever they went, asking:

"Do you know of a woman who has disappeared who looked like this and wore such and such clothes?"

The news spread through the whole region. Nobody knew anything about it, and all thought it very queer. Where had this woman come from? Had she run away? Why had she got into the underbrush? Had she taken poison? She could have done that miles away without bothering to travel so far. Benito had found her beside the stream in the bottom of the ravine, lying there as though she were just resting. . . .

A sudden rush of wind shook the ears of wheat and carried off these thoughts. The darkness was complete, and though the fires in the hollow called to him cheerily, the old mayor felt all alone in the night.

And this was the history of Rumi. Probably a lot had been left out. Perhaps he could go back over his memories more carefully. Time had passed, sometimes like a plow that turns up the furrow, sometimes like a high wind that breaks off the branches. But the earth always remained, unchanging, strong, and in its love man flourished.

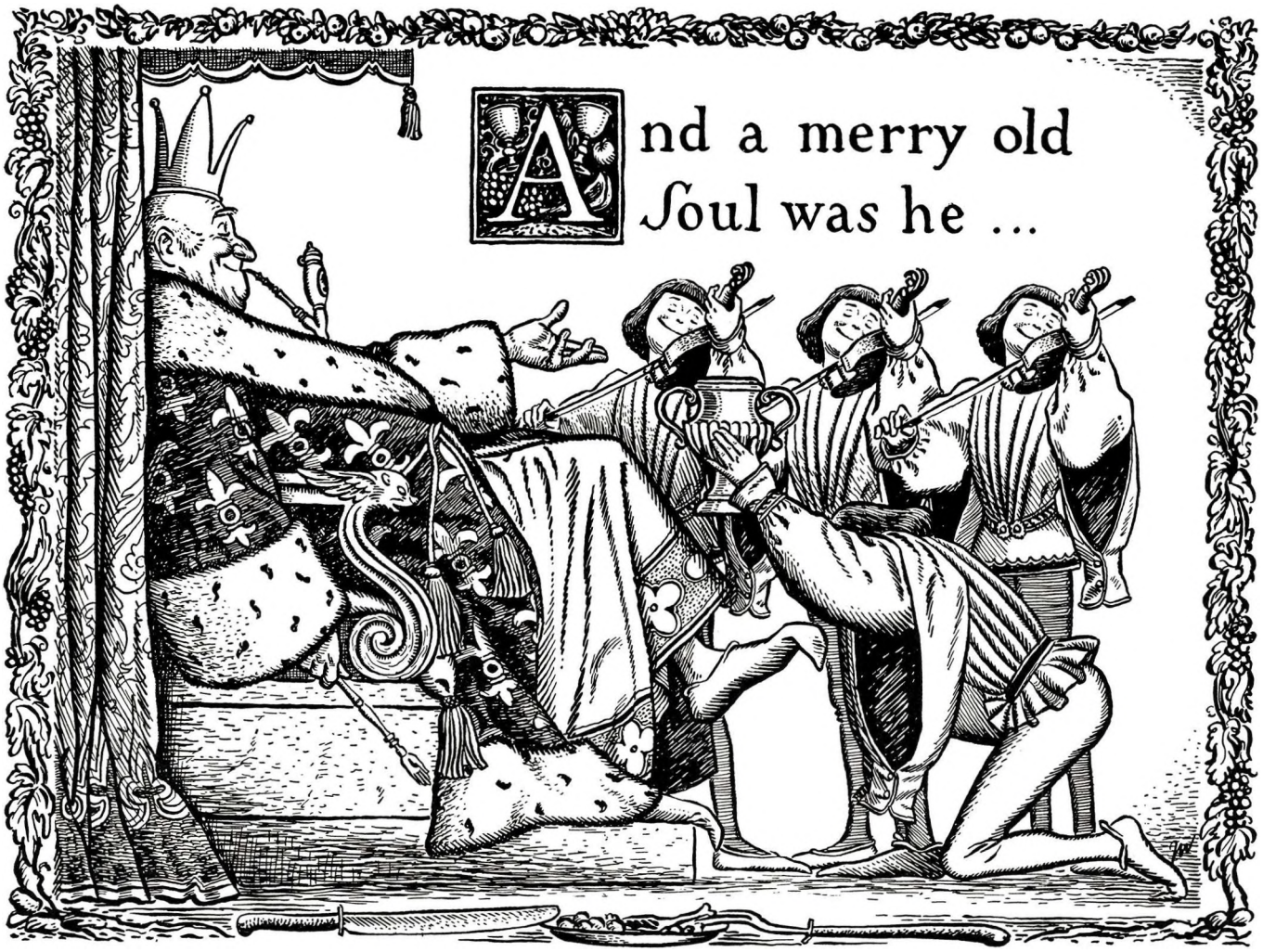
Now something moves in the shadow; the monolith divides; the old idol comes to life, and takes on human form. Rosendo Maqui comes down from the rock and slowly takes the path which forks at a steep hill called Cuchilla and divides the wheatfield in two. The stalks of wheat rustle pleasantly; and here, there, on all sides crickets and kataydids chatter away.

All of a sudden a cry rings through the night, arousing the hills.

"Rosendooo! . . . . Father Rosendooo!"

The crags answered, and the echoing voices died away until they were lost in the rustling of the wheat and the chirp of crickets and katydids. The ribbon of road showed through the darkness, and Maqui quickened his pace, watching carefully not to slip or stumble. His tired eyes hurt a little. A dark, swift panting shape was climbing the slope. It was his dog Candela; he rubbed against Rosendo's legs, whined a little and then ran back down the road. It was plain that he had come up to tell him something and now wanted him to hurry down to the village. Every now and then Candela would stop to whine and then run on ahead. Maqui trotted after him. There were the first stone walls beside which grew the palms and prickly pears. There at last were the houses lighted up by the fireplace. Maqui walked quickly down the middle of the street, crossing like a specter through the pale light of the fire. Several Indians sitting on the doorstep recognized and greeted him. The church bell gave a long penetrating clang, and then pealed on slowly and steadily. The old man wanted to run, but he restrained himself, feeling that he should behave as became his age and his dignity.

THERE it was at last, at last, to one side of the square, his own house of adobe, the roof pressed down by the night. A group of Indians stood before it. The light from the hall sharpened their silhouettes and lengthened their shadows. The Indians made way for Rosendo Maqui without saying a word. *Clang, clang*, the bell mourned. The grief-stricken voice of a woman sobbed aloud. The old man looked and stopped, silent and motionless; perhaps his eyes misted over. . . . Pascuala, his wife, had died. . . . There in the hallway, on a bier of branches and *yerbasanta*, lay her body.



WE HATE TO DISAGREE WITH MOTHER GOOSE

OUR "MOTHER GOOSE" BOOKS usually picture Old King Cole as a *fat* old soul.

Much as we hate to question these old favorites, it isn't very likely that anyone burdened with such excess poundage would actually live to be *old.*

Overweight and long life rarely go together.

A study of men accepted for life insurance recently revealed that those moderately overweight had a death rate 20% higher than men of average weight, and that the death rate of the obese was 70% higher. Circulatory and kidney diseases took a 60% higher toll from the overweight. Mortality from diabetes averaged 150% higher among the overweight.

After you are thirty, it becomes increasingly advisable to keep your weight down to normal, even to stay a little *underweight.* Overweight then tends to increase your susceptibility to many diseases, as well as to decrease your power to recover from illnesses. By keeping your weight down, you can avoid the burden which obesity puts on your heart, kidneys, liver, and other organs.

Overweight is an insidious thing, usually creeping up on you by unnoticed ounces and inches. That is why it is so important to establish proper eating and exercising habits to control any such tendency. If you tend to put on weight, regular checkups on your weight should be made as much a habit as bathing.

Your doctor is your best guide in helping you to establish sound weight control. He will determine what your weight should really be. He will explain the dangers of "overweight cures," of quick, drastic reducing methods—methods that frequently undermine health rather than improve it. And—unless some serious glandular or other condition requires special treatment—he will show you that in order to lose excess weight it is not necessary to go in for too strenuous exercises or too radical changes in your diet.

Write today for Metropolitan's free booklet, 101-R, "Overweight and Underweight." It gives a number of helpful low-calorie menus and offers many safe and sane suggestions to help you control your weight, subject to your doctor's approval.

An interesting 10-minute Technicolor movie on food and health—"PROOF OF THE PUDDING"*—has been produced by Metropolitan in co-operation with the United States Public Health Service. It is a contribution to national nutrition education. See it when it comes to your neighborhood.*

SPENLOVE IN ARCADY

by William McFee

This novel is a magazine version of a volume by Mr. McFee which will be published, unabridged, by Random House, Inc.

SPENLOVE IN ARCADY

by William McFee

AT last it was done, and he was free of his lifelong bondage to the sea.

Was he glad, as the train, passing under the city in a darkness barred by sunlit openings, carried him away from that bondage? Did his soul leap at the prospect of an endless anchorage?

"An old hulk, a non-fighting *Temeraire,* being towed to his last berth," was his private description of this performance. It was of no importance to anyone in the world, apparently. At long last, he had made room for another man. He had given the whole long line of aspiring juniors below him a chance to move up one rung of the crowded ladder toward the top. It was part of their professional theology that any change of personnel was not to have any immediate effect on the ship. So there would be no change.

He repressed a smile as he thought of his successor. He knew well enough that there would be no change of policy for a long time. On the contrary, his own records would be religiously followed and quoted as gospel, for the Company's Rules and Regulations had been based in large measure on those records. He did not consider them in the light of gospels himself, or even as commandments. They were, to him, Apocrypha, with a chapter or two from Revelations, yes!

Well, he was done with them now! He had ascended into the heaven of seafaring men and had retired to what old Captain Wensley called "a bit of a farm." There had been a dinner at a downtown club near the Battery when that magnificent old monument had retired, a dinner attended by newspaper men, camera men and officials of the Line. Captain Wensley had sailed on a Cunarder for England, to settle on his bit of a farm in—Westmoreland, was it?—an imposing John Bull to the last, seeing the shores of Long Island vanish without a quiver of regret, without any emotion at all!

Mr. Spenlove himself, not being a commander, had had no dinner of farewell. He had in fact merely left, unspectacularly, telling no one save his immediate superior in the office that he was through. He had been scheduled to retire a year earlier, according to the rules; but the rules were elastic in such cases. He had carried on until sailing-day, and then had taken his belongings ashore. Not through the gate into the city streets, however. One of the customs men, who had been on that dock ever since Mr. Spenlove had been coming in and going out himself, had taken charge of that old duffle bag, of that officer's trunk, long and black, with the name and rank in the Reserve painted on it, and the two cowhide suitcases—had put them in the customs lock-up shed for the time being, as a favor to an old acquaintance. So his juniors, seeing him go out with his raincoat and his overnight bag, had no suspicion that Mr. Spenlove was at last leaving his employment, after thirty years of service.

Yet so it was; and as the train emerged into the country, carrying him toward the oblivion that enfolds the superannuated, he made a conscious effort to see the day as a great event in his history, the beginning of a new era. He was, he told himself, entering upon the last of the Seven Ages of Man. Infancy, Childhood, Puberty, Romance and Socialism—he had survived them all, and was able to regard with benignity and compassion the fierceness of the young and the bigotry of the New Liberals. He had "weathered Cape Horn as well as the Cape of Good Hope," as he liked to say, by which he meant the Thirties and the "Roaring Forties." He was now in the fifth decade as he entered what he called Drydock. This was the end of his professional career.

It was characteristic of the people in the office of the Afro-Iberian Line, that they should have all silently assumed that Mr. Spenlove was headed, in retirement, for England and "a bit of a farm" over there. He had let them assume anything they wanted; but he was not going, nevertheless. Mr. Spenlove was retiring to Connecticut.

The hickory copse in which his shack, as he called his house, was built, was screened by junipers and hemlocks from the side road that ran down to the long arm of the sea below the town of Norbury, with a more distant line of enormous white oaks that made a tunnel in summer, through which the road passed to a humped "down" very much prized by Mr. Spenlove, because it was the nearest thing to Hampshire he had ever seen in America. Along the back of that long hill he would trudge to where it fell away to the wide flat shore of the estuary. This was peaceful and invigorating, and save for several large estates, uninhabited. On the land side, a half-mile walk toward Norbury took him to Sutton Corners, where there was a general store, a grain, feed and hardware emporium, a drugstore, and a gas station with two bright pumps.

ON the platform at Norbury, Mr. Spenlove, watching the procession of cars and station-wagons moving off as the train gathered speed and thundered away behind him, felt suddenly forlorn. Both taxis had been seized and had rolled away before his heavy baggage appeared on the station barrow. The place seemed suddenly abandoned and unfriendly. A solitary station-wagon, with the unusual name *Church Yard* in small black letters on the panel, stood solitary with its stern jutting over the platform, engine idling, door flung wide.

The owner of the station-wagon was walking up and down in an agitated manner. He was, apparently, angry. Someone had missed the train.

Mr. Spenlove walked toward the man, now staring at the station-barrow trundling toward him with Mr. Spenlove's baggage. Why had he called his place by that peculiar name of Church Yard? Why, for that matter, did he wear a green eyeshade, and a well-worn pullover, light yellow corduroy slacks and tennis sneaks? Mr. Spenlove's curi-

osity, which had been the lifelong enemy of his timidity, became active at once. The baggage-man, who logically associated his load of travel-stained leather bags, with their many labels, with the station-wagon, came to a halt. Mr. Spenlove advanced to meet him.

"No," said the man in the eyeshade. "Not for me." He leaned forward and examined the labels.

"Spenlove is the name," said the gentleman. "At your service."

"An R.N.R., eh?" said the man in the eyeshade. He looked hard at Mr. Spenlove and once again at the name painted in white on the end of a japan-black cabin trunk. "A man of rank, I see." He laid a finger soiled by typewriter ribbon on the words *"Eng. Lt. Com."*

"One of the mugs," Mr. Spenlove explained. "I was looking for a taxi."

"Were you? Which way do you want to go?"

Mr. Spenlove told him. The man in the eyeshade motioned to the baggage-man and opened the rear door.

"In that case I'll run you along. I'm going that way. I live just past there. No—no trouble. There's no train for two hours now." The man in the eyeshade, which thrust up his sparse hair and overhung somewhat tired humorous eyes, got in, and the station-wagon went off with a jerk that set Mr. Spenlove back on his spine and caused a shifting of the cargo, as he expressed it. The seats at the back had been removed, and his baggage went sprawling into the corners.

"You going to stay up here?" said his companion.

"If I survive."

THE man laughed. He patted Mr. Spenlove's thigh and seemed suddenly more cheerful.

"I know! I get thinking, and the old foot goes down on the gas. That's all. Just a habit. Did I understand you to say you owned the old Mudge place? I thought they'd foreclosed on the old couple."

"They died, and I bought it."

"I see. My name's Ducroy—Elliot Ducroy. Ever heard of Elliot Ducroy?"

Mr. Spenlove had heard of him. At first he was not sure how or where. Then with an effort, he fished up, as in a bucket, the name "Elliot Ducroy." Ah! *"A new series by Elliot Ducroy."* Yes, he had seen a story in a magazine. There had been an illustration of a man with a gun, and a half-naked girl in a penthouse roof garden, sprawled violently athwart a page.

"Oh, yes," Mr. Spenlove said. "Now I remember!"

Elliot Ducroy, his eyes on the road, nodded. Then he laughed.

"You don't have to read those things," he said. "Sometimes I wish to God I didn't have to write 'em. But they're good. They have to be, to make the grade."

Mr. Spenlove saw that they were approaching the Corners, where they would have to turn left. He shelved the theme of Mr. Ducroy's professional excellence for the moment. He was happy in the company of a fresh intelligence, but he was a shade nervous as he approached the scene of a new and untried existence. There were moments during which the whole scheme struck him as hideously out of character and partially insane. What, after all, did he, a British seaman, know of the real lives of those astonishing beings among whom his lot was now cast?

"That way," he said, pointing left. "And about a mile along, on the left-hand side."

"Okay, big boy!" The station-wagon swerved and rolled swiftly along the familiar winding road.

"Well, here we are," said Ducroy. He had scuffed one fender against a large boulder. "Anybody at home?"

"Nobody but me." Mr. Spenlove got out and walked up the stone path to the front porch.

Elliot Ducroy followed his passenger into the house. Mr. Spenlove pointed to a chair by the brick fireplace.

"How much time have you?" he inquired. He held up his hand toward a corner cupboard. Opening it, he revealed a row of bottles. "How about wetting our acquaintanceship, Mr. Ducroy? The well water is very good."

"The next train—" The man's wrist-watch was examined. "I ought to get back and do a few licks before I go to the station."

"But now you're here, eh? I would regard it as a favor."

"Hey, wait a minute! You see, I'm expecting somebody and I don't want to miss them, you understand. There's a special reason I must meet them myself."

"You don't need to apologize, explain or anything," Mr. Spenlove said. "I'll tell you why when I get the water. You will find that unblended malt in the stone crock very smooth."

Elliot Ducroy watched the newly hung swinging door leading into the kitchen sway to and fro. Then he went over and examined the stone crock of Highland whisky.

"Yeah!" he said to himself. "Smooth as a rubber truncheon, and nearly as quick in the kayo." He put it back on the shelf and carried a bottle of gin to the table.

"It's a bit early for unblended malts," he said in explanation. "I'll take a small spot of gin. Yes, and a dash of angostura. Well,"—he held it up—"here's mud in your eye, Mr.— I've forgotten your name. After readin' it on the labels, too! Now I remember—R.N.R."

"Spenlove. One of the mugs," that gentleman added, holding up a glass. "Where is your house?"

Mr. Ducroy waved his arm.

"End of the street and turn left. Back of here. Faces the Sound."

"You must think this is a pretty dingy dwelling," Mr. Spenlove said.

Elliot Ducroy looked around.

"It's all right. You aren't married, are you? You don't look married."

"Don't I? I'm not sure that's a compliment."

"I'm married," Mr. Ducroy said.

Mr. Spenlove said nothing. He had never known any good to come of interrupting a self-revelation.

Mr. Ducroy drank off his half-glass of gin and bitters, filled the glass with water from the pitcher and drank that off and set the glass down.

"You don't know what you're missing!" he said quietly. He seemed lost in thought for a moment.

In the ensuing silence he lit a fresh cigarette. Then he rose.

"I'll look you up sometime." He held out his hand. "Are you sticking around now?"

Mr. Spenlove nodded.

"I've retired," he said. "After thirty years in the Afro-Iberian Mail Line and its predecessors, I am on the beach."

"I was in the naval reserve over there," Elliot Ducroy said. "This is a funny place to hide away in. All the same, I'm glad. Thanks for the drink. I'll be seeing you."

He backed his wagon to the barn and spun off down the narrow track to the road.

Chapter Two

IT may be so," Mr. Spenlove said peaceably, "but I like it, all right. I know what you mean, of course, but it's an expensive hobby." She was the first visitor from the outside world who had not come to sell him something in the several weeks he had been there. On the contrary, she was looking for old furniture to buy. She sat on his porch, in an old rocking-chair. She was about forty, Mr. Spenlove thought, very robust, with clear, shallow blue eyes; her weatherbeaten features were handsome and indicated character.

Miss Penge—she had thrust her card toward him when he opened his screen door—had introduced herself as a neighbor. She was looking for New England pieces. Americana, she called them.

Her car, an enormous vehicle of ancient vintage, filled the yard beneath Mr. Spenlove's screened porch. She had bought it secondhand for a song, she said, and it suited her business. Lashed to the back of it was a pine table with a drawer and a stretcher missing. A large green glass carboy sat, like a corpulent, transparent matron, on the front seat. Mr. Spenlove glanced out at this equipage.

"What do you do with this stuff? Sell it?"

"I work on commission," Miss Penge said briskly. "And of course I'm a collector. Glass."

"Well, I doubt if there's anything here of any value," Mr. Spenlove remarked. He glanced around. "I saw the place when the old owners were alive, and they didn't strike me as having much interest in those old things. Why don't you try down the road?"

"Down the road? You mean the big places on the shore? They're all new dwellings."

"Mr. Ducroy's isn't. He told me the original structure was 1760."

Miss Penge made a gesture of good-humored impatience.

"He told you that, did he? He's right in a way. The original structure *was* 1760. But the original structure burned down in 1851. . . . You know Mr. Ducroy?"

"Slightly. I've met him. He's a writer, I understand."

"You know Mrs. Ducroy?"

"I haven't had that pleasure so far."

"It may be a pleasure—or maybe not," Miss Penge said, smiling. "Mr. Ducroy, he's all right. I like him all right. As for her, well—"

"Why don't you like Mrs. Ducroy?"

Miss Penge laid her hand on the latch of the new screen door. Her pocketbook and driving-gloves were clamped under her left upper arm.

"If you're so smart, you'll find out about Mrs. Ducroy for yourself," she said, and opened the door.

"Probably I will. I shall be discovering lots of things about my neighbors. Where is your place, by the way?"

"It's on that card I gave you. You can't miss it. Pity you don't have a telephone."

"It's coming. It takes time. The old owners never had one."

"I'll give you a ring, then."

He stood watching her as she got in and started the engine. The huge old car proceeded down the narrow track, entirely filling the space between the walls of foliage.

Mr. Spenlove dusted his hands, and relighting his cigar, walked across to his barn. He had cleared away the debris of two generations and had installed a bench and some power-driven tools. This had meant new electric cables from the house, and a new floor. The old planks were rotten with age and manure.

NOBODY save the workmen, so far, knew anything of this transformation. Mr. Spenlove, engaged in getting his bearings in a new life, had been assailed by several fears. One of them was occasioned by the difficulty of making his actions comprehensible to shore people. He had no intention, for instance, of degenerating into a pipe-smoking maker of ship models. The average shore person, like Miss Penge, for instance, would be quite unable to understand Mr. Spenlove's dislike of model-fanciers.

No, he was not making models. In fact, just the reverse, he reflected, surveying the keel and stem of the eighteen-foot hard-chine power-boat he was building. The local expressman had roared up one day and delivered a confusing consignment of heavy lumber very much weathered, massive packing-cases, and a lot of sacks containing lumpy metal fittings. He had backed up close to the open end of the barn and had tumbled it all out in a heap, where it had lain until Mr. Spenlove had found time to unpack it.

He stood now, enjoying his cigar and smiling to himself happily. It was very good to be alone for a while, he thought. His staff was now extremely small. Old Jim, who was "in back," as he called it, worked to his own slow rhythm clearing the land of undergrowth and dead timber and was eventually to tidy up the yard. And Mrs. Sankey came in during the forenoons to clean the house.

He was about to take up a chisel, to work on the frame held fast in the bench vise, when he heard a dog bark, and stood listening. He heard a soft scurry and the sound of claws on wood. The old black tomcat had flashed through his private hole and had leaped into the upper gloom.

"Hector! Will you come here, Hector?"

Yap-yap-yap-yap-yap—yap!

"Hector! Come here, sir!"

Yap-yap!

A scrabble of paws on gravel and a throttled bark. Mr. Spenlove made a face. He had often wondered why young ladies who adored dogs were invariably born with a complete incapacity for the training of dogs.

He waited. Puss crouched in the gloom of the rafters of the barn, listening to the fracas outside. To arrive on the scene with dignity, Mr. Spenlove had to go out by a door he had cut in the south end of the barn, and stroll around through the shrubbery to the porch.

"Hector! Oh, *will* you be quiet!"

When Mr. Spenlove reached the corner of the barn, he had a clear view of a brindle terrier of undoubted pedigree being dragged away by a girl of twelve or thirteen.

She was bent low over the animal, and her tawny bob had fallen over her face. She was bare-armed, and her shorts were rucked up her smooth round limbs by her struggles with Hector. On her wrist were bangles and a watch-strap. She wore a beret the color of blood. Her belt and her short woolen socks were blood-color too, contrasting with the brief blue garment that covered her body.

Mr. Spenlove stepped out from the bushes.

"What's this?" he said mildly. The girl raised herself so that the dog was held suspended on his hind legs. She had a blunt, freckled nose and eyes of such unusual color Mr. Spenlove could make no decision. She was no more than thirteen; yet she was all there, he observed, and she was unembarrassed.

"It's all right," she said, continuing to drag the dog toward the driveway. She unwound a leash from a diminutive pocketbook she carried, and hooked it to Hector's collar.

"What's all right?" said Mr. Spenlove in a slightly harder tone. "Trespassing on private property?"

The girl stopped hauling the dog, and her entire personality seemed to change. She stood up and looked directly at him. Mr. Spenlove smiled. He knew that his old corduroys and mess tunic had led her astray. She had believed him to be some sort of servant, like old Jim, who was chopping away behind the house.

"I'm sorry," she said. "Hector ran after a cat."

"Hector! And what's your name? Andromache?"

The curiously colored eyes—were they brown, green or yellow?—seemed to be veiled for an instant. Mr. Spenlove's study of mankind led him to believe that sex was perceptible in all females of the species from the age of two to eighty-two. Here was proof.

"I'm Sonia," she said.

"How do you do, Sonia? My name's Spenlove. I live here. And where do you spring from, may I ask?"

The girl's expression changed rapidly several times.

"I—I'm Sonia Pargett," she said. "I live over there."

"On the shore?"

She nodded.

"My father's a writer," she said. "He writes the 'Gentleman Church' stories."

"Does he? I thought that writer's name was Elliot Ducroy."

She nodded, and looked slightly confused.

"My mother is Mrs. Ducroy," she said. "Mr. Ducroy married my mummy."

"Ah. So that's it. I know him," Mr. Spenlove said, nodding. "He's been here. I've been there. Where were you?"

"At school," she said. "I'm home now. We closed for the summer. I'm at Harridge."

"I see," he said. "It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Miss Pargett. Come on in. And bring Hector."

She dragged the dog after her toward the porch steps. Hector at once tried to get under them. Mr. Spenlove had the delightful and revivifying sensation that invariably came over him when he found someone who was not repelled by his manner. That manner was assumed, had been assumed a long while ago, to conceal his own fear of humanity; or rather his fear of a too close contact with it. So long as people remained on the outside, mere decorative figures on a promenade deck, fenced by the formal rules of the social game, he could enjoy watching them. But if they wanted to pass the turnstile and enter his private world, they had to submit to the ordeal of his manner, sly, caustic, confusingly humorous and dominated by his eyebrows and beard, as though he were trying to disconcert them. Those who ignored the manner, who instinctively perceived the sort of man he was, inside his protective shell, had no difficulties. They knew him for what he was, a shy, lonely person who had become so accustomed to spiritual solitude that he enjoyed it as a rule, but who was always being betrayed into conversation by his philosophical curiosity about humanity and his passion for telling stories.

HECTOR was another victim of curiosity, it appeared, for he at once attempted to get under the porch.

"He's still after Tobermory," Mr. Spenlove observed.

"Tobermory?"

"That's what I call the cat. After a famous cat who learned to talk."

"A *cat* talk?" said Sonia. She scented a story. She adored stories.

"You can imagine the sensation it caused in the family," said Mr. Spenlove calmly. "It was a house like yours, only in England. There was a large party for the week-end

and the family cat suddenly began to make—well, rather catty remarks, you may say, about the behavior of the guests."

"Oh! Oof!" Sonia gave a delighted gasp, almost a grunt. She put her knuckles to her mouth and shivered with excitement.

"It's in a book," he said, smiling. "I'll lend it to you if you like."

Hector had subsided, his high-bred head on his exaggerated front paws, a gloomy expression on his face.

"We'll have to change the subject," Mr. Spenlove said, pointing to Hector. "They're psychic, you know, dogs are. They know what you say, to a certain extent. I suppose you are too. You look as if you might be."

"I've never been psyched," Sonia said, suddenly grave. "Mother thinks there's something in it. I don't like it."

"I don't either," Mr. Spenlove agreed. "I didn't mean that. I said *psychic,* not *psyched.*"

"I don't quite know what you mean," she said. "Are you a doctor?"

"A doctor? Oh, I suppose you think my beard goes with the idea of a doctor. No, I'm just living here, retiring from the world. The country's good for my health, you know. You might say I was in hiding. I want to be quiet. But I met your stepfather when I came down here to live, and I went to your house once. Lot of people there that time. But I didn't meet your mother. How was that?"

"I don't know," she said slowly, as though she were thinking of something else. "Were they tight, the people at our house?"

"Tight? Oh, I suppose some of them were. It was a party, and there was plenty to drink, I remember."

"Do you have people tight at your house?" she inquired casually.

MR. SPENLOVE blew out a great cloud of cigar-smoke that drove away suddenly as he laughed.

"Well!" He laughed again. She was so earnest about this that he was forced to revise his somewhat shadowy conception of Mrs. Ducroy. "Not many. I don't have parties, you know. Not yet. Don't you like people to get tight?"

She gave a shrug of her shoulders and shook her head, making a faint grimace, a subtle gesture of repulsion.

"You're English, aren't you?" she inquired. "Elliot said he thought you were English."

"Elliot? Who's Elliot? Oh, your stepfather. Yes, I suppose you can say England is my country of origin. It's a long while since I lived there, though."

"Elliot said you were a naval officer."

"Something like that. Now I'm on the beach. I'm like a boat hauled up out of the sea for good!"

She was a strangely attractive person, he thought, half child and half nymph. Mr. Spenlove delighted in her beautiful and charming poise, her completely American acceptance of him as a social contemporary. But her manner had also a delicate shyness, like a garment of light from another world.

"I'm English," she said suddenly, as though she had been thinking about this fact for some moments. "I mean Mother's English."

"Father too?" Mr. Spenlove asked casually. For some absurd reason he was eager about this, though he did not want to let her know.

She nodded.

"Is he in England?"

Sonia shook her head gravely.

"Mother got a divorce," she said in her clear, candid voice. Mr. Spenlove nodded in return, with what he hoped was sympathy and intelligence.

"I see. And now you've got a stepfather. And he's got a nice daughter."

She laughed. "Elliot said you were funny to talk to," she said. "I think so too."

"Very handsome of you both."

She suddenly seemed to become shy. "I must go," she said. "I promised Mother I would go to Norbury in the car."

"Don't let me keep you. I'll come and have tea with you one of these days."

"Tea?" she said. "All right. But at our house tea is always drinks. Elliot says that's what they come for! I'll ask Louis to have some tea."

"Who's Louis?"

"He's our houseman. I like him very much. He was with us in Hollywood when we lived there. Elliot calls him his mascot."

"I remember Louis. He has a very lugubrious physiognomy for a mascot."

Sonia clapped her hands softly. Like most adolescents, she had a delight in reverberating polysyllables. They delighted her as a rattle delights an infant.

Hector's pleasure in descending the porch steps was theatrical. Sonia was now a young animal suddenly scrambling back to her own place. She turned, and as the dog dragged her toward the trees, "Thank you very much," she said politely. Mr. Spenlove waved to her. Then he turned again to his workshop. He wanted to think, and he found thinking easier while working with his hands.

He had been to Elliot Ducroy's house a few days before, at a cocktail party. He was curious about Ducroy, the fabulously successful magazine writer, but he was more curious about Mrs. Ducroy. However, she had not been there. The people who were there were all fairly drunk, and all, to Mr. Spenlove, fairly unpleasant. They wore, some of them, jodhpurs, riding-breeches and smart, loud checks with preposterous hunting-stocks.

Mr. Spenlove, holding his cup of punch in a corner and watching the scene with quick-darting dark eyes under tufted brows, had heard a snatch of dialogue behind him, in a window seat.

"What do you know?" said a man in a velvet coat of deep brown with a pronounced waist. "She isn't back yet! He said she'd be back—"

The woman who was listening wore trousers of carmine corduroy of amazing width, and a starched white shirt with red glass studs.

She said: "Lord! How long will he stand it?"

The man said: "You can stand a lot when you're making his money, my lovely! It's only a question of time, though. Sydney Saxpool—"

And she had tossed her head and complained: "Oh, you're so unsentimental, Roger! Now, aren't you?"

Mr. Spenlove, with bent head, moved quietly away as the conversation became much more intimate than he thought an elderly bachelor should overhear.

The remarks of the woman in the red corduroys might mean that Ducroy's wife was running around with another man, a depressing discovery. Mr. Spenlove had no desire to poke his nose into a smelly intrigue. It might mean she was a sociological freak and disliked her own kind. And it might mean simply that she was an impossible sort of person who had made herself disliked by her husband's friends.

Mr. Spenlove was not prepared to accept any of these theories; he decided that Sonia's mother was a person he would like to meet. The question was, how? The peculiar relations of the remarried might be simple enough to the residents of the shore estates, but to Mr. Spenlove they were as formidable as the society pages of a Sunday newspaper. He hoped to get some light on *them* one of these days, when he felt more courageous.

He fell back, in his revery, on the adventure of his first arrival, when Elliot Ducroy, driving his station-wagon like an erratic amateur, had been so distraught because someone he had been to meet several times, had not come. That it was Mrs. Ducroy was an assumption, but it was probably correct. Crimson Corduroys, as he called that woman with the blood-red claws and toenails, had not been any help. For some reason the thought that Mrs. Ducroy was in any way like that person, haunted Mr. Spenlove. Probably not. Sonia was thirteen at most, and if she was the fruit of an ordinary first marriage, her mother was in the thirties. Crimson Corduroys was in the late forties.

DUCROY himself was a conundrum. He had worked at that party. Lugubrious Louis, the houseman, was continuously employed carrying around trays of food and drinks and carrying off the debris; but Ducroy himself, frowning or merely grave, made the drinks and set up fresh bottles of whisky for those who disliked punch. He seemed to drink not at all, and when not buttling, was meeting new groups. The impression Mr. Spenlove carried away was that Mr. Ducroy was going through the whole business from a sense of duty. Which made it none the less confusing, and Mr. Spenlove made up his mind to fathom it, one of these days.

Mrs. Sankey, the cleaning-woman, who had nearly finished her stint, came to the door of the barn and announced luncheon. She was a woman of hale middle age, reddish in complexion and of decidedly robust figure. On Monday mornings she often bore the marks of battle. Mr. Sankey was a jobbing carpenter by trade. His manly breast had imparted a fine sheen to the mahogany of the local tavern bar. . . .

Mr. Spenlove had finished his lunch when he heard something coming in from the road. A long low open car of foreign make came swiftly into view and stopped within a few inches of the shrubs in front of the porch. Mr. Spenlove, his hand on the porch door, well aware that behind the bronze screen wire he was invisible, waited.

SONIA PARGETT, his young visitor of the morning, sat beside a woman of what Mr. Spenlove called the perfect age. She was more than thirty and not yet forty. Her brown untidy hair was squashed down under an expensively simple felt hat. Her nose, mouth and eyes were precisely the nose, mouth and eyes of Sonia on a slightly more elaborate scale. She was the finished painting of which Sonia was the lovely sketch.

She sat, her heavily ringed hands grasping the huge steering-wheel, looking about her, the sun drenching the equipage with light that flashed back from chromium and enamel like fire, and reflected the barn and trees in the glossy black panels of the tonneau. On the deep red leather cushions lay a short fur jacket, a bag of groceries, a large carton from a New York department store, and a woman's pocketbook, very large, of yellow patent leather.

Sonia, who seemed to have been the organizer of this invasion, now sat in some confusion while her mother waited for the girl to do something. Mr. Spenlove did not have to wait for the woman to speak to decide that she was English. The whole cut of her was English. So that, he decided, was what had thrown him out, in studying Sonia.

"Well!" she said. "Get on with it, ducky! You said you'd made his acquaintance!" It was a voice softly resonant and full of rich tones. A lovely voice, Mr. Spenlove told himself, filled suddenly with a strange passion for England.

Sonia opened the door of the car and slowly descended. The car, Mr. Spenlove now saw, was a six-liter Virago.

He opened the screen door and went down the steps.

Sonia was extremely glad to see him. She led the way, which was about three yards, to the door of the car, holding out one hand toward her mother.

"Mummy, this is the gentleman! Hector chased his cat. I'm awfully sorry, but I've forgotten—"

"My name's Spenlove." That gentleman put his left hand on Sonia's shoulder and held out the other to Sonia's mother. She reached over and shook hands with him. "Are you Mrs. Ducroy?"

She nodded, a smile playing around her mouth. Her eyes were long and almost Nile green in the sunlight that was reflected from the new foliage into the polished windshield. She put her hand to her untidy hair and moved the little felt hat to and fro with lazy grace, examining her daughter's new friend.

"You must have made a hit with Sonia," she said. "She would have it we ought to come up and get some book you told her about."

Mr. Spenlove opened the door for Mrs. Ducroy to get out. "We had a nice little visit, thanks to Hector's passion for cats," he said. "Come in, please. I want you to come in."

She uncoiled long limbs in flannel slacks and stepped out, her feet shod in white and scarlet espadrilles. He noted she wore conventional stockings. He grasped her arm in its thin silk and wool sweater and guided her to the porch steps, where Sonia awaited them.

Mrs. Ducroy gave herself up to the mood of the moment, smiling and stepping with head slightly bent, conveying a subtle suggestion of having been captured.

Sonia ran up and opened the door for her mother. Mr. Spenlove, who had not experienced his present emotion for a long time, wondered if there was anything symbolical about that impulse of Sonia's. He wondered, too, as he followed Mrs. Ducroy into the porch, if he were being a fool.

"I'll get Sonia her book," he said, and led the way into the house. "Excuse the remains of the feast, please," he added. "My charwoman leaves early."

"Charwoman? I haven't heard that word for ages! Sonia says you're English too."

She looked around at the simple arrangements of the living-room, smiling at the loaf of bread and the triangular hunk of sharp yellow cheese, the empty beer-bottle and the jar of mustard pickles. She smiled as if to herself.

"What will you have?" he inquired. "Glass of sherry?" It seemed suitable.

Sonia looked up quickly from the book Mr. Spenlove had given her.

"Mother doesn't drink," she said.

"Not sherry?"

"Mother doesn't drink anything."

Mr. Spenlove glanced from one to the other, his hand resting on the bottle in its shelf. Mrs. Ducroy was still looking out at the summer afternoon with tender glances. Her face, in profile, was intoxicatingly beautiful. It was beautiful and very desirable. She seemed lost in her thoughts. The shadows of the leaves played delicately over her features.

At length she said, in that lovely voice that evoked in Mr. Spenlove's brain the sound of far-off chimes of bells within a sacred wood, "All right, ducky!" She smiled enigmatically at Mr. Spenlove. "Make mine ginger ale."

She began to walk about the room, and while he was on the back porch getting ice, she looked into the kitchen. He saw her walking upstairs. For some reason, which he could not at the moment define, this pleased him. "She pleases me, no matter what she does or says!" he thought, with sudden vehemence. He entered the living-room again and stood waiting. He saw Sonia stretched on the rug, her bob hanging over her face, which was supported on her hands. She was absorbed in her book.

Footsteps moved around upstairs. Now she was looking out of a window. Now she was examining the books, or perhaps the picture over the bookshelf which he could see as he lay in bed in the morning. How did she react to such things? Rembrandt's "Man in a Golden Helmet" didn't appeal to everybody.

Why should he care so very much whether it appealed to her or not? Why was he so extraordinarily excited, all at once? The recollection of his coolness and amusement, while Miss Penge invaded his privacy and gave him a preliminary glimpse of the world of local gossip, astonished him. Miss Penge was a woman not unattractive in a practical, domestic fashion, a capable, sociable, reliable creature, sound in mind and limb. Yet she might have been one of those inanimate female models one sees in store windows, so far as he was concerned.

NOW, as he waited for Sonia's mother to rejoin them, he was aware of an exaltation of spirit, a profound happiness, for which he could not find an adequate word, unless he was in love.

He stared down at Sonia, extended on the rug, her chin on her hands, reading. He listened to the sounds upstairs. He had all the touchiness of men who have been long in authority and who resent the intrusion of strangers into their privacy. Why did he not resent this entirely unknown person walking about his house? Sonia seemed as much at home as if she belonged.

He walked heavily onto the front porch and stood looking out at the afternoon sunshine. Instead of Miss Penge's ponderous old car, there was now the long, lithe, glittering Virago. Mr. Spenlove was inclined to be impressed by a machine of such august prestige in his own country. He knew you had to be in considerable funds to afford a thing like that. And her rings! He had not been able to resist the feeling that there was "a lot of capital locked up there," as he phrased it in his mind.

But these things no longer had any significance. They had no significance at all. What was of significance, he decided, was that instead of being retired, on the shelf, and of no importance to women, he was down in the arena, being challenged. And it was a challenge he could not ignore, even if he had wanted to.

He heard her step on the stair, and then she was beside him.

"Show me your place," she said in a low tone. She took his arm, and he opened the screen door.

He led her around the barn to the door of his workshop, which was open. He saw her peer in at the skeleton of the boat, at the bench and the machine tools, the white walls and the clean concrete floor.

"A boat!" she said at length, smiling. "We have a boat. So that's what you do! That's what you like!"

"When I haven't any interruptions," he said gravely.

"Don't be nasty," she urged him, still smiling. "I'm enjoying this visit."

"Don't you want your ginger ale?"

"I'm not mad for it," she said. "Of course, I suppose people come out of curiosity, and take up your time."

"What did you come for?" he asked. "I particularly wish to know."

"Sonia said you were nice," she told him. "Why did you particularly wish to know?"

"Well, I was wondering about you, you see."

"Why?"

"I had a visitor this morning, a Miss Penge. She collects glass."

"She collects scandal, too! What did she say about me, if it isn't too disgusting?"

"She didn't say anything about you. She started to, several times, but sheered off."

"She's a great one for that. I bet she's on the telephone now talking to her friend Mrs. Cagliari, telling her about her visit to you."

"Who's Mrs. Cagliari?"

"She's our gardener's wife. Mrs. Cagliari's the other end of the local grapevine. What those two don't know, they invent."

"You know more about this place than I do," Mr. Spenlove said. "I suppose it will be only a matter of time before they know you've been here to see me."

"I hope not," she said, "but they probably will. I'm not very fond of gossipy females. In fact, I'm not fond of females at all. Is that a bad sign?"

"I lack jurisdiction," he muttered. "Let us go back to Sonia. I'm fond of *her*. She's a female."

"Oh, so am I—though I am her mother. Sonia's a brick. You heard how she stopped you giving me a drink?"

"Yes—why?"

"Because she knows what's what. Do I make myself plain?"

"That would hardly be possible," he pointed out, and she gave him a delighted grimace.

"I'll tell you something," she said, and they began to walk back to the house. "It's a long story, so I'll make it short: I'm leaving my husband."

"What about Sonia?"

"That's just it. He's awfully fond of her. He's—never mind now. There she is."

She pointed to Sonia on the front porch. The girl came out and stood on the top step, silhouetted against the bright new bronze screen wire, which seemed to enclose her in a lustrous frame.

"I'm not surprised he's fond of her," Mr. Spenlove said in an undertone. "Who wouldn't be? And what do you intend—"

"I said it was a long story," she pointed out. "Could I call again? Would you mind if I came—" She made a gesture toward Sonia.

For a moment she met his glance, which was very bright and burning. Then she looked down at her feet and walked toward the car.

"Funny how things happen," she said, as if to herself, under her breath. She remembered her hat and started toward the house. Inside she said, earnestly, standing close to him:

"I had to tell someone! Sonia said you were"—her rings flashed as she set the hat on her bronze-colored hair—"English. All the same, it was an impulse. Was it a mistake? You don't think me too brazen because I—"

"That'll do," he said. "Sonia's in the car. I'll be here."

"Will you?" she said. Her face became extraordinarily seductive, and her voice low and musical. She closed her eyes for an instant as though in rapture. Then without further words they walked down to the car together.

"What do you drive?" she said as she got in and he closed the door.

"I haven't driven a car since I was a young man in England. I worked in a garage in London for a while. Panhards, Mors and De Dion Bontons. And the old Benz with a belt drive."

"You'll soon pick it up again." she said lightly. "De Dion Bonton! It sounds like a French perfume."

"It was. *Parfum de Petrole!* But I like it here. I can always send for a taxi—or I can, when I get a phone."

"Oh, of course. But excuse me. One gets the habit of rushing about." She started the engine.

"Good-by, Sonia. When you've finished that book, come and get another."

Mr. Spenlove stood and watched the car start down the narrow drive, Sonia holding up her hand to him, smiling.

Chapter Three

MR. SPENLOVE decided one evening some few weeks after this to go for a walk to the shore before dinner. The lighthouse was about a mile and a half by the road. Across the fields, it was about half that.

The road along the shore wound among hummocks of coarse grass and clumps of wild cherry that were bounded by a sandy slope above the beach. The lighthouse stood on the point beyond the yacht-club basin. The yacht-club house was still deserted, though a flag flew from the signal halyards in the lookout tower.

A speed-boat was rushing across the estuary toward the yacht basin. As he reached the wooden dock, it became a thuttering roar, and then suddenly stopped. The silence was delicious. He felt an involuntary gratitude blending with his rage against the unknown defiler of the evening peace.

The boat floated in quietly; the twin engines, throttled down, were turning over with barely a sound. He saw a lithe, leather-coated, goggled figure jump out. He realized that it was a woman. She came toward him with a familiar easy stride, carrying a white rubber raincoat, leather gloves, and goggles.

Mr. Spenlove held back a quick breath of astonishment, finding himself looking into those curiously colored eyes that changed as he looked. It was Mrs. Ducroy.

"Kismet!" she said, and made a downward movement with the hand holding the gauntleted gloves. "You've been following me!" She laughed in his face. "Won't you come in? The place is not really open yet. The season— We can have some—you know—ginger ale! I have to change. Won't you?"

A steward in a pale blue page-boy suit saw them ascend and cross the wide veranda, and opened the glass door leading to a large lofty hall with a vast stone fireplace. She hurried away, looking over her shoulder at him, as though trying to ascertain his thoughts.

He sat down and waited. After all, he told himself, he had had nothing to do with all this. He was not responsible for it in any way whatever. Sonia was the agent of destiny. Mrs. Ducroy had used the word *Kismet* in joke, probably, but it looked much as if there were something in that superstition. She had accused him of following her! Why now, he wondered, did the tone, the lovely timbre of her voice when she uttered that amazing impertinence, so thrill him?

What made him ponder was her assumption that he was worthy of her confidence. Was he? That was the really important point. Was he? Did he put so high a price on the meditative life (which could wait awhile, perhaps) that he would put an end to this performance? It was all very well to talk about "Kismet" and assume that she was merely making a convenience of him. He knew the signs. She was not. He knew the signs, and he was filled with a pleasurable anxiety.

He had not seen her for nearly six weeks. That had been deliberate on his part. He was a man of fifty-odd—"on the shelf," he had thought. Apparently he was not. Nor, any longer, did he wish to be.

There were hurried footsteps behind him. He closed his eyes for an instant, and opened them to find Mrs. Ducroy's face close to his shoulder.

"Did you think I was dead or gone away?" she said, smiling. "I had to have a bath. That boat is as dirty as an old oil-stove. I expected you'd have got sick of waiting."

"I said I'd wait," he said.

"And you haven't had anything to drink?"

"I waited for that too. You look as if you were worth waiting for."

She held out her hand and moved toward the door. "I'm glad. Come on, then!" she said.

The six-liter Virago stood in one of the stalls of the garage. She got in and started the engine, waving to him

to go around and join her. He did so. The Virago slid out.

At first she did not speak, and Mr. Spenlove had no idea of playing her game by exhibiting curiosity. So far, it might be a kidnaping affair! Using the arts of a siren, she had carried him away in her glittering chariot. The music of her voice would ensnare any man, he thought, even a blind man who could not see the beauty of her person.

The sea was calm under an evening sky of soft fleecy clouds faintly illumined by the afterglow of a sunset beyond the Connecticut hills. Only a few cars were parked at intervals among the wild-cherry copses that lined the shore, cars facing the sea, and with lights out.

A winking orange light at an intersection warned Mr. Spenlove that here was his way home. He was about to point this out when Mrs. Ducroy swung to the left and the car fled toward Sutton Corners. It slowed slightly, swung in among the trees, swept into his yard, and stopped as softly as a feather coming to rest.

"This is very nice of you," he said as he sought for the door-handle, "but it wasn't necessary. I was out for a walk. Exercise! Exorcise too, as a matter of fact."

"What?" she said, and laid her hand on his. "Say that again." She leaned toward him, smiling.

"Presently," he said. "It'll wait. Where were you going, when you came ashore, if I hadn't happened along just then—if it isn't an impertinence?"

"Here," she said. "I was coming to see you."

He got out slowly and closed the door.

"All right," he said. "but I usually go to Norbury for my dinner."

"We can have dinner," she said. "The car will take us to dinner."

"Aren't you dining at home?"

"Not tonight."

"So you were on your way here? You would have found me not at home."

She was already out of the car and coming around to the steps of the house.

"I'd have followed you," she said, smiling. "I wanted to see you, and you hadn't any telephone, you said, so that was the only way. You went out for a walk, and walked to the lighthouse. I saw you when I was out in the boat."

"Walked straight into the trap," he said, going up and opening the screen door.

"That's right," she said affably.

It was now dark in the house. The large trees shut out the sky. For a moment he stood beside her in that darkness, his hand grasping her arm strongly.

"What?" she said. She turned her face directly to his.

"I think we are being indiscreet," he said. "I'm not experienced in the customs of the country, but I couldn't help overhearing two of your husband's guests talking when I was there once. . . . Yes!"

"Didn't leave a stitch on me, I suppose," she said quietly.

"They were busy skinning you alive when I moved out of earshot," he said, still holding her arm. It was a strong, round, warmly resilient arm, and she made no protest.

"What did they say?" she asked, naturally.

"Later, later!" he suggested. "I didn't believe them. I'd never seen you, and didn't pay much attention. I was only perplexed because you weren't there, at the party."

"I was in New York," she said sharply. "I don't have to consult those horrible creatures if I want to go to New York. I told you what I'm doing."

"Horrible creatures! That's strange. I thought them not only horrible but obscene."

"They're Elliot's friends. They're not even his *friends!* It's his idea he has to entertain them, because of his position."

"His position?"

"Don't you know he's one of the highest-paid serial writers in America?"

He shook her gently. "I was thinking about you. A woman can be indiscreet and marvelous. The more marvelous, the more indiscreet, sometimes. I was just wondering. Those people at the party now—"

"I suppose you think badly of me, coming here, then? Coming here and telling you I'm leaving my husband."

"No."

"Think I'm a *femme fatale,* anyway?"

"Not in that sense. I dare say you're fatal enough, but not in that sense."

"You're nice! Let us go in, please."

"And have an *apéritif?*"

"All right. I'll have an *apéritif,* as you call it. What have you got?'

"How about sherry? Sherry and bitters?" he said. He added: "Now Sonia's not here to forbid it."

She shook her head. Then shook it again, violently.

"Can I have a whisky and soda?" she said.

He went to the corner cupboard and took down a bottle of whisky and a siphon of soda.

"Sonia said you didn't drink," he remarked without emphasis.

"This is a celebration," she said.

"Gin for me," he said, and went out once more to find glasses and some ice.

A celebration! He repeated the word as he broke off a lump of ice and dropped it into a wooden bowl for cracking. He got two glasses and put everything on a tray.

She raised her eyes to his keen dark gaze, with the heavy black brows, to the mobile, satirical, sensual lips above the sharply trimmed beard.

"Hah!" he said. "I can see what it is. You've always had everything you wanted, and—"

"No, I haven't," she said. She stamped her foot. "How do you know what I wanted? I'll tell you one thing I've always wanted, and never had. I've always wanted to own myself, be myself, be on my own, be independent, be somebody!"

"Is that what you're celebrating?" he asked. Her glass was empty. "Your final emancipation?"

"You don't understand. You don't *want* to understand!" She sprang up and faced him, her face glowing in the light of the amber-shaded lamp. "I thought you would, when I saw you with Sonia! You were sweet with Sonia."

She turned to the window and looked out.

"I suppose a man with the necessary intelligence for a woman like me is inevitably cynical. You don't have to be cynical, do you? I dare say you think terrible things of me now, because I've been honest with you. I am honest with you. I don't want to talk about magazine writers or any kind of writers. I would like to forget all about writers! What do you think of that?"

"All right," he said quietly. "But I had no reason to assume all that. Now you've told me, all right. Possibly I'm as honest as you are. I was in a state today, I can tell you. Yes!"

She turned quickly to look at him.

"A fair state!" he continued, without looking at her. "That honest enough for you? I went for a walk this evening, to get my bearings. I hadn't realized, when I came down here to live—in retirement, mind you—I hadn't realized I was so easily—h'm—well, so easily upset."

"Afraid?"

"At first. Plain fright! I'm a stranger on shore, you know. I haven't got my bearings."

"And have you got them now?"

"It's hard to put into words. Your voice. Do you know you have a voice that is like a benediction? That's not the right word. In fact, it's the wrong word. *Benison?* No; *benison's* too archaic. You see, I was thinking of the voice, but not in words. When you speak to me, I can hear the song the sirens sang!"

He smiled and came over to her, and took her by the arms. She stood close to him.

"Yes?" she said softly. "You're awfully nice! Tell me some more. Say something to me, please!"

"All right," he said.

Chapter Four

"SEE that?" she said, pointing. "Do you see it?" He saw it, plainly, through the binoculars. "Now do you understand my side of it?" she inquired. "Or must I go over it all again?" Mr. Spenlove did not reply immediately. He was standing not far from where he had been that afternoon when they had met at the yacht-club. He was a little farther up the river. It was about ten o'clock, a clear, soft, cloudless, moonless night.

Mrs. Ducroy had said, pointing across the river to a house, whose one immense window made a square of soft diffused light with a background of bright flames from a stone fireplace:

"See that?"

He had taken the binoculars she had suggested bringing down with them, a pair of high-power German glasses. The great raftered room of the house across the river was suddenly revealed to him. The window faced the river, and the occupants of the room were oblivious of any possible observation. A man and a woman were outlined against the firelight of large logs. The woman was short and had her arms around the man, who stood looking down at the fire. The heads of two other persons were visible above an immense divan that cut across the foreground.

Less than an hour ago, in a roadhouse ten miles away, he had first learned of the existence of the house into whose interior he was now gazing. But those tiny figures could not be identified by him. It was his companion who had brought him down here after their return from dinner the other side of Norbury. He had asked where her husband was. Was he in New York?

"He hardly ever goes there," she had said. "He doesn't need to."

She began to tell him a tale so fantastic that to him, a man of the sea, it sounded slightly cracked. He told her this, and she said, simply:

"All right. I'll prove it to you. I dare say it sounds slightly improbable, and I'm not a bit flattered! No woman would tell a story like this about her husband unless it was true. She wouldn't tell it even then, except to someone she trusted absolutely."

"And you trust me absolutely? Why?"

She had said, touching his hand lightly and smiling, in the shaded candlelight, into his eyes.

"Just because!"

IT was when he asserted his right to details that he heard, for the first time, about a person named Sydney Saxpool.

"You mean to say you've never heard of Sydney Saxpool?" Mrs. Ducroy had said.

"I must confess I haven't."

Mrs. Ducroy chuckled musically and indulgently.

"It's evident you don't read magazines! She's in all of them, almost! If not one week, the next. Sometimes two, or three at a time."

"You seem to admire her!"

"You notice she does more than admire my husband. There they are. She's in love with him—and he with her."

"Let's go back," he said in a low tone.

They got into the Virago and drove to his house. The porch was dark. Only the amber-shaded floor-lamp behind the door was burning. He was feeling extraordinarily elated, even though that restless analytical intelligence of his, which had controlled his emotions for years, was busy with the reasons for that elation. *"You are an old fool,"* it was saying feverishly. But he did not feel either old or a fool. What he had feared was infatuation for some young creature in whom he would inspire only derision. But this was something entirely different, he thought with exultation. It was as it should be, he told himself.

Mrs. Ducroy lay back in the green leather chair and watched him as he opened his corner cupboard. She made a lithe forward movement and took the book that lay open on the side table. She held it so that the light fell on the page, and she began to read. For a moment a faint frown crossed her forehead. Then she smiled.

"I hate books."

He went on with his preparations, sure-footed, neat-handed; silent, almost stealthy in his movements to and from the kitchen. When he was ready, he came in again with an old black lacquer tray, on which were a highball and a glass of rum and water.

"You said something like that at dinner," he remarked. "You said something about your being warped by books. Did you mean it?"

"I was talking about my childhood. . . . I was brought up in a literary home. We were up to the eyes in it. There was no getting away from it. They were all writing."

"Who's 'they'? Your family?"

"Father, mother, brother, cousins, uncles, aunts. My little sister inherited the family genius. My father used to be rather famous in an obscure way. He wrote serials for all the boys' magazines in England, under the name *Norman Tower.*"

She stopped, smiling.

"I've never told you my name," she said. "My given name. Or my other name either, for that matter. Perdita—Perdita Price."

"And you don't like it?" Mr. Spenlove said. "I am absolutely certain you don't like it!"

"I'm used to it now. I hated it at first, all right, when I was a kid," she said.

"Tell me about—you know—the man you married. Your first husband—Sonia's father. What was he like?

"A cousin by marriage. One of Mother's cousin's children."

"Name of Pargett?"

"How did you know? Oh, of course Sonia explained that. She told me. Yes, Archie Pargett. Does the name give you an idea?"

"It gives me an idea, but how do we know it is the right one? I can see him, though!"

He pointed his finger at her and made a sort of good-humored scowl at the fire, which was now bright and lively.

"Good looking?"

"Rather! He was a *Prince Charming* to me. He'd been around the world. Oh, he had glamour! So we became engaged. Father said he'd permit the marriage if Archie got a job. So Archie went to London and saw an editor friend of Father's. He told him he was engaged to me and needed a job. There wasn't any job, really, but the editor happened to pick up a letter that had come in that morning. It was from a Hollywood studio, and it invited him to send out a special correspondent at their expense, to see the studios and write them up in his paper. There was a movement just then in England to exclude Hollywood pictures, or slap a duty on them, and they wanted to do something about it, to change English opinion.

"This chap was in favor of the duty, wanted British pictures for British patrons, and so on, so he wasn't very keen on this scheme. But he saw a chance to get rid of Archie. He said: 'Want to go to Hollywood?' "

"Archie said, 'What ho!' when he read the letter. 'Will this complimentary ticket take two?' The editor said: 'I'll see that it does.'

"It sounds the maddest thing now, but we were very young, and the idea of going to Hollywood was simply intoxicating! It didn't seem important what might happen afterward. We had a ticket, and Archie's people gave him a hundred pounds. So we were rich!"

"You went? You got married and went? Of course. I can see now what it was puzzled me about you. You confused me when you came in here with Sonia. I couldn't place you. Now I am beginning to see you in a setting. You've had experiences!"

"I should think I have had experiences! Some of them very unpleasant. I won't talk about them."

"Did he leave you?"

"I left him!"

"So what?"

"I said I didn't want to talk about unpleasant experiences. I had a difficult time when Sonia was born."

"But didn't your people take care of you?"

"They did after things were straightened out. You see, Archie had given them the wrong idea. He'd cabled Father several times without my knowledge, and Father had sent him fifty pounds several times. When I'd left him and wrote Mother to help me get home, they couldn't understand. It was then I had the experiences, as you call them. Did you ever starve?"

MR. SPENLOVE was aroused from his revery. He rose and carried her empty glass to the table with the idea of refilling it. Something made him turn. He saw the tears running down her face and raining on her hands in her lap. He went over to her and put his hands on her shoulders, and shook her gently.

"Don't," he said. But he felt very helpless as the tears rained down. Suddenly she dashed the moisture away with her fists and found her handkerchief, and put an end to the scene.

"I won't," she said. "I'm sorry. I'm a fool. But it's your fault, really. You have a way of listening and you make me feel you understand and have sympathy. And I got to thinking of when Sonia was little, and I couldn't get a job. . . . Sorry!"

"Have another drink," he said.

"Oh, no!" She uncoiled her legs and rose suddenly from the chair. She put her arm around him and laid her head on his shoulder for a moment, regaining control.

"I must go," she said hurriedly. "Sonia has gone to the movies. She'll wonder where I am. I feel I've been a bad guest. I'll tell you everything, but not now. Excuse me."

She was cool and collected and smiling as he guided her down the porch steps to the car. She pointed to a star setting over the sea.

"I'll look at that when I'm in bed," she said. "Will you see it too?"

He nodded. She smiled again as she settled herself in the car and started the engine.

"I know what you're thinking," she said, and then leaned out with a swift caressing gesture. "You're afraid!" she added as she let in the gear-shift and turned on the lights. She added:

"Please don't be! Good night."

Chapter Five

HE was taking a shower after a warm day of working on the boat. He heard someone on the porch. He was planning to go to town next morning and had knocked off early. He put on a bathrobe to walk down the steep little stairway, and he found Elliot Ducroy. The room door being open, the visitor was in full view. He was taking short steps to and fro, smoking a cigarette very fast, as was his custom, and pausing to glance at the book on the table, the Notebook of Samuel Butler.

"He's come to have it out about Perdita!" Mr. Spenlove said to himself.

Well, had he? He turned his head quickly and in welcome when he heard Mr. Spenlove's bath-slippers slapping on the stairs. He spoke with obvious sincerity.

"Hello. I saw your gardener out there. He said you were in the house. He said you were upstairs, so I came in. Busy?"

"No. I'm going to New York tomorrow, so I knocked off. Have a drink?"

"No hurry. You going to New York? Coming with me? I'm driving up tomorrow morning. Got some engagements."

"Hm! It's a suggestion. If you're sure it won't put you out."

"It'll be company. We'll take the sedan."

"Not the Virago?"

"I don't like a right-hand drive. And besides, the Virago's my wife's car."

"Well, you make it difficult to refuse. If you'll wait a bit, I'll get dressed and we'll have one."

"This book—" Elliot Ducroy had held it up. "I don't know it. I've been looking at it. It seems good stuff."

"Out of print," Mr. Spenlove told him, going up the stairs. Ducroy nodded, studying the pages.

They had a cool drink, and Elliot Ducroy borrowed Samuel Butler. He said he understood Mrs. Ducroy had made Mr. Spenlove's acquaintance, and had called on him once or twice.

"We had dinner," Mr. Spenlove informed him. "Didn't she tell you?"

"That's right. She told me you're building a boat. That a fact? Sonia's been full of it too. What I was going to say—yes, she told me. I'm right glad about this. My wife's been a bit dissatisfied with things lately. Before we came here, she was in a pretty fast set in New York. She gets restless. Now, you can find time—uh-huh—to see her sometimes. I'm pretty busy these days, you understand. A writer has to work all the time. My work keeps me jumping. Yes, it keeps me jumping, all right. I have a schedule for a series."

He kept hold of Samuel Butler while saying this, as though that ironical non-jumping person might have some words of salvation for a man driven to turn out thousands of words a day to make a living. A man whose work, as he phrased it, kept him jumping; a phrase which, when applied to a writer, fascinated Mr. Spenlove. *"His work keeps him jumping,"* he had repeated to himself all that evening. He tried to imagine such a man at work, producing stories in a series—of convulsions.

Mr. Spenlove had already made a few cautious moves in the direction of his "scrap log," as he called it, that projected record of his adventures in his new surroundings. Samuel Butler's Notebook had been in evidence, because to Mr. Spenlove it was the only model he dared attempt. Butler put down his thoughts as they occurred to him. One of the chapters was even called "Higgledy-Piggledy." It was one of Mr. Spenlove's incessantly read volumes. It lay, as a rule, on the pine table beside his bed, with "The Anatomy of Melancholy," "Urn-burial," "Amiel's Journal" and Stendahl's "Rouge et Noir."

Cautious, timid moves only, so far. The emotions aroused by the blank pages of a large marbled notebook had astonished him. He had felt suddenly stark naked in his mind, as he put it; or at any rate, as if he were suddenly to find himself in his shift among strangers. That had been followed by an extraordinary sensation of insignificance. He became reduced to microscopic size in the world of thought. Time after time, after a long wait for "inspiration" as he supposed, he had closed the book without putting anything in it. The difference between merely thinking, talking, and writing it down so that it did not appear to be nonsense, staggered him; but he supposed this was because he felt self-conscious. If he had been required to express a professional opinion in a report, or to issue an order, he would have had no difficulty. But would it be possible to write down, as in a report, how he felt about Perdita Ducroy's voice, her hands, her walk, or the way she looked at him? Could he make a simple, businesslike statement concerning Sonia's eyes, which were as perplexingly changeable and distractingly beautiful as her mother's? Would it be possible to describe, in that projected scrap-log, the divine loveliness of children's tanned limbs on the beach, divine because they were innocent of desire? Or the grace and precision of Tobermory, his belly flat to the earth, as he moved swiftly and stealthily through the grass upon a rabbit?

Not even Samuel Butler had helped him to overcome this ridiculous bashfulness when confronted with a blank page. *"There is some secret in this business!"* he told himself, and put the book away, untouched, time after time.

When he did make a start, after Elliot Ducroy paid him that sudden visit, he surprised himself. He wrote hastily, half ashamed:

Temperature 75°, Barometer 29.7 ins. Prevailing wind southerly: smooth sea. Elliot Ducroy, one of the native chiefs, told me his work "kept him jumping." He lives in an expensive way—large house, three cars, possibly four, some horses, servants and a speedboat. About 95% of his expenses are not essential to his business or his pleasure, if his conversation is a guide. In fact, he deplores the necessity of doing it. A sort of slave of the pen. He came to see me, he said, about his wife. Said he hoped I would be friends with her. When I said I was going to town next day, said he was too, and invited me to go with him in his car. I accepted both offers, as a matter of course, just to be agreeable, not as anything important to me, etc. I don't understand why he has come here or why he should be friendly. At least not yet. The motives of the people here are obscure. Only P. (Perdita) does anything because she wants to, not because it is a fashion or what they think is "correct." But Ducroy's desire to have me friendly with P., who is leaving him, can hardly be based on any code. Or can it? So far, I am as puzzled, apart from Perdita, concerning the way these people act and react, as if I were in Tibet, or on another planet. Or in another century.

Of course there may be a perfectly simple solution of this mystery. We shall see.

Pouring himself a second cup of coffee, next morning on the porch, Mr. Spenlove saw a bright yellow sedan with a sharp nose roll into view. Inside was Elliot Ducroy, wearing a double-breasted business suit and a fedora.

He shook his head and held up a hand when offered coffee.

"Can't take it," he said. An offered Havana cigar caused him to pretend horror. "If I smoked those things—" he said, closing his eyes. "Gee!"

"You have led a Spartan existence, then," Mr. Spenlove surmised, getting into his coat.

"If you said I lead a hell of a life, you'd be nearer the mark!" said Mr. Ducroy. "It's my heart. Where do you want to go in New York?"

"Don't bother about me. I'm going over to Brooklyn on the subway. I'll get out anywhere. I suppose you're for uptown."

"Okay. Let's go."

The car slid down the curving driveway into the road. Elliot Ducroy was not a good driver, but he was a fast one.

Mr. Spenlove said at last:

"I'd rather go slower, if you don't mind."

Elliot Ducroy nodded and reduced to forty-five.

"Thanks. And now, there's something else I'd like to ask you."

"Shoot."

"Yesterday you said Mrs. Ducroy had been in a pretty fast set. Fast in what way?"

Elliot Ducroy kept his gaze on the ribbon of white concrete.

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. . . . You've never been married? You're a bachelor?"

Mr. Spenlove made no reply.

"Silence means consent," said Mr. Ducroy. "Well, my wife takes fancies to people. Some of the people she takes fancies to aren't so hot, if you ask me. They're a bad influence."

"What do you call a bad influence, Mr. Ducroy?"

"Well—" Elliot Ducroy took his right hand from the wheel, turned toward Mr. Spenlove and made a gesture of raising a glass to his lips.

"You mean too much drinking? I haven't noticed it. On the contrary—"

"No," said Ducroy, a curious expression on his face. "Maybe you're a good influence. Or you've just seen her in between the cycles."

"Between the cycles? You mean? Hm!"

"That's it," said Ducroy. The car's speed went up for a moment as his foot unconsciously pressed the accelerator. "Well, this crowd in New York—ever hear of a place called Greenwich Village? Eighth Street and so forth?"

"I've heard it described as a state of mind rather than a geographical area," Mr. Spenlove remarked. "Yes, I've been in it, never of it."

"Yeah, a state of mind! Well, my wife lived there, in that state of mind, off and on, before we came here. She had an apartment. I had to stay on the Coast, you see, to finish my contract. So she had an apartment, close to McDougal Street. Lots of parties, lots of people."

MR. SPENLOVE touched Elliot Ducroy's arm with his forefinger.

"Yes, yes!" he said. "Before you go on, why pick on me? Where do I come in? Are you suggesting—"

"Who's telling this story?" Elliot Ducroy swung the car into the parkway. "You asked me what I meant when I said my wife had been in a pretty fast set. I'm tellin' you."

"That's right. I did. I didn't expect you to go into details."

"Well, all right. But you asked me. And you could be just the right sort of influence. . . . See what I mean? . . . Advise her. She'd take advice from you."

"Advice about what?"

"I'll tell you: She wants to leave me. Wants a separation. After I spend pretty near fifty grand on that place, so's she'd have a background, she wants a separation! I'm not the man to keep a woman on a chain. No sir! I'm not that sort of guy. She can do what she likes. But it'd mess things up for me if she left me legally now. That's all. If she cleared out—again."

Mr. Spenlove, contemplating the mountainous regions of upper New York, shook his head.

"I couldn't possibly interfere. What do you take me for?"

"A square-shooter. I got that the first time. Sonia thinks so too. So does she."

"Did you say—again?"

"Yeah, I said, again. So you advise her. You could make her see the folly of goin' off, leavin' me."

"You mean you don't want the publicity?"

"That's what I do mean. Instead of going to a law-firm in New York or New Haven, for advice, she'll do what *you* advise. Now you know the background."

Elliot Ducroy turned south on Riverside Drive. Mr. Spenlove admired the splendor of the Hudson River, the bold line of the Jersey shore and the beauty of the suspension bridge.

"And now she wants to go back to it," Ducroy went on.

"To what? Greenwich Village?"

"Yeah. Says she wants to have an apartment and get a job."

Mr. Spenlove said nothing. The car had turned south, and now turned into a cross-street.

"Where do you want to get out?" Elliot Ducroy asked. The traffic was heavy, and he was crawling along, watching the line of cars at the curb.

"Here," Mr. Spenlove said. "I'm going to Brooklyn by subway."

"Okay." Ducroy saw a car leaving the line and nipped into the vacant space. "Bit o' luck, that!" He stopped the car and locked the ignition. "See what I mean now? Perdita's taken a fancy to you. She's interested. Do her good to talk to a man like you. You've been around. Done things and seen things. She'll see what tramps that bunch are."

"You exaggerate," Mr. Spenlove said, as he followed his companion out of the car. Elliot Ducroy locked the doors.

"This is a good place," he said.

Mr. Spenlove gazed about; the street displayed sidewalk cafés, screened at the sides by gay awnings and in front by evergreens in tubs. Elliot Ducroy led the way toward an awning with the name El Tobalito in pink glass letters across the top. They sat on stools in a sort of nook screened by glass panels from the other customers. Ducroy ordered gin and bitters.

"This is an off day, for me," he explained. He made some expressive gestures to indicate what he had insisted on from the first, that his work made abstinence compulsory.

"When you retire, you'll be able to do as you like," Mr. Spenlove suggested.

"Retire? Me retire? Writers are like donkeys. They die in harness. It takes me all my time to earn enough to pay the bills!"

Elliot Ducroy leaned his head on his arms as they rested on the bar. When he looked up again, he smiled.

"Retire? All right for you. But listen—know what I've come to New York for? To get an advance."

"You mean a loan?"

"Yeah! Call it by its right name, it's a loan. An advance on a contract. I need some money."

Mr. Spenlove, thinking of the fuel consumption of the speedboat, the probable dues of the yacht-club, and the cost of the Virago, was technically not surprised. Yet he was surprised.

"You're exaggerating again," he said, looking around the bar appreciatively.

"Maybe so, chief!" Ducroy said, smiling a little. "I'll need a lot of money pretty soon, and I'll have to roll some together. So I'm having lunch with my agent. How long you going to be over in Brooklyn?"

"Oh, I'll be finished in time to get back on the five o'clock train," Mr. Spenlove said.

"Hell, don't do that, man! This is my off day. Come here at five, and we'll go some place and eat. I'll drive you back."

"All right," Mr. Spenlove said. "I hope you get the money, but there's no need to squander it on me."

"Money?" Mr. Ducroy looked puzzled. Then his face cleared, and he laughed. He took Mr. Spenlove's arm and led him out into the street.

"I think it's a fine thing for Perdita to have a friend like you. A square-shooter. You'll be a fine influence."

He nodded gravely and stood, his hand raised in a genial gesture, and then walked off toward Fifth Avenue.

LATER that day Mr. Spenlove, entering once again the dusky foyer of El Tobalito, saw Elliot Ducroy at the bar talking to a small neatly tailored person who wore no hat.

"Meet Irvill," he said to Mr. Spenlove. "My script agent."

"How'd you do, Mr. Irvill? What's a script agent?"

"Irvill's his given name. A script agent gets you a contract for ten thousand dollars and sends you a check for about six hundred. The rest is his commission."

Mr. Spenlove glanced at Irvill's round black head. His round black eyes, with round shell-rim glasses, and his round blue chin were all extremely amusing and attractive. Mr. Spenlove liked him.

Elliot Ducroy was saying that the hide of a rhinoceros was wet tissue-paper compared with the epidermis of a script agent in normal health.

"You might think Mr. Ducroy was drunk," Irvill remarked in his smiling, tightly controlled fashion. "He's

just being complimentary. If he ever got drunk, he'd seem sober. Pleased to meet you, Doctor."

"Drunk? I'd take care not to be drunk doing business with Irvill," Mr. Ducroy said impressively. "One of Irvill's ancestors made a fortune skinning fleas, marketing the hides, tallow, entrails and mandibles. My friend Spenlove is a sailor, not a doctor. He doesn't approve of intemperance."

"Mr. Spenlove is without prejudice," said that gentleman. "But that does not mean he is not human. He is, for instance, hungry."

"All right," Elliot Ducroy agreed. "Let's go and eat. Hey, Irvill, let's go to your place. Terry won't mind, will she?"

Irvill said no, and they rose. "Where are we going?" asked Mr. Spenlove.

"To Bannister Street. That's in the Village."

They drove down to Washington Square, along Waverly Place and into the maze of narrow lanes, mews and crooked passages which are the heart of Greenwich Village.

"May I ask who Terry is?" said Mr. Spenlove.

"She's the wife."

THEY stopped, and Irvill led the way to a neat white door. It was unlocked, apparently, and he welcomed them in. He was holding the hand of a plumpish fair girl whose features were not very clear because of the window behind her. She waved her other hand benignly.

"Terry says, come on in," said Irvill.

She smiled and led the way into the apartment, which was an immense attic with a terrace encumbered with skylights. She pointed to a low table where there was a tray with bottles and glasses, and excusing herself, went into the kitchen.

After a while she reappeared bearing a platter on which a thick steak was still spitting, in a mass of fried onions. The two men cleared a card-table hastily and spread a cloth. Irvill produced knives and forks. Ducroy set chairs. They sat down and fell to. It was excellent.

Finished, Mr. Spenlove was in the process of lighting a cigar when the telephone rang. Terry answered it.

"It's for you, Elliot," she said. "You know—she asked for Irvill. . . . She doesn't know—"

"Say you can reach me," Elliot said hurriedly. "Say Irvill will get in touch."

They heard Terry speaking with the exaggerated lucidity one woman uses in speaking through the phone to another woman she dislikes. They heard her say:

"Yes, Irvill's here, Mrs. Saxpool. He was out on the terrace. Yes, he has an engagement with Mr. Ducroy. Yes, sure he will. I'm telling him. No, no trouble. Good-by, Mrs. Saxpool."

She set the receiver down with enormous deliberation and came back to get the coffee. She brought it to the table with an inscrutable expression on her fair, irregular features. Mr. Spenlove allowed his glance to rest alternately on the two men. It was a whimsical glance, committing him to nothing, but indicating that he felt more sure of himself now than at any time during the day. He had noted Elliot Ducroy's idiosyncrasy, to assume control of anyone with whom he associated. Possibly Perdita had not been sufficiently malleable material. Possibly she had incurred criticism. Mr. Spenlove knew how quickly a man could change into a god in his own estimation. And now here was Sydney Saxpool, whom he had seen that night, through his binoculars, while the splendid Perdita pressed close to him in the darkness, her hand on his shoulder.

"I don't know if she believed me, but there it is. Irvill, you've got to call her at the apartment. And not from here, please!" Terry said.

"I wasn't sure she was in town," Elliot Ducroy said, and to Mr. Spenlove it was obvious that he expected no one to believe him. "No, I wasn't sure she—"

"Suppose I decamp," Mr. Spenlove said, looking at his watch. "I can catch the nine o'clock, all right."

"No! You wait!" Elliot Ducroy said. "You're drivin' back with me. We won't be more'n an hour. Eh?" he said to Irvill.

"Less'n an hour," said Irvill. "It's important money, if we can swing it."

"You wait here, an' talk to Terry," said Ducroy.

Mr. Spenlove made a hasty mental note to the effect that his reputation for reliability was evidently well founded, and spreading.

"I hope you won't be bored," the girl said. She brought the coffee-pot over to refill his cup.

"On the contrary. . . . Were you talking to a Mrs. Saxpool?"

"You heard me? Yes, she called. She is—" She looked doubtfully at Mr. Spenlove, wondering how far she could assume a knowledge he might, quite conceivably, not possess at all. "Do you know her?"

"I know of her. I mean I know where she lives, for instance. Across the river from my place. She's a writer, too, I understand. I can't recall anything of hers—"

"She made a hundred and forty thousand last year," Terry said. "Counting motion-picture and radio rights."

"Hm! She must be talented. Is she a friend of yours? I rather thought, from your voice, you weren't enamored—"

"She's talented, all right!" Terry said grimly. She crossed her legs and drew down her short skirt. "Too talented in some ways."

"Irvill said it was important money they've gone for. Just what is important money?"

"Well, several thousand dollars. Irvill is trying to arrange a contract with a magazine for a collaboration serial, by Elliot Ducroy and Sydney Saxpool."

"Do you think it's a good idea?"

"No, I don't! I don't believe Mrs. Saxpool would even consider it, if she hadn't something else on her mind."

"What do you mean—something else on her mind?"

"I don't know if I ought to talk about it."

"Why not?"

"Well, you're a friend of Mr. Ducroy's, and maybe you'd feel—well—"

"I'm a friend of Mrs. Ducroy, even more," Mr. Spenlove said quietly. "I came to New York on business, and he asked me to ride in. But Mrs. Ducroy and Sonia—that's her daughter—are my friends, yes. Do you know her?"

Terry nodded.

"Sure I know her. I don't mean as a close friend. I know her, yes. She's very glamorous."

"She told me about Sydney Saxpool," Mr. Spenlove said. "I had never heard of the woman. Perhaps you haven't anything to reveal that would shock me," he added. "Or Mrs. Ducroy."

"I guess that's so," said Terry slowly. "Well, it only shows how queer men are."

"Some men."

"Yes, some men. Irvill's different. Irvill's very reliable. But I never try to influence him. He's absolutely free, s'far as I'm concerned. The mistake many women make is to try to boss a man around. But that isn't the only trouble. With Elliot, it's money. He was pretty well all right while he was only making around a couple of hundred a week. His first wife married again, and that let Elliot out s'far as alimony went. Now he's in the big money, he's changed. Do you know, I really believe there's some sort of magnetism in money. It's partly Sydney Saxpool's success that is causing this break-up. I don't mean he wants her money. Nothing of that sort. It's just the fact he feels she must understand him better than anyone else, because she makes so much money the same way he does. I don't seem to explain it very well," she ended lamely.

"You explain it admirably," Mr. Spenlove said. "It's a sort of cosmic gravity. The psychology of what you call important money used to be one of my hobbies when I was at sea. You're probably on the right track. Mrs. Ducroy seems to know what's going on."

"I thought it was pretty raw of Mrs. Saxpool to take a house so close to his. But she's that sort of woman. And after all—"

"How old a woman?"

"Oh, she's forty, I guess. I first met her when she was out on the Coast doing a continuity for a film company. I'd say she's forty now. She's got a boy in college. I don't know why men fall for her, hard, but they do."

"And now she's got our friend, apparently."

"It depends. He's like most successful writers. He's an idealist."

"It must be quite expensive, being an idealist."

"You can afford it, if you're successful. In a way, it's a sort of symbol of success. If you're poor, you just have to make out the best you can."

"I don't see the idealism unless he marries this Mrs. Saxpool."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that! *He* might, but she can keep her head."

"Well, all this is very surprising to me. What do you suppose will happen? You see, I live next door to them, as it were. I mean, my small place is tucked away in the hills behind the Ducroy place. Sonia, that's the kid, comes over to see me. She's thirteen or so. I'm fond of Sonia. Mrs. Ducroy drops in too. So does he, for that matter. Without having any designs on them, I've become a friend of the family. But I've never seen them together. I've even been to a cocktail party, a big one, at their house, and she was away. I thought that peculiar until I heard some of the guests discussing her rather freely."

Terry nodded.

"I know. She was in New York. Irvill told me. Irvill knows everything that's going on. She expected Sydney Saxpool to come to that party, and she knew Elliot wanted them to be friends. He didn't want any quarreling. She came to New York."

"Wanted them to be friends? That's a very extraordinary thing to say. Do you mean to tell me a man likes his wife to associate with the woman he is in love with?"

"He's an idealist, I told you."

"Suppose you explain what you mean by an idealist."

"Well, that's what he is: He feels he has an obligation to take care of her and the kid. Knowing what he does, he's afraid what might happen if— Of course, Irvill and I are on his side, but don't tell him anything I say, please. Her first husband's married twice since. To a Mexican dancer, now. I forget who it was the first time. Mrs. Ducroy didn't get a cent from him. He's English. Elliot paid for her divorce as well as his own."

Mr. Spenlove smiled.

"It strikes me you dislike her," he said.

Terry dimpled.

"I CAN see she's been on her very best behavior at your house," she said, "when she's with you. But aren't we all?"

"You mean to suggest everybody's under restraint in my stately presence?" Mr. Spenlove grumbled. He stood up and began to walk about the room, while Terry, after examining her highly organized fingernails, put her hands behind her blonde head and leaned back, watching him. "One of the first things I ever heard about Mrs. Ducroy," he said, "was a vague innuendo. One of my neighbors, a good sort of woman, in the antique business."

"A woman in the antique business wouldn't get much change out of Mrs. Ducroy," Terry agreed. "As a matter of fact, Elliot's wife gives another woman the impression she's thinking of something else all the time. That accounts for the innuendo, as you call it. It's hard to explain, though. It's as if she belonged to another world. I remember before Elliot married her, he gave her a cream-colored Duesenberg roadster, the sort the stars have. She used to leave it outside the Brown Derby and walk away after lunch and forget about it. I can't imagine a woman like that! She had no sense of property at all. That was part of her charm for Elliot. The girls on the Coast are not so subtle. They're fast, or they're thrifty, or greedy, or they get one of these freak Californian religions; but you can always figure them out. Elliot's wife was never one of the crowd. And she came East soon after they were married. Just got on the train and came East. Said the climate out there was so horrible she couldn't stand it. Said her kid needed a more bracing climate. Irvill did everything for her. Elliot began to make more money than ever before and *Gentleman Church* was everywhere. The money poured in. He got offers from advertisers. He made himself into a corporation—Gentleman Church Features, Incorporated. That was stopped after a while, by the Government."

"So he had to have a country estate?"

"Well, what else was he to do with the money? He bought a lot of stocks one year. You know what a good idea *that* was. So he got that place on the Sound and put a good many thousands of dollars into it. His idea, you see, was to make a setting for her, to give her a background. He thought maybe she'd been unhappy in Hollywood. He still owns a big property out in California, but they never lived in it. He thought, maybe it's all too new and crude for her, coming from England. So he bought that old place on the Sound and remodeled it, like all the other men were doing, and persuaded her to live in it."

"Well, she does live in it. What does he want? Why the Sydney Saxpool business?"

Terry clasped her hands around one knee and rocked herself gently. She said, slowly:

"You wouldn't say a thing like that if you'd been married."

"How do you know I haven't? What gives you the idea—"

Again Terry dimpled.

"Oh, that's obvious, Mr. Spenlove! Excuse me. . . . What does he want? With a man like Elliot, his demands are terrific! Most of all, he wants a woman to be absolutely absorbed in their partnership. Not in him personally. Of course, I don't explain it very well. It's like a soldier, you know and—his armor-bearer. I was an extra in a Roman picture once, a spectacle. The centurions had armor-bearers who followed them. When a man's in the thick of it, making lots and lots of money, and he has dozens of problems and contacts, he needs a woman who's with him, thinking of him, pulling for him, for both of them. You understand?"

"Not entirely. Perhaps she doesn't want a lot of money."

"Every woman wants a lot of money," Terry said casually. "If she says she doesn't, she's a liar."

"You really believe that?"

"I don't simply believe it; I know it."

"Mrs. Ducroy is the exception, then?"

"She doesn't take any *interest* in what he's doing! See what I mean? He hasn't ever had her pulling for him in her mind, thinking for the two of them while he makes the money. . . . If a woman isn't *absorbed* in her husband's life, she isn't married at all, really. Why, Elliot was marvelous to her when they met in Hollywood. She was practically starving! She was trying to get taken on as as extra, but having no luck. Elliot saw her one day, with the kid, in the casting office, and fell for her. So they got married. She came East soon after, by herself. Said she couldn't stand it there any more. She lived here in the Village. Elliot stayed in Hollywood awhile, working, and that's when he met Sydney Saxpool. I don't like her, but I guess she's a better influence on Elliot than his wife. Why, that Mrs. Ducroy—but maybe you wouldn't believe me."

"How do you know I wouldn't believe you?" he said.

"You'll find it pretty hard," she said in a gentle voice.

He waited. He knew that much anyhow, that if he waited, she would tell him, and having to make the move herself, would tell it more truly. If he pretended it didn't matter to him, it would be more dependable.

"Yes," she said at last. "Of course, this is in confidence. You ought to be able to see Elliot's side of it, too. And I'm sure I never had any desire to see her the way she was. I wouldn't wish my worst enemy—"

"You are telling me she has been the worse for drink?" he said.

"The worse for—" She looked at him. "You think we—Irvill and I—make a fuss over anybody just getting tight? *Worse for drink* doesn't describe it. It's been worse than that, with her."

"It's so incredible. I can't possibly believe you made it up," Mr. Spenlove muttered. "I've had vague premonitions. Well, now I know! Now I know!"

"Most people know," said Terry in a low tone.

She heard the man beside her say something to himself.

"What?" she said.

Before he could answer, the doorbell buzzed and she rose at once.

"There they are," she said. "Of course—" She stooped to bring her face close to his, her finger on her lips, "Irvill wouldn't like it if he knew I'd said anything."

He did not reply save by a nod. The two men found him lighting a fresh cigar.

Chapter Six

MR. SPENLOVE, in his shirt-sleeves, his large hairy forearms on the pine table, read the latest entry in his scrap-log. In his hands, their backs tanned with sun and dark with hair even on the powerful fingers, the wooden penholder and the bowl of his pipe seemed out of scale.

What he had written seemed out of scale too, he re-

flected. It was a report of what he had heard in New York. He had added these words:

The personal equation cannot be solved by reference to third parties. Listening to that girl Terry, in New York, was a mistake. No one is ever what words make them out to be. Never as vile, or as good. Everybody bears false witness.

He was waiting for Perdita in a mood that was neither complacent nor gloomy. The sound of her voice on the telephone—*"Can you endure me alone?"*—was still echoing in his ears. *"I've something to tell you!"*

He walked up and down. *"What I want,"* he told himself, *"is still solitude, with her coming here for an hour! There's only that shadow, the shadow of what that girl told me. It might be pathological. And it might be exaggerated by that girl. Evidently she doesn't expect me ever to check what she said. She was gratifying some obscure feminine urge."*

He went in and got ready to go to dinner. Perdita had not come at once, after all. To be consistent and the austere disciplinarian he enjoyed imagining himself, he should have it out with her when she came, and announce his decision as a commander of their friendship. He must be allowed to issue orders. She must obey orders. And so on.

But he found this idea preposterous the moment it appeared. It conflicted with the shadowy but splendid conception he had formed of the woman and their possible relationship. He had no desire to have her chained up in the yard, as it were, or to assume responsibility for her eternal welfare.

He did not believe Perdita, after her experience of marriage, with Pargett and Ducroy, wanted any more of it with anybody else. He didn't know what she wanted. That was one of the things he intended, since talking to Terry, to discover.

The thought of Perdita coming into his life drugged him somewhat. He sat in his porch in the deepening twilight, reflecting upon his good luck. Never having made the extravagant demands upon life so fashionable among the younger generation, he thought some credit was due to his philosophy of intelligent individualism. He was unable to discern any part of his life pattern which had injured a single human soul. He believed in what the older economists called "the rewards of abstinence." He believed that a life of strict regard for duty and integrity, for loyalty to his principles of conduct, entitled him to create his own private world.

But he was finding this was none too easy, now that he was away from the familiar landmarks. If he had, for instance, imagined himself being entangled with a woman, he would never have foreseen a girl like Perdita. He wasn't even entangled, in the vulgar sense. She made no demands on him at all. She was pure delight. He had been saying so, ever since she came with Sonia, to see him. When she had shown him that extraordinary scene through his binoculars, her husband in the arms of Sydney Saxpool, she had said she trusted him absolutely; but she had not demanded his help. She wasn't that sort at all!

What sort was she, in the light of this story the girl in New York had told him? He had to find out her side of it. She could not retain any respect for him if he was afraid to ask.

IT was almost dark. She had not come. It was past his dinner-time. He got up, went to the telephone and called Elliot Ducroy's house.

He heard a slow vague voice, which he suspected belonged to Louis, the sad houseman. No, said Louis, Meesiz Ducroy wasn't home yet.

Was she expected? Mr. Spenlove inquired. There was no answer. Louis probably hadn't got that.

"Well, she said she would call, and she hasn't, so—"

As he put down the receiver, the room was suddenly flooded with the high-power glare of headlights coming up the drive. The shadows of everything in the room, silhouetted against the back wall, grew furiously and agitatedly smaller and sharper. There was a slight crash as a fender struck the stone well-curb, and the car stopped with the lights still on.

He stepped down into the yard, shading his eyes with one hand. He said gently: "Put out the lights!"

There was no answer. He stepped around and looked in behind the windshield.

She was sitting with her shoulders pressed against the upholstery, her arms rigid and her hands clenched on either side of the big steering-wheel. As he leaned over the leather-cushioned coating of the door, she smiled, and leaning forward, cut the ignition and the lights.

"What are you trying to do?" he said. He laid his hand on hers and opened the door. "What's the matter with you?"

Her head fell back against his shoulder, and her eyes closed. He put his arm around her shoulders and drew her to him. Then he became aware.

"So?" he muttered, and looked at her closely. Her head fell against his breast. *"Well, here it is!"* he thought. He took her left hand from the wheel and lifted her, with a backward movement, out of the car. He got the screen door open with his knee, carried her into the porch, and laid her down on the long swing seat. He fetched a cushion from a stool in the front room and put it under her head. Then he went to the telephone.

"Mr. Spenlove speaking. Mrs. Ducroy is here now. She's just arrived."

There was no answer.

"You understand? Is Mr. Ducroy at home? Mrs. Ducroy is not very—"

"Meesta Ducroy, 'e's eatin' out."

"All right. Mrs. Ducroy's eating out too. Get that?"

HE stood at the door leading to the porch, trying to decide what to do. This stupor would pass, he supposed. He went over and looked closely at the face he now knew so well, and which he thought so marvelous when alive. It was dead now, he said to himself, frowning.

It was night, and he had not eaten. He could not go away and leave her. Well, he could, if he were the ironic, completely emancipated intellectual man he often imagined himself. Faced with the problem, he found he could not. She had a hold on him. She made demands. He had to make up his mind, not merely for this adventure but for the future, whether she could depend on him to take care of her, no matter what she did.

Ducroy, of course, was in theory the man who ought to be in command. In theory! Mr. Ducroy, according to the laconic major-domo Louis, was "eatin' out." That meant he was probably either across the water at Sydney Saxpool's place or with Sydney Saxpool at some roadhouse. She had a telephone. How would it affect the *mores* of this region if he called Ducroy there, and told him to come and take his wife home?

He went into the kitchen, made some strong coffee, then carried the tray with the coffee-pot carefully onto the front porch. As his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he saw that the swing seat was empty. She was not there.

He looked to see if the car had moved. It was untouched. He hurried out to it, thinking she had made a sudden decision. He saw then a light upstairs, in the bathroom. He returned to the porch and resumed his cigar, waiting for her to come down. He was about to pour himself some coffee when the telephone rang.

"Hello! Spenlove? Mr. Ducroy speaking. Louis says my wife didn't come home to dinner. Says you called him."

"I told him she was here."

"Is she all right? Louis doesn't talk very plainly on the phone."

"She's all right," Mr. Spenlove said in a low tone.

"Okay. I guess I'll be late back."

"Don't worry," Mr. Spenlove said.

"Thanks a lot. I appreciate it. Can't explain now."

Mr. Spenlove set the telephone down on its pine shelf and stood at the foot of the stair. What did that conversation mean, unless it was a quittance?

He stood at the foot of the stair, waiting. Then he decided to go up and call her.

There was a crack of light under the door. He knocked.

"All right?"

He heard a splash as she said:

"I'm perfectly all right now. I'll be down in a minute."

"I've made some coffee."

"Splendid! I'll come."

"Want a bathrobe? I'll leave one outside the door. And an extra towel."

"You think of everything, my dear! What time is it?"

"Half-past nine. Had any dinner?"

"No."

As he went down, he decided to say nothing at all. The one thing a woman in such a situation would never forgive was stupidity. To know, yet never allude to it; to support and strive with her; to make her feel he would never let her down, no matter what she did—that would be his policy.

She came down carrying her shoes in her hand, his bathrobe over her slip and stockings, and stood before him, dark shadows under her eyes, her lips pale yet smiling, her glance without fear or challenge.

"All right now." She sat with her hands folded, her body inclined a little toward him, as he poured two cups of coffee.

"It's still hot. I didn't know how long you'd be. Bath all right?"

"Yes. I had a soak. Best thing for a soak is another soak." She did not laugh; merely shrugged and with a faint shudder accepted the coffee. Then, as she stirred it, she looked up at him.

"The telephone. I heard you.... Was it—"

He nodded.

"H'm."

She went on stirring abstractedly.

"Everything's all right," he said, "except that you must be hungry."

She shook her head.

"I wish you were right," she said. "But that's the least of my troubles."

"Well?"

"I can't go back there. I can't go to that house again."

Her voice was steady, dry and full of pluck.

"What'll you do?"

She shrugged, and then seemed to remember something.

"Not going back!" she said. She sat with her chin on her hand. "We had a row," she said in a low tone. "He took a new line, and I couldn't stick it. I said I was leaving definitely, and told him why. He said I couldn't keep myself. He made comparisons."

She pressed her hands between her knees and looked down at them.

"Do advise me! I lost my temper. I was furious. He's so simple in some ways! He honestly is mad about that woman. She's hypnotized him, I think. So I can't go back. I thought it was a temporary affinity. Writers have them like measles. This is serious. She's *absorbing* him! What must you think of me? After a frightful row, I drove into Norbury and had a lot at the Inn. I was so excited it did me down. Did I faint? I don't remember driving back!"

"I'd advise you to have some dinner. I've only cold stuff here. You hit the fender, you know. Have a look."

"All right. Tell me what to do, and I'll do it," she said in a low tone. She rose obediently to go out to the car, and he caught her strongly in his arms.

"Yes!" she said, desperately holding to him. They stood for some seconds silent, molded together in the half-darkness of the porch.

He held her a moment longer, the formidable barricades he had built up through the years between himself and the world crumbling away.

AT length she went to the stairs and stood there for an instant, looking around the severe little room. "I'll get dressed," she said, "and we'll go and have dinner." She ascended, holding up the bathrobe like a skirt, to avoid stepping on it.

He heard her moving about upstairs. The sound filled him with vague pride and satisfaction. All the same, what was she to do now? Tomorrow was another day. What was she to do?

He heard her coming down, heard the *clip-clop* of her high-heeled pumps on the stairs. He put on his coat and took a couple of cigars from the box. His first impulse, to ask her again what she was going to do, he saw at once to be clumsy and crude.

They went out to the car. She took his arm with a gesture he already knew and loved. As he opened the door, she said in a low tone, as though someone might overhear her:

"I say, I do wish you would drive! You can take the wheel when we are out on the turnpike."

"All right," he said. "Where do we go for dinner?"

"Do you remember the first time we had dinner together? That's where I'd like to go tonight."

She clutched his hand tightly as they sat together in the darkness. There was a touch of excitement in her voice that made it hoarse and mysterious to him. She leaned close to him, urging him.

"I do so want you to drive!" she said huskily. "It means a lot to me; really it does. You will, won't you? Not much traffic now."

"You mean, on the way back?" he said.

"Yes," she said. "That means a lot too." She held to his arm as though for safety. "I'll know, my dear, where I am then. I made up my mind just now, in the house. Your house."

"You will come back?" he said. She sat looking straight ahead in the darkness for a moment.

"Yes," she said. "That's what I want."

Chapter Seven

ELLIOT DUCROY was being interviewed for a motion-picture magazine soon after his arrival in Hollywood, when he had what he called a flash. Louis had just served the interviewer an old-fashioned. She was a bit old-fashioned herself, he observed, a queer, tiny, nervous, black-eyed creature who lay back, almost invisible, in a big chair and smoked furiously through a long white cigarette-holder.

"Mr. Ducroy, you must have *some* faith!" she protested. He had waved away Numerology, Yoga, Astrology, and other cults. When she had learned the day and hour of his birth and consulted a battered little book in her bag, she said his success was obviously due to the stars.

"Your Jupiter is in Taurus now, so it's in conjunction," she told him gravely. She was obviously sincere. He said nothing to spoil it.

"I'm a writer too," she went on rapidly. "I wish you'd run through a manuscript of mine. Would you help poor little me?"

"A script?" he said.

"No, a novel," she said. His heart sank. He had heard of men who were brutal to this sort of interviewer; he envied them. "It's about a star who's lost her mascot and can't act until she has found it. It had been stolen, you see. She has all these adventures searching for the thief."

"Is the thief another star?"

"How did you know?" she wailed.

"Well, it might have been a jealous dresser, or a crazy doorman."

"But how did you *know?*" she insisted. She looked imploring.

"I'm a seventh son of a seventh son," he told her.

It was then she said he must have *some* faith, and he had the flash.

"I've got a mascot," he said. "Only, the mascot doesn't know he's a mascot. If he did, it would break the spell."

"Who?" she said breathlessly, leaning forward. Her black, damson-like eyes were very bright.

"My houseman," he said, "the one who brought the drink. It was when I found him, that I began to sell good. Yes, I guess Louis is my mascot, all right."

It wasn't a bad article in *Screen Shadows*.

It wasn't such a crazy idea after all, either, when he came to think about it. A year earlier, after eighteen months of free-lance work on short stories for the slicks (with a featured serial in a pulp) he had felt so stale and washed up he decided on a trip abroad. He had not had a vacation since the Great War. His wife, Myra, had gone back to Ohio, where the hundred and fifty a month he gave her went three times as far as in New York, and where she was thirteen times happier. He himself had been living frugally in a two-room apartment on West Fiftieth Street. He had several thousand dollars in the bank, and editors were beginning to ask for more underworld stuff.

When the interviewer for *Screen Shadows* inquired where he had obtained his knowledge of the underworld, he had told her:

"The same way H. G. Wells got to know about Mars, and Rudyard Kipling learned about the jungle."

It was a fact: his specializing in gang wars and crime had been largely accident. The stories had caught on. It was because he had done a series of six stories about a character named *Gentleman Church* and had sold the first

serial rights for three thousand, that he decided to travel. No *Normandie* stuff for him, of course. He took a round-trip ticket on a Red Star cabin liner to Paris and London. Coming home on the old *Gothland,* he had met Louis, his dining-room waiter.

Something in the saturnine sallow features, seen foreshortened above his own shoulder, as well as the stealthy precision and silent speed of the man's work, attracted him. Louis was without conventional charm as an attendant. He was taciturn because of his limited English. He preferred freighters to liners, and had been a sailor as well as a mess-man, for he liked the sea. He had gone to sea in the first place because wages as a cook in a restaurant had not been very large. There were, moreover, no tips.

Elliot Ducroy, slipping him a ten-dollar bill, asked him if he would be open to take a job as a butler. Would he buttle for twenty-five dollars a week and all found? He gave Louis a card with a telephone number penciled on the corner. Louis said yes.

When Elliot Ducroy returned from this voyage, the *Gentleman Church* boom had begun. He had a number of stories, already written or drafted, which he remodeled to fit the series. The saturnine features of Louis he used for the leading character.

Louis was unaware of this conception of him. He did not know—and it was irrelevant to a man like Louis—that he was the "original" of *Gentleman Church,* whose sardonic and deeply lined features were becoming as famous as *Sherlock Holmes* or *Mutt* and *Jeff.*

There had been a time, after the rate for one of his stories had been raised to a thousand dollars, during which Elliot Ducroy had played with the country gentleman fantasy. He had the idea of importing an English butler. He realized he was much more comfortable with Louis. An English butler would have kept him in his place as a vulgar rich American. Louis was apparently unaware of either social or financial distinctions. He was silently, mysteriously efficient, and continuously sad and taciturn. He neither saw nor heard anything, so far as a stranger could discern. He was like some harassed poor relation moving around in his black alpaca or white linen coat.

OUT on the Coast Louis refused to leave Elliot Ducroy. Attempts were made to lure him to the palaces of the minor movie moguls, who were always having trouble with their help. Louis remained with Elliot Ducroy. He preferred the known to the unknown, and he had no woman interfering with his arrangements.

He hoped there would never be another Mrs. Ducroy. His professional feelings were exacerbated by the amateurish clumsiness which women revealed in domestic matters. They were all right, tolerable in an imperfect world, as subordinates; but in command of an establishment, compared with the chief stewards who had taught him his business, the chefs who had shown him how to cook, they were incompetent nuisances.

He was perfectly happy looking after the bachelor quarters Elliot Ducroy had rented, a bungalow halfway up a precipitous cañon road. It was built in the lavish theatrical California style, on stilts on the slope. The veranda faced the sea and gave the observer the feeling that he was looking down from an airship. There was a garden at the back; and Louis, who suffered from vertigo, kept his eyes on his work if he had to go into the veranda. His own quarters were cut out of the rock, like the garage.

Elliot Ducroy was entirely businesslike in his attitude toward his employers in the motion-picture industry. "Why, sure!" he said to another newspaper man who was collaborating in a story. "I suppose when I've made a bit, I'll blast Hollywood like all the rest of them. Just now, I'm singin' for my supper."

He continued to sing, and Louis kept his bungalow, stuck like an eagle's nest on the steep mountain-side, in good shape. And then the whole quiet tenor of their monastic lives was shattered by Elliot Ducroy's meeting Perdita Pargett, who had been sitting in the waiting-room of the casting director as Ducroy came rushing in, his hands full of papers and photographs, for a conference.

Perhaps the deciding factor had not been Perdita so much as Sonia. Sonia had been what she called "little" then. She had been sitting on the rug at her mother's feet, her page-boy bob resting against Perdita's knee. She had been gazing thoughtfully into space, unaware of the people swishing and rustling around her. Elliot Ducroy had stopped in his tracks to look at her. And for a moment, before he turned the doorknob and passed in, he looked at Perdita.

The costume director, a thin, intelligent woman in rimless pince-nez, was showing some designs. "Who is she?" he asked her; she looked at the names on a pad on the desk of the casting director.

"Nothing," she said. "An extra. She comes here—" She shrugged.

"What is she?"

"English. Starch. You'd be surprised. You'd think she was Ellen Terry or something. Just a not-so-good-extra—really nobody."

PERDITA PARGETT and little Sonia, sitting in a Pacific-Electric trolley, roaring along the boulevard to Santa Monica, where they lived in a tiny bungalow made of what Perdita called "pink mud," were unaware of being followed. At that time Elliot Ducroy owned an imported convertible which could out-distance any Pacific-Electric street train, and he was skimming along just behind them, on a romantic quest.

It was romantic because the time he had spent in Hollywood had conditioned Elliot Ducroy to the standardized loveliness of the women. Glancing around him in the Brown Derby at lunch-time, they all seemed turned out of the same factory, as if there were in America huge plants with transmission belts, off which beautiful models, lacquered and enameled and chrome-plated, came under their own power and were shipped to Hollywood.

Perdita, with Sonia at her feet, had flashed on his brain as something entirely and brilliantly different. It was because she was so different, so completely unsuitable to the screen, that he was attracted, enthralled. His imagination had been captured by the posing of the mother and child, which had been unstudied, unintentional.

When the big car drew up in front of the shabby pink bungalow and Elliot Ducroy pressed the bell, which did not ring, Sonia opened the door. Her smile gave him the lead he required.

She said: "Mummy, it's the man from the studio." And Perdita said, from the tiny kitchen:

"Tell him to go to hell, ducky."

She was able to explain, after he had refused to go. She liked him because he told her flatly she was not screen material at all. He had not come to give her a rôle.

"I know I can't act," she said as she sat studying him. He was exactly the lean-jawed American type she had heard of so often, and imagined to be the original "Vanishing American."

"You don't photograph," he said. Then he told her he came, not to make passes or to get her on a payroll,—"which would be helping you to get money by false pretenses,"—but to have the pleasure of her acquaintance.

"But what's the matter with me?" she inquired.

"You're a lady, not a screen actress," he said. "I suppose you're broke."

"I suppose you've done this so often you're an expert," she suggested.

He let her fight him, and counted on Sonia to pull him through. He was in a fury of emotion. He was inflated with an enormous vanity, for it was an accepted canon of the Hollywood creed of those days that Englishwomen were cold and proud and generally inaccessible. His erratic movements plunged Louis into a profound perplexity until the stage was reached when Perdita and Sonia came to dinner.

Perdita sat on the veranda, which seemed to be hanging in mid-air, and looked out over the cañon without speaking. At first Elliot Ducroy, who had been in the pantry with Louis, giving orders about drinks, imagined that she was stunned by the view. She was struggling with her own confused emotions. Her recent experience had been a severe strain on her. It had been a magnificent gesture, leaving her husband and taking Sonia with her; but it was a gesture which impressed Mr. Pargett as merely unwise for her, and a wonderful bit of luck for himself. And it had depended, far more than Perdita had imagined, on money from home—which had apparently failed to arrive.

It had arrived; but her husband had found it extremely handy. Well, there was no use going over all that again. What occupied her mind now, as she sat in that high place looking down the cañon at the queer black derricks beyond the house roofs in the valley, was the nature of the fortune

that had befallen her. Elliot Ducroy had left her in no doubt, even at the end of their first meeting, that he wanted her—wanted her to get a divorce and marry him. And Sonia, who was at that moment in the kitchen with Louis, liked him.

That, as she sat there, was uppermost in her mind, not the scenery. Oh, no, not the scenery! She had never told anyone yet, and perhaps it was colored by the discovery, out there, that Archie Pargett was an outsider in spite of his swank and polish; but to her, California was not beautiful at all. It was nightmarish and touched with madness even in the daytime. Now that she was so far away from the English countryside, it seemed marvelous. She kept her mind sealed from the sights and sounds of Hollywood, her senses immobilized, waiting for deliverance.

So she meditated, oblivious of the view, oblivious even of the silent Louis at her elbow offering perfectly cooked food, and eventually she capitulated. Yes, and again for Sonia's sake, yes!

Louis enjoyed having Sonia around. He moved about his work with added alertness and good humor at such times. She was English, which for men of his race bore a special connotation. She told him things she withheld from the rest of the world. She sat on a stool in the pantry, where Louis did most of his work on his feet, a habit he had contracted at sea.

Sometimes his austere sallow features underwent a peculiar convulsion when she made one of her naïve remarks. As when she said, munching a cookie he had made for her: "I'm glad Mummy's goin' to marry Elliot, 'cause you're my best friend."

She grew out of those confessions, but the friendship between them grew stronger. When the inevitable readjustments took place between Elliot and Perdita, Louis and Sonia became even closer friends. When her mother took a small apartment downtown, coming to the bungalow once or twice a week, Sonia explained to Louis that, "Elliot needs absolute quiet for his work."

This was the situation a year after the marriage. Perdita had a tendency to ignore the social life of the picture community. It was difficult for her to appreciate the importance and prestige of people whom Ducroy called, in private, the moguls. She did not read the studio gossip, and formed no friendships with the artists. She was even unimpressed when other script-writers and famous novelists and playwrights came to the bungalow on Sundays.

"I don't care for myself so much," Elliot Ducroy pointed out to her! "It's for you. I'm thinking about you. You miss a lot. These people are the top of the heap. They are cultured people. They've got a very cultured community out here. Why don't you like them?"

"I just don't," she said.

IT was here that Irvill began to hover on the edge of the scene in which Elliot and his wife were playing the leads. Sonia, in Irvill's opinion, was an ideal juvenile, while Louis was comic relief. Irvill saw everything in real life as a scene, a situation, or a setting. He took a simple pleasure in directing the pictures he saw thus. He had an ambition to be more than an agent.

There was a childlike simplicity of intellect in Irvill which aroused in Perdita a subtle antagonism. Irvill had a "perfessor," as he called him, to coach him in English, to give him lessons in history and geography. Did Mrs. Ducroy know that New York used to be called New Amsterdam? Irvill no longer said *Joisey* for *Jersey* or *hunnerd* for *hundred*. He was sure Mrs. Ducroy would enjoy getting posted.

The odd thing about their acquaintance, for it was impossible to call it a friendship, was that it never degenerated into dislike. It was rather a gentle clashing of traditions. It was impossible to convince Perdita that her ignorance of a fact had any significance at all. Subconsciously she was aware that facts were relevant to the soul.

"I don't care what it used to be called," she said. "All I know is, I'd rather be in New York than here."

Elliot Ducroy turned from the view down the canon. He had been struggling with a sequence.

"You can go to New York if you want," he said patiently. "It's all right. I mean it," he added. "You go."

What was it she really wanted? He would ask himself this, in a pause in the frenzied life in the studios.

All his values were completely ignored by a woman who, in his view, owed everything to him. He himself was aware of the rootless and ephemeral nature of the California scene. He knew that the morality, the religions, the culture and the intellectual achievements of the people around him were somehow different from the East. But why should that prevent a man and his wife getting along together when he was making five hundred dollars a week?

SUCH moments were rare. He was too absorbed in his work to be overcritical. When Perdita suddenly went East by train, taking Sonia with her, he made all arrangements, and resumed the hard-working bachelor life she had interrupted. Within a month of Perdita's departure with Sonia to New York, he had signed a new contract for a year at seven hundred dollars a week.

Louis received picture postcards from Sonia, and once a week Ducroy used the transcontinental telephone to talk to Perdita for five minutes. He told her what he was doing, what people he was going around with, now she was no longer there to disapprove, and asked after Sonia—"Louis wants to know how Sonia's making out." And then he asked her if she were happier in New York.

She always said yes, she was happier, and he invariably replied: "That's swell!" But the words, as so often happens with those whose coinage and capital consists of words, were inadequate. He himself as he would replace the receiver and made a note in his record-book, knew that there was something missing from their relationship. He could detect in his feelings, under the pride of ownership and his own success in the world, under the surface pleasure of hearing her lovely voice across the continent, a canker of unhappiness.

He had married twice; and so far, happiness had eluded him. Well, would he recognize happiness if it did come, he wondered. What was the matter with him and Perdita? Why could she not settle down with him?

Irvill, who had been in New York, supplied him with a hint of what line Perdita was taking, and it had surprised him. Perdita in Greenwich Village, with poets and painters! "She's on her own now," Irvill said, smilingly. "She's got the stage to herself—see? You're Mr. Big here, if you know what I mean. Now she's got something, as you might say, exclusively. *Décor!*"

"She isn't running around with anybody, is she?" Ducroy asked. Irvill was definite. He made a downward gesture.

"No. What do you think? She's an aristocrat." Irvill emphasized the second syllable. He used the word in a special, personal sense. There were several classifications for human beings in Irvill's private world, and the word *aristocrat* did not necessarily include some of the titled husbands of stars he had met.

Why was it, Elliot Ducroy wondered, that he could never impress Perdita with his importance, with his success in a specialized branch of art? Why was everything he did apparently of no *importance* to her? Why was he mortified because she ignored or neglected the material luxuries his success enabled him to give her?

Even more perplexing was the failure of the other women he met in Hollywood to perceive the qualities he saw in her. Men were aware of her, but not in the sense that they were aware of their own kind of women. They were, to put it in simple phrase, scared of her. Or they appreciated her glamour while not liking her. Only Irvill was articulate enough to define the emotions she inspired, and Elliot Ducroy suspected most of Irvill's definitions came from Terry, the young woman with a good level head and a good extra-girl's body. Irvill and Terry were devoted to each other. Terry was the sort of girl, in Ducroy's opinion, a man ought to have if he could clear his head of illusions and delusions. She was the ultimate useful mate for a worker.

But Elliot Ducroy knew that he himself would never be able to jog along the way Irvill did. Some devil inside him made him hanker after the unattainable. He wanted someone of his own stature, he supposed, someone who could grasp his ambitions, enter into his only half-formulated plans for the future, and share his confidences.

It was perplexing to him, with his Midwest traditions, that Perdita should ignore material and artistic triumphs. What did she want? What the hell did she want?

How would it be, he reflected, how would it be if he cut Hollywood and came East, hook, line and sinker? How about a place in the country? A country estate—not in Long Island, but Connecticut—and live together again, satisfactorily? He would bring Louis with him, of course. Old Louis, his mascot.

The idea attracted him. Life on the Coast, in the shadow of the enormous fortunes of stars and moguls, even if he had a pretty big salary for a writer, was extraordinarily uninspiring. An author wasn't much here. He liked the idea more and more, to go East while he was still good, to settle where he would be somebody, maybe have a nag and a boat. He had, he now realized, the money to do it. But he could spend a half-million dollars out in Beverly Hills and it would hardly rate a quarter-column in *Script*.

THESE were his thoughts when Irvill returned on the airliner from New York, a few weeks before the end of his second contract. What Irvill had to say was in his own special jargon, but it was obvious that he had something unusual on his mind.

"Chief, I think you ought to go back to your wife," he said to Elliot in his office.

"Go back to my wife! I like that. That's an understatement, Irvill."

"I mean, she's running around with a bunch as crazy as bedbugs," said Irvill.

"I'd have to learn the exterminator business from the ground up. All right! All right! I'll go. Is it serious?"

"There's still a lot of not-so-good hard liquor in New York," Irvill said glumly.

"She used not to drink—not much."

Irvill made no immediate reply. He could be diplomatic. Terry's wise aphorisms were not lost on Irvill. He said, after a long pause to light a fresh cigarette:

"It's a sort of nervous relief."

He made a gesture of raising a glass and downing a drink. His round black East-European eyes were wide open, as he looked at the man with one leg over the arm of the office chair.

"I'll go. I intended to quit, and I will, too. So long's she's not leaving me. She wouldn't do that now." He mused. "Would she?" he said to himself.

"Oh, sure not!" Irvill knew Elliot Ducroy never meddled with women at that time, and he had Terry's word that Perdita wasn't anybody's pick-up. He'd take Terry's word for that.

"I'd like to see the kid again," Ducroy said. He saw, in his mind's eye, a file of paid bills for board at the special farm, where Miss Sonia Pargett was living; and the other file of very short, very strenuously written letters to *"Dear Dadda,"* which they made Sonia write him. Dadda! When she had always called him Elliot!

He went away from Irvill's office, which was cunningly situated in downtown Los Angeles, and drove meditatively toward home. In the back of his mind lay a resolve to leave the screen stuff to Irvill, to live in the country near New York, and buy a new car. The one he had now he would turn in, and have the new one delivered in New York.

The new Virago catalogue had caught his eye one morning. The Virago was a six-liter English machine with a top speed, guaranteed silent, of ninety miles. What would a Virago do to Perdita? And a speedboat. . . . He had a vision of a house with a covered dock where a speedboat could be housed. He saw himself going down through his grounds to the dock, starting all twelve cylinders with a roar, hurtling out across Long Island Sound. Speedboating had, for him, in prospect, all the thrill of motoring without any traffic trouble. It would do him good to take a spin in a speedboat. Perdita would like it, he thought.

He wanted her. He was in that mood (unusual for him) in which he was conscious of monetary success. In its way, only half emerging, what he felt was the same desire of the successful British soldier, statesman, or merchant to buy an estate in the country, an old manor house, and set up an establishment with a modish, aristocratic wife from a good family. He had seen such places in England, with a row of cottages down beyond the paddock, which went with the place. It must make a man feel feudal to own a place like that. In California, it was different. The moguls made anything under a thousand acres and twenty bedrooms sound suburban. The atmosphere was not right for it.

In the East it would be different. He saw that the change from England to Los Angeles County must have been difficult for Perdita. What could he have been thinking about, to expect her to settle down in California? He would go back and be a devoted parent and husband. Sonia was a swell kid! He wanted to see her again.

He had to drill himself into thinking that now, with his accumulated savings from his years of slaving in the movies as a sort of abnormally well-paid hired hand, doing the rough work around the place for the moguls, he could be somebody and live, not a life of ease, but of comfort and security in the country, doing the work he preferred.

But he wanted Perdita. He wanted her as a mirror, a magic mirror in which to see his own success.

Back in his lofty perch on the cañon edge, he smiled. He went to his desk and saw a telephone message in the vague, sprawling hand of Louis—

Mr. Ducroy, call Mr. Cavoura—before six.

"Okay, old son," he said to himself, and went over to the telephone.

Josef Cavoura was a frustrated genius; in Elliot Ducroy's opinion, he was frustrated because he directed commercial co-features, instead of designing huge symphonic treatments of mighty classics which would probably cost three times as much as "The Miracle." Cavoura's villa was an immense stucco edifice which resembled a Gothic dragon's castle from the outside and within seemed as vast as the Grand Central waiting-room.

It was probably a party. Cavoura was an abstainer, but he had good liquor and gave enjoyable parties. Elliot Ducroy listened: "To meet—to meet—a new writer. She want—she want—to meet—writer—of *Shentleman Shurch.*"

"Whassa name?" Ducroy inquired.

Here was an *impasse.* He could not make out what Cavoura was saying. He sometimes fancied high-salaried foreigners talked like illiterate immigrants out of vanity.

"Well, all right. I'll come. Delighted."

He had a shower, and changed into fresh clothes. What was going to happen to him, he wondered, when he arrived and carried out his plan to live with Perdita in the country? He did not know which he dreaded more, her refusal, or her indifference. He frowned as he thought of this, biting his lower lip, becoming uncertain as to the real reason for his anxiety.

She would like that Virago at any rate!

Chapter Eight

APPROACHING the medieval chateau occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Cavoura and a dozen servants, he put away his dreams—for they were nothing more, and came from that part of his mind which was useless to him in his business—and drove his car to the end of a line of vehicles. A white-coated Japanese revealed a complete set of large and perfect teeth and ushered him into an oak-paneled great hall with a fine stone fireplace. Here the company was assembled; and Mrs. Cavoura, a quiet little lady who had never had any connection with motion-pictures, had never been on the stage, and who was supposed to go to church for fun, gave him her hand and immediately left him to amuse himself.

Elliot Ducroy had developed a system adapted to these gatherings where the great, the almost-great and the would-be-great were mixed with nobodies and nonentities. He cultivated the affable manner of a floorwalker and remained quietly outside the various groups until he found some one he knew. This time he went toward the broad figure of Cavoura himself, who sat on a lounge in an alcove with a dark girl. Cavoura had his hand on her arm as he leaned toward her, telling her something that made her laugh diplomatically.

When he saw Elliot Ducroy, he held up his left hand, still holding the girl's arm with the other. He struggled to his feet.

"I introduce—" he said, *"Shentleman Shurch,* Sydney Saxpool."

He smiled at the girl, who sprang up and stood close to Elliot Ducroy.

"Oh!" she said, taking both his hands and thrusting her face toward his. "Are you really the creator of *Gentleman Church?* I must kiss you!"

Mr. Cavoura smiled even more broadly.

"And Mees Saxpool—she write stories."

Cavoura was not acquainted with the full extent of the girl's fame in the magazines.

"When Mr. Cavoura said he knew you, actually knew you, I made him ask you to come."

"You are Sydney Saxpool?" Elliot Ducroy saw Cavoura, smiling broadly and without malice, lumber away to the bar. He sat down.

Her hair was a solid dark bob which seemed to have been cut away in front so that she could look out. Her skin was white, almost translucent, against a costly and simple black dress. A necklace of small red coral beads had an extraordinarily seductive effect. Her bosom was deep and full, and her eyes were dark and bright and searching. She looked at him with frank admiration and critical approval. There was a curious blend of business acumen and female acquisitiveness in Sydney Saxpool.

Elliot Ducroy knew her by reputation. He knew she was one of the spectacular successes of the last two years, not only in serials but in short fiction. Now at last she was in Hollywood, and the first thing she wanted was to meet the famous author of the famous *Gentleman Church* stories.

"Just as I'm leaving," he said. "Don't pass it around, but I'm through. I mean I'm through here."

"Oh, don't go away just as I'm needing someone to tell me what it's all about!" she said. He had got her a drink and was now getting one for himself.

"You'll find it all out for yourself," he said. "The great thing is, don't worry. Let them do that. Take it easy."

SHE thought this over. As he looked at her, he had confused thoughts. She had kissed him when she heard who he was. She was confident and admiring. She gazed at him with the familiarity arising from their exactly similar backgrounds and professional achievements. Yet it was something more. She was not only a conspicuously successful woman writer, with such a phenomenal output that her serials seemed to follow one another without a break, but she was a desiring and a desirable woman.

He tried, as he gave himself up to the intimacy of their conversation, to recall what he had heard of her private life. He knew she had been married and divorced several times, and that was all. It did not matter. He saw she was completely interested, and he was aware of an upsurge of emotions that had been dormant for a long time.

When he asked her if she wanted another drink, she shook her head.

"No," she said. "I have had two. Two more than I usually have. I don't drink."

"Me too. I'm celebrating."

"Celebrating what?"

"Meeting you. Will you have dinner with me tonight?"

"I can't tonight. I've got an engagement."

"All right. What do you suggest?"

"Call for me." She took a card out of her pocketbook and showed him the address. "I'll say I'm expecting you. We can have dinner tomorrow."

He copied down the address.

"I'll be there at ten," he said.

"Do you really want to? It's a long way out of town, Mrs. Cavoura says."

"Yes, I want to."

"What shall we do?"

"That's telling."

"All right. Show me your etchings if you want." She made a mouth at him, and her smile was provocative. It was the smile, not of an odalisque, but of an independent woman in full vigor of mind and body.

"It's an amusement," he told himself, as he drove to the Club for dinner with Irvill. "She's marvelous, too."

Irvill nodded when he heard Ducroy had met the new arrival. He knew all about Sydney Saxpool coming to Hollywood. She had no agent, he said.

"No agent? She'll have to have an agent," said Ducroy with vehemence.

"Sure," said Irvill, "but who'll tell her? She thinks she knows it all. Thinks she's going to save agents' commission. Thinks agents are the bunk. Says she's her own agent."

"I'll mention it," Ducroy said.

"Don't just mention it. Mention me," said Irvill. He grinned.

"That's what I mean," Ducroy said, without grinning. He was thinking of Sydney Saxpool.

He mentioned it. He was convincing. Sydney Saxpool's resistance to the agents in New York had arisen from her lack of experience and from the stories she had heard from other writers. It had taken a personal letter from the president of the corporation to get her to sign a contract to supervise the "picturization" of her most recent best-seller. When Elliot Ducroy told her of Irvill's many virtues, she said she'd give him her contracts in future, if Elliot thought he was all right.

"All right? He knows more about my financial position than I do!" said Ducroy.

They were on the veranda of his bungalow, looking out at the constellation of lights that was Los Angeles and Santa Monica and Venice and Hermosa, with a luminous presence behind which was the Pacific. They had dined at a hotel, where she was staying in a cabaña on the grounds until she found a house, and then he had driven her up the cañon road.

"All alone," he had told her, as he unlocked the garage door. "My man's out this evening. Probably sitting in one of those Mex joints and drinking a gingerade. He's another faithful soul, Louis is. Like Irvill."

The view, when he led her up the steps cut in the rock, to the house itself, and with his arm around her, to the veranda, made her exclaim. He remembered how Perdita, sitting in precisely the same chair, had seemed not to notice the view at all.

"You get used to it," he said. "It's like the girls here. At first they attract attention. They knock your eye out. Then they become part of the show. All the same, this is one of the things I'd like to keep. But it's only a rented shack." He waved toward the view.

"I'll rent it if you're really going East," she said.

"I'm really going East," he told her. "I've got plans, yes; and it's too bad you have to come out just as I'm headed back there."

"I'll be coming East," she said. "I've no intention of giving up my real work. I want some local color, for one thing, and—well, it's real money, isn't it?"

"Some of it is. This is a hell of a place for polite panhandling. A woman can dodge it better'n a man can. And there's a lot of politics in the office. And humbug. Don't forget that you, as a writer, are less than the dust beneath the second deputy assistant supervisor's chariot wheels."

"Oh, is that so!" said Sydney Saxpool.

"Yes, that's so! You'll suffer less than most. You'll suffer, though. It's like seasickness. You get used to the motion of the pictures, and then you don't notice the insults."

Elliot Ducroy laughed. He was enjoying himself. In this girl's company he unfolded; whereas with Perdita, who preserved an air of resignation while he was talking of his work, he felt strangled. It was not that Perdita disapproved of what he said, or that she was bored, but that she hadn't paid attention. She was somewhere else, he believed. Sydney Saxpool laughed too now, but she was not convinced.

"The first second deputy assistant supervisor who—" she began calmly and broke off. "Oh, the hell with them! I'm mad at you because you're going East just as I— You'll think I'm one brazen hussy." She looked out across the night.

"No," he said. "No. I think you're swell. I've wanted someone like you!"

"Those words you take right out of my mouth," she said. She put her arms around him. She was rather short, and he lifted her, holding her to him. She delighted him.

She was his exact complement. She had a boldness toward him that suited him without alarming him. He discovered, also, that his preoccupation with Perdita's physical type had been an illusion. What he really wanted was something utterly contrasted, something Sydney Saxpool possessed in its full maturity and vigor.

"You're sweet!" she said in a low, measured tone. Her voice was thrilling.

LATER, he thought about this new situation. He was in love with Sydney Saxpool as he had never been in love with anyone before; and she was in love with him. Then must all his plans be changed? Should he get a divorce from Perdita?

He wanted both. He saw Sydney in the foreground, sweet, loving, understanding, a partner who knew what his work was, and with whom he could talk about it, who knew and appreciated its importance, as Perdita did not; and Perdita and Sonia and the new country home in the background. That was it. They were the background.

He felt extraordinarily happy. He could not remember when life had held so much.

The next day he called Perdita on the long-distance telephone and told her his new plans to come East and set up an establishment in the country.

Chapter Nine

SONIA lay in her bed in her room in the new house and looked at everything. Her expression was that of a young and delightful fairy monarch who had reached the throne of her desires by using magic arts. Sonia had done all this, really. Now she lay in bed, under the curved muslin tester, looking out across the gardens to the beautiful sea, filled with a grave, sweet sense of delight. They were all together again, Mummy and Elliot and Sonia, and Louis too. And there too was Hector, pretending to be asleep in his basket on the hooked rug in the corner. Sonia drew a deep breath and treated herself to a small inward smile. Outwardly there was only a brief rapid flutter of her long lashes.

It was now early summer, and they had been in the house which Elliot had christened Church Yard, for nearly a year. What changes those early months had made in the place! Sonia had watched the transformation of an Eighteenth Century Colonial dwelling, with its shabby flaking paint and heavy beams, its curling shingles and warped porch floors, into a splendid mansion. She had seen rattling windows changed to lovely casements, and big old barns reclothed with white-painted boards and fitted with handsome doors. There was a most lovely pigeon cote on a tall pole in the yard in front of the garage, full of cooing birds. The long drive in front had been graded and laid with bluestone, the gate replaced with a new one of squared oak.

It was early yet, and apart from the knocking of Louis' feather duster against the banisters, there was no sound indoors. Elliot did not get up very early; and Mummy, in her own great beautiful west room, did not get up until noon. Sonia would go in and look at her and receive a mumbling response from a head buried under the clothes.

The sun was making a great shine over the sea now, and Sonia lay watching the sky get hotter and hotter. Even Hector, yawning and snuffling and stretching and finally jumping on the bed to sniff in her ear, did not distract Sonia from her thoughts of the past few months. So Hector got down and lay quietly waiting for getting-up time.

She had been horribly lonesome at that farm while Mummy lived in New York and Elliot stayed on in Hollywood making pictures.

The children at the small, uncomfortable school in the village had not been nice. On one occasion Sonia had smuggled a small grubby note into her weekly letter to her mother—*"Mummy, please take me away please, Sonia"*—which contrasted strangely with the sedate hypocrisy of the dictated words of her formal letter.

There had been a number of slight improvements after that, and Perdita had descended upon the farm in a rented car, had taken Sonia into the village and bought her some picture postals. One of them had gone to Louis in Hollywood, and one to Elliot Ducroy.

Out of the haze of infancy came grotesque shapes to haunt Sonia's loving imagination. Other children had parents, real parents who lived together with their babies and little boys and girls. They did not, for instance, live in separate homes in California and hold long arguments at intervals that ended in slammed doors, or (even more mysteriously) softly closed doors, which the small Sonia was forbidden to open. Other girls had mothers who came to see them with exhausting regularity, who smelled of perfumes and rich clothing. They came with daddies to the summer camp to which Sonia had been taken that summer, with older sisters. They had aunties, uncles and cousins.

Sonia longed for relatives. She wanted to be like other girls in such matters. But with only her Mummy at hand, and with Elliot so far away, it was obvious that Sonia herself would have to make the most of what she had.

Suddenly the world had changed from a dull gray to rainbow splendor. Mummy and Elliot, in a most enormous beautiful car, came down to the new camp (six hundred dollars for the season, with horseback riding and dancing lessons extra) and took her with extreme speed to show her the new home. Sonia sat breathless between them as the great car, which Mummy said was a six-liter Virago, shot like a bullet through Norbury, through Sutton Corners and along the sea front to a tangled garden in which stood an old, weathered house with several old red barns in the rear.

"Darling, we're going to live here," said Sonia's mother.

"All together, Mummy?"

Perdita exchanged a glance with her husband, pinched Sonia's nose and nodded.

"Oh, Mummy! It's a lovely house, isn't it?"

"Built in 1746," said Elliot Ducroy solemnly. "That's pretty near two hundred years old, Sonia. The real-estate man says there was a house here before that, built in Sixteen something."

Even Sonia could see Elliot was not in his usual glum mood when he was not working. She looked from one to the other with dawning happiness, and her mother suddenly put her arm around her as they sat in the red-leather tonneau of the Virago.

She lay thinking of those days, and the days that followed. It was the happiest time ever, she thought, even though she could bring into focus only the special delights. And at the camp she had met her great friend Shiela Boldwin, whose parents were in Europe. Shiela's home was only a quarter of a mile away from Church Yard. It was near the yacht-club. It was pretty hard to think of as a home because there was never anybody there except a short, dark Filipino gentleman who took care of the place. Shiela's parents were always away. They went to Maine in the summer and to Florida in the winter, and in between they went to Europe or to an apartment in New York.

One of the important things in Sonia's life now was her friendship with Shiela. When Shiela's parents learned about Sonia's parents rebuilding the old house on the shore road, they did not cease from traveling rapidly, by air if possible, to all parts of the world. They let Shiela stay with Sonia, and the Filipino ran their house for the two children between camp and school. Shiela went to Harridge, a school of enormous prestige at the other end of Connecticut, a school for the female offspring of people like the Boldwins. It was part of the curiously inverted relationship between Sonia and her mother since Sonia had turned ten, that she should instruct Perdita in the tremendous advantages offered by Harridge, of which Perdita had never even heard the name.

"Righto—we'll go and have a look at this wonderful school," Perdita had told her. And Elliot had agreed. Elliot was what Shiela called "a perfectly grand man," Shiela having picked up the phrase from an older girl.

Then there was the speedboat Elliot had bought. A marvelous experience, to sit in the uplifted bows of that rich, dark, powerful, plunging monster, while the exhausts of the twin engines gave out a deafening hullabaloo. The rush of wind on their faces, as Shiela said, was simply divine. It was hard to breathe, perched in the upward-slanting bows that swayed deliciously as the screws tore a wide gash in the Sound. Sonia had often shuddered with a deeply relished delight when she thought of it.

At that time, the time of the rebuilding of Church Yard into a modest country gentleman's estate; the time of the cars, the speedboat, the lovely toy house, and finally the time of the arrival of the expensively pedigreed Hector, Sonia felt that everything in the world was perfect.

NOW, Sonia was uneasily aware, there was something else. Coming from Harridge for summer vacation, which for Harridge was from the end of May to the end of September, there had drifted into Sonia's life a new care. That miraculously perfect solidarity of the three of them at the beginning was not there any more. Of course, Harridge was tops, and equally of course Shiela Boldwin was tops too. But it wasn't the same as having Mummy and Elliot all to herself, one on each side of her in the Virago, or in the speedboat. Sonia had a terrific passion for a family, for relatives. At school she invented them. She invented adventures in California in which her parents had been her partners, and they were simply *screaming!* She invented relatives in England, aunts and barrister uncles, and a few more in California. It was easy to do this at Harridge, though the house-mistress, who knew who paid Sonia's school-bills, had once remarked that "fiction seemed to run in that family."

Now that was over. It was useless to pretend to Shiela that Mummy and Elliot were really loving parents. Sonia had gone to stay with Shiela, and when she came back, her mother was in New York. Elliot had looked at her somber-

ly at lunch when she asked where Mummy was. There was a tense feeling in the air which made Sonia unhappy. Grown-ups had an extraordinary way of bringing on this tenseness, so that you felt as if something was going to explode.

"I don't know when she's coming back," Elliot said when Louis had gone into the pantry. "She may not come back at all! I expect she will, though. You play with Shiela. She'll come back all right."

"May I stay with Shiela?"

"Sure. I'll be out to dinner. You'll be going to camp soon, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes. But please, Elliot, I don't want to go to camp and not see Mummy. I have to take care of Mummy."

"Yeah. I know. Only, she don't want to be taken care of. So she went back to New York. But don't you worry. She'll come back."

Sonia said, in a shrill, piping voice, to hide her fear of blubbing: "Of course! I *hope* so."

ELLIOT DUCROY, with an inscrutable, stern expression, pinched her cheek. He looked mad about something. He said:

"You want Shiela to come and stay with you? It's only a quarter-mile to her place. What's the idea? Lonesome at night?" He went on, as if to himself: "It's a fact; she ought to be with Sonia. What are we to do?"

He went away after lighting a cigarette, and Sonia could hear his typewriter rattling with fierce energy. She got Hector and went out. And suddenly, in the evening, there was Mummy in the station-wagon! Elliot had brought her from the station.

"Hullo, ducky! Thought I was dead?" She turned to Elliot. "Sonia's in one of her disapproving moods. Look at her!" She gave Sonia a hug.

"Where you been, Mummy?"

"Where? Oh, in New York. By request, ducky. This is the new system. What the eye doesn't see, the heart can never grieve over. That's an old English proverb."

She was looking not at Sonia but at her husband, as she said this. Her eyes, which seemed to change color as one watched them, regarded him attentively, without anger, without criticism, without even that opaque indifference that intelligent married women use to conceal their chagrin over their fate.

Elliot said, as he stood before the large stone fireplace he had had built in the central living-room, a room which had been made by knocking three rooms into one:

"You said that before."

"That's right," she said, "I did."

She turned her head to look at Louis, who came in bearing two glasses of sherry-and-bitters on a tray. Sonia slipped out of her mother's arms, looking from one to the other, and ran off.

"Did you see Irvill, or Terry?" Elliot asked. He drank half his sherry and put the glass on the mantel.

"You know I don't like her," Perdita said, sipping her sherry as though it were not very nice medicine.

"How should you? But she's good for Irvill, and Irvill's good for me—or us, if you like. She doesn't fit into any classification that I know of. I admit that. I admit I like her. I know you don't."

"Go on. Say it, Elliot. You think I'm no good. I spend your money, and I'm no good. Yet, from my point of view, I've been a good wife to you."

"Yes?"

"Well, I said a good wife, not a good mistress. That's what you want, really. It's what you need, possibly. This," she went on, twiddling the wineglass and smiling at it, "is a damned polygamous country, my good man. Wives are like suits of clothes. You wear 'em, or not. You want 'em cleaned and pressed, ready to wear when you happen to fancy 'em."

"Now, now!" he said, smiling.

As though he had really warned her, as though he had blown a whistle as their conversation took a sudden dive into subterranean chambers, she pulled up and said, in another, more musical tone:

"This wine goes to one's head, doesn't it? We aren't quarreling, my dear. Let's not. Sonia doesn't like it."

"What are you driving at?" he said, frowning. "What makes you think—"

She rose suddenly from the big chair by the low table, where she had been lying almost horizontal, her legs resting on the heavy brass and leather-upholstered club fender. She picked up her pocketbook, hat and gloves.

"Elliot," she said in a matter-of-fact tone, "I don't think. I know! And I don't very much care."

That had been the night before; and now Sonia, before she slipped out of bed and accompanied Hector downstairs to see Louis and have breakfast with him, lay looking around her room and out at the shining Sound; discovering, as she thought of all that had happened at Church Yard since they moved in, that there was a faint, transparent, yet perceptible specter in her mind, a disturbance of spirit rather than a defined shape of unhappiness. Out on the cañon road, in the foothills of Hollywood, the cure for such spectral uneasiness was conversation, as she called it, with Louis. "I had a conversation with Louis," she would tell her mother; and Perdita, putting down her magazine, would say: "I bet Louis never got a word in edgeways!"

It was obviously time for a conversation with Louis. Hector, giving up the idea of pretending sleep, left his basket, and yawning, flexed his pedigreed, grotesquely bred limbs.

Sonia opened the bedroom door, and Hector at once ran downstairs. The wide landing, the shining waxed boards and slender white-painted balusters, the delicate old English prints against white panels, and the dark walnut chest, were bathed in the morning sun from a high clear window. In her camel-hair robe and bright scarlet mules, Sonia was transfigured by the sunlight into angelic brightness. Finger on lip, she moved silently to her mother's door and knocked. It was not closed completely. Sonia opened it an inch and peeped into the dusky interior.

Looking down at the floor, she whispered:

"Mummy! Mumsy darling!"

There was a silence. There was, Sonia knew, nobody there at all. She stood in the half-opened door and pressed her finger to her lower lip to stop its trembling. She stood again on the landing as the door on the other side opened and Elliot Ducroy came out part way.

"Hello, kid. Your mother went away in the car. It's all right. She'll be back, you know. I *tried* to get her to stay. You going down to get breakfast? Ask Louis to bring me some coffee. Coffee and grapefruit. Go on, now. It's all *right,* I say! She'll be back."

He retreated and closed the door softly, solemn and silently thoughtful.

Sonia descended the curved staircase. She went slowly, pausing and sitting down, holding her blonde head in her hands. Then, quite briskly, she sprang down several steps and scampered violently into the dining-room.

The drooping shoulders of Louis, in an alpaca jacket, wearing a green baize apron, which he had refused to abandon in spite of Elliot Ducroy's sarcasm, were visible in a corner. He had spread newspapers—Louis had no other use for newspapers save to spread them under or over whatever he was doing—and he was polishing the arms, legs, stretchers and backs of the Chippendale chairs.

"Oh, good morning, Louis," Sonia said. "Is breakfast ready, please?"

"Chocolate's mos' ready."

THE first months in New York and at Church Yard had been highly agreeable to Louis. Church Yard was to him the pot of gold at the rainbow's end. He thought life was extremely good. Maintaining Church Yard's interior in a condition of almost fanatical perfection was an easy job to Louis, who was a natural-born domestic drudge. Only, it was never drudgery to Louis, because he loved polishing silver and crystal and china.

His was the artistry that concealed both the art and the artist. He leaned negligently by the breakfast nook, gazing solemnly down at Sonia and Hector. He might have been a casual visitor, save for the napkin over his shoulder, a magical napkin that would change, for Sonia, into a white rabbit with long ears, a bishop's mitre, or even a pigeon in flight. He leaned there, listening to Sonia's remarks.

Sonia was telling him that there was a newcomer living in that old house, the Mudge place, behind the hill.

"Daddy said he was a sailor, but he didn't look like a sailor. He looked like the doctor who came when I was sick in Hollywood. You know, with a beard."

Louis nodded gloomily, his lower lip thrust forward. He moved the cream jug nearer to Sonia. Like many stewards,

he ate nearly all his meals standing up, like a horse. He took up now a dish of bran, which strongly resembled horse-fodder and began to eat it with a teaspoon, holding it close to his chin. As he munched, he reflected that the boss and his missus, when he had brought the sherry-and-bitters the previous evening, had been holding themselves in. They had not looked at each other. Mrs. Ducroy had looked at him, Louis. Sonia had looked at her mother, and at Mr. Ducroy, before running out in a manner that Louis remembered well. When they were spatting in California, Sonia would run out like that; and the memory of it seemed to produce a hollow feeling in his chest. He knew perfectly well that Mrs. Ducroy had left the house last night, driving the big Virago down the drive at sixty. And he knew Sonia knew it too.

All this conversation of Sonia's, he knew, was a trick to distract him from the immediate fact that they were both unhappy. He heard Sonia laugh shrilly as if she were very excited.

"I wonder if he's a doctor and a sailor, too!"

Louis nodded slowly, pulling the corners of his mouth down.

"Ship's doctor? Out 'ere? Off a yacht, maybe?"

Sonia clapped her hands.

"Oh, *Louis!* I forgot! Will you please take Elliot some grapefruit and coffee?"

"Okay," said Louis. He turned leisurely and put the hot coffee-pot on a tray already set. He took the grapefruit and cream from the refrigerator. He moved without haste, yet with speed. He watched Sonia out of the corner of his eye as he folded a napkin intricately, and it opened into an ecclesiastical cap, which he placed over the grapefruit. Then he laid his own service napkin solemnly, almost hieratically, over his shoulder, with a gesture that delighted Sonia, always, and took up the tray on one hand, the other arm akimbo. He marched to the service staircase with dignity, while Sonia watched, smiling a little. They were both aware that this was his contribution to the great scheme, to pretend that they were really happy.

The house was now perfectly still save for the faint hum of the refrigerator. Outside in the sunshine the pigeons cooed, and Mr. Cagliari was mowing the grass with a power machine. Suddenly Sonia wiped her mouth with her paper napkin and slipped out of the nook, to Hector's great joy.

"Stay here now," Sonia said, shaking her finger at him, as she drew her robe around her and ran up the service stairs so that she would not have to pass her mother's room. She dressed quickly, in shorts and rubber-soled beach shoes. She dragged a comb through her hair once or twice, and ran down again to the kitchen.

Across the paved yard and through a green door in the red brick wall that bounded the kitchen garden and formed a support for the greenhouses, Sonia followed the joyful Hector. She was recovering from the thoughts which had clouded her mind before breakfast. The fear that Mummy *wouldn't* be taken care of, that Mummy didn't understand the terrific importance of staying with Elliot, was like a dread of meeting a specter, or of walking off into space over a cliff.

The walk through the woods always calmed Sonia. She loved the trees with a passion the fantastic foliage of Southern California had never awakened in her. Beyond the meadow, which had been graded and seeded to make a lawn, a bowling-green, and a tennis court, with an oval swimming-pool near the tidal brook that bounded the property, the high oaks, pines and hemlocks stood like columns in the shadow of their own verdure. The leaves of a hundred seasons had made a thick carpet of humus, and small wild animals had made paths and runways toward the uncleared thickets of bayberry, sumach and wild cherry, with clumps of birch and young cedar.

Sonia loved to walk here. The golden-brown carpet, with a pile six inches thick, was delicious. The squirrels would sit on a safe limb eating their breakfasts and watching her with the bright derisive glance of animals who had imposed successfully upon countless generations of sentimental human beings. As she pushed through, so that the house and also Elliot's little bungalow, where he worked, was hidden, Sonia knew that she would see, beyond the high trees that crowned the ridge, what Mr. Cagliari the gardener called "de Mudge place."

Sonia walked that way now, and left Church Yard behind, while Hector carried out an exhaustive examination of certain holes in the large fallen tree, of which he had long entertained the gravest suspicions. The log lay like a tubular bridge across the bottom of a depression in the slope; here the last of Elliot Ducroy's trees, the boundary of his estates, stood extremely tall, and formed a high, covered space clear of saplings on its hollow floor. Sonia liked to walk along the log to reach the final rise from which she could discern the house on the Mudge place.

SONIA, walking with exaggerated preoccupation, in case someone might happen to see her, followed the line of surveyor's stakes northward to where the brook became the boundary. It wasn't much of a brook. It came from a spring, and there was a pool the size of a basin, to which Hector repaired with the passion of his kind for genuine running water.

She followed the brook; and Hector, greatly refreshed, tore on ahead to bark at a low-slung badger-colored phantom which, quite in the tradition of phantoms, suddenly vanished. Sonia became excited too, and ran up to the magical spot on the bank and found Hector lifting up his voice over a woodchuck's burrow. Sonia was suddenly gay. The weight of her responsibility seemed taken from her heart. She raced Hector to where the shore road crossed the outlet of the brook on a stone bridge. She was gay because she heard the horn of the Virago, the triple-note sound that came from the long silver-plated trumpets of her mother's car. She clambered on to the road and ran along to the gate, which was open. Soon she saw the long, low machine with one door open, near the front of the house; she galloped up the drive, and blundered, like a young foal, through the open house door under the deep porch and into the living-room.

She saw Louis glowering at her from the stairs, the tray with its empty dishes and crumpled napkin in his hand. He shook his finger before his nose as he descended slowly, looking upward over his shoulder and making gestures with his head to indicate prudence on Sonia's part.

At the foot of the stairs Louis paused and contemplated the rug under his feet, listening to the voices upstairs. He shrugged and moved toward the pantry, when Perdita suddenly appeared, her face illuminated by the sunlight reflected from the polished landing. She leaned over the rail so that she could see Sonia, and smiled.

"All right, ducky. Come on up and see Mother. And Louis, bring me some coffee, please. Make some fresh."

Sonia and Hector darted up the stairs. Her mother, leaning over and smiling, submitted to a hug.

"Mummy!"

"Yes, I've come back. The prodigal mother has returned. I've been telling Elliot all about it. Know what Mummy's going to do? She's going to get a job and work!"

They walked in together, their arms entwined, to where Elliot Ducroy, who had finished shaving, was coming from his own room.

"I'll never agree to it!" he said quietly. "It's not necessary."

"Yes, it is. Necessary to me."

"You haven't said what you mean by work."

"I'll go to an employment agency and take what I can."

"You know what those jobs pay?"

"Not an idea! Whatever it is, I'll take it." Perdita looked smilingly at Sonia.

Elliot Ducroy looked at them both. He had a sense of bafflement. She had come suddenly up the stairs as he rushed out at the sound of the horn, his face still soap-streaked, and had announced what she called "a solution."

"Of what?" he said.

"Of us," she told him. "We won't squabble and fight, my dear. We'll gang our own gait, as the Scotch say, or as they say the Scotch say. I'll be on my own, if you'll bear with my presence a few days."

"I can't let you do that!"

"Who says you can't? The thing is, we can't go on like this."

Elliot Ducroy took his breakfast-tray and thrust it into the hands of Louis as he came to the door of the bedroom.

"Beat it!" he said—and turned to his wife.

"I've done all this for nothing, then?" He made a gesture to indicate Church Yard.

"Yes, if you think you can keep me here and run across the river to your fascinating friend whenever you feel like it. I don't want to go into that."

She turned her head to listen, while Elliot Ducroy stood looking out the window at the lawn where Mr. Cagliari was

moving back and forth on his power mower. Perdita went out on the landing and looked down the stairway at her daughter.

"You mean you'd leave me here, after I've— You'd leave me here alone?"

"I said—I suggested," she said quietly, her arms still around Sonia, who was extremely grave and still, "that we don't fight. I'm as much to blame as anybody. I won't mention the real reason I have to go now. I won't even make a melodramatic exit. I'll stay a few days. But I've got to make some sort of life of my own."

"Like you were doing in the Village?"

"Oh, no! Though for that matter, there was nothing very terrible about what I was doing in the Village. I met a lot of interesting people. They were much more interesting than the people here. They weren't very rich or very sober, but oh, they were infinitely more interesting than these people."

"I don't understand what you're planning to do," her husband said. He looked at her apprehensively. "You won't take Sonia with you?"

Perdita looked at her daughter, who was clasping her arm in both hands.

"No. I'm not a lunatic. Sonia'll go to camp, and back to school. I'll take anything from you for Sonia. Besides, what I thought I'd do, I couldn't have her with me."

"What?"

"I'll tell you later. Sonia, my pet, go and see if Louis is making that coffee, please."

She thrust the child gently toward the door and closed it.

"It's just this: I can't be honest with myself if I stand in your way. I can believe you never wanted her to come here—no; but now she's come, I move out. Not like a tragedy queen—no—but out. It's better to have an amputation than die of a gangrene. I thought I could stand it, for Sonia's sake, but it's not possible.

"Although, to tell you the truth, I think you're wise! Wiser than you were when you took pity on me. What did you think, then? That I could be bought, a nice piece of goods? Well, you're wiser now. She's probably just what you need in your life. She speaks your language. I gathered that, as it happens, in New York."

"Who from?" He turned to her with suspicion.

"Oh, Village gossip. Never mind now. If you'll only be a decent sport and take care of Sonia until I find my feet—"

"I'll fix that. But I don't want you to do this. I think it's crazy—"

"I'm not going to squabble. I'm going to make some sort of life of my own."

"It's not some other man, then?"

"You mean, some other man I'm in love with? No." She shook her head slowly, as though turning the possibilities over in her mind. Then she smiled. "I suppose it's natural for you to assume that. It's almost as if polygamy were in the air, over here! However, set your mind at rest about me, my dear. I don't believe I ever want to be in love again."

"I don't believe you've ever *been* in love," he said hoarsely. He was finishing his toilet, and not looking at her.

"Well, perhaps not, in the Hollywood sense. Oh, *don't* let's quarrel! I'll be off, and you'll work all the harder, make all the more money; more, more, bigger, better, colossal!"

She laughed, held up her finger and went to open the door. She said through the opening:

"Thanks, ducky. Will you put it in Mummy's room? It's darling of you to bring it up for me."

She closed the door again and smiled at her husband.

Elliot Ducroy lit a cigarette and stood at the window looking out at his estate. He was perturbed because he was discovering that this news had no bad effect upon him in his mind. He was merely uneasy lest his wife planned to do something which would expose him to ridicule, commiseration, or possibly even upset his working routine. It seemed that she had no such idea. She was even leaving Sonia as a sort of guarantee. But he was perturbed. It did something to his pride, to discover that she could be so composed and understanding about this decision, that she could quit him without any heroics or pangs. That she could, moreover, estimate the real value of his motives in building up this life around Church Yard.

"Well, it's for you to make a decision," he said over his shoulder. "I still think you're crazy, though. I want you to stay as long as ever you want. Go and come just as you—"

The extension telephone at his bedside buzzed. He took it and listened. Then he said, his hand over the mouthpiece:

"The Inn wants to know if you're staying over. They may want the room."

"No; I'll get my things later."

When he had settled that, she went on:

"I had to be by myself and away from here. I'm sorry. I ought to have told them."

"That's all right. I understand."

"I'll have my coffee and a bath."

"I'm going to work. Listen, why did you come back so early?"

"I had the idea I wanted to get it over. I wanted to have an understanding before you went out to your work."

"You going to stay here today?"

"I told you I wasn't going to do anything melodramatic. I only wanted an understanding, that you're quite free."

There was a pause as she stood looking over her shoulder, not at him but at a picture of Sonia, a water-color done a couple of years ago. The thought passed through her mind, that he wanted her to be free in order to be free himself. And he was thinking that she would probably think that, though he was honestly not thinking it himself. And this was followed by another thought, that these complex misunderstandings only arose between men and women who tried to live together instead of living apart.

As the door closed quietly behind Perdita, he had yet another thought, very unusual for him, for his mind had a coarse mesh, and many subtleties slipped through unnoticed. It was, simply, that they were now in such a relationship that everything he might say or do made matters worse for himself in her mind. One would think he had actually imported Sydney Saxpool into the neighborhood, and was paying her rent, whereas, in fact, he would have preferred she had gone to some other summer place to live, not quite so close. He couldn't order her to go away. Nobody could order Sydney Saxpool about. She did what she wanted to do.

Chapter Ten

"IT looks like a good day," Mr. Spenlove said. The attendant, as he cranked the yacht-club pump, nodded absently, his attention concentrated on Mr. Spenlove's boat, which he was fueling. Without being able to sort out his impressions, he was aware that *Glory Hole,* like her name, was unconventional. The proportion of beam to length, the unusual angle of the hard chine, and the squat, safe-looking stern of her, registered sharply in the mind of a man who was constantly looking down upon yachts, launches and cabin cruisers in need of fuel. He nodded absently, chewing on his gum.

What Mr. Spenlove called a good day had begun, for him, before dawn, when he put a kit bag in the secondhand coupé he had bought, and drove along the shore road in the half-light to the yacht-club basin. The lighthouse was still sending out its slow revolving beam.

At the turn of the road on the point, he stopped the car and looked toward the sunrise. This was one of his private pleasures. The sun was coming, but not for a moment. The sea was as flat and hard as a cement floor. The horizon to the eastward was a hard black line. The sky above it was darker than at the zenith, by reason of an immense mass of invisible vapor over Long Island, which the morning breeze was driving up the Sound.

He watched. The moment was at hand. The darkness had assumed, imperceptibly, a mysterious clarity, as if the beach, the rocks, the column of the lighthouse, and the surface of the sea, were all composed of a substance potentially luminous and semi-transparent. The illusion was completed by the sudden radiance that outlined a dense bank of cumulus cloud with flashes of sheet lightning, like distant gunfire. The flashes ceased; but there was the cloud-bank outlined now by a thin line of silver. The flashes were then seen far away and less clearly. Now could be seen, like an apparition, the pre-dawn, the softening of contours, the stirring on the face of the sea.

This was the rare moment, to be enjoyed like a solitary prayer, and he sat watching, his engine silent, only the

long pale beam from the lantern swinging above his head to remind him of humanity. He loved it even more than the line of light that ran swiftly along the low hills, the burst of color in the sky and the theatrical golden trackway across the sea.

The lantern of the lighthouse went dark as he started his engine and went on. He could see the buildings sharply outlined against the hills across the estuary. Rabbits scampered across the road to sandy burrows.

He unlocked the gate to the yacht-club enclosure and drove in. He had been amused to find how quickly some of the fishing members had discovered the value of a dawn start. He saw one of them now, rowing out in a dinghy to an outboard motor craft at anchor. He saw him climb on board and begin the inevitable struggle with a cold two-cylinder engine not half big enough for its job. Mr. Spenlove, whose passion for fishing was always under control, smiled indulgently as he thought of the vigorous, healthy exercise enjoyed by outboard enthusiasts. He himself had a couple of heavy-duty storage batteries on his boat, to do his work for him.

HE went on board the *Glory Hole,* which was moored to a buoy, near the jetty, and looked around the cabin. The boat, by reason of her beam and low freeboard, was deceptive. The cabin was large; and when the bunk was pulled out, you had a commodious bed place, he reflected. When the firm in New York wished to know what equipment he desired, because his blueprints showed no details in the cabin space, he told them: "For an overnight run." So there was only a small primus stove, a rack for a row of square thermos flasks, and a toilet. After a prolonged study of their catalogue, he had thrown it aside. Only a millionaire could remain solvent, once he was started on a spending spree for gadgets. This boat was a utility, an extension of his normal existence; and tungsten steel anchors, high-power searchlights, copper-nickel hot-water heaters, chromium handrails and two-way radios were not in his line.

She looked, he noted with satisfaction, businesslike. Her fittings were good quality bronze, painted black; the mattress and cushions were pneumatic and could be put away in a drawer when not in use. Even the portholes were painted. He had small use for the snobbery of scoured metal, for what was called "spit and polish."

He opened the hatch and started the semi-Diesel engine, listening attentively to the soft, scuffling sound of the exhaust that harmonized perfectly with the blue-black sooty smoke puffing from the vent in the counter.

"She looks like a smoky commercial craft!" Perdita had said, with a relish she could always communicate to him. He remembered that conversation.

"I know she does. That's the way I want her to look. As little like a certain speed-craft as possible."

She had made a face at him.

"This," he told her, as though delivering a lecture, "is a functional vessel. That's the expression—functional. She's a means of crossing the water, a substitute for the old-fashioned miracles of the saints. They used stone drinking-troughs and granite basins to sail the seas."

"Who did? What are you talking about?"

"The old saints. I told you they were once my favorite reading. They were so holy they could do anything. We are not holy, so we have to invent our own miracles. A granite boat is no more miraculous than an internal-combustion engine, if you think the matter over."

"May I interrupt?"

"You may."

"Let's talk about us. Just us. I'll begin."

"Yes."

"Let's go away."

"That's an order."

"In the boat."

"I have an idea. You've given me an idea. All right."

"And leave the natives to their cannibal feasts and savage customs!"

"All right. Cross over to that island we can see on the horizon."

She clapped her hands gently.

"Is that the idea you said I'd given you? Where shall we go?"

"Leave that to me. There will be no cannibals on that coast. No scribes and no Pharisees! The natives are friendly."

"How delightful! You always give me pleasure when I come to see you. Why haven't we thought of this before?"

"I was waiting for you. I went on with the boat. I said to myself: 'It's only a scow compared with that thing she tears about in, but it will have virtues of its own.'"

"Oh, my dear! Were you really thinking of me while making it? Never speak of it again. The speedboat's sold."

"You sold it?"

She stirred her tea meditatively.

"No. I turned it back to Elliot. I didn't want to have it on my conscience. He bought it originally for himself, you know. He thought he would like to have one. He's like a young boy in some ways. Wants a toy he finds he doesn't want. And yet he doesn't know *how* to play, really. He's a worker. He works all the time."

"Even over there?"

"Even over there. Even more over there. You mustn't misunderstand Elliot, my dear. He's in heaven now. He's working with her and in love with her. It's a relief to him that he doesn't have to pretend he loves me any more."

"Did he, at first? I've always had a doubt."

"As far as a writer can ever be in love with anyone but himself. Or herself. They live," she added pensively, "for their art. Elliot does, I know. It's a sort of desperation, like persons swimming to reach the shore before they drown."

"You're free now," Mr. Spenlove said. "You can keep away from writers after this."

She waited a few moments before answering.

"Yes," she said. "It's an unusual situation. Elliot in some ways is not grown up. I suppose that's the secret of his marvelous skill in writing those adventure stories. He has no suspicion of you—or me. He has absolute trust in both of us. He thinks you're absolutely the best thing that could happen for me! He takes likings to people, and he liked you. He told me, when he first met you, how different you were from the people round here, how he liked your background."

"If we go away together, will it make any difference to his confidence in my sterling qualities?"

"He's certain you'd take care of me."

"So we can go away?"

"He'll hate it. It would upset all his plans. He wants to keep Church Yard going. As a matter of fact," she added, smiling, "he wants it there to come back to."

"And we ought to avoid anything that would spoil his happiness?"

"That's about the size of it," she said.

"Well," he said, "what do you suggest?"

"Why, the boat. It's finished. Boats go in and out all day and half the night. We can go fishing. Wouldn't you like to take me fishing?"

"Very much. But is that a solution of our problem? To go fishing?"

"Well, if you mean Elliot, it isn't. Only a temporary expedient. I'm under a strain in that house, though. It's all his. It's in his name. I've promised not to walk out on him. Unless I go away with you, I can't help myself. There's no particular fun in being a kept woman, I can assure you."

"Ssh!"

"All right."

"Now let me get a word in edgeways."

She touched his arm and leaned her cheek against it.

"We'll do it," he said. "Tomorrow, early. Come down in fishing-clothes. Tonight, when you come over to dinner, can you bring a bag—just as if you were going to visit friends overnight?"

"Aye-aye, sir!"

NOW she was coming in at the yacht-club gate. She was in linen slacks and a sweater, her hands in her pockets, her blue beret askew on her fair hair. He knew Perdita well enough to be sure she would continue to walk toward him and would not expect him to stage a theatrical *entr'acte* of waving and grinning. "Acting at a distance," as he called it.

The attendant finished with the pump and screwed home the brass plug in the foredeck of the *Glory Hole.* The name intrigued him.

He also liked Mrs. Ducroy, whose speedboat used so much fuel that he was likely to be short sometimes. He was aware of a lack of pretense about her, a complete obliviousness to what he described, in his mind and among

his Norbury cronies, as "funny business." And when she said, standing easily on her long legs, her hands in her pockets, and her eyes smiling down at the *Glory Hole,* that she was going trolling for bass with Mr. Spenlove, he nodded and dismissed them from his thoughts. He considered them swell folks.

PERDITA entered into the cabin and looked around. The settee was occupied by fishing tackle and a duffle-bag containing groceries. There was also a carton of beer and another of mineral water. She set to work to transfer these to the icebox in the counter. The groceries went into a locker under the seat from which Mr. Spenlove was steering, in the small pilot-house ahead of the cabin. She could see his forearms, matted with dark hair, through the glass of the door, as he grasped the wheel. It was marvelous to be with a person who did not *hover* over one, who was not everlastingly assuming a fake proprietorship, who could give orders as if to a man, and leave one alone to do a job without any Sir Walter Raleigh rubbish!

She started to make coffee. She unhooked the table that let down over the bunk and laid the coarse linen cloth.

She went out and sat down in one of the chairs aft, and watched the shore. The sea was perfectly flat, smooth and shiny, as though filmed with oil. Long streamers of curd-white foam lay on the steel-blue surface, like roads on an azure plain.

The water in the kettle was boiling. She went in to pour it over the coffee in the dripper. There was enough left to cover the eggs. She put them on, noted the time, and opened the door to the wheelhouse.

"I thought you'd gone to sleep," Mr. Spenlove said. "You've been very quiet in there."

"I've been getting breakfast and looking at the shore."

He made room for her to sit beside him.

"Want to steer?"

She shook her head. "The eggs are boiling. Three and a half minutes, isn't it? Coffee's nearly ready."

The sound of the engine and propeller was muted to a faint murmur. She said something about this.

He nodded. "Insulation. I can see by the gauges how she's doing. I don't want to hear her. So I had heavy soundproofing put in this deck here."

There was a faint tinkle from the cabin.

"The eggs! I'll take them out."

"I'll go another mile or so and stop the engine."

When she struck a spoon on a glass, he cut the engine and came into the cabin.

"Perhaps it seems a silly question," she said, "but I've been wondering—"

"Well?"

"Had you ever been in love before you met me?"

"Not intimately. The one girl I loved was killed, accidentally, in some street-fighting in Salonika. I was a young man at that time. I saw her fall, and carried her into her house."

"It wasn't a real love-affair, then?"

"It couldn't have been real. She was another man's mistress."

"It sounds fearfully romantic."

"*I* was fearfully romantic, in those days."

"You talk as if you'd given it up. I don't think so."

"I realize that now. When I left the sea, I thought I was through, as Americans say. From what I'd seen of marriage among shipmates, I didn't want *that!* I'd been thirty years with the Company. It seemed a century. There didn't seem anything to do except go into retirement and meditate. And I liked the idea of belonging to myself instead of an organization. Possessions never appealed to me as much as—ah, self-possession. I thought I'd have solitude for a change, after the fuss and feathers of a liner. It's quite a strain, you know, having a new set of faces six times a year. Even the crews change rapidly nowadays. A strain."

"Well, you settled down, all snug, and—here we are! Are you sorry? I don't really mean that."

"It's not a question I could answer. It assumes you set a trap. It makes me out a victim, caught in the trap, struggling to escape. Whereas—"

"That's right. It's a custom, at home, for a man to say he's been caught. I suppose it is English humor."

"He is, as a rule."

"While it's really myself that's caught in this case, and trying to escape."

She sat over her coffee, making little dabs with her spoon at a crease in the cloth, her head resting on her hand.

"Words don't seem to be any use," she said in a low tone. "They make you say what you don't really mean, half the time."

"I've noticed that too. Words seem largely ornamental. I suppose they were originally intended to express feelings we don't have any more. We lack a way of expressing sentiments without feeling ridiculous."

"I know. The lies I've told, just to square what I was doing with a fairy-tale! Father and Mother believed them, too. I told them Archie and I both had wonderful jobs in Hollywood. I was in a trance. I couldn't bear to have them think I'd made a ghastly mistake about Archie, and an even more ghastly mistake about myself."

He looked at her keenly, shrewdly, silently, and with love.

"It's a fact," she said, looking straight at him. She fingered the heavy black strap of his wrist-watch. "I thought I could be an actress in the films."

"You! You had hallucinations, then!"

"I know. I mean, I know it now. Elliot was honest enough about it to satisfy even my prejudices. So were the casting people. Well, that's all over."

She waited for him to make a comment, but he said nothing, and she went on to the end:

"So you see, I haven't been particularly bright. In fact, I've been a damned fool where men were concerned. I've never been in love the way I'm in love with you."

"What I was thinking was this: How do I compete with the men you've known? To me, they all seem extraordinarily glamorous, by comparison."

"Who's looking for glamour? Who wants the stuff? What are you laughing at?"

"I was thinking of Irvill's wife, Terry. When I asked her if she'd ever met you, she said she had, and then—'she's very glamorous,' she said."

"Meaning me? Well, that's always the way. She knows very little about me, so to her I'm glamorous. Am I to you?"

"Who wants the stuff? I've never had any occasion to use words like *glamour.* Terry was trying to convey an impression she had of you, of strangeness and loveliness and—I am guessing, of course—breeding."

Perdita sat motionless for a moment, chin on hand, looking aft at the sunlit sea.

"Perhaps all that is glamour to her," she said good-naturedly. "Are we going to stick here all the morning?"

The *Glory Hole* got under way. Looking over the stern, Perdita saw the smooth hump of the wake swell up abaft the squat counter. She saw the lighthouse and the roof of her house in the middle distance. They were getting smaller. Louis the houseman was over there, hard at work, keeping the place spick and span. Louis was all that was necessary. But suppose she left for good? Suppose the plan they had talked of last night, of going to England,—taking Sonia with them,—materialized, would Louis stay on in that house, alone? Would Elliot be shocked out of his trance of fascination with Sydney Saxpool and go back to live in his own place? Would he?

Elliot wanted to keep his house and his wife—and his infatuation too. What would he do if she left?

The coast grew less distinct. The shore-line opened out, and she saw the far hills of Connecticut in the distance. The sun was hot. The breeze was pleasant. They must be doing all of ten knots, she thought.

She began to assemble the fishing rods.

Chapter Eleven

"SAY it again!" she said.

"All of it?"

"No, not all of it. Begin where we are getting into Dorsetshire."

"We strike north from Abbotsbury after coming down the high road from Lyme Regis and Bridport, above Chesil Beach."

"And you show me a swannery in Abbotsbury."

"And a nunnery too. Then we go through Portisham to Dorchester. From there we have a choice of roads. We can go northwest to Salisbury, then east to Winchester—"

"We'll do that. Isn't it ridiculous? I've never seen England, except London and that corner of Suffolk near

Brandeston Knights. Now I want to see it. How far's Winchester?"

"Well, we stopped off at Bath, and as near as I can figure, we've done a mere hundred miles since the late breakfast you insisted on, and we've taken our time, and had tea in a thatched cottage at Combe Bissett—I think that was the name—so by the time we reach Winchester, you will take one look at that hotel I spoke of, where I once spent a night when I was on a walking-tour, and we'll go no farther."

"Say it again, please," she urged him anxiously.

"Ye Olde Hostel of God-Begot," he intoned with solemnity, and she sighed.

"It seems hardly possible," she mused. "It'll be awful for you if I find you made it up."

"No fear of that. It's there. It's been there four hundred years. You have breakfast in a bow window that lets you look right down the street. Just as well, because the room is so dark you can't see anything inside it. Black beams and rafters that shine! As if the place had been hewn out of an ebony cave! Each upstairs chamber is named after an English queen. Plantagenet for choice!"

She shivered with pleasure.

"The names are on the doors," he went on abstractedly, recapturing the mood of a time long past. "I was put in what they called the shepherd's room, being young and single. No bow window, but a lovely view of the stables and the cathedral. And a fine strong smell from the horses. That will be gone now."

"And then? After the God-Begot?"

"The Cotswolds. Steer due north until we can turn west for Wantage and on to Cirencester. I bicycled that way, and went trout-fishing."

"When you were young?"

"When I was what we used to call an improver. I was out of my time as an apprentice."

"Were you happy in those days? But that's a foolish question."

"It's not an easy question to answer, my dear. What I am now didn't exist, then. I was a callow kid. I was afraid of girls, for instance."

"You!"

"Me. Not only that; I thought it would be a fine thing if I could arrange my life completely independent of women. I had that ambition. The only ones I knew at first-hand were shopgirls, landladies and their daughters, and the girls you could pick up on the streets. I don't mean professionals, but girls of my own class. They were like me, looking for experiences. But at that time I had a bad case of mental measles. I was suffering from a rash of crude political notions."

"Socialism?"

"Yes. It was fashionable. We had a lot of rich socialists in England. In fact, unless you were rich, you couldn't afford to be a socialist. I know I couldn't. It was a purely intellectual exercise, of course. I worked as a wage-slave and enjoyed it. But it seemed to me that the sort of man I wanted to be would never take women seriously."

"You got over the measles, all right."

"When I went to sea."

"That would settle the woman business. I had that idea when I first met you. You found another interest in life, and so—"

"Well, you have time to think and to see life in perspective. The things people fuss about on shore become less important. You live your own life, not that of the herd. That's why so many men hate the sea. I liked it. I kept that secret for many years, that I liked it for reasons incomprehensible to those who hated, and who went to sea because they knew no other way of making a living. You know the saying—only fools and drunkards go to sea."

PERDITA laughed softly. She was lying in the cockpit, her shoulders against a cushion in the corner, while Mr. Spenlove, his arms around his knees, sat on the stern and kept a weather eye on the traffic. The *Glory Hole* lay almost motionless, under the afternoon sun.

He heard her laugh and turned to look at her.

"I ought to make a good seaman, in that case," she said ruefully. "I'll bear it in mind, if all else fails! You *were* happy then?"

"Yes, I was. I knew what I wanted, and I found I was able to get it. Can you believe that? I enjoyed every last detail of my life, even the really horrible work. . . . Wait a bit. I didn't enjoy going home and trying to fit into my place in a provincial town. I hated it."

"Where? You've never said."

"It didn't occur to me to mention it. It's a small place in Hampshire. Throxford, it's called. I'm the Hampshire wonder! I've often marveled that I could never work up any enthusiasm for going home. I used to stay in London, or Liverpool, if I hadn't a ship. And when I took service in a line running out of New Orleans, I liked that much better. No going home! I had a valid excuse for never going to that dreary place where I was born."

"I feel the same about where I was born," she said. "But I do want to see Brandeston Knights again."

"We're going there!" he said strongly. He caught her ankle and pulled her toward him. She fell against him and enfolded him in her arms, his head against her breasts.

"That's right," she said, her breath coming suddenly fast. "We'll go there before we go to London. Can we?"

"Surely, through Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury and then St. Albans. I was an apprentice when I was sent to Aylesbury on an outdoor job. A gentleman's estate. The gentleman was very rich and wanted electric light. We put in a plant for him. I lived there for several months."

"Didn't you have any adventures?"

"The beginning of one. The fair was on, and we did the booths with some of the country girls. Mine was a very dark wench who wore nose-glasses."

"Was she pretty?"

"It seems so, on looking back. I was young, about eighteen, and there was something intriguing about a girl with glasses. She was aggressive too, which suited my mood. And she had a French name. She was pure Buckinghamshire, but her name was French. I can remember it was Autrand."

SHE stood up and looked down at him, smiling.

"You aren't going to take me to that place—what was the name again?—where you grew up?"

"No. Nor to the boarding-house where I lived while I was an apprentice in London. There are some places one never wants to see again."

"Right. I'm that way about Hollywood. I served my apprenticeship there! What an apprenticeship! The longer I was there, the more unskillful I became; in a town full of women earning fabulous salaries, I became an economic inferior, almost a public charge! Sonia used to say, 'Mummy, what does a star do?' I would tell her, 'She shines, ducky,' and she'd think that over. Of course, I'm prejudiced; but there isn't a village in Suffolk that isn't a million times prettier than Hollywood, and hasn't more dignity and decent sense. And intelligence too, if you ask me. Elliot used to agree with me about Hollywood. 'Sure it stinks, and I'll blast it too, as soon as I've made mine.' That was his way of putting it. What a way to live! I'd rather be dead."

"That's what my shipmates used to say of going to sea. They'd as soon be dead. And so you can understand why I kept to myself the fact that I liked it. I became a man of mystery: No wife, no home port, no family, and he goes to sea when he could get a shore billet! I could have, you know. They knew I could. That's one thing you can't hide from your shipmates—intelligence. The natural thing for me to have done was to get a superintendent's job, go into the office, become an executive, and live in Scotston Hill, Glasgow, or Bootle, Liverpool, or some place like that. As you so justly remark, I'd rather be dead."

"If you'd done that, I'd never have met you."

"If I had, you'd never have wanted to."

"That's true. It's very unusual to find anyone who has always done what he wanted."

She stood up, the prismatic binoculars to her eyes. The gesture revealed the sweet long curve of her thigh and flank, the hollow of her back and the firm thrust of her breasts, as she stood with her feet planted on a thwart.

"Those yachts are simply not moving at all," she said, "—they're becalmed."

She was in a state of complete happiness, so that the words were of no consequence. They needed no comment. The afternoon was drawing on. She put the glasses on a cushion and stopped to look at the cabin clock.

"Would you like some tea?" she said doubtfully.

He shook his head. "Not today," he said.

The afternoon drowsed. A white excursion boat, with tiers of decks, like a heap of trays, and with two thin yel-

low funnels sharply raked, steamed eastward a mile away. The hills on the mainland were purple and mauve-gray.

This, he thought to himself, was a life only a man who had been a sea toiler and who had preserved his intelligence, could relish completely. Unaware of it, he had been preparing himself for this for years, he now understood. Almost he could conceive what men meant when they spoke of "being guided," or when they declared that they had been "led by the grace of God" to this or that felicitous consummation. Or the Victorian allusion to "meeting one's fate." It sounded mawkish and theatrical now, he reflected, but it was the phrase, not the experience, which dated. All over the world, for instance, young men were suffering the pangs of young love, just as he himself had suffered them thirty-odd years ago. The only difference was that in those days one had the seed and the tender flower, and then it withered. Now they had to nurse it along until it bore bitter fruit, and then they blamed society because it was bitter. Then, in middle age—emotional dyspepsia.

Yes, he was fortunate in every way, and all without forfeiting what he valued most, his independence of mind and spirit. Perdita was the one perfect woman in the world, he believed, for sharing such a supreme experience. He watched her now, for a moment, before taking another look around. She had a genius for quick, silent obedience. Tell her to do this and that, she went at it and got it done. Whether she knew it or not, it was the right way with him. It astonished him that such a quality could be thrilling and an inspiration of passion. Yet it was. It had an almost corporeal shape, this attitude of hers, which he could handle and caress. All her qualities, indeed, had this solidity and shapeliness of spirit, so that you either loved her or hated her, he suspected.

He heard her speak in a muffled voice. She was pulling her sweater over her head.

"You coming in too?"

She had on a swim suit under her slacks. Kicking these off, she came out of the cabin quickly, a saffron-colored rubber cap on her head, her bronze-green eyes smiling.

"Just a second," he said. One of her straps was twisted, and he passed his hand over her shoulder to straighten it. She stood perfectly still and straight, smiling and looking at the Long Island shore, as he did this, loving him in silence.

"Stay alongside," he warned. She stepped on to the seat, nodding.

"Your hands!" she said as she stood making ready. "I never loved anyone to touch me before. Hurry up."

She went over the side cleanly, and swam under water to the bow.

In a moment he made ready and followed her. The water was cool. He could never get used to the shock of it, having done nearly all his swimming in tropical seas. Not even a day of blazing sun could take the chill off these Sound waters.

When he reached the sharply raked stem, she was swimming past the counter, which was like the roof of a house, a smooth slope on which the words *Glory Hole, Norhaven,* gleamed white in the sunset. He swam aft, waited until she came into view, and gave her a hail.

"All aboard," he said, and pulled himself over the gunwale.

As she came to the side, he was waiting with a heavy towel robe. He put it over her shoulders.

"That rubber cap suits you. What color d'you call it. Yellow?"

"If you like. 'Sulky saffron's' the trade name."

"We used to call it gamboge," he told her. "Whatever it is, it suits you."

"Same color as my eyes," she said. "Excuse me." She dived into the cabin and closed the door.

Chapter Twelve

THERE! That's the first flash," said Perdita. They were returning from the long, perfect day. They had talked a great deal, and it had all been decided. She would leave Elliot; and since they could not stay in Norbury; they would go to England to live, despite the imminence of war.

She nodded toward the Norhaven lighthouse. The sun was behind the hills, and the light suddenly showed like a tiny jewel in the dusk. She was steering while he unjointed the rods and stowed the gear.

"I'll take her in a minute," he said. "Slow her down. There's no hurry."

"I wish we didn't have to go back there," she said.

"Take it easy. You are in my charge now."

"Yes; but I'm not sure of myself."

"You are stronger than you try to make out. I think you're very strong, though I don't know"—he came in and sat beside her—"I don't know how you got that way."

"I don't understand you," she said.

"I don't see how you became what you are, from the kid you must have been when you married that Archie Pargett of yours. How did you evolve into—"

"I still don't understand. Evolve? It sounds as if I'd changed from something into something else."

"You have, I believe. I try to think what brought it about."

"Having Sonia, for one thing. Did I tell you Sonia was Archie's choice for a name? Do you think it suitable?"

"Not very."

"It isn't. I had a bad time in the hospital in Los Angeles. She gave me a lot of grief. I don't see how any woman could help evolving in that place! Another thing that might change me from a bread-and-butter chit to what I am, was—starving. Doing without bread and butter."

"Starving?"

She nodded without looking at him. "I don't mean going short. I mean going faint because I hadn't money to buy food. I nearly went to heaven once, I was so dizzy and light in my head. Sonia was about four then. Oh, lor'!"

"A man always forgets that part of the business. Since I've known you, I've come to the conclusion I've dodged a lot of things in the past."

"Oh, I wouldn't say *dodged,* darling! You didn't *dodge* anything. One has these things happen, or one doesn't. You've been loyal, I think."

"To what? To principle, I grant you. But to what else?"

"I'll tell you. You know you said that girl you were in love with, in Greece, or some such place. . . . You were in love with her, weren't you? . . . Yes, you take it now." She gave him the wheel.

"Yes, all right; what about her?"

"Well, you kept her memory all that time. That was loyal. But was she in love with you?"

"I don't know. Ah, well! She wasn't. I told you how it was—and she wasn't."

"And was any other girl in love with you?"

"I don't know. I never heard of one. If she was, I never knew it. What are you getting at?"

"There you are! I'm the first. That's what I was getting at. Because *I am!* I'm a damned lucky girl. What do you think about that?"

"Can't tell you while I'm steering." He switched on his side lights. "We've got to face the facts of life now, though, my damned lucky girl. Do you want me to see Elliot and tell him we're going away together?"

"Heavens, no! No necessity for that. What do you think I am? A funk?"

"No. But it is my job."

"Not anybody's job. Unless it makes you feel better. Are you going over to Sydney Saxpool's house to tell him? I say, are you?"

She crept close to him in the deepening evening as they chugged softly into the river under the mild beam of the lighthouse lantern. The land was dark beneath the deep colors of the sunset.

He kept his attention on the course, not wanting to look toward that other woman's house. He certainly didn't want the job of going there; and so he said no, he wouldn't do that. She said, in a low tone:

"Well, what *are* you going to do?"

"Get you home first. If he's still over there, then we'll get Sonia from her camp and push off as soon as I can make the arrangements. I'll tell you what papers you have to bring to New York. I must go in tomorrow."

He could see the lights on the club veranda. He slowed down still more.

"I suppose you can depend on that man of yours to be on the job?"

"Louis? Good old Louis. Yes, he'll be there, all right. I'll be sorry to lose Louis."

"I suppose it can't be helped. He wouldn't leave Elliot, would he?"

"He's not so keen about what's happened. He didn't like *me* at first; it was Sonia he took to. Later he seemed to tolerate me."

"I understand Louis perfectly. Well, I understand him in that respect. I don't know how your leaving would strike him. We can cross all those bridges when we come to them."

"Except the Bridge of Sighs! I believe I'm losing my nerve, my dear, now we're coming into port. Do you know what I was going to suggest? That we anchor near Church Yard, and I could swim ashore. So nobody would see me. What's the matter with me, do you suppose?"

"Don't worry. What we do is nobody's business. We'll just make fast and lock up. I'll bring up the stuff in the morning. And there's the car to take you along home. In the morning—"

Slowly the *Glory Hole* moved into the dredged basin, and to the dock.

As they came gently to the end of the jetty, he saw a group move along the club veranda and stand at the doors while one slender figure rippled down the steps and ran toward him. It was one of the club servants in uniform.

"Damn and blast!" he said. "Get into the cabin and stay there while I see what's up." He cut his engine and switched off the side-lights.

SHE obeyed him. Stepping on to the jetty with his painter in his hand, Mr. Spenlove faced a youth out of breath with his run.

"Mr. Spenlove?"

"What?"

"Mrs. Ducroy—you've seen her? We've a message for Mrs. Ducroy. It's important."

"All right. Make fast first. What is it? What's the important message?"

The young man made a sudden gesture of urgency. He gaped and swallowed.

"You better see the club secret'ry right away," he said breathlessly. "You better!"

"All *right!* Mrs. Ducroy is coming ashore at once. Now run along, as you don't seem to know what the message is. Do you?"

"It's—it's Mr. Ducroy!" the youth said. He thought a moment, and decided to make a run for it. He had news. She was here at last. She was about to be told. He hastened away to tell them she was coming.

The faint note of hysteria in his voice had reached Perdita, readying herself in the cabin. She came out, and Mr. Spenlove helped her on to the dock.

"You heard what he said?"

She nodded, and they walked together toward the clubhouse. Suddenly she took his arm and raised her chin a little. Her eyes were bright and hard with decision and a touch of panic.

"Now, now!" he said.

He saw the club secretary come down the steps to meet them.

"What's wrong?" Mr. Spenlove said sharply.

The young man led them at once around to the back of the club, where his office looked out on the parking-lot. As he closed the door behind him, he said:

"There's been an accident! Mr. Ducroy was swimming—"

"Where was this? Here?"

The secretary coughed.

"At Miss Saxpool's." He made a gesture in the direction of the river. "It was very warm and they went in swimming. He had an attack—"

"Where is he now?" Perdita asked.

"At your house, Mrs. Ducroy. They tried to locate you. We heard you were fishing. So we kept watch on the boats coming in."

"A serious attack?"

"Very serious, Mrs. Ducroy. I was asked to warn you, to prepare you—"

He looked at her with anxiety.

"He isn't dead, is he?"

The secretary nodded nervously. Perdita turned and went toward the door without dramatics. For a moment she moved like an automaton, without fire or feeling. Then she came to life. She turned toward Mr. Spenlove gently, but spoke to the secretary, who was also the manager.

"I see," she said. "Will you excuse us? It was awfully kind of you to—"

"Not at all," the secretary said.

"Of course I must go at once," she added. She looked at Mr. Spenlove for a moment, a glance of extraordinary intensity. During that moment, perhaps due to the lighting in the office, her eyes seemed black and opaque. It was a glance of supreme surrender and appeal.

He went to her and put his arm around her shoulders. He turned to the secretary.

"I'll take her home. Will you see my boat is berthed? I'll leave you the keys. I'll be down in the morning. Will you be so good?"

They walked across the parking-space to his car, in the early evening dusk. Once, in the smaller more intense darkness of the car, while he waited for the engine to get away, she held her hands to her face. He was careful to avoid anything in the shape of theatricals. From long habit at sea, he was conditioned to keep his head in a crisis, even in a crisis in which he could not, as it were, assume command. His philosophy was, if you can't be in charge of events, you can be in charge of yourself.

He drove down to the shore road. He was outwardly calm, but in his mind was tumult. He was suddenly faced with a situation perfectly familiar as a common hazard of existence, but frightening as a personal issue.

To avoid entanglement with human folly had been his policy for so long, that he could not immediately realize that period in his life was definitely over.

So he drove, carefully and in silence, along to the Ducroy house. He stopped behind a line of cars that led up to the front door.

"Now, do you want me to go in with you?" he said.

"It's going to be awful, but I don't see how I can bring you into it. But will you come round tomorrow? I'm going to telephone to the camp for them to bring Sonia back."

"Why not let me go and get her? It's only sixty miles."

"Would you? It's dear of you. Yes, it would be better."

"Because I want Sonia as well as you," he said, stroking her cheek.

"I love you so much!"

"You'll have people there."

"You don't suppose. . . . I say, you don't suppose *she's* here, do you?"

"We'll go in together."

The doctor, an elderly, gray-faced person with a sagging abdomen and pale eyes behind gold-rimmed nose-glasses, was coming down the curving staircase.

"This is Mr. Spenlove, Doctor," Perdita said. "A friend of—of ours. . . . What was it? The stroke, I mean—Mr. Ducroy. Was it—" She touched her breast.

"Angina," the old gentleman said. *"Angina pectoris."*

"He's had one or two attacks before," she said.

"He ought to have avoided violent exercise," the doctor grumbled. "Dived off Miss Saxpool's float. Been working all day in a hot room. It's been hot today," he added. He took out a yellow silk handkerchief and wiped his glasses.

"Then it was drowning?" Perdita asked fully.

"Nope. He got to the stage all right, and was pullin' himself up, and fell back. Somebody saw him and grabbed him. Got him into the house and sent for me.

"Too late, I understand."

"I thought there was a chance at first. Can't always tell with the coronary art'ries. We had a consultation. Overexertion. Must have forgot the warnin' he had in Hollywood. Miss Saxpool told us he had an attack out there."

"I'll go up with you," Perdita said to the doctor. Then as Mr. Spenlove moved toward the door, she said:

"I don't think I'll stay here tonight. Will you take me to the Inn later?"

"I'll be back about eight-thirty," he said.

He saw her appeal in her eyes, to keep this business, this infernal business, on a formal basis. He made a bow to include them both; and as he went out, he heard her tell the doctor who he was, and how he was going to get her daughter from camp next day.

AS Mr. Spenlove turned into his own narrow lane and drove up to the cottage, he realized that he was in need of a stimulant. He unlocked his house and turned on the lights, experiencing another need. It was a shocking thing, he realized, but it was the truth, that he wanted Perdita there, now, in his house. It was a sudden overpowering realization that his scheme of things, cunningly contrived over the years to keep him safe from the disintegrating forces of society, had itself disintegrated.

He poured himself a double whisky and water and sat down in the dark porch to take stock. There was a hoarse sound at the screen door. He rose to open it.

"You too, eh!" he muttered. Tobermory thrust a lean, hard body against him. Here was another individualist who had discovered that it was better to give an occasional hostage to fortune. It wasn't, he reflected with a dour smile, as he went out to give the old warrior his evening chop—it wasn't merely "cupboard love" as they stupidly called it. Else why, after he had been fed, and sometimes when he might have gone off on his own affairs, would the old bandit crouch close to the boat or the bench, and watch the tools moving, making the deep rumbling of utter cat's peace in his throat?

It was a strange sensation, he thought, when he went back to his drink, to find oneself a different person entirely from the imagined perfection. He still assumed that being an intellectual hermit was perfection, though why? Why? The hermits he had read about had not been admirable, save through the art of writers who had not been hermits.

No, that idea was ended. He had found romance, he who had never expected it. And another idea was ended too. Both he and Perdita had drawn back from the idea of marriage—he because he had always lived a life free of obligations, and she because of her disastrous experience with marriage. But now he could think of nothing but what she had been to him, what she meant for him, and what he now desired. That was possession, marriage; and it meant Sonia too, her child.

Chapter Thirteen

THE next morning Mr. Spenlove went to get Sonia from the girls' camp where she had been sent for the summer. It was a warm day again; and he wished, for once, that he had overcome his conservative reluctance and had bought a faster car. Today he wanted to go fast. He wanted to flash up these Connecticut hills and float marvelously, swiftly, as though air-borne, through the townships. Cars passed him, and he experienced a new emotion, of mortification. There was no logic in it. He had inveighed with irrefutable sagacity against Perdita's occasional eighty miles an hour in the Virago, and she had accepted the reproof meekly, dropping to sixty-five just to please him. Now he felt that if he had it, he would do sixty himself.

This was a symbol of the change going on, undoubtedly a form of rejuvenation. The fact of his immense seniority in his job at sea, because he had come into the company so long ago as a result of a merging of financial interests, had imposed upon Mr. Spenlove a patriarchal rôle. He had been there before any of them. He saw how he had become conditioned, as they say, to being a sort of oldest inhabitant in his profession. He had become used to regarding himself as a veteran among men who had been boys in school while he was gaining his first laurels in the company. The feeling that he was "on the shelf," as he called it, had hardened around his mentality like a shell and immobilized his emotions.

Perdita had broken the shell, and now he was beginning to move again with ease.

Once beyond Torrington and on the right road, he began to think of Sonia. In any case, her life would run parallel with his for a few years. His passion for loveliness had been a strict regimen for many years at sea, fed on the austere grandeur of lonely waters and mountains seen from afar. The virginal loveliness of youth, as Sonia had it, was like wine to him. There was also her character, which had a firm grain and a strength he could feel when she was with her mother. He found himself depending on that strength already, to aid him with Perdita.

The dirt road he was following, past a State forest with lofty green hills beyond, took a wide sweep around a stand of tall timber, then forked. Presently he met a private bus with a number of extremely brown girls inside. He stopped abreast of it and made inquiries of the chauffeur. One of the girls called in a shrill voice: "Sonia Pargett's going home. She had a phone call from her mother."

"That's all right," Mr. Spenlove told her. "I'm the messenger. Sonia's coming home with me."

He went on; and soon, among the trees, he saw log cabins. He saw archery targets, very brilliant, set up in a row on a grassy sward. He saw barbecues and tennis-courts, and presently a lake with canoes and yawls and diving-boards before a boathouse. As he proceeded, he beheld tents in which more girls lay on cot-beds, enjoying a siesta after lunch. And then the track led on to a large building where cars were parked in a semi-circle, and another bus, exactly like the one he had met, stood empty by the steps leading to the central door.

He went into a wide dark hall. A sign showed him the office, and a young woman with gray hair and an appearance of extreme competence came forward to greet him. He told her who he was.

"Mrs. Ducroy phoned this morning," she said, nodding. "She said you were coming for Sonia. Won't you sit down and wait? She'll be right down. She's changing."

"Did her mother tell you—"

"Yes. She asked our advice about telling Sonia at once."

"What was your advice? This is rather out of my line. I'd be glad to have a suggestion. I don't fancy a sixty-mile trip under false pretenses. Sonia is intelligent."

"I told her that her father—her stepfather, that is—had had an accident, and was not expected to recover."

"That's true. He isn't."

"That's the impression in her mind at present. You can go on from there. The Hartford paper has just come, and there's something about Mr. Ducroy. Just a brief mention. Of course Sonia wouldn't read the paper, but we have held it up until she's gone, so nobody will tell her."

"You have a nice place here."

"It's a good camp. The girls are really happy."

"Did Mrs. Ducroy say anything about Sonia's coming back here?"

"She said she might have to leave, at any time. I suppose Mrs. Ducroy's position is bound to be—well, changed, now."

"She's going to England. She's English, you know."

"Is she? And is Sonia going with her?"

"Naturally. Sonia could come back here next week, let's say, for a few days, after this funeral business is over."

"I understand. We'll be sorry to lose her."

She moved off, obviously eager to be back in her office. "I'll send her right out," she said, smiling professionally. Mr. Spenlove bowed and sat down in a large chair in front of a prodigious stone fireplace. He took a magazine from the table.

There it was, one of the featured stories in the book: "Gentleman Church Goes Home." That was prophetic, Mr. Spenlove thought. He laid it down, pondering the situation. The quick, nervous sentences, the rush of action, the staccato dialogue, the incessant allusion to forceful qualities and virile antagonism—all this brought the now dead writer before him in imagination. It was a strange thing that such a man, who could fill the leisure moments of millions with harmless amusement, should have been so unsuccessful in achieving enduring happiness for himself.

PERHAPS fifteen minutes later a young lady in a tweed coat, yellow shantung skirt, silk stockings and white shoes appeared on the landing. As she came downstairs holding a small hat and a pocketbook, he saw that it was Sonia, dressed for the street.

He was astonished to realize that he had imagined it was Perdita. He had never seen Perdita in the child so plainly before.

Sonia came up to him quickly, a sudden charming smile of welcome on her deliciously small features. For a magical instant she was close to him, and seemed to utter a faint sigh of pleasure. The gray-haired young lady came out of the office. Another girl, in camp clothes, was carrying Sonia's suitcase out to the car. Mr. Spenlove heard the gray-haired lady murmur something to Sonia, whose eyes were on the girl with the suitcase. He bowed to the director and followed the two children to the car.

"This is Shiela," Sonia said. "Shiela Boldwin, my friend."

The other girl put down the suitcase beside the car and gave Mr. Spenlove a firm handshake, a precise, businesslike salutation. She immediately dropped his hand and stood looking at him. She had a broad freckled face with gray eyes and firm mouth. She was slightly bigger than Sonia; her breasts were more fully developed, and her manner more authoritative. Sonia was obviously the follower, Shiela the leader.

"She'll be back," he told Shiela, who looked straight at him without speaking.

Sonia said, suddenly putting out a hand:

"Good-by!"

Shiela suddenly broke her pose and hugged Sonia, quickly, strongly, like a boy hugging a chum after a fine feat. Sonia responded vigorously, then got into the car; the suitcase was shoved in behind, and they started.

Sonia did not speak for a long time. Once or twice she waved a hand to girls she saw in tents or walking on the forest paths. Then, as they reached the main road, she subsided and looked ahead.

There was an odd air of maturity about her. She seemed older. Mr. Spenlove had never seen her save in the play-suits and shorts of her life at home. Now she was elegant and possessed an unexpected gravity and dignity.

"What about Hector?" he asked her. "I expected him to come too."

"He's at the vet's," she said. "He picked up something in the woods."

There was another silence, yet it was not unpleasant. Sonia sat ever so slightly nearer to him than if he had been a stranger, and she had a sympathetic personality. It was, he supposed, the germ of Perdita's thrilling magnetism. Possibly, too, the not-so-wonderful Archie Pargett might have contributed something to Sonia's charm.

"What about lunch? Did you have any?" he inquired. She nodded, waiting politely to hear if he had eaten. He said, no, not since breakfast. They'd stop somewhere.

AS the car pulled up at a roadside restaurant, she leaned toward him.

"Is Mummy all right?"

His heart gave a queer jump. He realized with a pang, both painful and pleasurable, that he and Sonia were confronting a job of work. The way she said the words "all right," told him that Sonia was aware of this.

"Quite all right," he said. He was noting that she made this inquiry first.

"I'm awfully glad. I wanted to ask you, but I couldn't at camp, and we're not supposed to talk much to anyone driving a car."

"Quite right. Now we'll have a snack."

"Is Mummy worrying about Elliot? Did it happen at home?"

"No, not at home."

"Then he was at the other place."

"What other place?"

"That house where Sydney Saxpool lives."

"What do you know about Sydney Saxpool?" he asked. They were both out of the car now. Sonia stood beside him, her white wash gloves and her purse in her hands. Mr. Spenlove locked the car.

She said: "Mummy's been upset. She said she was going to leave Elliot. Shiela told me. . . . Shiela heard."

She looked down at the graveled parking-place, and poked a pebble with her white shoe.

"You like Shiela?"

"She's my bestest friend!"

"Oho. I thought I was going to be a friend."

"Oh, you are! And Louis! Have you seen Louis?"

"No. But I think he's on the job. Your mother told me only yesterday morning that Louis was on the job. You see, your mother and I were out fishing in my new boat when Elliot had this accident. He was swimming."

"Mummy told me. Have you finished your boat? Oh, and how is Tobermory?"

"He prospers. You know, the wicked always prosper. I'm sorry Hector is out of luck."

"It was his own fault. He's so disobedient."

"It was his disobedience that introduced me—don't you remember? And that introduced your mother too. You introduced her."

"I know," Sonia said. She walked into the restaurant as though her heeled shoes were unfamiliar. Once or twice her ankles turned on the pebbles of the drive.

They sat down in a room empty of customers but full of tables with check tablecloths. The bar was vacant. A waitress came and took their order.

"If anything happens to Elliot, you will have to take care of your mother."

"Oh, yes, of course."

"Your mother gave me the impression, Sonia, that if anything happened, she might go to England, and of course she'd want you to go too. Wouldn't you like that—to see your grandparents?"

"Oh!" The idea of England was evidently novel and vague to Sonia. Her beautiful enigmatic eyes, changing in color, expressed a sort of virginal skepticism of the reality of any existence so far away.

"Well, would you? I practically promised to inquire and see how you felt about it."

"Is Elliot at home?" she asked suddenly.

"Not now. He's at the hospital, I expect."

She had her fingers on the cloth in front of her, and she raised her eyes from them to look across the table at him with her clear, trustful, interrogating glance.

It reminded him of her aversion to being "psyched" as she called it, and his secret consternation at discovering such notions in the head of one so young.

Now he suspected a shadow of doubt in her thoughts as to the exact state of affairs at home.

"I see," she said, and looked down at the tablecloth again. She was demure in her acceptance of what the immediate future might hold for her. Possibly, he thought, she had the instinctive confidence of youth and sex that she would be guarded and cherished. Possibly she had already an intuition of his part in the business.

"I'm pretty certain it's terribly serious," she said earnestly. "About Elliot, I mean. Mummy wouldn't have sent for me if she hadn't felt it was serious."

There was a sort of magic in that word *serious,* he told himself. He realized he had repeated twice, as she had. It was a refuge. He hated prevarication. He was unconsciously attempting to thrust it from between them.

He thought, as he ate his sandwich and drank his beer, "I must have Sonia with me if I marry her mother." It was suddenly apparent to him that Perdita had no chance to stand out against the two of them.

"Don't forget," he said, as he paid the check and they went out to the car. "If your mother goes to England, you must go along to take care of her."

"Of course I'll go with Mummy," she said.

"I was thinking of going over too," he said as they got into the car.

"Oh!" She looked at him with beautiful, unfathomable eyes. She clapped her hands softly, so that he lost his heart to her over again. "Oh, couldn't we go together?"

"We might. Ask your mother. Think she'd like it?"

He started the engine and let in the clutch.

"I'm pretty sure she would!" Sonia said. As the car gathered speed and headed westward, she gave a quick, gasping laugh. It was as if she had gained a glimpse of the golden future as the sun shone in her eyes, and she repeated her words.

"I'm absolutely *sure* she would!" she exclaimed.

Chapter Fourteen

HE was upstairs packing, preparing to go to New York, when he saw the huge car which he remembered as belonging to Miss Penge, the enterprising dealer in antique furniture. He was not surprised. He had seen her at the funeral service in Norbury, sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Cagliari. He had observed her catch sight of him and immediately converse with Mrs. Cagliari, who at once stared across the aisle at him.

The sight of the big old car, with Miss Penge preparing to get out, brought back the experiences of that forenoon in a sacred edifice. He had remained completely aloof from the cortège, which had surprised him by the number of black frock coats and top hats. He had not realized so many men still had them in this country, he told himself. The honorary pallbearers walked in couples behind the paid mortuarians who actually carried the casket. They looked like mutes, Mr. Spenlove thought, with their expressionless faces, funereal garb and the gray gloves supplied by the undertaker's assistant.

He had remained completely aloof. When Sonia had seen her mother in a black dress, she had stood stock-still for a moment, and then had put her arms about Perdita gently and without speaking. Then she had walked gravely out of the room to find her friend Louis.

Mr. Spenlove took Perdita by the arm and led her into the garden. She stood on the terrace dressed in black, beautifully tall and full of splendid vigorous life. It was

almost as if, without her knowing it, the death of Elliot Ducroy had bequeathed his vitality, which he no longer could use, to her.

"Don't go away!" she said. "I want to feel you're there. Don't leave us!"

"I'll be there. I'll go to the funeral too. One of the fellow-townsmen. Yes, I'll be just a fellow-townsman. Have you had a bad time today?"

"I've had a terrible time. People coming and phoning all the time. I had this dress sent over from Norbury with a woman to do some fitting. She's here now, making me some widow's weeds. . . . Well, I was a good wife to him as long as he wanted a wife. That was a long time ago, before he made so much money."

"Have you seen Mr. Irvill, the agent? You ought to, you know. He is very upset."

"Not yet. Elliot trusted him. I can't attend to business yet. I don't *want* to!"

"You should have a competent lawyer. I know a man in New York—he advised me about this place of mine, got it for me, in fact—he'll know a good firm. Mr. Merry would know a good man."

"Couldn't I leave all that to you?"

"No, you couldn't! The moment anyone in Norbury heard that, they'd say that I was after your money. Sinister influence of mysterious stranger on wealthy widow."

PERDITA pressed his arm again. "How do we know I'm wealthy?"

"I'm assuming there's something in Irvill's anxiety. He has bank-books to show you."

"The woman who's fitting me is outraged; she thinks I ought to be lying down in a darkened room, weeping. What I feel, my dear, isn't grief, but confusion. I'm so puzzled over my own emotions. You see, he was so horribly in love with her! It was painful to think of, when you knew. It's *she* who ought to be measured for these weeds."

She held back a laugh that became a choking convulsive sound. He stopped her.

"Go," he said quietly. "Go now. Sonia has been splendid. Sonia will take care of you. My dear!"

He pressed her arm and pushed her out gently.

"I'll be there all the time," he said.

"That's a promise!" she said.

So he had gone to the obsequies, sitting well back, but not so far back that Miss Penge, who knew everybody in that part of the church and nodded to them all, did not notice him and told Mrs. Cagliari, who looked at him almost at once. . . .

She had come, he thought now, to spy out the land. Making, as the local phrase so crisply put it, a check-up. He put on his coat and went down to see what she wanted.

He had made his arrangements with Mrs. Sankey, his cleaning-woman, to keep an eye on the place. As he went downstairs, he looked at his watch. He had about an hour to finish his packing and lock up, leaving Mrs. Sankey to put the key under the mat. The barn was already secured, and his boat was hauled up.

He held open the door for Miss Penge. She came in smiling. She was dressed with unusual smartness. New shoes and thinner stockings than she usually wore, and her hair had been rearranged, so that she seemed, if not younger, less virtuous. He shook hands as he thought of this, and the gleam in his dark ironical eyes, under the upthrusting gray brows, daunted her a little.

"Miss Penge, this is a pleasure! I thought you'd forgotten me."

She sat down on the porch seat. The door of the house was closed, and the shade of the window giving onto the porch was down, to keep out the afternoon sun.

"Thought you'd forgotten me," she said briskly. "Thought you'd never recognized me at the funeral service."

"It was the hat," he said, smiling. "A hat does change a woman's appearance. You're looking extremely well. How's business?"

"Very good. That reminds me: You got any spare cash?"

Mr. Spenlove was startled. That, he thought, is New England. They come to the point.

"On the premises, you mean?" His thoughts went to the leather case upstairs, with its thick roll of travelers' checks and cash money, its sheaf of passports, and steamship papers.

Miss Penge waved the idea away.

"Shucks, no. There's a party died suddenly over by Totoket, an old friend o' mine. We used to go to auctions together up in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. She was a widow. She died suddenly. The whole of her stock's for sale at about half what it's worth. I took an option on the lot. I've got to take it up this week. Y'see, they know I'm one of her oldest friends; and her nieces, who've inherited, are goin' to live in the house, so they want a quick sale."

Mr. Spenlove said he supposed Miss Penge had private reasons for confiding in him her business problems.

"Thought you'd like to go in on it," she said. "It's a mite too big for me to handle alone, but you'd turn your money over in six months and make a good profit."

"What are they asking, Miss Penge?"

"Twenty-five hundred for the lot, take it away yourself. That's what I called to see you about. I didn't care to use the telephone. Nobody knows about it yet."

"It's a speculation," he said gravely.

"Sure. But you got something you can *see,* and it always sells above what I'm getting it for."

"Twelve hundred and fifty dollars?"

She nodded.

"You must be a mind-reader," he said. "Let's have a beer. We can drink on it."

He made his voice sound as casual as possible. Miss Penge, sitting on the swing porch seat, had her back to the house that Mrs. Sankey was setting in order for his departure. Miss Penge was not sure whether Mr. Spenlove had agreed to her suggestion. He was surely a cool customer. But he evidently didn't realize that it was *because* he knew very little about the antique business, and wasn't likely to take advantage of what she was telling him, that she was making the proposition.

He came back with the beer, the last contents of the icebox. Mrs. Sankey was carrying off the rest of the perishables when she went home this afternoon. He handed Miss Penge a glass and held up his own.

"The best of luck in your adventure," he said.

"You mean you'll go in with me? I'll git a lawyer to draw the papers. You'll not regret it, I can say that. I'll take up my option at once."

"You attend to it. I'm going to New York to see a friend of mine."

Miss Penge sipped her beer, and nodded, smiling.

"I guess you'll find it a bit lonesome here, now your neighbors are goin' away. I understand Mrs. Ducroy's goin' to see her folks in England."

He looked at her gravely from his chair in the far corner of the porch, and nodded.

"Possibly. Would you take a check now and give me a receipt? It happens I sold an investment, and it brought me considerably more than I actually needed. So I've the money there in the bank."

MISS PENGE nodded. She understood such things. He got up and went into the house. He went upstairs and took out his check-book, tore a receipt form from a block and went downstairs again. He invited her in to sit at a table and offered her a fountain pen.

"I'll have a catalogue printed," she said. "I got an invent'ry of the stock." She put down the pen and took up the check. Mr. Spenlove blotted the receipt and folded it.

Miss Penge was a little excited when she resumed her seat on the porch. She drank some more of the beer.

"I hope you don't think I come over just to do business," she said.

"Didn't you?" he said, smiling in the way that had confused her so when she first met him.

"Why, no!" she said. "Thought maybe you'd be over to visit me sometime. Now you got a car. Guess you find a a car a convenience."

"That's right," he said, nodding. He hoped she wouldn't stay too long. "So is a boat."

She smiled with a certain archness.

"I heard you'd fixed your boat. You go fishin'?"

"I did not long ago. Just before Mr. Ducroy died."

"You did? That's brought some changes, I guess, him dyin' like that. They say it was only a matter o' months, and she was goin' to get a divorce. Waitin' for a residence qualification, I guess."

"Who?"

"Why, Mrs. Ducroy. And now she's goin' to England. They come, and they go. I've seen a lot of 'em here, come and go."

"Mrs. Ducroy is only paying a visit to her parents, I believe," he said quietly. He looked at his watch again.

"Maybe so, but she'll never live here alone, after what's happened."

MR. SPENLOVE folded his arms and seemed to meditate this, his eyes on the floor between them.

"I think," Miss Penge went on rapidly, an unusual brilliance in her glance, "I think we ought to set an example. Most Norbury people live here all their lives, and they live with their lawful partners too."

"Are you thinking of getting a lawful partner?" he inquired.

Miss Penge gave a loud laugh. She looked round at the door to see if it was closed.

"I don't mind admittin', Mr. Spenlove, I used that bit o' business as a sort of lead. I thought to myself, this is as good an opportunity as ever to offer Mr. Spenlove a partnership. More'n business."

There was a silence. There was, for a moment, no sound at all. Mr. Spenlove did not fall down dead; nor did he spring up and run into the house, as Miss Penge more than half expected him to.

"A partnership?" he said at last, faintly. "A purely financial one, of course."

"Why 'of course'?" she muttered, and looked at the toe of her bright new shoe.

He began, "I'm afraid—" and stopped short. He sat up listening. So did Miss Penge.

"Someone comin'," she said. After all, he thought smiling, what made her think he would never have any other visitors? His hermitlike appearance? His infernal self-possession? The sound was coming nearer. Miss Penge stood up slowly.

"Guess I'd better move my car," she said, frowning.

"Don't trouble," he said. "Since I moved that wall back, there's plenty of room. Ah!"

He did not dare look at Miss Penge as the Virago suddenly thrust its immense nose and headlights past the shrubs of his driveway and swung into view. He stood at the door looking down at Perdita, in a close black hat and suit, with Sonia at her side in rust brown. The car stopped beyond Miss Penge's, which seemed no longer very large and unimaginably obsolete.

The occupants sat quietly, smiling at him. The rear of the tonneau was full of coats and hand baggage. The large trunk at the back had new yellow leather straps.

He kept his back to Miss Penge and went down into the yard. He went up to Perdita.

"Miss Penge has been making a call," he said in a low voice, indicating the lady's car. "I'll excuse myself, and we can start. I've made all arrangements with—"

He moved away, looking at both of them. Perdita got out. They met Miss Penge coming hurriedly down from the porch.

Perdita greeted her:

"How do you do, Miss Penge? Have you met my daughter?"

Mr. Spenlove slipped into the house.

"I'm going now," he said, out back.

Mrs. Sankey, resting in an old rocker, passed the back of her hand across her moist brow and then wiped it on her apron to shake hands. All the orders and final words had been uttered. She said she hoped he'd have a good time.

"I'll write you," he said. "You have my box key. Read the mail if you like! Good-by!"

He hurried upstairs, closed his two suitcases and his attaché case and carried them down to the car. He found Miss Penge sitting behind the huge steering-wheel of the car she had bought for a song. Her robust figure seemed to be built into the vehicle. Perdita was saying:

"I'll back up and let you go out."

Miss Penge said shortly: "No, you go on out."

"Good-by, Miss Penge," Mr. Spenlove said. He offered his hand. He had put his baggage in the Virago. "Mrs. Ducroy is giving me a lift."

He left it at that, seeing her stare stonily at the new steamer labels on his baggage. Slowly he got in beside Sonia, who made room for him with a welcoming little wriggle that meant a great deal to Miss Penge, who saw it.

Slowly the Virago moved back, its enormous dual-valve engine sighing with an almost voluptuous ecstasy, as if it too were full of virile pleasure at returning to the land of its birth.

Mr. Spenlove gave his Panama hat a light tap to settle it, extended his right arm behind Sonia, and raised the other in a grave gesture of farewell to Miss Penge. The car suddenly went forward down the drive.

"Now go slow," he said, and Perdita nodded, keeping her eyes on the road. She knew what he meant, that it would hurt the feelings of Miss Penge if they flew away out of sight immediately.

THEY went slowly toward Sutton Corners. In the rear-vision mirrors they saw the lumbering vehicle, with its large wheels and solemn façade, following them. They saw Miss Penge turn into the gas station.

"That's that," said Perdita, smiling. "Please may I go now?"

"Go on," he said, looking down amiably at Sonia, as if amused at his new rôle of commander. "Full speed ahead. That is indeed that."

"What did she want, dear?" Perdita asked.

"I can tell you what she got," he said. And told her.

Perdita whistled. He said quickly:

"It's a perfectly good investment. She knows all there is to know about furniture. Yes, I was lucky. I got off cheap."

"Cheap? I don't understand."

"Some day I'll tell you. Some day when we have got out of Arcady."

Sonia looked up at him, her nose wrinkling in inquiry. She was very happy. She had everybody she loved, except Hector the dog, and Shiela. Poor Hector couldn't get into England on account of the quarantine laws. Shiela was going to Maine to a hunting-camp. Louis, however, was in New York, with heavy baggage. Louis would be on the ship with them. But—Arcady?

Perdita laughed. Evidently, Sonia thought, it was a grown-up allusion. The car sped through Norbury and fled along the pike to where they turned into the parkway. They would leave the car at the dock to be shipped, and have time for dinner and a show before going on board. A musical show, Sonia suggested. They were due to sail in the small hours.

"Is this too fast?" said Perdita. She gave him the old magical glance from those lovely eyes that changed color as he looked at them.

"No!" he said loudly. "Go faster! Full away!"

As the car began really to move, he added, calmly:

"Go as fast as you like!"

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