DECEMBER 1915

PRICE 15 CENTS

# THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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GILBERT PARKER
MEREDITH NICHOLSON

and 12 pace-setting Short Stories, including "The Gold Brick Twins" by IRVIN S. COBB

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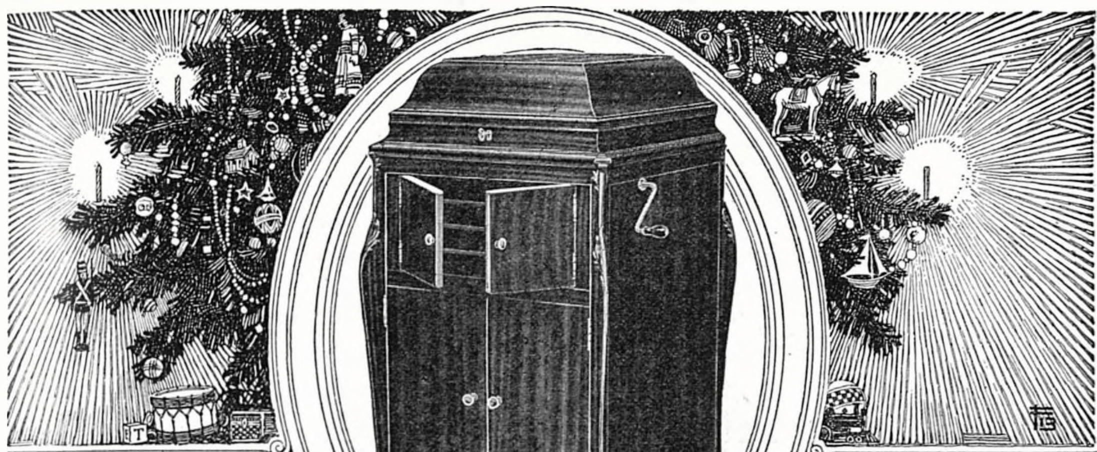

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***PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES***
**Beautiful Women of the Stage**

## *THE THREE BEST SERIAL NOVELS OF THE YEAR*

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The story of a girl's adventures with life and love in the busy years of 1914 and 1915.
*Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg*

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*Illustrated by C. H. Taffs*

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*Illustrated by Frank B. Hoffman*

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*Illustrated by Rea Irvin*

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**That Parson** — By A. E. Dingle — 390
A story of the sea by a writer who understands his subject and his craft.

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*Goldilocks*

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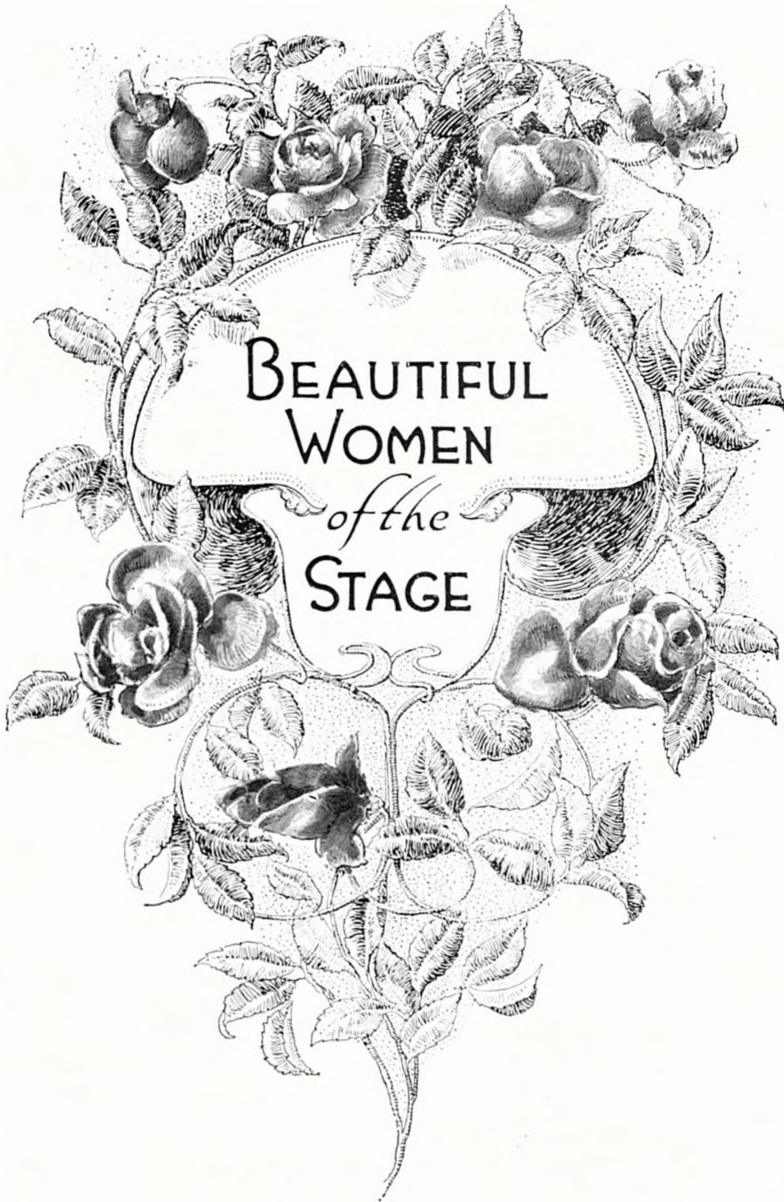
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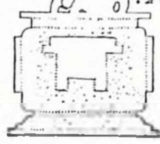
WOMEN
of the
STAGE



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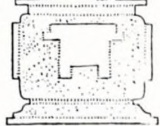

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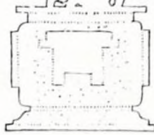

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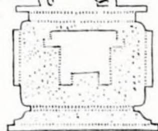

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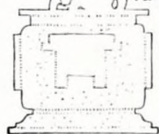

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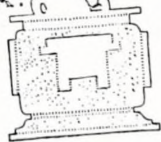

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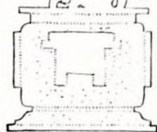

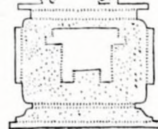

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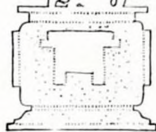

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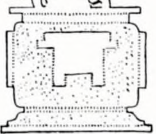

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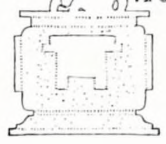

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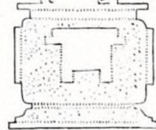

GERTRUDE ROLAND
in "Ned Wayburn's Town Topics"
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3rd—Make the suds with Ivory Soap paste. (See directions inside wrapper.)

This method avoids rubbing and extremes of temperature, both of which make woolens shrink. And, most important, the use of the mild, pure, neutral Ivory Soap keeps the suds free from alkali which not only shrinks woolens but makes them rough, stiff and uncomfortable.

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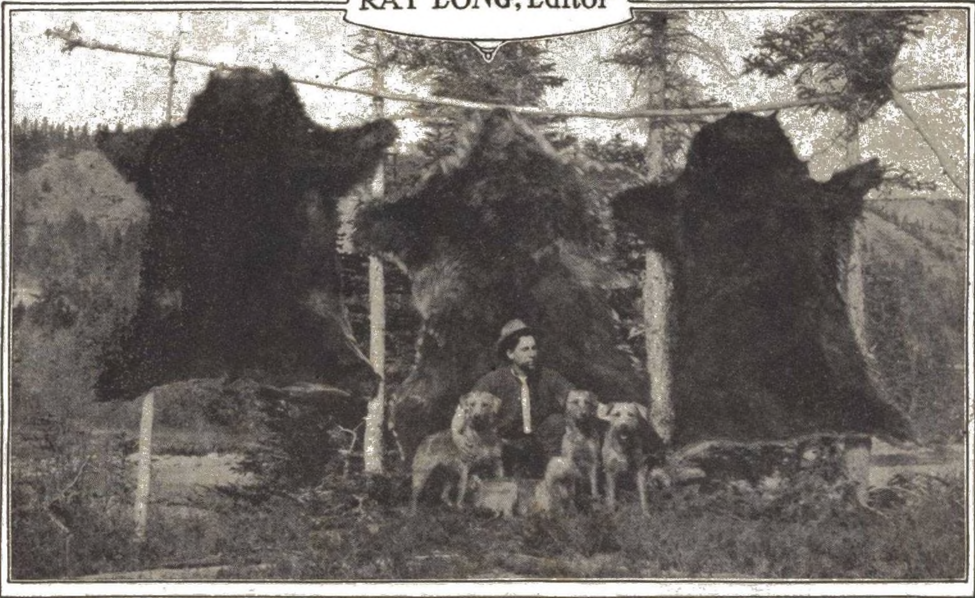
December • • 1915

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Vol. XXVI No. 2 • •

RAY LONG, Editor



Mr. Curwood with four of his Airedale bear-dogs and three of the grizzly pelts he got on his last trip to British Columbia.

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD, whose wonderful stories of "Kazan," the wolf-dog, evoked more enthusiasm than any feature ever published in a magazine, has written another novel of animal life. "The Grizzly" is the title, and the story will begin in the next—the January—issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE.

Mr. Curwood's knowledge of wild animal life is more complete than that of any other writer, and grizzly bears are his specialty. For, while he has killed many grizzlies on his hunting trips, he has spent more time studying them. He has watched the big lords of the ranges for weeks at a time, without shooting. This has been especially true on his last four annual trips into British Columbia, the greatest grizzly country in the world.

"For one whole week I followed a grizzly along a creek, studying his fishing operations," said Mr. Curwood in a recent letter. "This was the grizzly that met and fought the huge black bear, and killed him—a fight I describe in this novel.

"To corroborate certain facts regarding the birth, size, blindness, etc., of baby grizzlies, I dug out a grizzly mother on the Athabasca River and found young cubs a few days old. The mother was torpid. We did not kill her but left the cubs with her.

"One season my outfit was accompanied by a grizzly cub about four months old, and it was with us for three months—during which I received my greatest education in the ways of young bears, how they seek out the various roots, herbs and berries, how they learn to catch fish, and a hundred other things. More than all else, this cub taught me to love bears; it also proved to me convincingly that a bear can have as warm an attachment for a human as a dog.

"There is something about a bear-cub infinitely more lovable than a puppy or a dog. That is why I like this novel even better than 'Kazan'—I have put my real affection for the big fellow into the story."

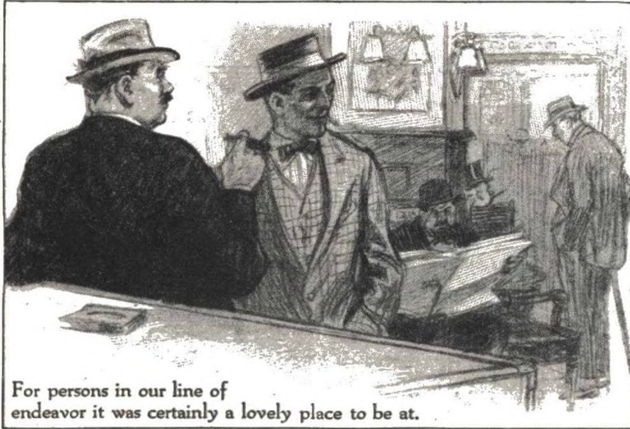
You had never thought of a bear as a lovable animal, had you? But you will realize just what Mr. Curwood means as you read his story. Begin—

## "THE GRIZZLY"

BY JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

In the January issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE.

# *The* GOLD BRICK



For persons in our line of endeavor it was certainly a lovely place to be at.

A new story of some old friends by the author of the famous "Judge Priest" stories.

"SAY, those old boys that used to write the fables—aint it curious how they nearly always had their dope straight?"

It was my highly improper friend Scandalous Doolan who put the question, thereby starting the conversation off on an entirely new tack. Until this, nothing whatever had been said about fables or the authors of fables. As I recall, the talk at the moment dealt with the habits of whales—he-whales and she-whales.

We had been speaking of whales in the first place, and whales had suggested ships, and ships suggested icebergs, and icebergs suggested soda fountains, and soda fountains suggested frothy things, and frothy things suggested mad dogs, and mad dogs suggested hot weather, and hot weather suggested light underwear, and light underwear suggested heavy underwear, and heavy underwear suggested polar explorers, and polar explorers suggested walruses, and walruses suggested whales. So here we were back again on whales, breezing along beautifully, when Scandalous' mind suddenly jibed and went about.

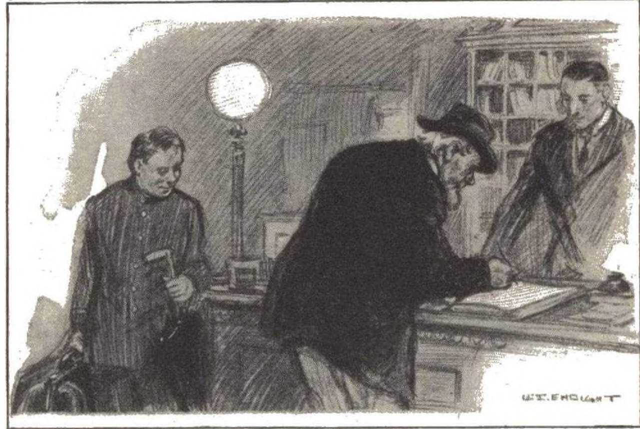
Had it been anyone else who interrupted, I am quite sure I should have felt a momentary sense of pique. A whale is one of the best things to talk about that I know of. In regard to whales and their peculiarities you can make almost any assertion without fear of successful contradiction. Nobody knows any more about the subject than you do. You are not hampered by facts. If some one mentions the blubber of the whale, and you chirp up and say it can be noticed for miles on a still day when the large but emotional creature has been moved to tears by some great sorrow coming into its life, everybody else is bound to accept the statement. For after all, how few among us really know whether a distressed whale sobs aloud or does so under its breath? And who, with any certainty, can tell whether a mother whale hatches her egg like a hen or leaves it on the sheltered bosom of a fjord to be incubated by the gentle warmth of the midnight sun? The possibilities of the proposition for purposes of informal discussion, pro and con, are apparent at a glance.

Personally I would give it first rank. The weather helps out amazingly when you are meeting people for the first time, because there is nearly always more or less weather going on somewhere, and practically everybody has ideas about it. Breakfast also is a wonderfully first-aid topic to bring up in a mixed company. Try it yourself the next time the conversation seems to lull. Just speak up in an off-hand kind of way and say you never care much about breakfast, that a slice of toast and a cup of weak tea start you off properly for doing a hard day's work. You will be surprised to see

# TWINS By Irvin S. Cobb

ILLUSTRATED BY W. J. ENRIGHT

IF you are one of the thousands of Irvin Cobb "fans," this story is just what you've been hoping for.



how the conversation livens up and how eagerly all present join in. The lady on your left feels you should know she always takes two lumps of sugar and nearly half cream, because she simply cannot abide hot milk, no matter what the doctors say. The gentleman on your right will be moved to confess he likes his eggs boiled exactly three minutes, no more and no less. Buckwheat cakes find a champion, and oatmeal rarely lacks a warm defender. Weather for strangers, but among friends, breakfast and whales—bear these in mind and you will never be at a loss for pleasant ways of spending the long winter evenings which are now upon us. But the greater of these is whales. We had hardly skimmed the subject of whales when Mr. Doolan leaped headlong into fables.

Nevertheless I gave him leeway by waiting in silence for what was to follow. Through long acquaintance I have come to learn his idiosyncrasies, which are many and unique. For a brief space, after his interrupting remark, there was silence. I held my tongue and he peered contemplatively down the slant of his cigar to its glowing tip and with the bottom of his glass made little patterns of rings upon the marble top of the table. Anon he resumed:

"NOW, f'rinstance, speakin' of fables, you take that one about the grasshopper and the ant. It's been a favorite of mine ever since I first heard it. From what I've been able to gather, that particular fable was first pulled by an old guy named E. Sopp. I wonder did he spell his last name with one *p* or two? Anyway, it's no matter. By all accounts he was a foreigner and most foreigners have funny monakers, anyway. Even if he was a wop, he must've been considerable of a deep thinker — that old boy. The party that first brings this fable to my attention tells me E. Sopp lived three or four thousand years ago. Naturally, I couldn't stand for that. I says to this party, 'Quit your kiddin',' I says to him; 'this is only 1915 that we're livin' in now. You can't go behind them returns,' I says. And of course he didn't have any come-back because I had the figures on him. Just the same, I judge the old bird dated clear back to before the year of the Big Wind in Ireland, and that's plenty far enough back for me.

"But speakin' of this fable, the grasshopper went pikin' about all summer wearin' snappy clothes for 'varsity hoppers and havin' the time of his life. Easy come and easy go—that was his motto. Every time he got a dollar he spent a dollar and fifteen cents of it right away. He couldn't break a five without developin' some new friends. But all this time the ant is workin' like a bird-dog, hivin' it up and saltin' it down. Pretty soon the heated term is over and fall has came and went, and now the crool

winter is upon us and the grasshopper finds hisself as busted as a ha'nt. Bein' out of money, it's a cinch he is out of friends too. When your riches start to fly away, there's quite a few that ketch the sound of them restless rustlin' wings almost as soon as you do—I've noticed that myself, and I'm no member of the Sopp family either. I guess it's because they've been cuddlin' up so close to you that they can hear the warnin' with such a cute acuteness.

"Well, anyway, the grasshopper starts down the big road. He's limpin' on both feet, fallen arches havin' come on him just as soon as he deprived his insteps of the constant support of the bar-rail. His hair is stickin' out through the top of his straw hat, and the chill wind of December is rattlin' his white duck pants. He comes by the ant's house, and sees the smoke pourin' out of the chimney. The ant is settin' at the front window smokin' the best cigar that any amount of money up to ten cents will buy, and readin' funny pieces out of the comic section. The grasshopper remembers him and the ant used to belong to the same college fraternity back in the old care-free days. He goes up to the front door and knocks. The ant takes a peek through the window and sees who it is, and, bein' a tender hearted little cuss, the sight of his old chum standin' out there shiverin' in the bitter cold affects him so he can't bear to look at it any longer. So he pulls down the shades and goes and calls the dog. And the next mornin' the grasshopper is discovered frozen to death in a snowdrift and the ant has liver and onions for breakfast. The moral, as I figure it out, bein' that it's tough to be an ant but a blame sight tougher to be a grasshopper.

"I'M reminded of that fable every time I think of the fix in which me and the Sweet Caps Kid finds ourselves one winter about two winters ago. The summer precedin' was the finest summer for grasshoppers that I ever encountered. And me and the Sweet Caps certainly was one gallus little pair of hoppergrasses. We spent the heated term and all we made at one of them hot-bath resorts in the Middlin' West. It was a great place for losin' symptoms, bankrolls, waist-lines and reputations. An old boy would blow in there ridin' in an invalid chair and sayin' 'Ouch!' every time the wheels went over a crack in the planks. He'd be kinked up into a nice tight hard knot, with his joints so full of rheumatism that when he took a step he creaked like a new pair of corduroy pants. The sanitarium folks would take him in hand and begin givin' him the treatments. Inside of two weeks he'd be hirin' a fluffy blonde to teach him the fox-trot and his wife back home would be consultin' an alimony specialist. I never saw so many human pretzels converted into animal crackers in my whole life before.

"FOR persons in our line of endeavor, it was certainly a lovely spot to be at. The place was as wide open as oysters on the half shell. Everywhere you looked you could see wise guys from the city in the act of bein' trimmed by suckers from the high grass. Not since the old days when I worked the shells with a wagon-circus that carried its own troupe of porch-climbers and let out the safe-blowing privilege to the highest bidder have I seen the plums hangin' so low and the pippins so easy to pick. For three months me and the Sweet Caps Kid took in coin with both hands; the trouble was that we let it go with both hands too. We couldn't figure how the crop would ever run short, for the harvest was most plentiful, and the reapers, they was few.

"But you can't always tell. All of a sudden something happens. There's a change of city administrations, and no sooner does the new crowd get into office than they start house cleanin' something frightful. The word goes out to close the dampers and bank the fires. One or two hardy adventurers disregards the gipsy's warning, whereupon a grand jury leaps upon them with shrill cries and inside of four weeks they're bein' measured for nobby outfits of striped suitin's at an institution for the promotion of indoor occupations run by the State. So me and Sweet Caps Kid takes advantage of this period of enforced inactivity to hold a consultation.

"'Sweety,' I says to him, 'something seems to inform me it's our next move. Personally I have no desire,' I says, 'to have a large, coarse creature called a deputy warden standin' over me teachin' me how to make chair bottoms. Any time I need a hair-cut I want to be able to pick my own barber. Let us,' I says, 'proceed to show these zealous reformers that us two are the boys that put the syrup into surreptitious. Let us go hence with all the silent yet sincere alacrity of hot sorghum runnin' out of a leaky jimmyjohn.'

"Sweet Caps, he sees the wisdom of my remarks and he allows we can't be startin' too soon to suit him. But the main drawback to our mappin' out an extensive travelin' debauch is that we're down so close to the cloth. We've been fritterin' our substance away on frivolities when we should have been buryin' it in a perserve-jar back of the smoke-house. So we compromises on a short, quick trip to the city of Hot Springs, in the State of Arkansas, pronounced by the home-folks *Arkansaw,* the *sas* being silent as in *juniper,* and the *saw* bein' prominent as in *planin'-mill.* We departs therefore in a speedy and unostentatious manner.

"WELL sir it certainly looks like misfortune is doggin' our steps, because we arrives just twenty-four hours behind another reform wave. For persons in our perfession there is positively absolutely nothin' doin'. The only door-mat in town with a 'Welcome' sign on it is the one in front of the county jail.

"Sweet Caps undertakes to horn his way into one of the leadin' card clubs with a view to replenishin' our exchequer by a little judicial play at faro and kindred sports. They throws him out twice and he goes back for the third time — and the door-keeper climbs a-straddle of his neck and rides him all the way down the front steps, clear across the sidewalk, out into the street, and leaves his mussed and prostrate form on the car tracks. And then it seems to dawn on Sweet Caps that they really don't want him there. So he takes the gentle hint and comes away.

"In a quiet by-way openin' off one of the main thoroughfares we rigs up a simple little green baize table and produces the educated pasteboards, our intent bein' to teach the trustin' souls of them pastoral wilds the Three Card Montessori system for the education of our little ones. The understandin' is that I'm to do the rifflin' and Sweet Caps is to make change. But before I've had time to make more'n one pass, up comes a bull disguised as a plain-clothes native, reinforced by a whole passel of the infuriated peasantry, and they chases us four or five blocks.

"AFTER that, conditions continue to get no better rapidly. Pretty soon we're down to a small stack of thin white chip. Jitney by jitney our little hoard vanishes from us. All summer I've been burnin' up those large dark-brown imported Havana back-logs at forty cents each. The best I can do for myself now is to blow a nickel about once in so often for a Peter Panatela, the cigar that never grew up. Domestic goods they are, too, and I'm no domestic. I belong to one of the learned callin's.

"We aint eatin' with our accustomed regularity, neither. I don't scarcely remember a time when toothpicks plays such a small part in my daily life. We feels that we are indulgin' in a spell of unbridled extravagance any time we spend a dime apiece for a crock of Chilly Con Carney, which is a Mexican dish named for an Irishman. And the Chilly part is stuck on for a joke, because the stuff is so hot you can't notice the taste. I never knew before red pepper could be a blessin' in disguise.

"We used to go up against the Greaser uprisin' for dinner. At breakfast time and lunch time we'd bestow our patronage upon the free-lunch emporiums. That is to say, we did so at first. We'd drop into a saloon, all organized to accept anything that might be passed out, except the bar-check. But it wasn't long before the lookout got to know us, and no sooner had we breezed through the swingin' doors than he'd throw his protectin' form between us and the cracker jar and start whistlin' for the bouncer. Whereupon we would withdraw in an abrupt but dignified manner and go for

a long walk on an empty stomach, meanwhile broodin' upon them happy, happy days when we et only the white meat, with a little of the dressin', and throwed the second joint and drumstick away.

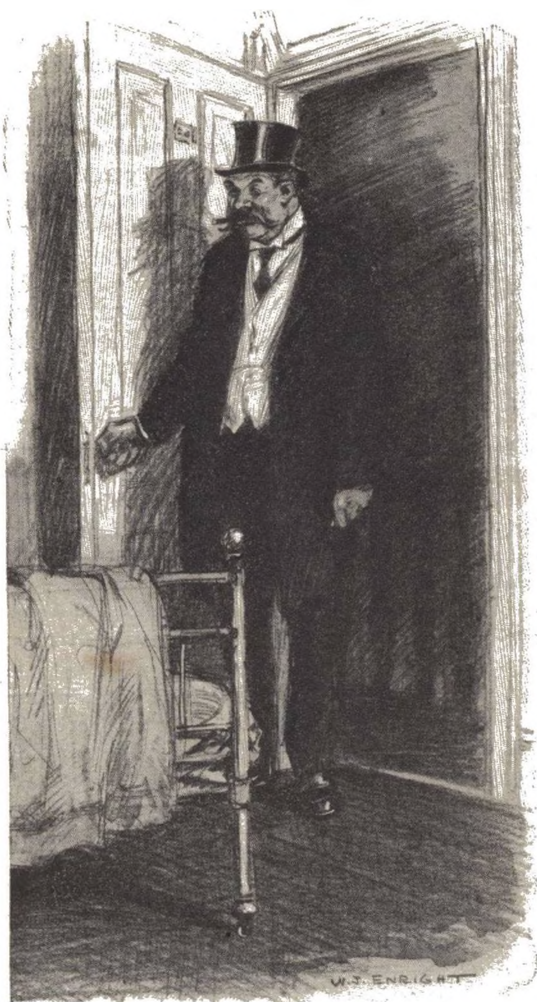
"We has ample time for all such bitter

The door opens. But it aint our hopeful friend, the proprietor, that stands beamin' upon the threshold. It's a large, influentially dressed person in a high hat. I seem to ketch the hauntin' aromas of wines, ales, liquors and cigars the instant I lays eyes on him; also hot vittles.

reflections. There we are, us two, both of us, me and him, marooned on a desert island in the midst of plenty—two poor little famishin' grasshoppers from the effete East entirely surrounded by thrifty but highly inhospitable ants. I hadn't heard about the fable up to this time, but as I look back on it now, I know old Mr. Sopp certainly calls the turn on us. Nearly everybody else in our line of trade has hurriedly shut up shop and gone away to give the moral spasm time to quit spassin', and them that hasn't gone is stayin' on for the same reason that we stays — they didn't have the price.

"Well, to make a long story just as long, things continues in this heartbreakin' way for several days — only they seems like weeks to us—and then we meets the General..... Don't get tired and go 'way before I tell you about the General, because he's really the star of the piece. How does he get to be a general? How should I know? Maybe his paw kept a general store or his grandmother suffered from general debility. Out in that far country some folks is born with a title and some inherits one. I guess, though, the General borrowed his when nobody was lookin'. He didn't fight for it—I'll swear to that. He wasn't old enough to have been in our late Civil War, and besides, no Civil War that thought anything of itself would 'a' let him be in it. With the General infestin' the vicinity it couldn't have stayed civil more'n a week at the very longest.

"ONE day me and the Sweet Caps Kid are settin' in our lonely lodgin's, for which we are now two weeks behind with the rent and no prospect of ketchin' up, neither. Not havin' any-




thing else to do, we are engaged in wonderin' how long a growed-up man with all his facilities intact can continue to go on livin' after he's become a strict non-eater and a total anti-imbiber, when there comes a knock on the door.

"We figures it's the landlord again. He's been up to see us twice already durin' the day, makin' pointed inquiries touchin' upon a subject which we would greatly prefer not to have discussed in our hearin'. Still, if he wants to keep on payin' duty calls upon us, we can't object without hurtin' his feelin's.

" 'I s'pose it's our estimable host once more,' says Sweet Caps. 'He told me the last time he was up that when he came again, he hoped to see a little money. What an optimist that guy is! Seems almost a pity to disappoint him, don't it? S'pose we match to see which one of us goes to the door and tells him we aint neither one of us in?'

" 'No,' I says, 'let us remember,' I says, 'we are guests to-day beneath his roof and to-night are liable to camp on his sidewalk. Come right in, Little One,' I says, raisin' my voice.

"With that the door opens. But it aint our hopeful friend, the proprietor, that stands beamin' upon the threshold. It's a large, influentially dressed person in a high hat. He has a wide, warm smile, one of those long, cream-separator mushtashes, a bad eye, a high hat, and a malt, spirituous and vinous breath. It's the General. Of course we don't know at the moment he's the General, but we know just by the way he looks he's something. I seem to ketch the hauntin' aromas of wines, ales, liquors and cigars the instant I lays eyes on him; also hot vittles.

"We bids him welcome and he comes in and introduces himself and says our names have been suggested to him by a mutual friend in the city. We didn't know until then we has any friends in the city, mutual or unmutual, but we begs him to proceed. Then he wants to know if we are open to a proposition to make a little piece of change.

" 'Well,' I says, 'murder is out of our line and we aint never done any grave-robbin' or kidnapin'. But,' I says, 'we're willin' to try. Let the Gold Brick Twins do your work,' I says. 'Pray proceed,' I says; 'your openin' remarks interests us strangely.'

"So then he sets down amongst us and outlines his scheme, and if he'd been singin' it and accompanyin' himself on the zither, his words couldn't 'a' sounded more dulcit than what they sounds in the ears of me and the Sweet Caps Kid. Long before he gets through, each of us is holdin' him by the hand.

"Well, the net result is that he advances us certain sums of money with

which to get the rest of our wardrobe out of retirement, and he stakes us to a regular human meal. And the descendin' shades of night finds us all three spraddled out in luxurious ease in the smokin' compartment of a sleepin' car goin' away from there at forty miles an hour. It's just like a dream. There we are with cigars in our faces and soothin' mixtures in our mitts and one of the brightest graduates that Booker T. Washington ever turned out of his seminary to wait upon our slightest needs. The General is puttin' up for the travelin' expenses and payin' all bills incurred *on root;* yet still I can't seem to care for him as I maybe should. I'm willin' to do business with him, but I aint prepared to love him.

"It's plain though that he don't feel that way with regards to himself, personally. Any time the Genearl gets on the subject of the General he's prepared to speak for hours and hours without becomin' wearied. He's a very consistent absorber, too. I figure out he's part Scotch and the rest seltzer. If he aint got a highball at his elbow, he feels something is missin' from the landscape. But subsequently, as time passes on, I notices that when it comes to a struggle to see who's goin' to pay for the last round, he's very easy to control. The more I see of the General, the more prone I am to unlike him excessively. But as I said just now, he don't share none in them sentiments. He's passionately addicted to himself.

"Shortly before midnight, when me and Sweet Caps has a moment of privacy together in the wash-room prior to retirin', I find my little playmate entertains practically the same feelin's that I do.

" 'It strikes me with great forcibility,' says Sweet Caps, 'that this new-found benefactor of ours is considerable of a Camembert. Sizin' him up casual, I would say off-hand that he's mostly deep yellow, with a fleck of green mold interspersed in him here and there,' he says.

"Sh-h!' I says; 'naughty, naughty,' I says, just like that. 'Let's not be uncharitable,' I says. 'Probably he was born that way. As the Latin puts it, *Semper Edam,* meanin',' I says, 'once a cheese always a cheese.'

" 'I don't like them milk strainers he wears on his upper lip, neither,' continues Sweet Caps, in a petulental tone. 'Burnishers has gone out of style for wear upon the human face,' he says. 'When we get to know him a little better, let's club in and buy him a nice clean shave.'

" 'Sweet Caps,' I says, 'never look a gift horse in the mushtash. There are several things about the General that I don't deeply care for, he himself being chiefly one of them. But let us bear with him,' I says, 'until he ceases to bear. At the present he's our staff of life. Never,' I says, 'never, never punch a meal ticket until you have to.'

"And with that I leaves my shoes in the aisle, and puts my feet in the hammock and goes to bed on the bottom shelf of Mr. Pullman's perambulatin' pantry.

"THE next morning we arrives where we're goin' to. It's the capital city of one of the flattest and most enterprisin' commonwealths in this entire sisterhood, bein' located in the heart of that favored district which people in New York regards as the Far West and people in San Francisco regards as the Far East. I prefer not to name it by name. It is true that the General is now no more, and he never was very much; he passed away last spring, as I read in the papers at the time; but the State itself is there yet, and the Statute of Limitations continues to hang on, and I'm afraid some of the folks out there is still a little mite fretfully inclined whenever they happens to think of me and the Sweet Caps Kid. So I will not burden you with too many details. Howsomever, any time you should chance to be out in that neighborhood you shouldn't have any trouble findin' the place. Just take the first turn to the right after you cross the Mississippi Valley, keepin' the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Coast on your left, and after a while you'll come to it. It's got a Carnegie Library and a new fire station; some of the streets run one way and the others run the other way, and the Eagles met there once, and the Elks are expected to drop in almost any time. You'll be able to recognize it easy. Oh,

yes—here's another hint to help you: The people livin' there always speak of it as the garden spot of the world. It may be a garden spot, but it needs cultivation.

"By a strange coincidence, we arrives on the very day that the State legislature convenes. We takes rooms at the leadin' hotel, occupyin' what the Kid, who's a mighty literal pronouncer, insists on calling a *suet,* meanin' by that a *sweet.* The General takes one parlor and fits it up regardless with bottled goods and corkscrews and other necessities of life, and in the adjoinin' parlor me and the Sweet Caps Kid rigs our cosy little deadfall; and then we sets back and waits for business to open up.

"We don't have long to wait, neither. You see, it's like this: The General is a lobbyist by profession. He's one of the hottest little lobbyists that ever come out of a loblolly. Naturally, though, he don't call himself by such an obnoxious title. He speaks of himself as a promotor of helpful legislation. He's been retained by the principal railroad traversing that part of our common country to do its plain and fancy corruptin'. All the railroad desires at this time is for the legislature to give it about the half the State in the shape of franchises. And all the General has got to do is to see that the legislature comes through. He turns in an expense account every week that would make a Rivers and Harbors bill look puny, and from what I can gather he's drawin' a pretty fancy salary, besides which he's entitled to keep what he can make by chiselin' down a member from his regular price for bein' corrupted. Any time a corn-fed statesman who's set forth in the past-performances-book at the figger of five hundred, can be induced to sell out for, say, three hundred and fifty, the General goes south with the difference. It's his legitimate commission on the deal. And at that he aint satisfied. He hankers to get the three-fifty back without losin' said statesman's vote. That's where me and the Sweet Caps Kid come in. That's why he took that trip all the way to Hot Springs to dig up a couple of specialists. That's why we're now on the job in Parlor B of *Sweet A.*

"It's so easy it's right simple. The General sets his eye on a promisin' rube-member from the tall and uncut. He honeys up to him, wearin' the greasy smile of a fish-duck that's just located a fat minnow, and soon the hellish deed is done. In the dusk of the evenin' the General takes his young friend by the hand and leads him into his room and pays him the price of his shame. Maybe he gets him for two hundred, and maybe he has to pay him as much as two hundred and fifty—you'd be surprised to know how cheap you can buy shame in some sections of this favored land.

"Well, they closes the deal and then right away the member gets impatient to go. If he's an old timer at the game, he's worried for fear he sold out too cheap, and if this is his first offence, he's low in his mind to think of what his constituents will say if they ever find it out on him. That's the General's cue to slip a drink or two into him. Then the General goes to the door and opens it about an inch and a quarter and takes a quick peek outside. He slams the door then and comes back and tells the member there's a suspicious-lookin' party snoopin' round in the hall. He suggests they slip into the next room to wait until the coast is clear.

"So they slips into the next room and, lo and behold, me and the Sweet Caps Kid is settin' there playin' show-down for pennies. The General introduces us to the corrupted guy as a couple of friends of his, and then me and the Sweet Caps Kid invites 'em both to set down and play a little nickel-ante with us, jacks or better to open, ten-cent limit. The General says they've got a little time to kill and maybe they might as well draw a few hands.

"I guess I don't need to tell you the rest of it—you must know how the Big Mitt is worked. No? Well then, p'raps I had better explain, briefly. The deck goes round a few times and nothin' happens. Then it comes my deal, and the Sweet Caps Kid takes a flash at the cards I've slipped him, and he says sort of wistful-like that he certainly wishes we was playin' for something substantial, because he's got a hand that he'd like to adventure a little real money on. Them

words sound like a message from Heaven to the General's young friend, and he seconds the motion. So just to humor him and Sweet Caps, me and the General agrees to remove the roof temporarily, and them two starts in bettin'. In order to show that he's perfectly calm and collected, the sucker knocks his stack of chips over and turns pale as a sheet and keeps swallowin' his Adam's apple and trembles all over. And the Sweet Caps Kid keeps on a-h'istin' him and a-h'istin' him.

"After a while the legislator's money is all up, and then Sweet Caps calls him; and he spreads out his little throbbin' king-full on palpitatin' queens. But Sweet Caps, he merely smiles a sad, pensive smile and reaches for the coin, at the same time layin' down four rattles and a button.

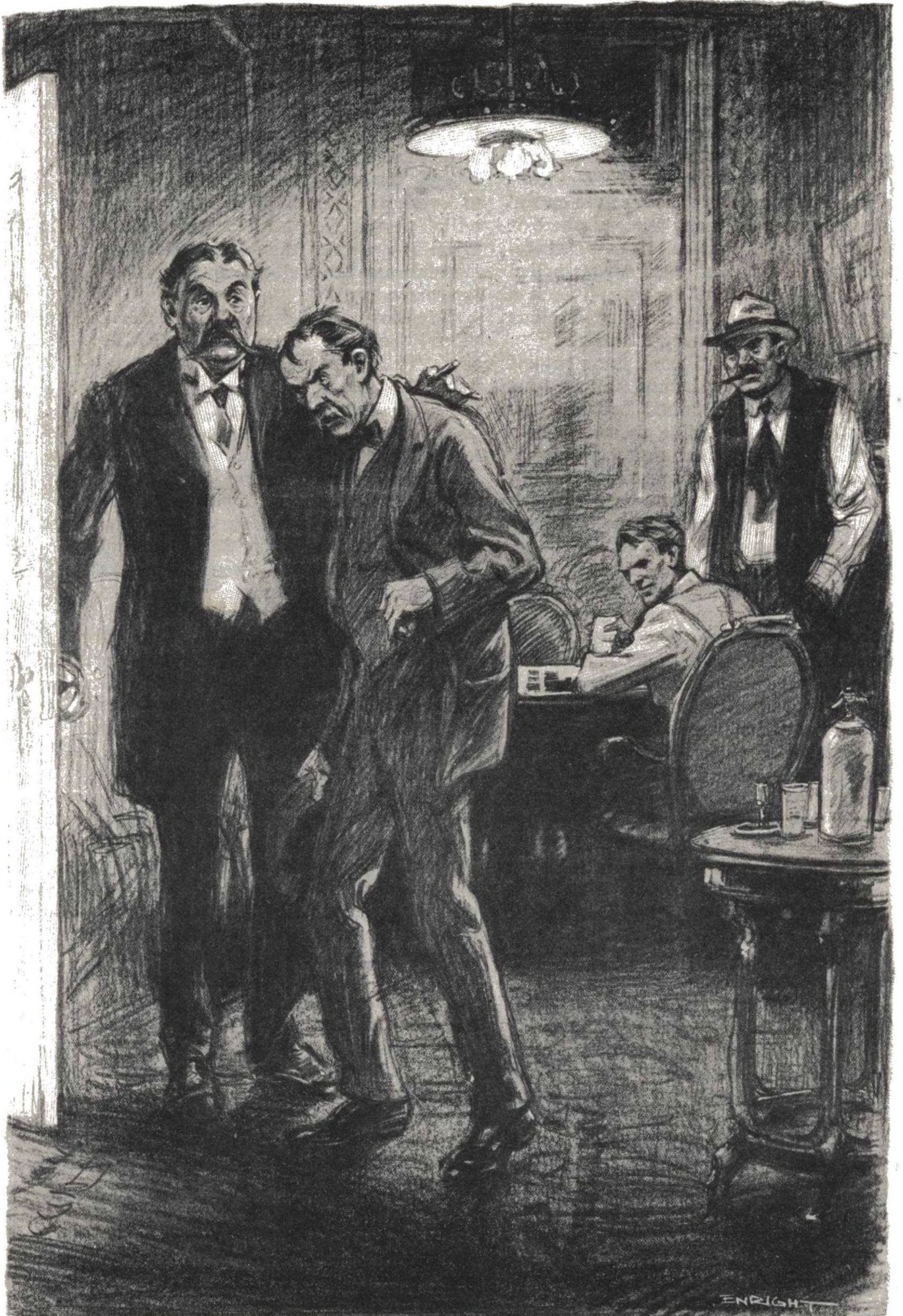
"What's four rattles and a button? Why, that's my pet name for a complete set of tens with an ace on the side for a confidence card. So the sucker, talkin' strange words to himself, departs in a kind of a stricken state, reflectin' upon the melancholy circumstance that he's sold his birthright for a mess of jackpottage, and then lost that too. When the sound of his draggin' footsteps has died away in the distance down the deserted hallway, me and Sweet Caps and the General splits the winnin's three ways, and then we all retires to our downy couches, filled with the comfortin' thought that to-morrow will be a new day.

"IT'S a payin' business, with sure profits and no risk, but at that I don't care deeply for it. I reckon I'm too honest—that's always been my principal drawback. But the General, he thrives on it. While we're cuttin' up the proceeds, he sets there combin' his droopers with his fingers and takin' on flesh so fast it's visible to the naked eye. Every night that passed I seems to care for him less and less, until after a while I could be arrested for thinkin' the thoughts which I thinks about the General. I want to kick him so bad it makes my foot hurt. But I restrains myself. As I says to the Sweet Caps Kid, 'Business before pleasure,' I says.

"Well, things jog along very comfortable and cosy for a while; leastwise, they would be comfortable and cosy if I could only quit dislikin' the General long enough to take some interest in my surroundin's. Sometimes a statesman that's been trimmed in our little game refuses to stay bought, but generally he does.

"And then one day, in comes the General and tells us he's garnered enough ordinary members to make a mess, but just to insure a dead cinch he needs the chairman of the House Committee on Railroads. It seems chairmen come higher than the run of ordinary perch, because the General says this particular fish can't see his way clear to compromisin' his priceless honor for less'n two thousand bones, cash down, paid in advance. So he feels that we mustn't take no chances on lettin' any part of that large and succulent mass of dough get away from us. The gent in question is plum' addicted to flirtin' with the playin' cards, so the General tells us, and you can't bet 'em too high to suit him when he's got his sportin' temperature up, but he's a toler'ble wise bird, and there mustn't be any slip-up. He thinks the deal will go through on the comin' Friday night, after the legislature has adjourned for the week. This is a Tuesday when he unloads all this valuable and timely information upon us.

"Immediate, I has an idea of my own. I says to him, 'General,' I says, 'it occurs to me that for this special and extraordinary occasion there maybe oughter be a new face round our happy fireside. The fact that me or Sweet Caps has won every time we had one of our little sessions is liable to have caused talk amongst the classic shades of that there state-house. It is possible,' I says, 'that sinister rumors, founded upon unjust suspicion, has already come to the ears of this wise young friend of yours. Don't you think,' I says, 'that we'd better have a fourth player present at our next little gatherin' — somebody who's a perfect stranger to Mister Chairman. And then, if the stranger holds the winnin' hand and all the rest of us goes through the form of droppin' our bank-rolls too, why there'll be no reason for the principal



So the sucker, talkin' strange words to himself, departs in a kind of a stricken state, reflectin' upon he melancholy circumstance that he's sold his birthright for a mess of jackpottage, and then lost that too.

loser to beef or renige. Do you,' I says, 'get my drift? Or don't you?'

"'I get you,' says the General, or words to that effect, 'but that means there'll be four instead of just us three to divide up the surplusage. I'm constitutionally opposed,' he says, 'to cuttin' a melon into so many pieces, where it can be avoided. Besides,' he says, 'whereabouts are you goin' to find your added starter? Remember,' he says, 'this is a close corporation and regular dwellers in this sweet community is barred.'

"'Well,' I says, 'I don't know myself yet where we'll find him. But at least we can be lookin' round between now and Friday. I'm liable to run upon a promisin' non-resident almost any time,' I says. 'I've been suspectin' for some time,' I says, 'that there was sharpers loose in this fair metrolapus. I'll keep my eyes skinned,' I says.

"The General, he grumbles some more, but he's bound to see the force of my reasonin', and so finally he consents. The next day and the day after I goes snoopin' round, spyin' out the land, and late on the afternoon of the second day, which is Thursday, just after the train from Saint Louis gets in, I goes and looks up the General and am able to report progress. I tells him a well-dressed party who looks like he might have ulterior motives on other people's bank-rolls has just blowed in on the 4:03 from Germantown-by-the-Eads-Bridge and that if he's the person I think he is, we've located what we've been lookin' for.

"'How'll you find out if he is, or if he aint?' says the General.

"'That,' I says, 'is one of the easiest things I do. Come with me,' I says.

"So I takes the General with me and we goes up to the suspect, who is leanin' against the cigar case in the lobby, pickin' himself out a suitable smoke.

"'Howdy do, Izzy,' I says. 'How did you leave things at Joliet?'

"'Excuse me,' he says in a hauteurful manner; 'I'm afraid you have the wrong party. My name is Montague—P. Alex. Montague.'

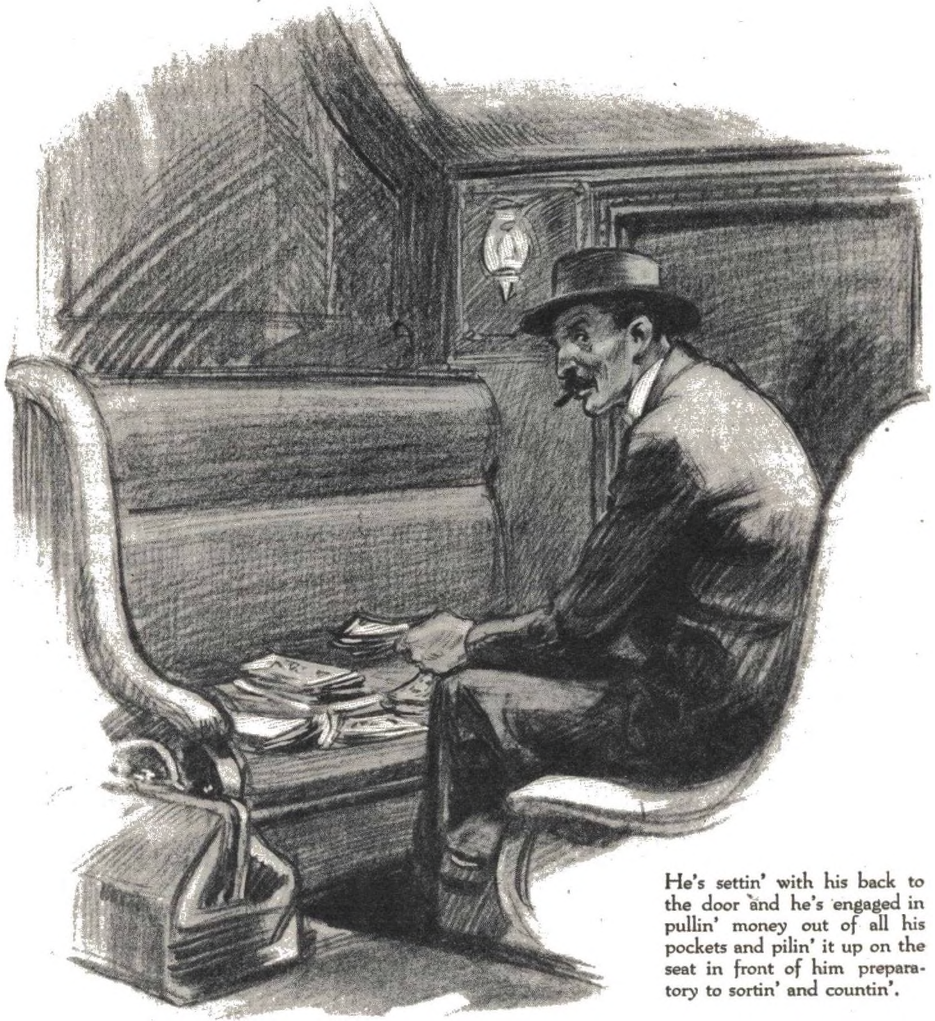
"'Probably so,' I says, 'probably so, for this day and date. But what's a name more or less between brothers in the same lodge? And besides,' I says, 'I've seen your picture in the paper too often to be mistook. Come with us,' I says; 'for,' I says, 'we wouldst have speech with you in private. I'd hate it something awful,' I says, 'if some gossipin' busybody was to overhear us and go runnin' round tellin' people that Mr. P. Alex. Montague is no other than First Aid Izzy Wexenbaum, the well-known and popular card-wizard.'

"He looks worried at that. 'Is this a pinch?' he says. 'Because if it is,' he says, 'I'll have to tell you now that nobody's got anything on me.'

"'Our sole desire,' I says, reassurin'-like, 'is to introduce you to some easy money. General,' I says, 'allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. P. Alex. Montague Et Cetera Wexenbaum.'

"So with that we all repairs to our snug retreat, where Sweet Caps is waitin' for us. The moment Sweet Caps lays eyes on the gentle stranger he says to him, 'Friend, aint I seen you somewheres before?' 'Well,' says First Aid, 'I wouldn't be surprised, because as far back as I can remember I've nearly always been somewheres or somewheres else.' After that it don't take no time at all to come to an understandin'.

"Now, if you don't mind, we'll just skip along to Friday night. Everything works like it's been greased. The chairman of the Railroads Committee receives his bonus of two thousand and tucks it away in his wallet. He starts to go, but the General suspects there's somebody snoopin' round in the hall outside—so they ooze into Parlor B for a few minutes. Much to their surprise, they finds me and Sweet Caps and the gentleman known as P. Alex, settin' there together, fussin' with the pasteboards in a bored and nonchalant way. From this point you know the route. It is sufficiency to say that on the fourth deal the limit is removed by general consent and everybody starts bettin' his head off. Pretty soon the pace gets too warm for me and I throws my pat flush into the discard. Then the Sweet Caps Kid decides his little seven-full on trays is also outclassed and he retires graceful. But the General and the Chairman and First Aid keep right on slingin' their frogskins into the



He's settin' with his back to the door and he's engaged in pullin' money out of all his pockets and pilin' it up on the seat in front of him preparatory to sortin' and countin'.

center until when the show-down finally comes off, the General, to all appearances, is out two thousand on four nines and the Chairman has gambled his two thousand away on four lovely kings, and First Aid is in the rocker with a little straight flush of hearts.

"So First Aid gathers up the dough and shoves it into various pockets. He then arises and says it's gettin' on towards his bedtime and he thanks everybody for a pleasant evening and says good-night and bows himself out, all of which is part of the play as agreed upon. The Chairman likewise departs, but without thankin' anybody, and if it's been a pleasant evening for him he forgets to mention that, too. That leaves me and the General and Sweet Caps, and we sets awhile waitin' for First Aid to come slippin' back and return to us our ostensible losses and cut up the Chairman's two thousand with the rest of us. But he don't come, and Sweet Caps goes out to see what's detainin' him.

"In a minute Sweet Caps comes tearin' back in to say our new little playmate is missin'. He aint in his room, and the night clerk reports that a person answerin' to the general plans and specifications of P. Alex. just now paid his bill and departed in a hired hack.

"At this I jumps up with an agonized cry, rememberin' that there perfidious Izzy has just about got time to get the 11:15 if he hurries. Simultaneous, the same horrible thought comes to the General, and he jumps up too. But I reminds him, while we were grabbin' for our coats and hats, that it wont never do for him to be seen engaged in a personal altercation with a common crook. 'You stay here, General,' I yells to him as me and the Sweet Caps Kid makes for the door, 'and we'll go ketch up with him. Stay right here,' I says, 'until you get word from us.'

"When it comes to lettin' somebody else do the rough work and take all the risks, the General is certainly old Colonel Buck Passer's favorite nephew. He falls back into his chair, beggin' us to lose no time, and as we tears down the hall we hears him utterin' moanin' sounds.

"Take it from me, we loses no time. We jumps into a taxicab that happens to be waitin' outside the front door and tears for the station. We arrives there just as the little 11:15 choo-choo is on the point of departin' for Chicago and all points east. We runs through the gate and piles aboard her and goes rampagin' into the sleeper and shoves open the door of the stateroom. And sure enough, Mr. First Aid Izzy is hidden away there. He's settin' with his back to the door, and he's engaged in pullin' money out of all his pockets and pilin' it up on the seat in front of him preparatory to sortin' and countin'.

"He looks up, but before he's had time to say a word we've got the stateroom door fastened on the inside. Just as we falls upon him with joyful cries, the train pulls out, bearin' me and him and the Sweet Caps Kid far, far away into the stilly night. So when the first excitement has died down, I takes charge of the dough and divides it up proper. And as for Izzy, he appears to be perfectly satisfied with what he gets."

I BROKE in here.

"Surely," I asked, "you didn't give him anything after he'd tried to run away with the entire pot?"

"Why shouldn't we give him any of it?" countered Mr. Dolan. "Look at all the trouble he had been put to—leavin' his regular engagements and jumpin' all the way out from Saint Louie on the strength of the telegram he got from me Wednesday morning. And anyway, aint he the Sweet Cap Kid's own half-brother? No sir, he gets all that's comin' to him—he's done earned it.

"But I knowed the dear old General would be settin' up waitin' for the word I'd agreed to send him, and I always believe in keepin' my promises. So from the next station I sends him a wire readin' as follows:

> Dear General—
> You was dead right. It's better to cut a melon three ways than four. Which we have just done so.
> (Signed) SCANDALOUS,
> SWEET CAPS,
> BROTHER IZZY.

"But," concluded Mr. Doolan, "I don't sent it C. O. D.—I sends it prepaid, right out of my own pocket. I judged the General might not have the cash with him to pay for it if it comes 'Collect.' "

**IRVIN COBB is writing more stories about this highly immoral but decidedly amusing pair. The next will appear in an early issue of The Red Book Magazine.**

## A Complete Résumé of the Previous Chapters of Rupert Hughes' New Novel

RUPERT HUGHES, forceful writer of life as it is lived today in this country, is giving, in "The Thirteenth Commandment," a brilliant picture of the average American spending his last dollar—or going into debt—to procure the luxuries of millionaires.

Daphne Kip, who belongs to a representative American family, straining to make appearances, is the heroine. She is a fresh, April-day sort of girl, who must have her electric car because "other people" do. And Clay Wimburn, her lover, who has a good position with a New York house and a "bright future," goes into debt to buy Daphne's engagement ring.

The Kips live in Cleveland. So Daphne must buy her trousseau in New York. Her father puts a second mortgage on the last bit of property not already doubly borrowed on, to furnish the money, and Daphne and her mother fare forth. They live in the expensive apartment of Bayard Kip, Daphne's brother, while in New York, as Bayard is in Europe on a honeymoon with his beautiful bride Leila, whom he has won in a race with Tom Duane, wealthy New York clubman.

DAPHNE is enchanted with her stay. Wimburn lunches her and dines her at the finest hotels, gives theater parties, and they motor everywhere. It is not till the delighted girl suggests they look for an apartment like her brother's that she gets the first peep at the modern enemy of love. Wimburn lets her understand that twenty-five hundred a year for lodging is beyond him. Daphne is perplexed and Wimburn unhappy.

Wimburn takes Daphne to supper at the Claremont after the theater one night. It is two days to his pay-day, and he figures he can just make it. Daphne wants a certain seat overlooking the Hudson. Wimburn tips the head waiter five dollars to get it and then orders a delightful supper. When the check comes, he is staggered. They have given him melon costing seventy-five cents the portion more than the kind he ordered. He cannot tip the waiter. Daphne is near tears at the scene.

Outside, Wimburn finds that he has not even carfare left. They must walk the four miles or so to the Kip apartment. In his embarrassment he lets Daphne know that his bank account is also wiped out. Daphne, while bravely trying to bear up, is sick as she sees stretching out before her the kind of penny-fighting existence she always has hated so in her own home.

Finally arrived at the apartment, Bayard Kip himself, to their amazement, opens the door.

"Money gave out, so we had to come home," laughs Kip. "What's the good word?"

"Lend me five dollars," replies Wimburn.

NEXT morning at breakfast Daphne sees the funeral of a modern honeymoon. Her brother reads the newspaper and is eager to rush to his office. His wife finds herself only a little piece of his world after his fervid protestations that she is everything to him.

Leila now takes a hand at Daphne's trousseau. The things she plans will cost three thousand dollars. Daphne and Mrs. Kip are aghast. The three go to shop for simpler things. Leila and Daphne find "gowns just made for them" at two hundred and seventy-five dollars each. Leila has both charged to her husband. That night Bayard Kip goes into a frenzy of anger at their extravagance. His outburst opens Daphne's eyes still further. She turns on him and tells him she will not only send the gown back but that she will never again take anything from any man. And when Wimburn comes, she hands him his ring.

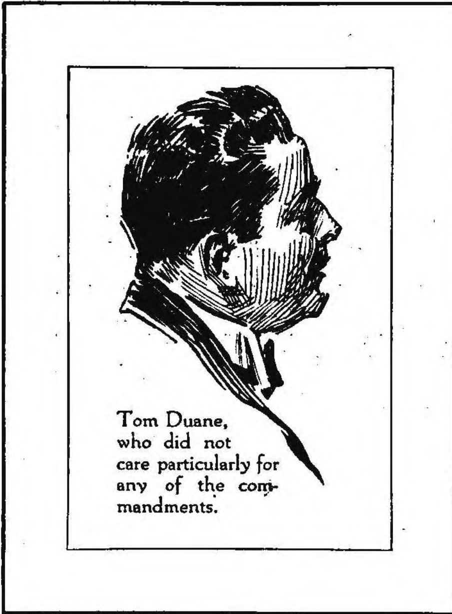
"What have I done?" he asks.

"Nothing. Neither have I. But I'm going to do something," answers Daphne.

Despite the horror of her family, Daphne decides to go to work. Her first hard lesson comes when she telephones Tom Duane to help her get a stage position. Duane tries to make love to her, but gets her an opening as understudy to a popular actress.

Wimburn sues for favor again, and they make up till he finds Daphne is determined to be an actress. He tells her he is ready to slave for her. She tells him that is exactly what she will not have him do. They break again and Daphne goes on with her work. She is given a rehearsal, with the star to help her. She fails and is dismissed. In her sickening grief Duane calls and promises he will force the producer to give back her job.

# *The* THIRTEENTH


Tom Duane, who did not care particularly for any of the commandments.

A New Novel by the Author of "What Will People Say?" and "Empty Pockets."

## By Rupert Hughes

### CHAPTER XXIV

CONSOLATION is a dangerous office when one of the parties to it is a man and the other a woman. The more sincere the grief and the more sincere the compassion, the more perilous the communion.

Daphne's grief was that of a little girl whose doll-house has fallen apart, and Duane's sympathy was that of the big boy who will glue it together again. But he and she were no longer children, and she was in love with another man—all the more bound to Clay Wimburn from the fact that they had quarreled and the visible golden bond was gone. Yet Daphne could not impute mean motives to Duane in the face of his offer to regain her lost opportunity for her.

And, indeed, Duane's motives were of the noblest. But his heart was as susceptible as a rake's heart usually is. He was cynical toward women's tears as a rule, because he found them selfish or the result of wounded vanity or frustrated selfishness. The cynic surprised from an unexpected angle is the most ingenuous of men.

It was a new sensation to Duane to find a girl crying because she was thwarted in nothing more selfish than her wish to be independent for the relief of others and her willingness to work hard for her own support. He knew that there was no personal conceit in Daphne's ambition, no hankering to publish her beauty to a maximum circulation of admirers. She wanted to pay her own way, and luck refused her the privilege.

Duane had seen enough of the theater to know how peculiarly cruel its disappointments are to the supersensitive beings that people it. Daphne was the latest and most blameless victim of its cruelty.

He had promised her to be her good friend and omit flirtatious advances. Even when she broke down and cried, he restrained his impetuous hands. But at length they had to go out to her. He embraced her as a pitiful fellow-creature in defeat. But once she was in his arms she proved to be also a very warm, round, sleek, beautiful, caressable young woman.

She welcomed his embrace at first, because it upheld her at a moment when her heart was reeling like a shot bird. But once she had taken his hands with grateful enthusiasm, he became more than the heroic rescuer, the gentle consoler; he became the strong, clean, warm, attractive power that he was. Duane was no Greek god and had not the look of one, but he was what is still more dangerous among the un-Grecian

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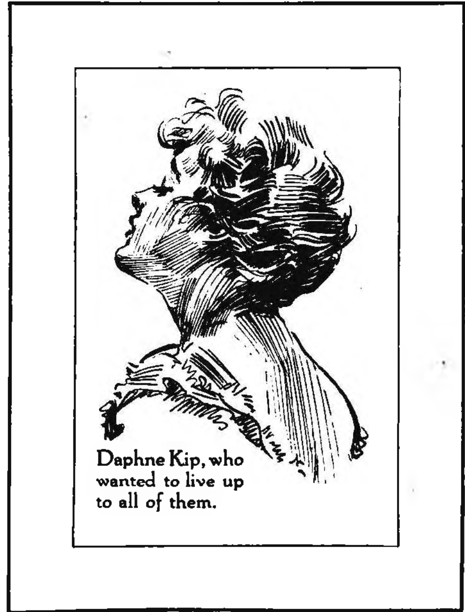
# COMMANDMENT

The story of a girl's adventures with life in the busy years of 1914 and 1915.

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg


Daphne Kip, who wanted to live up to all of them.

women of to-day, a magnetic, polished, tactful man of the world. The Greek gods of our time seem to have drifted toward female impersonation or costume dancing.

DAPHNE'S self-respect and Duane's respect for her might speedily have dissolved their embrace, though it would have left them in a mood of mutual tenderness. But suddenly they heard a door closed, and they started apart guiltily.

With a great shock they both realized how it must look to an interloper to find them clinging to each other. No outsider could realize the actual situation and the gradual steps that had brought them together. Any attempt to explain would seem ridiculous and hypocritical.

It was neither Leila nor Mrs. Kip that closed the door. Nor was it the curious maid. She was so busily making ready for an evening out with her young man, that she had no time even to eavesdrop. The door was closed by a breeze that came spiraling up around the building and rushed into another room.

A fatalist would have said that the zephyr was a divinely sent messenger for the rescue of two good souls from being too good to each other. Whatever the explanation, the result was a rescue.

The shock of the door blown shut startled Daphne as if Clay Wimburn had appeared and fired a bullet.

It was a tonic shock, however.

Duane and Daphne stood for a moment, trembling with dread of the opinion of the imaginary intruder. When they understood that they had not been observed, they laughed foolishly. The spell was broken. But they had been warned. They regretted that a man and a woman might not put their arms across each other's shoulders as two men might in good comradeship. But they realized that it was impossible.

Duane said: "I'll call Reben up at once. No, I'll go see him."

"But you put me under such obligations, I'm afraid—"

"Never be afraid of an obligation."

"I'm afraid I can never repay it."

"Then you're one ahead. But you can repay me and you will."

"How?"

"Let's wait and see. Good-by. Don't worry."

He gave her a hand-grip of perfect good fellowship and went into the hall. She followed him to tell him anew how kind he was. As she was clasping his hand again, Leila opened the door with her latchkey.

THERE was triple embarrassment. Tom Duane had paid ardent court to Leila before she married Bayard. Now he was in Bayard's wife's home,

apparently flirting with Bayard's young sister.

Leila felt all the outraged sentiments of jealousy, and all the indignation of a chaperon who has been circumvented. Duane and Daphne knew exactly what she was thinking, but dared not answer her unspoken rebuke.

Duane retreated in poor order. Daphne stammered an explanation too brief and muddled to suffice. Then she went to her room.

There her mother found her when she came in later. Daphne had only a faint hope that Duane could work his miracle twice, and so she told her mother she had failed as an actress. She told her bluntly: "Mamma, I've been fired."

To her comfort her mother caught her to her ample bosom and said: "I'm glad of it. I'm much obliged to whoever is to blame. Not but what you could have succeeded if you had kept at it. But you're too good for such a wicked life. A person couldn't be an actor without being insincere and a pretender; and my little girl is too honest. So now you come along back to Cleveland with me."

"No thank you, Mamma."

"You must. I was hoping to get started to-night, but I can't; we'll go to a hotel till to-morrow."

"Go to a hotel?"

"To a hotel! Do you suppose I'd spend another day under this roof after what Leila said about me last night?"

Thanks to the superb acoustics, Leila heard this and hurried into the room to disclaim any malice and to insist on Mrs. Kip's remaining forever.

Mrs. Kip tried to be majestically lofty but Leila would not be rebuffed. She pulled Mrs. Kip's arms about her and holding her tight insisted on being forgiven. At length Mrs. Kip relented and took her daughter-in-law back into as much of her good graces as a daughter-in-law has a right to expect. Mrs. Kip consented to stay one more night, but she insisted that she must go back to Cleveland the next day. She painted a vivid picture of the ruin into which her neglected home was undoubtedly falling. She said that Daphne would go back with her, but Daphne said "No."

Mrs. Kip had gathered herself together for a vigorous assault, when the telephone rang and the maid brought word that a gent'man wished to speak with Miss Daphne.

It was Duane and she braced herself for another blow. But his voice was clarion with success:

"I've seen Reben. It's all right. He's promised to keep you on and give you a chance. He says for you to report at the theater at seven-thirty to-night."

And now again Daphne was more afraid of her success, such as it was, than of her failure. But it was pleasant to carry the news to her mother and Leila. It disgusted them both. They were still trying to dissuade her from continuing on the downward path, when a telegram from her father came for her mother:

> Taking beaver arrive grand central to-morrow don't meet me love.
>
> WES.

He had spent several minutes of literary labor in getting it all into the ten words. He had controlled his own impulse to waste a few pennies for his own ease, but he had not refused to spend many dollars in answering his wife's call for help.

The word "beaver" puzzled them till Bayard later explained that it was the name of an express-train leaving Cleveland at four-thirty-five in the afternoon and reaching New York at seven-fifty in the morning.

BAYARD was late as usual and Leila's temper had just begun to simmer when the door was opened stealthily and a hand was thrust in. It proffered a small box of jeweler's size and waved it like a flag of truce.

Leila rushed forward with a cry of delight, seized the packet and then the hand and drew Bayard into the room and into her arms.

"This is your apology, I suppose," she said.

"Yes, the apology for being late and that's what made me late."

Leila was enraptured. She adored gifts and she had the knack of inspiring them. Bayard had not had the natural instinct for paying tributes. He was not

by nature one of those charming souls that always bring flowers or candies or some trinket when they call. Leila was training him for that class.

The little square parcel provoked her curiosity. It might contain anything from a diamond sunburst down to a silver stickpin. She tore the paper off and opened the pasteboard box and seized out a little velvet casket of glowing promise.

She opened this so excitedly that the contents fell to the floor. She swooped for them and brought up a platinum chain with a delicate plaque of tiny diamonds and pearls on a device of platinum.

Her face was flushed from the swoop and from her delight, and her eyes had the baleful glitter of diamonds. She kissed the jewelry, then pounced on Bayard with a frenzy of gratitude. She was exceedingly beautiful in her flaming exultance, and Bayard was proud of her and of his ability to enhance her beauty.

Leila ran to Mrs. Kip and Daphne, exclaiming, "Aren't they beautiful! Aren't they wonderful! Aren't they glorious!"

Mrs. Kip and Daphne tried to keep the pace, but once more they could not forget who it was that was raining gold down on this strange Danaë. Their alarm was not diminished when Bayard said:

"You're not the only one who can open accounts. I started one for those."

Leila was delighted at hearing this, which should have frightened her. But Daphne caught another of her lightning-flash glimpses of the relations of men and women. Being herself a wage-earner-elect, she demanded hotly of the world:

"What right has that woman who does not work, to accept the crazy extravagance or rebuke the sober industry of that hard-working man? What right has she to criticise his hours? What right has any woman to the submission, homage and tax-paying tributes of any man? Why is any man fool enough to pay a woman a high salary for being pretty and lazy and hard to please?"

Those were her thoughts, but her words were politely enthusiastic.

Bayard was not yet done with his efforts to placate the graceful idol he had niched in his life. He took from his pocket a pale brochure and said to Leila:

"That allowance we agreed on, you know?"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, instead of paying it to you week by week, I decided to open a bank account for you, so I made a deposit to your credit—five hundred dollars."

Leila forgot her jewelry for the moment in this new pride. She strutted about with mock hauteur, waving Mrs. Kip and Daphne aside, and saying:

"Don't speak to me. I am a lady with a bank account."

Mrs. Kip sighed in dreary earnest: "That's more than I ever was."

"I'll start you a bank account, Mother," said Bayard, "as soon as I get a little further ahead." He meant it and she was glad that he meant it, but she knew that at the present rate he would be a long while getting a little ahead. He was making rapid progress to the rear. All his soul was devoted to pleasing this creature, about whom there was nothing extraordinary except Bayard's infatuation for her.

LEILA'S first question was ominous: "Do I have to go all the way down to Broad Street every time I want to draw out some money?"

Her first thought was to attack the integrity of her store!

"No, dearest," said Bayard, "there is an uptown branch right around the corner. But I hope your visits there will be more for put-in than take-out."

"That depends on how much you give me," Leila smiled.

"She's a born grafter," Bayard said, with a rather difficult laugh.

She meditated, and asked with her kind of earnestness:

"Honestly, honey, how long ought five hundred to last—in New York?"

"Forever," said Bayard. "It's only a nest-egg. I want it to grow and grow. Every time I give you anything, I want you to put some of it aside. Maybe some day I'll want to borrow it awhile. Maybe you can save me from a crash some day. Anyhow, it will be a great

"Instead of paying your allowance to you week by week," said Bayard, "I decided to open a bank account for you, so I strutted about with mock hauteur, saying: "Don't speak to me. I am a lady with a bank soul was devoted to pleasing this creature, about whom

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help to me to feel that I have a thrifty little wife at home. A man has to plunge a good deal in business. It's his wife that usually makes him or breaks him."

Leila did not rise to the honor he thrust upon her. She dodged behind her own character.

"Better not count too much on me. I never could save. Daddy and Mamma both tried a dozen times to teach me. But they never knew how themselves."

"You must learn, honey," Bayard pleaded. "It's the most important thing you have to learn. You've got beauty and charm and everything delightful. You ought to be able to learn this one thing."

"All right; I'll try," she murmured, toying with the jewelry.

Bayard studied her and felt afraid. He spoke with unusual solemnity:

"Old Ben Franklin said: 'A shilling earned, sixpence spent, a fortune; sixpence earned, a shilling spent, bankruptcy' — or something like that. But Moses got ahead of him. When he handed down the Ten Commandments, he whispered an extra one to be the private secret of the Jews."

"What was that?" said Leila, with a minimum of interest.

"'Thou shalt not spend all thou earnest,'" said Bayard. "It was—well, it was the Thirteenth Commandment, I guess: a mighty unlucky one to break. The Jews have kept it pretty well, and they were the bankers of the world even while they were persecuted."

Leila shrugged her handsome shoulders and studied the gems. Bayard went on:

"I'll go out and earn the money if you'll stay home and try to save it. It's hard for the same person to do both. But with a little team-play now, we can be Mr. and Mrs. Crœsus in our old age."

That was an unfortunate choice of words. Leila was not interested in her old age. She said:

"Oh, I'll help you, but I'm afraid I'm not much good at saving. The nicest thing about this bank account is that I wont have to nag you every time I want some cash. It's so humiliating for people who love each other to be always discussing money."

"Money is a big part of love," Bayard began, "and one of the best ways a woman can show her affection for her husband is by being tender of his money."

His sermon would have been more effective if it had not been inspired by his own unthrift: it was a temperance lecture punctuated with hiccoughs. Leila ended it with a little grimace of disgust. "But let's not talk about it to-night. Let's dine somewhere and go to the theater. I want to show off my new splendor."

"Fine!" said Bayard, trying to cast away his forebodings and lift himself by his own bootstraps. "Get on your duds, Mother, you and Daphne."

"I can't go," said Daphne. "I've got to be in the fun-factory at half past seven and I've hardly time to eat anything."

## CHAPTER XXV

WHILE Leila and Bayard and Mrs. Kip were putting on their festal robes, Daphne was eating alone a hasty meal brought up tardily from the restaurant.

Before they were dressed, she had to march out in what she called her working clothes. The hall man ran to call her a taxicab but she shook her head. Her humble twenty-five dollars a week would not justify a chariot to and from the shop.

She walked rapidly along Fifty-ninth Street but not rapidly enough to escape one or two murmurous gallants. She boarded a Broadway surface car at Seventh Avenue and dropped her nickel in the box with a sense of plebeianism.

Daphne felt gray and mousy, cowering alone in a corner of the car, but a passenger opposite stared at her so persistently and minutely that her flesh fairly ached under his eyes. There was no escaping his inspection, no glaring him down. At length she remembered a bit of advice she had read somewhere and began to gaze at the feet of her persecutor, to study them as he studied her, only with a cynical smile.

The scheme worked to perfection. The ogler began to fidget, to cross and

shift his feet, finally to examine them. At length he let them carry him out of the car.

Daphne was glad of the new weapon, but it seemed to be at best a frail and uncertain defense. A few blocks further on she left the car and hastened with bent head through the pitiless glare of Broadway. Other solitary women were sauntering the street at their trade.

Daphne turned a corner into a dark street and found the stage entrance of the Odeon Theater. The decrepit door-keeper recognized her and let her pass. She had no dressing-room to go to and did not know what she was expected to do. She found Batterson quarreling with a property man over the responsibility for a broken vase. He ignored her till at length she ventured to stammer:

"Here I am, Mr. Batterson."

"So I see. Well, sit down somewhere."

Finding a seat was no easy task. Every piece of furniture she selected became at once the object of the scene shifters' attack, and she had to flee.

Members of the company strolled in, paused at the mail box and went to their various cells.

Eventually Batterson found that all the company was on hand and in good health. He said to Daphne:

"Everybody is here and nobody sick, so you needn't stay after the curtain goes up."

SHE loitered about, feeling like an uninvited poor relation. The members of the company came from their lairs, looking odd and unreal in their paint. They seemed to be surprised that Daphne was still in existence. Eldon gave her a curious smile of greeting.

She heard the call-boy shouting "Overture" about the corridors. She heard the orchestra playing "the King's piece;" then it struck up a march that sounded remote and irrelevant. There was a loud swish which she supposed to be the curtain going up. An actor and an actress in white flannels, with tennis rackets under their arms, linked hands and skipped into the well of light. They bandied repartee for a time. Then a smiling actor in butler's livery grew very solemn and marched on the stage stiffly.

Eldon, speaking earnestly to Mrs. Vining, suddenly began to laugh softly. He laughed louder and louder and then plunged into the light.

By and by Miss Kemble hurried from her dressing-room, her maid in pursuit handing her her handkerchief and a fan. She was in great distress, and told the maid to run out and telephone. She paused to speak to Mrs. Vining, who asked softly:

"How is the kiddie?"

"Not so well to-day." Her painted face was taut with anxiety. Yet suddenly she shook her head as if to scatter gloom, moistened her lips, glanced over her costume and entered a door. There was a sound as of rain on a roof—the audience greeting its faithful servant. Then Daphne heard that magic voice giving its strange felicity to that wonderful "How d' you do?"

She marveled at the brain that could accomplish such mechanical perfection and give perennial freshness to the same cheap material with unfailing regularity. The harrowed mother in the wings had become the mischievous girl on the stage by some abracadabra that Daphne could not grasp. She was delighting the house; muffled thanks followed nearly every line of hers.

A little later Eldon came off the stage, laughing. He dropped his laughter as he crossed the border and resumed his anecdote. "As I was saying —" But Mrs. Vining interrupted:

"There comes my cue. How are They to-night?"

"Rather cold," said Eldon; "it's so hot."

"The swine!" said Mrs. Vining. Then she shook out her skirts, straightened up and swept through the door like a dowager swan.

One of the box-lights began to sputter, and Batterson darted round from the other wing to curse the man in charge. He ran into Daphne, glared and spoke harshly: "You needn't wait any longer."

Daphne swallowed her pride and slunk out.

BROADWAY was dull again. The mobs that had rolled down the cañon were housed in the theaters.

Daphne was so restless that she ventured to squander a taxicab fare.

The apartment was deserted; the maid was out. Loneliness shrouded her. She imagined that she was a poor young actress stranded in a small hotel. New York had a village look at this point, and the uncrowded streets confirmed the likeness. She stood at the open window and stared down into Columbus Circle. Many people were going many places, but nobody was looking for Daphne.

She wondered why she had entered upon this unnatural life. If she had sought admiration and fame, she had not found them, for she sat alone in an isolated window. She had alienated those who loved her, without gaining a new friend — unless Tom Duane were one, and she was not sure of him, whether he were friend or enemy.

She was neither a working woman nor a lady. She was a foolish, forlorn girl whom nobody approved, and nobody understood.

She tried to walk through her lines but her distaste for them was like a nausea. She thrummed the piano, gave it up for a book—a novel, about a man and a woman on a desert island. She felt that she was the woman and New York the island, and the man was—

She was awakened by the return of the family. They were all very gorgeous and they had had a joyous time. They told her that she had "missed it" and that she was a fool to work when she did not have to. She agreed with them.

## CHAPTER XXVI

BUT if night brings counsel, morning brings action. She woke early again. It was just six o'clock. Daylight filled the room and it seemed ridiculous to lie asleep.

The street-cars and the traffic down below resounded like a brass band playing a quick march. She rose and went to the window. The scene was the same but the soul was entirely altered; so vast a difference there was in spirit between blue moonlight and morning amber.

She remembered that her father would be arriving in two hours. She decided that it would be a pleasant duty to surprise the poor old neglected codger by meeting him.

She bathed and dressed and took the subway. Here under the ground the tube was full of people scurrying to jobs. There were women innumerable. Some were sleepy-eyed and sullen with regrets of the night before. Some already were alert for flirtation, trying all the men's eyes, looking willing, ready to fence just for practice. Business had not robbed these at least of their femininity.

At the Grand Central Station, Daphne found that she was nearly an hour early. It amused her to take her breakfast at the lunch counter, to clamber on the high stool and eat the dishes of haste, a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich. It was pleasant to wander about alone in this atmosphere of speed, the suburban trains like feed-pipes, spouting streams of workers, the out-bound trains carrying their passengers to far-off destinies as if by suction.

Daphne felt sorry for the poor army of workers. She thought of the shops and of the women who would spend there the earnings of these driven hordes. She was glad that she was no longer one of the loafers. Her poor father would no longer have to toil for her.

AT length it was time for his train. She watched at the bulletin board till the track number was announced and reiterated throughout the station by the megaphones that gave the walls speech. Daphne went to the rope barrier opposite the door of entry for that train and waited in ambush for her father.

A regiment of mixed souls marched up the platform. She recognized a few of her Cleveland friends; but did not call to them.

At length she made out a rather shabby man carrying his own luggage. It was her father. He looked older and seedier than she remembered. He did not expect to be met. He was looking idly at the new station. He had not been to New York since this station had been thrown open.

He stared up at the golden zodiac, and marveled at the people walking as

She wondered why she had entered upon this unnatural life. If she had sought admiration and fame, she had not found them, for she sat alone in an isolated window. She had alienated those who loved her, without gaining a new friend—unless Tom Duane were one, and she was not sure of him, whether he were friend or enemy. She was neither a working woman nor a lady. She was a foolish, forlorn girl whom nobody approved, and nobody understood.

if in air on the glass floors along the vast windows.

There was something quaint and rural about her father and about his upstaring awkwardness that struck Daphne as never before. But she saw that he had been through great trouble. That dignified him. She felt glad again that she was to do something to lighten his burden. She ran to him. He dropped his old suit-case on the toes of the man following him and embraced Daphne with fervor. He devoured her with his eyes and kissed her again and told her that she was prettier than ever. All about them there were little groups embracing and kissing. There was a wonderful business in reunions.

WHEN her father said, "I haven't had my breakfast, have you?" she lied affectionately, "No."

"Let's have breakfast together."

"Fine," said Daphne. "We'll go to the Biltmore."

"Kind of expensive, isn't it?" he asked.

"It's my treat," she said. This amused him enormously.

"I'm going to treat you to a red-cap, too," she said snobbishly as she beckoned to a porter. Her father made a brief struggle: "It's very light."

"Let him take it," said Daphne. She saw that he was thinking of the tip. She was thinking of appearances, dreading to face the Biltmore bell-boys with a father who carried his own suit-case.

"So you're going to treat, eh?" her father laughed.

"Yep," she said.

"Where did you get all the money?"

"I'm a working lady now."

He laughed again and shook his head over her.

They reached the hotel lobby by the underground passage, and a bell-boy snatched the suit-case from the porter. Daphne had to borrow a quarter from her father to tip the porter. He thought that a dime would have been enough, but he paid it. They checked the suit-case with the hat-boy, and Daphne borrowed a tip for the bell-boy. Later she would borrow a tip for the hat-boy, and another for the bell-boy who would put the suit-case in the taxicab.

WHEN they were seated at the table and breakfast was ordered, Wesley said "Your mother wrote me something about having a little disagreement with you. She seemed to be right worried, so I thought I'd better run over to see if I couldn't smooth things down. I'm glad you came to meet me. We can talk without interruption for once. Tell me all about it."

She told him the whole story of her decision to join the great social revolution that is freeing women from the slavery of enslaving the men. Her peroration was her new watchword.

"I don't want to take any more money from you."

"Why, honey," he protested, "I love to give it to you. I only wish I had ten times as much. I couldn't dream of letting you work. You're too pirty. What's that young Wimburn cub mean by letting you work?"

"Oh, he's bitterly opposed to it, so I gave him back his ring."

"Well, I never!" he gasped. "And all this trip of your mother's and yours and all the expenses gone for nothing, then!" was his first doleful thought. He remembered the second mortgage he had placed on one of his properties to get the money for the vitally important wedding festival. And now there was to be no wedding. The son-in-law who was to have assumed the burden of Daphne's bills was banished. Daphne was again her father's own child.

He was glad to have her back, but he could have wished that she had not gone away; since he paid the freight in both directions. And now here was himself in New York and nothing to show for all the spilt milk of time, money and thought.

He was trying to be an uncomplaining, obedient, ideal American father, but he could not mimic enthusiasm over the investment. And he could not feel any confidence in Daphne's plans for supporting herself. He had put Bayard through college and into business, and he knew all too well that a child of enterprise is more expensive to a parent than a lazy child or an invalid. Sons had once been pillars of strength to a father; latterly they had been liabilities

instead of assets. And now daughters were going to insist on being launched into financial seas!

AT the critical moment Daphne mentioned that the star whose understudy she was would earn fifty thousand dollars that year in spite of the hard times. "Fifty thousand dollars" had a musical sound to Wesley's ears. If Daphne could earn a tenth of that, he would believe in miracles.

He had understood that the stage was extremely wicked, but he had never understood how profitable it was to a few of its people. To earn fifty thousand dollars one must either be superhumanly wicked or not very wicked at all. But he was out of his own depth and he returned to a topic that he could discuss.

"Where were you planning to live, honey, while you're acting? With Bayard, I suppose."

"Oh, no," said Daphne; "we've ruined his honeymoon enough already."

"With who, then?"

"Oh, by myself, I suppose."

"Good Lord, you couldn't do that very well—a pirty young girl like you."

"Why not?"

This was like being asked why babies were found under cabbage leaves. He was an old-fashioned father and he had never been able to rise to the new school of discussing vitally important topics with the children vitally interested.

"Why, why," he stammered, "why, because nobody does it, honey. Nice girls don't live alone."

"Thousands of them do in this city."

"Not very nice ones, I guess—unless they're orphans."

"Well, suppose I were an orphan?"

"Then you'd have to, I suppose, though even orphans usually have some relatives."

Daphne studied him with a tender amusement. He was so innocent in his way! She knew what he was thinking of. She was sophisticated in the manner of the nice girl of her time, and she liked to treat submerged themes with clean candor. Prudery was a form of slavery. But all she said was:

"You weren't afraid of Bayard's living by himself?"

"No; for if a man—er—does wrong, it doesn't affect future generations."

"I should think it would."

"It's hard to explain."

"I know what you mean, but I don't think it's true."

He stared at her in terror. She went on relentlessly:

"We've got to change that old idea of men keeping women in the dark because the women are too good to be trusted. I'm going to earn my living. I can't afford to support myself and a chaperon."

"If you've just got to stay in New York, and just got to work, your mother can stay with you, I suppose."

"But what becomes of you and your home?"

"Oh, I'll get along somehow. I don't matter."

"But you do! Can't you understand, Daddy, that I'm trying to relieve you? To make myself useful instead of a parasite? Thousands of women live alone, professional women, art students, music students, college girls, normal-school women, besides the women in shops and factories. It's coming more and more."

"But you're not brought up to a trade."

"I wish I had been."

"You wouldn't do anything wrong, of course, but if you lived alone you'd be misjudged, and men would keep throwing temptation in your way."

"I had plenty of that when I was living at home."

"Daphne!" He cried out in pain at the very thought.

She went on, educating him with a vengeance.

"Plenty of temptation and plenty of opportunity. It wasn't your fault. You gave me all the protection that anybody could, Daddy. But you can't protect people all the time. And it was when you trusted me most that you protected me most. People are just beginning to realize that even in penitentiaries, the higher the walls and the stricter the guards, the more prisoners try to escape. They're sending convicts out to work on roads now with no guards at all. And they do their work and come back. Don't

As Daphne stepped into the hallway, she found Clay Wimburn there. He sprang to his feet with a gasp of relief. He ice. She burned with rage at the irony of all those lonely home-comings ending in this sudden embarrassment He saw that Daphne was confused, and he bade her good night and smiled again.

caught sight of Duane, and his joy died instantly. Daphne, rushing forward to greet him, felt checked by his sudden of escort. Clay growled at Duane: "Hello, Duane." Duane smiled back. "Hello, Wimburn."
"'Night, Wimburn." He could afford to be light. He had nothing to lose.

you think women can be trusted as far as convicts?"

"I suppose so," he sighed, but he was convinced of the security neither of the convicts nor of the women under these new anarchies. He was convinced of only one thing and that was of his helplessness. The problems confronting him were so terrifying and the clouds enveloping him so thick that he hardly noted what a breakfast he had eaten.

Daphne made a great flourish of paying for it. But she realized that after all she had not collected her first wages yet; it was her father's money that she was spending. Still, it was a luxury for him to have some of his money lavished on himself. He got his Christmas and birthday presents so.

## CHAPTER XXVII

SHE led him to a taxicab. At the apartment they caught Bayard just rushing for his office. He hugged his father and ran. Daphne was glad to see that her mother embraced Wesley with genuine warmth, even though she knew that he was welcomed as an ally against her.

Wesley took Leila by storm with his lavish and whole-hearted praise. He gathered her to his breast, then held her out at arm's length to praise her and to praise Bayard for bringing her into the family. And throughout the day, he kept turning to her, and patting her on the shoulder, and saying how proud he was of her.

Mrs. Kip did not delay long the assault on Daphne's position. But Wesley said:

"We've had a long talk and I guess she's pretty set in her way. But she's a good girl, Mamma. And she knows her own mind better than we can. God forbid that I should try to dictate one of my children's lives. Let her have her way, and if anything goes wrong she can always come back home."

"Wesley Kip, are you going to sit there and encourage that girl to ruin her life and her reputation without doing anything to protect her?"

"Oh, I guess she's not going to ruin anything. After all, the best way to protect folks is to trust 'em."

It was bald plagiarism, but Daphne made no complaint. Wesley got into hot water at once, however, by making the suggestion that his wife remain as a companion for her child. Mrs. Kip took it as a sign that he wanted to be rid of her, and Daphne refused to take it at all.

Wesley sat pondering in silence for a while. Then he rose and said: "Be back in a little while," and taking his hat, he went out.

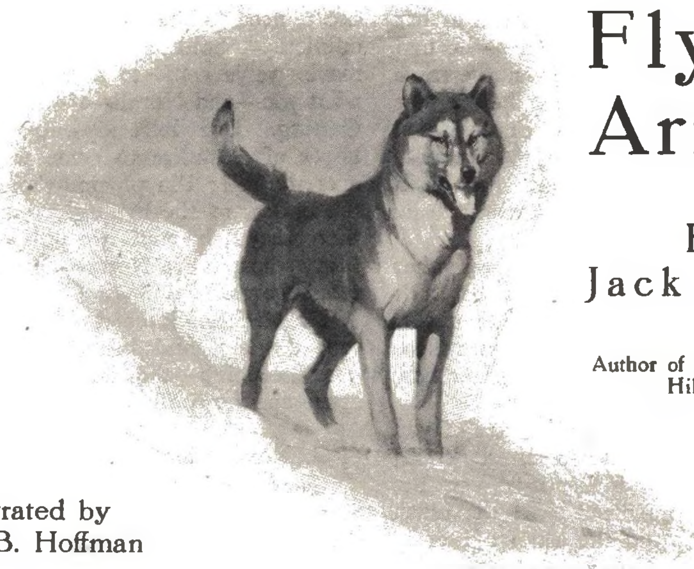
THEY wondered what mischief he was up to and what folly he would commit. He came back in half an hour with a smile of success.

"I guess it's all right. I've been thinking about things. We don't want Daphne living by herself, and she don't feel like she ought to trespass on Leila's home, so I got an idea and went down and saw the janitor or superintendent or whatever he is, and I asked him mightn't it be there was somebody in this building wanted to rent a room to a nice girl, and he said there was a young couple felt the rent was a little high and had an extra room. So we went up and took a look at it. Right nice young woman, name of Chivvis or something like that; said she'd be glad to take my daughter in. Her husband has had reverses on account of the hard times, and they had more space than they really needed. She showed me the room Daphne could have. Looked right comfortable. Not as nice furniture as this one, of course, but there's an elegant view. I was thinking that if Daphne was up there she could see Bayard and Leila when she was lonesome or anything, and she'd be handy where they could keep an eye on her if she got sick or anything."

The three women looked at him in amazement. He had solved the riddle that baffled them all, and had compromised the irreconcilables. The only question Daphne could think of was "How much is it?"

***Continued on page 408 of this issue.***

INTRODUCING as fine a team of dogs as ever felt the traces, a girl who deserved the bravest of lovers, and a hero who fits that specification to a T.



# Flying Arrow

By Jack Hines

Author of "Juno of Irish Hill," etc.

Illustrated by Frank B. Hoffman

CUTTING stood on the bluff which commanded a sweeping view of the frozen river, expecting at any minute to see the mail carrier's team swing into sight and the dogs come bounding to the end of their regular sixty-mile run from Golovin. O'Connor, the mail carrier, was an hour or so behind his usual arrival time in Council City. And O'Connor's time of departure and his run up from White Mountain were such matters of precise regularity with him that if, as now, he were a bit behind that running time it meant that some obstacle on the trail had been encountered and had retarded him.

Cutting could see far down the river. A great cloud of steam hung like a snowy vapor over the trail. By this sign he accounted for the trailer's tardiness. The river at that point was overflowing the bed-ice, and he pictured the torture that the mail carrier was enduring, possibly at that very instant, while trying to get to the ice-trail once again.

Finally O'Connor hove into view, and Cutting sighed both with relief and apprehension: relieved that O'Connor, whom he loved, had escaped the treachery of the overflow; apprehensive because Norah, his daughter, must make the return trip, and the still more hazardous voyage from Golovin along the Bering coast line to Nome.

Cutting breathed deep of the sharp air, and each of his steps as he heavily retracked to his cabin was marked with a devout prayer for the child who languished within its log walls.

NEXT morning, while the sun was doing his utmost to break through the banked clouds and flood the trees and plains with a dazzling whiteness, Miles O'Connor was heard outside the Cutting cabin, speaking to his crack team dogs and preparing the sleigh robes for the precious freight they were soon to receive. He passed to each of the dogs and spoke to them as if they comprehended his meaning. There was not a trailer in the team who could not read the slightest change of its master's face, let alone understand the tone of his voice, so well had they come to know each other.

Inside, the nurse from the Wild Goose emergency station had prepared Norah against the intense cold. Cutting put on a brave face, considering the anguish of his heart. There was something in the look of the girl's eye and the feel of her skin that startled him at times—he had seen the same look and noted the same condition once before, just before her mother..... He fought back the ashen shade that he felt was rising to his cheeks and assumed a cheerfulness which even the dulled sight of Norah readily saw was a miserable counterfeit.

"Come, Father, cheer up. Think what a wonderful ride I'm going to have; it is too wonderful for words that Mr. O'Connor is going to take me; and those marvelous dogs, Father—you know how I love them. It will be glorious!"

"Yes, and Miles will take care of you like you're his own little sister. You'll come back to your father in the spring, and he wont know you with the blush on your cheeks and the old laughter in your eyes, my dear."

Tenderly O'Connor lifted her from the bed in the cabin and carried her like a wee babe to the folds of the sleigh furs; he was quick in the work of getting under way. For some reason he was strangely nervous, a sort of flighty exhilaration; he could not quite analyze the feeling. He had watched Norah grow and break into his vision like the budding and blooming of a lily. Frail and timid she had always been; a pale, beautiful being from some far-removed world, she had seemed to Miles, from the day he had first seen her until this very day, when with her womanhood had come invalidism.

O'Connor was of the type that can challenge the elementary fury of the North. When the blizzard howled its fiercest or the rivers raced in their deadliest frenzy, O'Connor, with a laughing heart, proclaimed himself their master. So when Norah's father told him that the girl was to be intrusted to his care for the time that it would take for the trip to Nome, that upon his manhood and trailing skill depended her health, her very life, the wild man in O'Connor, the mightier-than-Fate part of him, sprang to this love-task, determined that because of her coming into the realm of his responsibility, there would be no failing and no—*death.*

"It's a high compliment that ye're paying me, sir," he said to Cutting. "I don't need a field-glass to see what opinion you hold of me; an' by this toime maybe ye've come to a way of feeling what you—and Norah—mean to me, Mr. Cutting. I've loife aplenty, sir, and hopes of Paradise to come when I go over the hill; I'm placing them both in the hollow of the little girl's hand, and there they'll be until we pull up at St. Mary's hospital in Nome—and after that too, begorra!"

The father clutched O'Connor's extended hand, and bent for an instant over the sleigh—thus he bade them Godspeed and farewell.

TO Norah this going away was all hazy and indistinct; it was as if she were being borne along on the softest of fleecy clouds. Although she was feeling much better this morning than she had for weeks, she knew it was the buoyancy bred of excitement; for when she felt the power of O'Connor's arms as they slid under her to lift her, like a mighty wave floats a shell, she sank into his cradled embrace weak and relaxed.

As he carried her from the bed to the sleigh she was conscious of a thrill which penetrated to her very soul. Since first she had beheld the Indian-like O'Connor and had heard his mellow voice and the whimsical brogue that shot through his phrases, she had instantly framed him as the dominant figure in all her girlish romances of love and deeds of daring. As she grew, and with her growing came the sickness, she became more and more intense in the worship of her hero. It was a hopeless, helpless idolatry over which she had no control. *She* was the languishing princess chained to her couch by the heaviest and most unbreakable of fetters; *he,* the dashing squire with her gauntlet at his belt, fighting back the whole world to make a triumphant roadway for her. She was now living the ecstasy of those dreams.

She knew the running time of the mail schedule as well as did the mail carrier himself; and always she had

As he carried her to the sleigh, she was conscious of a thrill which penetrated to her very soul.

fancied herself by his side, his guiding fairy spirit to shield him from the dangers of the trail. And now she was actually with him — floating off the Council Heights, like flying, it seemed, as the team dogs rushed on with the ringing of their harness bells and the singing of the steels which shod the sleigh runners, to the river trail below—a whole mile below.

The dogs took the glaring trail aggressively; there were conquest and confidence in the entire string. They sensed the import of this mission. Life and love were the stakes in this race. Before this they'd known that behind them, either in dead metal weight or in the bulky canvas sacks, rode the treasure of Master's government, and they would plod on in the fulfillment of their day's toil. But on this trip they were giving Master everything they had, as he had asked of them at the start, feeling that in the springy craft which they drew reposed the empress of his heart—they were with him to the tips of their frosted guard hair.

THEY had much of crust and water going between Council and White Mountain, but at sundown, when the blue, hazy twilight descended, and the Wild Goose station lights shone like glowing ember splotches ahead of them, they drew on their reserve vitality, and as one dog, from Grey Cloud to Chief and Buck, they raised their finish cry, a chorus of joyful yells. Another day's work was done; they had served again, and were soon to feel the caressing hands of Master as he tended their lacerated feet and placed before them their warm supper.

Again Norah felt the great beating heart of the man as he held her gently to him—"just like Mother used to carry me," she thought—and carried her up the steep incline where Mother Garrard and Woodson, her blue-grass lord, waited to welcome her.

By nightfall of the next day, when Dexter's finally had been reached, the mail team had met with every known freak and fancy of the winter trail. First, between Fox River and the Horseshoe it was one continuous overflow, most all of the going being on portage and bank trail or in water up to the sleigh bed. On the flats at the head of the Chinik lagoon it was glare ice, not a speck or patch of gripping snow for miles. A strong fair wind out of the Fish River head mountains blew dogs and sleigh in a sidereal direction, much against their frantic endeavor to get a scratch hold and cling to the true course. Miles made fun of it all. When a severe blast took the outfit square abeam, he whooped like a schoolboy, and while the dogs, huddled together and being blown wherever the wind drove them, whimpered and howled, O'Connor held to the handle-bars and rode the runners in great glee.

His humor infected Norah; she felt the surge of invigorating air to her lungs; unconsciously she was breathing deep, exultant breaths. She felt that a fighting man had transmitted something of his spirit to her. From that moment she *demanded* life, and for the doctors to whom she was going for treatment half the battle was won.

All that was visible of her were two clear blue eyes and a wisp of brown hair across the whitest of foreheads. To see Miles she had to lift her lashes and raise her eyes as though looking toward the sky; the sight of her dream knight in action was the most stimulating draught she had taken since the beginning of her illness. The drift snow, dust-like and cutting, had fringed his wolverine-trimmed parka hood, and in this glistening aura his granite-like features seemed to Norah like those of an ancient war-god.

O'Connor looked down at her, and all oblivious to the careening, skidding outfit, his soul leaped into the look—and Norah dropped her eyes, leaving him the tantalizing sight of dark fringes on an alabaster skin.

IN the morning it took but a few minutes for the racing dogs to make the end of the Golovin highland and speed the sleigh toward the westward ice-trail. O'Connor, try as he would to concentrate on the guidance of the team, could not shake the fact which stuck in the very core of his heart. He knew himself to be

a chain-bound captive in the mesh of love. His mind blanketed the entire scheme of his former heart attachment. There was no woman who could quite qualify in his eyes for just comparison with the girl now in his care.

He threw himself into the serious business of out-racing a Norton Sound blizzard. It was right at their heels; the clouds walled up behind them black and ominous.

The speed imp was alive in the dogs; at their head Grey Cloud ran close to the trail. He fairly skimmed, a regular wolf shamble which overtakes distant trail marks like magic.

"Wind setting up-coast," thought Miles; "the wind is playing into the hand of the Asiatic current that takes this ice out av bed without a second's warning and sinds it away to sea; an' God help us if anny av us are caught."

There surely were bad omens aplenty that day. The tremendous sea power—the strength of the ocean tides — was working against the puny opposition of one man and seven malamute dogs. Miles knew how surreptitiously, how insidiously, treacherously, the ocean rose and with its swell lifted the tons of ice from their coastal anchorage as though they were a cellar door afloat on its mighty bosom; then, with wind and ocean current working together, carried the entire mass to the expanses of the open sea.

Miles shuddered when he recalled the many trailers who had been trapped that way. They had gone insane, starved, eaten their dogs—yes, even pulled straws to determine which of themselves should serve as food.

ARRIVING at Solomon, Norah felt that the strain of the day's trip had told heavily on her; yet she could not forbear a slight tightening of her fingers on Miles' arm as he carried her from the sleigh to the road-house.

What she did was the involuntary act of her fingers. The contact of her body in the embrace of the only man in her love-world caused the convulsive contraction of her fingers, although her mind was doing its utmost to have her restrain any show of her real feeling.

When leaving Solomon the next morning, O'Connor was abjured to beware the trail. He was told that Big Hurrah was a riot of rushing water. "Hug the coast to Port Safety—and take care when you round the Cape!" These were the farewell words from the old-timers who gathered to wish them good-by.

A thick drift snow was falling. Had it been head-on, it would have proved a blinding curtain against which even the mail carrier would not have ventured. But being plumb at their backs, it was not a storm to hold them from their journey. Although the thermometer hung at ten below freezing, still it was not particularly cold. A southeast snowstorm always brings a sort of negative comfort with it. And Norah was dressed to withstand fifty below zero.

The direct course from Port Safety to Nome is about a point north of west, but in order to clear the Nome Cape, which juts out into Bering Sea, the winter trail makes a detour to the southward and for three or four miles is on ice that in many places crusts six or seven fathoms of sea-water.

The government operator of the Port Safety wireless station told Miles that the trail had been flagged all the way around the Cape and on up to Nome River, where the trail again strung along the shore to Nome. He indicated the first of the standards about a half mile distant, and Miles saw that from its head fluttered a red streamer.

"The boys have set them up at every hundred yards all the way to Nome River," said the station keeper, "so unless she's exceptionally thick, you haven't much chance to go wrong. It's some nasty, and it doesn't look like it's going to ease up any. I can't see beyond the first stake, but you'll be able to make them out when you hit the line."

"We're hitting it now—so good-by and thanks," sang Miles as they went speeding away.

An hour afterward they were toiling on in the midst of a blinding blizzard that whirled the snow around them in whistling eddies—the storm wind was fierce and prankish; it raged from every direction. This was not the first time that Miles had been up against just such

man-killing passion of the elements. And now as before he put his trust completely in the lead dog, which plunged on against the leaden drifts, always to fetch up at a red-topped standard and to inspire the rest of the team with his absolute mastery.

At the first descent of the blizzard O'Connor had folded Norah in the sleigh robes; she snuggled in the furs like a kitten in a down quilt. "I'm tucking ye away, Norah, so's to keep the snow out of your eyes—just go to sleep if ye can; we're all hunkie-dorrie, fetching up foine at each stake. I say *we* are, but I'm having but divilish little to do with it. The Cloud's showing his blood, Norah. Sure he goes through this snow like a circus girl jumps through the paper hoop. And by that token the dog comes out just as safely on the other soide — having the advantage over the circus lady that he has no shpangles to lose in the ring nor quite as far to fall if he misses."

Norah fought down the impulse to say "Miles, my adorable Irishman—" and a whole avalanche of tender expressions which flooded her brain whilst O'Connor arranged the robes and talked to divert her mind from the peril that she knew he was about to face for her.

THE snow began fairly to boil after that. There were times when Miles was so bewildered that it was difficult for him to realize that the world was not spinning around like a top. Once his faith wavered in the gray lead dog; he thought Cloud was off in the wrong direction. "Gee, Cloud! Gee, boy! Ye're going to sea!" he shouted.

The dog, obedient, came off the tack for an instant but gradually worked back to it again, and as he did so he whinnied a rebuke to Miles for questioning his sense of direction. It was the only time that his ears and tail drooped from their defiant stand. The sign of the master's indecision filled the whole team with a sudden panic. Taking their cue from Grey Cloud, as one dog they dropped their tails, semaphore-like, and cried out in remonstrance. Not until the leader was again on his first course between the trail stakes did they regain their spirits.

"It's all right, lad; I'll not open me face again. Have it anny way ye want it." While O'Connor thus cheered the leader, the standard loomed up dead ahead; he had to swing the sled abruptly to miss running into its block-ice foundation. "Now for the next one. We're way pasht the Cape and headed for the river, boys. Go on, Cloud," he urged; "you've forgotten more about running these snow blockades than auld man O'Connor's son Miles ever knew. More power to ye, acushla!"

Well did O'Connor have to send along some cheerful word to the lead dog. It was part confession to himself that some impending peril was upon them. There was a creepy moisture about the lashing snow that had the smell of salt water! He felt—or at times imagined that he felt—the whole ice-trail warp and writhe as though it were about to puff up and split in two. Sudden depressions seemed to form in the close-packed snow; they appeared in long weird-looking striation and then would close up again and leave the snow surface smooth and cushioned like the down of eider.

Some great uncanny force was playing with the sea ice! It was as if Neptune were flexing his titanic muscles beneath his frozen armor.

The nearest thing to fear that ever clutched at O'Connor's heart seized him now. Had he been the conveyor of nothing but inanimate mail pouches, past performances would have shown that he went through without a qualm. O'Connor, the premier trailsman of Alaska, topped a great form-sheet.

But now he experienced all the soul-racking anxiety that the master of an ocean liner feels when his ship speeds along the iceberg trail in a thick fog—except that Miles dreaded what the sea-captain would have welcomed: the open sea!

Miles felt so sure that his apprehensions were true that already he was arranging his plan of procedure. There was no doubt of it—they were on floating ice. The wind screeched in his ears and whipped his face with stinging sleet. All about him was a dense fog, smoke-like with the permeating tang of salt in it.

Only the lead dog maintained his absolute poise. Grey Cloud forged ahead with the assurance that he would pull up to and pass the trail stakes one after the other; that if there was open water it did not lie between him and the shore. He was on his anchor segment of the ice. The dog had no dread of menacing signs. His unconquerable spirit drove him dead ahead. But suddenly he veered over to the "haw" tack as though the Master had chopped a command at him, and quite as abruptly the black, sinister sea lay like an inky gulf not twenty feet on their right.

THERE was no time to think of the horror of the situation. The fighting man took charge of affairs at the instant that the enemy to life appeared.

"Come in. Haw! Cloud." There was nothing of indecision in the command; it was the first order of defense. The leader spun back like a dart. When he stopped at the windward side of the sleigh, the next command, "Down, dogs," placed the dogs there until further orders, a furry protectorate of seven heat-radiating bodies for the girl in the sleigh.

O'Connor's first thought was of Norah; and as she was above all his chief consideration, he did not disturb her. "Time enough to break the news to her," he thought, "when I've figured out my line of battle and 'tended to the preliminaries."

Going back where the leader had first cut from the trail, he saw that they had been coming along on an old track that led straight into the water. He went to the edge of the ice and peered through the mist. He could see the break on the other side; the sight of it set his heart beating with unspeakable joy; and there beckoning to him like a star of hope was a trail standard for which the lead dog was making with unerring precision. The bit of red bunting hung drooping from its staff, which leaned out over the water at almost a falling angle. It seemed to Miles to be just toppling into the black waters.

He noted that the main ice was setting to the westward, estimated its speed and by his pocket compass marked the course to the trail. The crimson-topped guide-post called to him; beyond it were safety and life,—the means of rescue for the treasure in the sleigh,—and Miles was impatient to heed the call. His duty was as plain before him as was his path blazoned by the fluttering strip of cloth.

How to break the news to Norah was the next facer for him, but he went to the task without hesitation.

"Norah, will ye come out of the land of dreams?" he said as he lifted the robe and looked down into her eyes. "I don't know how to tell ye what we're up against—or rather what's up against us. Ye're not strong enough to fire a shotgun, are ye—darling? Well, if so ye were, I'm thinking we'll be after having some wild duck shooting pretty soon. Did ye know that it was the open season, Norah?"

"Oh Miles, don't fidget so. Tell me—or shall I tell you? The ice! The open water that has bothered you on the whole trip? Have you come to it? Don't fear to tell me. Can't you see that I've got much stronger? We've work to do, Miles, and it's so glorious that I can do my share of it!"

"Here she is calling me Miles! Holy Saints," thought he, "this is a happy day!"

Still he could not understand how Norah knew what ill luck had befallen them, but the girl had really apprehended the danger from the moment that she had to forego the sight of the gray snows — and his gray-blue eyes — and what was going on all about. If she had not been of the stuff to "do her share of the work" she would never have submitted to being almost smothered under the robes in order not to impede Miles in the slightest manner in this race with death.

"Wont you lift me so that I can see it, Miles?"

As he placed his arms about her he felt her twine hers around his neck and breathe his name again and again into his ears. He crushed her to him for the second, unmindful of her frail body. Then speaking softly to her, he said: "Norah, we have much to thank God for, darling. I'll not be gone long from ye. Just obey commands while ye're yet

Going back where the leader had first cut from the trail, he saw that they had been coming along on an old track that led straight to the water.

on this soide of the ice; something tells me I'm to be a blithering slave when we both stand safe and sound on its other soide. But, Norah, that'll be a rosy by and by.

"There's never annything so bad but it might be a bit worse. Sure if it had 've been a low timperature this day, it makes me shudder for what might have happened; but as it is I'll be along the coast trail in half an hour—and before dark has set in we'll be back here with a big oomiak and you'll see the shining faces of some of the Nome River Indians and hear the joyful songs av thim —rejoicing that the Winter Dove has been spared for the Flying Arrow — that's me, darling.

"Now mind: if I'm gone that long,— till dark, I mean,—I've fixed a torch in this gold-pan here. All you have to do is to strike a match, if ye think that ye have the strength, and loight it, and then with this snow-shoe shove it clear of the sleigh so's it wont set ye ablaze, darling.

"I'm leaving ye with them great dogs; and will ye just whisper a word to the Holy Father and thank Him for moild weather and Norah Cutting—and put in a word for me, if you please, because it's only toimes like this that I ever think of Him at all at all, and thin I haven't the nerve to ask Him for a bit av a boost. Now fold yourself up, dear, and do not try to see what I'm about."

This done, Miles wrote a note of instructions and making a packet of it, tied it about his neck. He then went to the dogs and bade them guard the sleigh. Whispering a farewell, he stalked to the edge of the ice, crouched there for a moment, then struck the water a cushion plunge and swam for the anchor ice of the other side. While working against the upcoast set of the current, he recalled—and the recollection seemed absurd at this time—that once before he had dropped into water (then unexpectedly) when he had a long run before him to reach shelter. It was forty below zero at that time. True, when he finally got to Chinik, dragging two solid lumps of ice that once were his legs, the kerosene process of thawing was a bit heroic, but he survived it all right. "Why, this is child's play compared to that," he thought. "The water's warm and so is the air; it's a cinch, Miles. There was nothing at stake then but my miserable self, and I saved that without anny unnicissary exertion. Why, O'Connor, how can ye lose now with the weather clear and the thrack fasht, with Norah Cutting as the purse for the homestakes?"

He fetched up against the opposite face of the break almost before he knew it. He slid up on a shelving under-shoot of the ice, and with the help of his hunting steel he clambered to the edge of the wall, enthusiastic though saturated. He immediately attempted a yell to the side he had just left, but the wind threw it back at him with choking violence. He got into vigorous action, making for the trail stake with the utmost speed of which he was capable. He took no chance of cross-cutting but bounded along the break until he at last came to the government stake. He stopped for a second and saw that its base was firmly frozen to the main ice and that it was in no immediate danger of toppling over and disappearing.

Then he began the race along the trail. His brain worked at high tension. There was nothing that he did not think of in this great endeavor—this supreme test of his timber.

He brought into play every faculty that Grey Cloud had taxed to keep to the trail—that was the first duty for his brain; he was always ten paces ahead of his feet. He used his eyes, and realized what an advantage he had over his lead dog because of his height in seeing ahead. His ears he strained for the slightest sound to direct him to some living being that would mean help for the girl out on the drifting ice. He inhaled the air, analyzing each atom that entered his lungs in the hope of detecting the odor of some cabin fire. He demanded of each infinitesimal ligament and muscle in his whole superb frame its ultimate exertion. He taxed his brain to keep vividly awake. He *commanded* Fate to urge him on.

Through all the labyrinth of these conflicting mental and physical sensations O'Connor still felt the intoxicating softness of Norah's caress and the fra-

grance of her breath. It was fire to his soul and lent speed to his legs, which began to move, as he thought, sluggishly. It seemed that they would never move fast enough. Had Miles been shot from the mouth of a cannon—it would still have been a snail's pace for him. His mind outstripped his frosted legs.

IT was just between sundown and darkness, the fleet will-o'-the-wisp twilight of the Northland. Lieutenant Massey stood gazing from the front room of his quarters. Suddenly he jumped back and tore through the hall to the front door. He had seen a frosted apparition with the shape of a human being lunge into his dooryard. At the same time the commanding officer's orderly had bounded across the barracks street toward the falling object.

Another officer, who had been sitting by the fire, came close at Massey's heels. The three men carried Miles into the room and the orderly hastened for the Fort medico. Running true to form, O'Connor hadn't dropped until he delivered the goods. He was incased in a rattling, clinking sheath of ice; it covered him like a shroud. All those knew the famous mail carrier, but with his frosted nose and cheeks and a livid mask of sheet ice almost obliterating what remained of his features, he was beyond instant recognition.

Hutchinson cut the packet from about his neck and took it to the fire, feeling that its message would be all-important.

When Dr. Jerauld came, he had Miles taken outdoors again, and soon with deft professional skill he had the labor of reviving and thawing well along. Hutchinson unfolded and read the message; the precautionary lines of instruction which Miles had written before he had consigned himself to the black waters:

> Follow flag trail. Cross and skirt break *west.* Norah Cutting to St. Mary's, Nome. Feed the dogs.
> O'CONNOR, U. S. M. S.

Nothing could have been more explicit to direct any person who might have found him if O'Connor had fallen on the way. The guiding angel certainly had been good to the heroic Miles, for to no other place along the Bering coast could he have come where such complete facilities to care for him and hastily equip a relief expedition were always at hand.

Soon the barracks' horses were ringing with their winter bells, lanterns were flashing, commands were sung out as the post dories were skidded to the bobsleds and packed with all necessary paraphernalia for the night's rescue work.

When the frost had been drawn from Miles' feet and hands and the face patches were thawed, Dr. Jerauld gave him a sleeping potion, and after swathing his whole body in oils and soft cotton, had him put to bed. The doctor then hurried to accompany the relief corps.

Lieutenant Hutchinson, who assumed command, took nothing upon himself in the laying-out of their traveling course; he carried out the instructions of the note to the letter. In packing he included a bundle of dried salmon for the dogs, although he knew that a dog man like the Fish River mail carrier would never be without food for his team.

ALMOST immediately after the Master had left the dogs they set up their chorus—their infinite-reaching wolf-call—and fixed their exact location for any living thing that might be within its great radius. Norah's heart beat with admiration for them. She realized that each one knew the predicament in which they were caught.

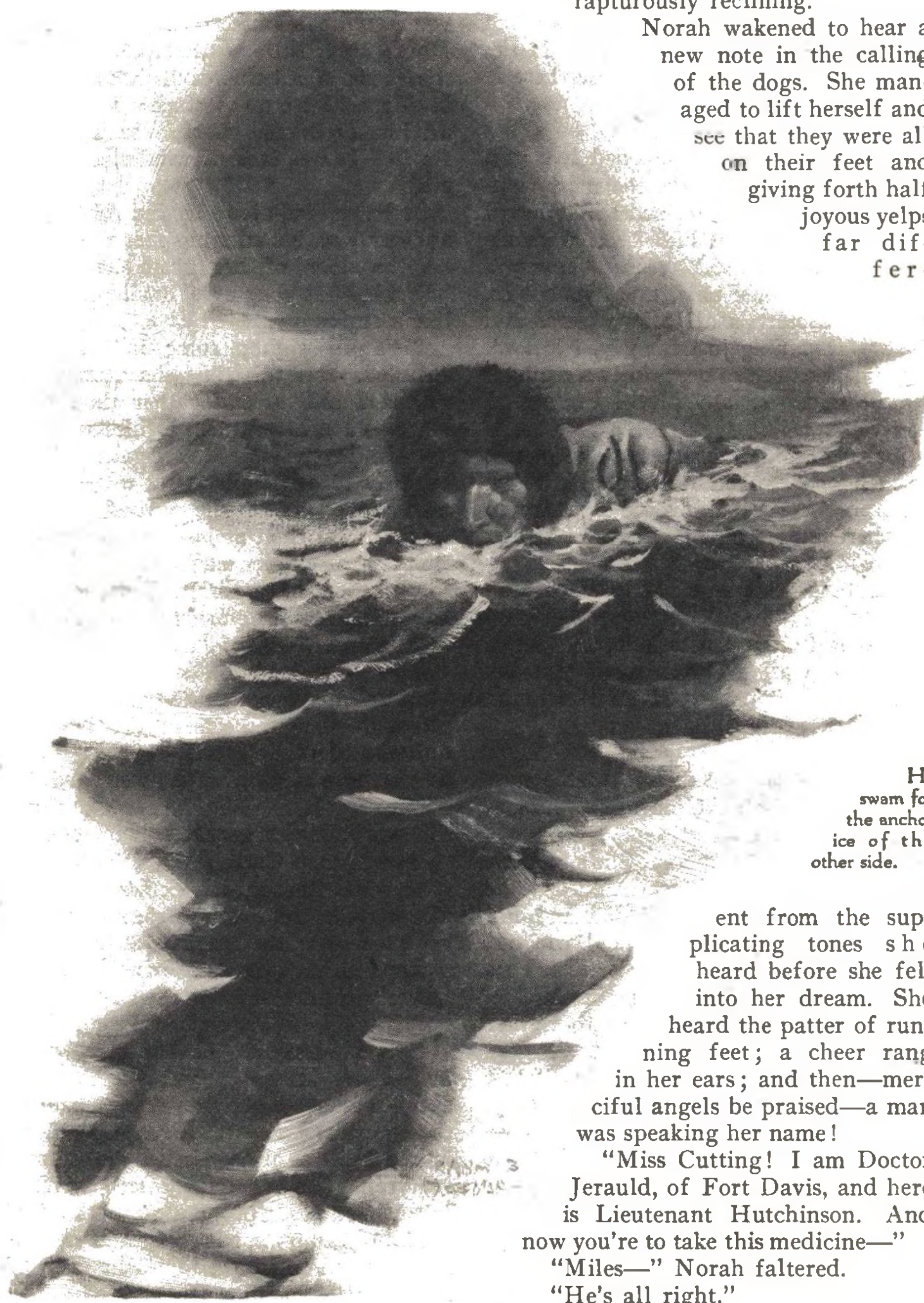
When the leaden shades of night fell, she set fire to the flambeau that Miles had arranged. She could not suppress a tear when she saw that it was made of one of her beloved's fur mittens soaked in seal oil. Immediately the torch flared up a bright beacon. As she shoved it clear of the sleigh she prayed that its glow might be seen by whomever came to save them.

She pictured Miles in the water, trying frantically to scale the icy wall on the other side. Then for a horrible second she saw him sink back to the treacherous depths. She closed her eyes and wished at that instant to die and

join him at the gates of heaven. She beseeched the saints to watch over him—'twas always he: she prayed for nothing for herself. Her soul mingled with the ceaseless wail of the faithful malamutes; she merged her lament with theirs, breathing God's name and ever seeing her crusader flying at the head of great banked clouds.

He carried something in his outstretched arms. Away in the radiant distance she beheld the glorious throne to which Miles was flying—and in his arms she saw that she—she herself—was rapturously reclining.

Norah wakened to hear a new note in the calling of the dogs. She managed to lift herself and see that they were all on their feet and giving forth half joyous yelps far different from the supplicating tones she heard before she fell into her dream. She heard the patter of running feet; a cheer rang in her ears; and then—merciful angels be praised—a man was speaking her name!



He swam for the anchor ice of the other side.

"Miss Cutting! I am Doctor Jerauld, of Fort Davis, and here is Lieutenant Hutchinson. And now you're to take this medicine—"

"Miles—" Norah faltered.

"He's all right."

"There is a God, Doctor!"

The girl drank the draught and closed her eyes to rejoice and sing high praise.

From the malamutes the officer and men could not restrain their caresses. They fell on the whole team and gave each of the dogs a good hug, which was received understandingly. Champion beasts they were and they knew it, each standing where he had been left, in the traces of duty, to starve and die there if need be.

WHEN next Norah opened her eyes she found herself in the most wonderful of fleecy quilted beds. She heard the soft tones of a high-bred woman's voice: "Sweet child," it said, "how you have slept. Come now, open your eyes. See! The storm's all blown away and the sun is shining just for you, I know."

"Oh, I've been so peacefully sleeping," Norah said, "or am I still dreaming? Are you real?"

Mrs. Jerauld touched Norah's hands and tenderly stroked her forehead. "Yes, I am real," she said, "and you are to rest here until you are fine and strong again."

"Miles — where is Miles?" Norah asked.

"He is in the Doctor's room. After you've been all prettied up, if you can stand to see him dressed up like Santa Claus, we'll bring him to you."

"DOC," Miles was saying to the post surgeon the next morning, "how is she?"

"All O.K., O'Connor. She's a little beauty, and she'll get well, old boy, be sure of that. She's got blood and fire in her heart, O'Connor. We'll win out sure. I wish that we could keep her here in the post hospital—or right here in the house—Grace would love to mother her."

"She niver had a mother, Doc. But Bennett Cutting, her auld man, he's been father and mother to her for these manny years. The auld fellow's not got all the spare cash in the world—but at that he's spinding his lasht ounce to put Norah in the healthy clear.

"Say, Doc,"—an enlightened look suffused O'Connor's eyes as they shone through the cotton bandages,—"I'm in the government service, as you know—now isn't there something about medical attintion for all government employees and their families—to be had here free gratis for nothing, Doc?"

"There is, O'Connor. Why?"

"That's what I thought. Now will you let me slip into the room where Norah is, if she's so that she can stand the shock of all this divilish cotton embroidery I have on me face? I can walk all hunkie dorrie. Sure, what's a little frosht! It was lack of wind that floored me."

Miles scuffed along behind the Doctor as briskly as his stinging feet permitted. At the door of her room he called: "Norah, shut your eyes, darling. I look like a scarecrow."

"It's all right; come in," she responded. But this time she utterly disregarded orders, and rather than close her eyes she lifted them to him with the age-old mystery of the world shining brightly through glistening tears. With outstretched arms she waited for his coming, and then at last for an ecstatic minute she held her man-god to her heart.

And then, exalted with his wonderful happiness, O'Connor turned to the Doctor and his wife: "Sind to Nome for Father Van and Bishop Rowe, Doc. They're me two greatest frinds, and although they're both at the head of different churches, still — praise be — they're both strong for the wan God."

IT was indeed a gorgeous home-coming for Bennett Cutting when the first upriver packet brought back his daughter. She had the rose of the sinking sun in her cheeks and the laughter of the racing streams in her eyes as she rushed to her father's arms.

"Didn't I tell ye, sir," said the radiant O'Connor, standing at her side, "that Norah was to hold my chances of loife and Paradise as long as she was under the care that you gave her up to? That in the hollow of her hand she carried everything that I held sacred? Well, Mr. Cutting, I propose now that we pool our happiness: it's you and me for Norah until we drain the lasht drop of our blood living for her."

THE adventure among the Home Haters of a couple so beautifully old-fashioned that they really loved each other.

# The Unbaited Trap

## By Albert Payson Terhune

Author of "The Years of the Locust," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE BAKER

JOAN and Hugh Vedder had been married eight years — ever since she was twenty and he was thirty. Happy the nation — tenfold happier the wedded couple—that has no history. And the Vedders had been very happy indeed.

There had been no struggle to make both ends meet. From the first, the Wolf and the Door had never been within a mile of each other. Vedder was a good business man, a good husband, a good comrade. Joan was more than satisfied with her quiet, home-loving mate, and with the quiet home he loved.

If there were no thrills in their lives, neither were there any heartaches. They loved each other; they suited each other. A placidly sweet engagement merged very naturally into a sweetly placid married life. Their friends were of their own sort — pleasant, ultra-respectable folk, fairly well-to-do, simple in tastes, clean. If they were not very inspiring, none of them knew it.

All this was in New York, mind you— in the actual New York, not the New York of fiction or of visitors' tales; the real New York, which holds more quiet, steady, home-loving people than any other city in America. New York is merely Pompton, New Jersey, or Grayling, Michigan, seen through a magnifying glass. Everything (except human nature and the average apartment) is on a gigantic scale; that is all. There is no greater number of social strata; there is nothing to differentiate the metropolis from any other village, except that it is infinitely larger.

And the Vedders had lived for eight years in New York as though New York were Springfield, Massachusetts.

THEN a man whom Vedder knew in business — Archer Dunne — became associated with Hugh in a real-estate deal. Their wives met. And the Vedders were asked to dine with the Dunnes.

That started it. Right around the corner from their own apartment, the Vedders walked in on a new world: a world of jolly liveliness that was only a shade too lively and too jolly, a world that sparkled and was professionally gay. To the home-staying Vedders, there was nothing tawdry in the sparkle, nothing forced or fevered, in the gayety. It was all spontaneous and novel and delightful.

As the bread-and-butter child might revel in its first course-dinner, so did the Vedders revel in this glitter-world into which they had blundered. There was something thoroughly likable about Joan and Hugh, a unique something that attracted the clique of people they met through the Dunnes. The "something" was wholesomeness, though neither they nor their new friends realized it. It was a novelty to the Dunnes' set, a novelty that made its two possessors very welcome among the home-haters.

The Dunne set can be found in a village as well as in Gotham. In the village its membership scarce reaches into the dozens. It swells far into the thousands in New York, but only because New York is that many times larger. In the village it is made up of women

who would rather board than do their own cooking and who dawdle away precious baking-day afternoons in gossiping and in playing progressive euchre or putting on their best clothes and walking down to see the five-fifteen train come in. Its men would rather make five dollars on a semi-doubtful horse swap than earn ten dollars at the factory. They dress better than their neighbors; and they have the rare gift of getting perpetual credit, on no security, at the grocer's.

In New York, the women of the Dunne set plead the servant-problem bugaboo as an excuse for living at hotels instead of keeping house. Their men, once wooed from the old-fashioned home idea, abet them in this. These same men are in New York merely because they can make more money with less work there than anywhere else, and because so-called good times are to be had in all sizes, varieties and locations.

Both the men and the women, being divorced from home ties, have plenty of time to get into mischief. They keep open the doors of the flashier dining places, the after-theater restaurants and certain types of theaters; and they keep the taxicab companies from bankruptcy. Time, to them, is like deer to a sportsman: something to be killed as quickly, as excitingly and as frequently as possible.

It is a dreary, dreary routine, this life of the home-haters, whether on Main Street, Yaphank, or on Broadway, Manhattan.

Yet, to the visiting Vedders, it was a grown-ups' fairyland. To them, restaurant dinners still had the charm of brilliant novelty. Cabaret brass was virgin gold. A theater evening was an exception, not a rule. Butterfly people were a marvel and a joy to these staid home-dwellers.

Once or twice, just at first, they both noticed and wondered at a certain queer freedom of speech, at jokes and discussions on themes their old friends had always avoided.

But they told themselves and each other that they must not be provincial or prudish, and that they had probably become too narrow-minded from long lack of friction with up-to-date people. And, in an amazingly short time, the feeling of embarrassment died a natural death.

Into this gay new world the two stay-at-homes launched themselves with all the blended zeal of explorers and proselytes. And daily they learned more and more of its astounding ways.

For example, Hugh found that a man who likes to spend all his evenings at home with his own wife is in danger of becoming a fossil. Worse still, he is in peril of ridicule from wiser folk. Mrs. Dunne herself told him this—this and a hundred other interesting things. She told him in such a pretty, tactful way, and so convincingly, that he began to look back on the old life as a new-hatched millionaire remembers his dinner-pail and his one shirt a week.

Women learn anything and everything far more quickly than do men. Their powers of adaptation are positively uncanny. While a lucky-strike miner is still trying to learn not to eat with his knife, his once-calicoed wife already can go through the complete litany of afternoon tea or dinner etiquette.

So it was with Joan. Before Hugh had fairly begun to realize his new surroundings, those surroundings fitted her like a made-to-order glove. She learned to laugh prettily, instead of showing blank dismay, when the women around her spoke openly of flirting with other women's husbands. She learned not to shudder — even inwardly — when folk talked of the liaisons of seemingly respectable men, as of everyday matters.

She scoffed daintily at old fogies of both sexes who were tied bovinely and complacently to marital apron-strings. She looked back with amused self-contempt to the prehistoric days when she had deemed it "fast" for a woman to smoke a cigarette or drink a cocktail, and when the sight of even a mildly drunken man had filled her with sick horror.

True, she could never learn to smoke without choking, and cocktails always tasted like hair-oil and made her sick. And she could not bring herself to adopt, personally, the loose-moraled conditions that had once shocked and now

Mrs. Dunne herself told Hugh that a man who likes to spend all his evenings at home with his own wife is in danger of becoming a fossil.

amused her. But she was no spoil-sport. And the Dunne set adopted her without question.

JOAN was mentally adapting herself to her new sphere to an extent she had not counted on. For example, she unconsciously found herself beginning to compare Hugh with the men around him, and her own uneventful wedded life with their wives'. And at last she saw she had been deprived of something.

Hugh was a dear, faithful old chap. But he was not inspiring. She recognized that, now. And her love-life, by contrast to some of her present friends', had been a stagnant mill-pond compared to a cataract. Yes, she had missed much.

Fate had robbed her of the one "grand passion" that is every woman's right, had shackled her to conventionality, when the right man might have swept her off her feet and set her thrilling. She had never thrilled. She yearned to.

And bit by bit, merciless self-analysis told her she had never loved Hugh, did not love Hugh, never could love Hugh—in the mad, reckless "world-well-lost-for-love" fashion that she felt her nature could rise to under the proper incentive —or improper incentive, as the case might be.

No, her affection for poor old Hugh was more maternal than marital. She felt a tender devotion for him, a desire to make his road smooth, a keen motherly interest in his success, a worried solicitude for his welfare. That was all. He could not appreciate her. He never had appreciated her. Wild, all-encompassing sex-love had passed her by. And she rebelled. It was not fair that she should go through life cheated out of the one Great Love.

Joan Vedder was quite certain that she arrived at all these sorry conclusions without one atom of outside help. If she had been told that they were the direct result of a score or more of fragmentary talks with Archer Dunne, she would have denied it vehemently and honestly.

True, she liked Dunne, admired him and enjoyed hearing him talk. He knew so much of life, of love. He had such rare insight into feminine nature. He understood her as no man had ever understood her. His tired dark eyes seemed to look down into the very soul of her, to read all her heart-emptiness, her capabilities for sublime love, the strangely elusive charm that made her so different from all other women. He said so himself. And she knew it was true.

IT was coming home from Shanley's that Dunne told Joan about the "elusive charm" and her unlikeness to other women. Ten of them had gone to the theater and to supper. That left two over, after two taxies were filled for the homeward ride. And she and Dunne chanced to be the two. Hence the tête-à-tête in a third taxicab.

"I never understood why men could rave about the subtle mystery and the miracle of women," he was saying, "until I met you. Till then, all women had seemed to me pretty much alike, and not at all mysterious. And then I met *you*—my Lady of Mystery. Tell me what it is that makes you so different—so unforgettable."

"Why," she laughed, embarrassed, "I'm a very ordinary mortal, I'm afraid."

"The man who lets you think so deserved a 'very ordinary mortal' for a wife," said Dunne, savagely. "And he is about the only man of my acquaintance who hasn't got one."

Vaguely, she felt she ought to rebuke him for the implied slur on Hugh. But the impulse was not strong enough to rise all the way to her lips. Besides, she found it inexplicably sweet to listen to such unwonted praise of herself.

How this man understood her! How he read her! It was—it was almost supernatural. How different from Hugh's boorish compliments, which usually took the form of a bear-pat on the shoulder and some such coarse words as "Old girl, you're all to the good!"

"I'll be a better man—I'll be a happier man—always and always," Dunne was murmuring, "for having known the One Woman. You don't know what it means to me, Lady of Mystery."

His hand closed softly over hers.

There was nothing of flirtation in the gesture. So tender, so reverent it was, that Joan had not the heart to draw her hand away.

"I am glad," she said, shyly. "I'm glad if I've—helped."

"Helped?" he echoed. "Why, you've made 'a new heaven and a new earth' for me. Oh, if I could tell you all it had meant—all it will mean—forever, till I am dust! Will you let me tell you, darling?"

His free hand was stealing about her waist. And even Joan could read nothing of reverence in this new gesture.

"Don't, please," she said, moving forward. "You mustn't."

"Forgive me!" he cried, all contrition. "But if only you knew! You *must* know, Joan!"

And, all at once, Joan knew. This man loved her. And something told her it was the Great Love—the wild, adoring, suicidal love that her life had missed. The thought thrilled her to the soul. It surged through her, setting her warm blood atingle, her brain awhirl.

"I—I mustn't listen to you," she said feebly.

"You must!" he urged with really beautiful abandon, his body trembling from head to foot. "You *must,* my sweetheart. Heaven has brought you to me, from all the world. I can't lose you! I *wont* lose you."

The taxi lurched around a corner. Joan forced herself to turn from the man's imploringly hypnotic eyes and to look out of the window. By the delicatessen store with the gilded boar's head on a blue platter in the window, she saw the cab was turning into her own street. In another two minutes she would be at home. Dunne also saw where they were.

"Listen, dear heart," he said adoringly, "I must leave you in a minute or so. When can I see you again—*alone?* I must see you, to-morrow. Say I may."

She hesitated, her mind still in a delicious turmoil.

"Do you know the Prince Crœsus Hotel?" he went on. "The tea-room is so cozy and dim-lit and secluded. Will you meet me there—say, at five — to-morrow afternoon? Tell me you will! I *must* see you."

"Y-es," she heard herself answer faintly, through no volition of her own.

"Thank you ten million times!" he exclaimed, fervently.

As she timidly eluded his effort to kiss her, he added more prosaically:

"I'm certain I can make it by five. I've a big directors' meeting at three. But it ought to be over in time for me to get to the Prince Crœsus before five o'clock. If I'm detained, I'll telephone you. But I'll move heaven and earth to get there."

"You—you *can't* telephone me," she faltered. "How can you? If I go there to meet you, it wouldn't do to have a page shouting my name all over the room. Don't you see it wouldn't?"

"H'm!" he meditated. "That's so! But—"

"I have it," she broke in. "If you find you must telephone, ask for 'Mrs. Senoj.'"

"'Senoj?'" he repeated, puzzled. "How did you ever happen to think of such a queer name as that? Is it a real name, or did you make it up? How do you spell it?"

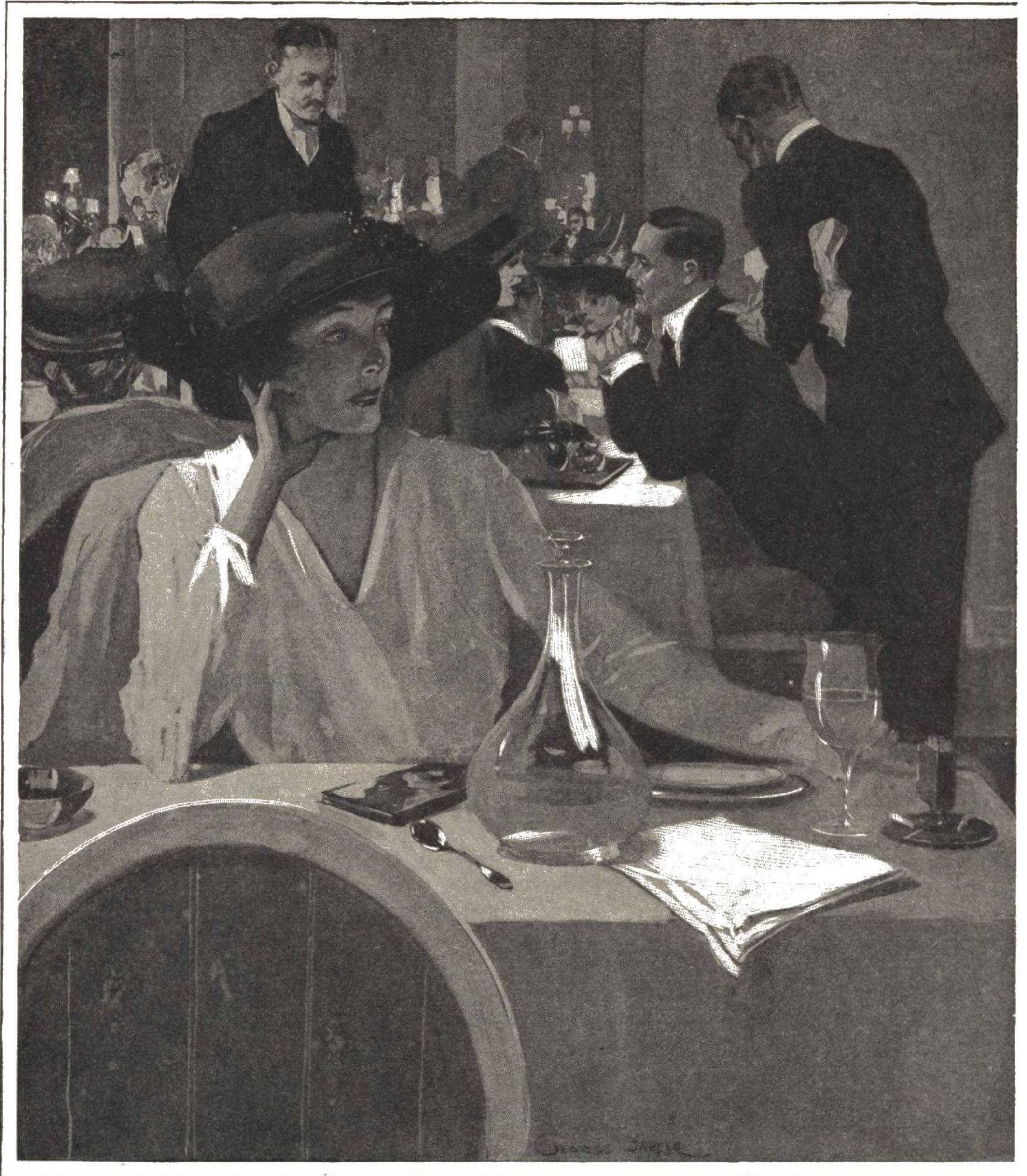
*"S-e-n-o-j,"* she answered. "It's *Jones* backward. I—"

The taxi halted with a jerk, in front of the Vedder apartment. Hugh was on the steps, waiting for them. So was Mrs. Dunne. A departing taxicab had just disgorged them. There were voluble farewells. Hugh and his wife went indoors, together, both phenomenally silent, for once in their lives.

THE Prince Crœsus Hotel is a half-block off Broadway. It runs through from one numbered street to another. It is one hotel in a hundred. And the other ninety-nine are precisely like it—except for the tea-room.

The Prince Crœsus tea-room is an institution. It is known to lovers from Greenwich village to the Bronx. Also it is wholly respectable.

A huge room, it is, fully one hundred and fifty by ninety feet in area—a room of magnificent distances. The distances are rendered greater by the subdued light that bathes the place in a soft, warm dimness through which the solitary little pink light on every table shines like a



She had forced back the moss-covered old scruples that threatened to engulf her new ideas of freedom. She here in this dim-lit Lovers' Lane of a tea-room, waiting to hear Archer Dunne Woman; that she was a Wonder Girl; that she was

misted star. Coming in from the bright foyer, one's first impression is of a twilight blur, spotted here and there by tiny table lamps that glow but do not illumine.

The walls and ceilings are in somber colors, arabesqued and frescoed and latticed in neutral tints that absorb light without reflecting it. There is no regular arrangement of tables. Practically all of them hug closely the four walls or snuggle in half-niches. At the tables are low fauteuils and lower chairs—wicker and upholstered in gray. The room's center is given up to the big pillars, to a table or two sheltered by

had forced them back, after an all-day battle. And now she was here—tell her again that he loved her; that she was the One his adored Lady of Mystery.

them, and to a writing desk and a lounge.

It is an odd place, this tea-room of the Prince Crœsus, a place devoted to low lights, to lower voices, to tender silences. It is as far removed from New York's life and racket and rush as any hidden valley in the Lotos Land.

Into the tea-room, at five the next afternoon, came Joan Vedder. She paused for an instant in the curtain-hung doorway to accustom her eyes to the soft gloom. At first she could distinguish nothing. Then, gradually, her eyes began to take in vague details. Two white-capped maids and a waiter or so were moving about silently. But no one came forward to usher her to a table.

As she stood there, hoping that Dunne would appear out of the dim-lit spaces to guide her to her place, a man and woman just beside her rose to their feet and (after various athletic feats with a tight overcoat and with a wrap which insisted on holding itself upside down) departed, whispering. Joan sat down at the table they had vacated.

By this time her eyes had focused themselves to the half-light. She could see, for instance, that every other table within her range of vision was occupied. And at all the tables but one, were a man and a woman, alone together. Sometimes the couple sat in the big, low wicker chairs; oftener on one of the very narrow fauteuils, side by side. And at least three such pairs were semi-openly "holding hands."

The one table, forming the exception to this rule, was the gathering point of three old ladies, a young woman, a six-year-old child and a thoroughly uncomfortable looking man with lonely whiskers. The group were as out of

place as a wheelbarrow in a temple of Venus. And they evidently knew it.

At the other tables some of the couples were drinking highballs or cocktails. A very few were sipping tea and nibbling at English muffins. One fat and bald-headed old man with a bilious visage had just ordered for his opulent-figured companion a bottle of champagne. The beverage was long in arriving, and the wine-opener was fretfully rapping on the table with his thick finger-tips and inquiring of the head waiter:

"Can't I get a little service here?"

Joan presently lost interest in what was going on around her. She sat where she could see the doorway, and toward the doorway she looked, far more in fear than in hope, waiting to see Archer Dunne's trim figure appear there, waiting to hear his tenderly contrite apologies for being late.

(It chanced that Archer Dunne, at that moment, was neither contrite nor tender. He was fuming in blasphemous impotence, as a subway rush-hour "block" held him in a stuffily smelly subway train, stalled midway between Twenty-third and Twenty-eighth streets.)

The day had not been wholly pleasant for Joan. On the preceding night, the excitement of what she had gone through and the dazzling revelation of Dunne's love for her had kept her buoyed and strangely exultant. She had felt like a heroine in a popular novel.

The sound of Hugh's tranquil snores in the next room had sickened her at thought of his material grossness. She wished he would sleep more quietly and leave her in peace to her new golden dreams.

But the morning had dawned rainy and raw, as the next morning has a cynical way of doing. And reaction had set in. First of all, oddly enough, she had regretted repeating the idiotic name "Senoj" to Archer Dunne. Not because it was idiotic, but because, to her, it had once been half sacred—although she had not thought of it for many months, until it had popped unbidden into her mind when the question of a telephonic name came up.

When she and Hugh had been engaged—oh, a century or more ago, when she was in her late teens—she used to telephone to him every day at his office. And as the engagement was not yet announced, she did not want to telephone so often under her own name for fear the office people might talk (which they did).

Thus, after one of the long conspiracy-conferences so dear to true lovers, she and Hugh had evolved "Jones" as a pseudonym to throw the others off the track. She would henceforth announce herself to the office telephone-girl as "Miss Jones." Then it had occurred to Hugh that "Jones" was such a terribly plain name that the operator might suspect it was not genuine. Whereat, in real inspiration, Joan had suggested that they pronounce it backward. And, for months thereafter, the demure telephone-girl had called daily to Hugh:

"Mr. Vedder, Miss—er—Senoj is on the wire."

And *that* was the name she had been so disloyal as to give to Archer Dunne to use!

Joan felt as if she had shown one of Hugh's love-letters to a stranger. She did not see how she could have been so base as to take the holy name of Senoj in vain. Well, it was done! and anyhow, the chances were fifty to one that Archer would be at the tea-room ahead of her. So she felt at liberty to pass on to the next worry.

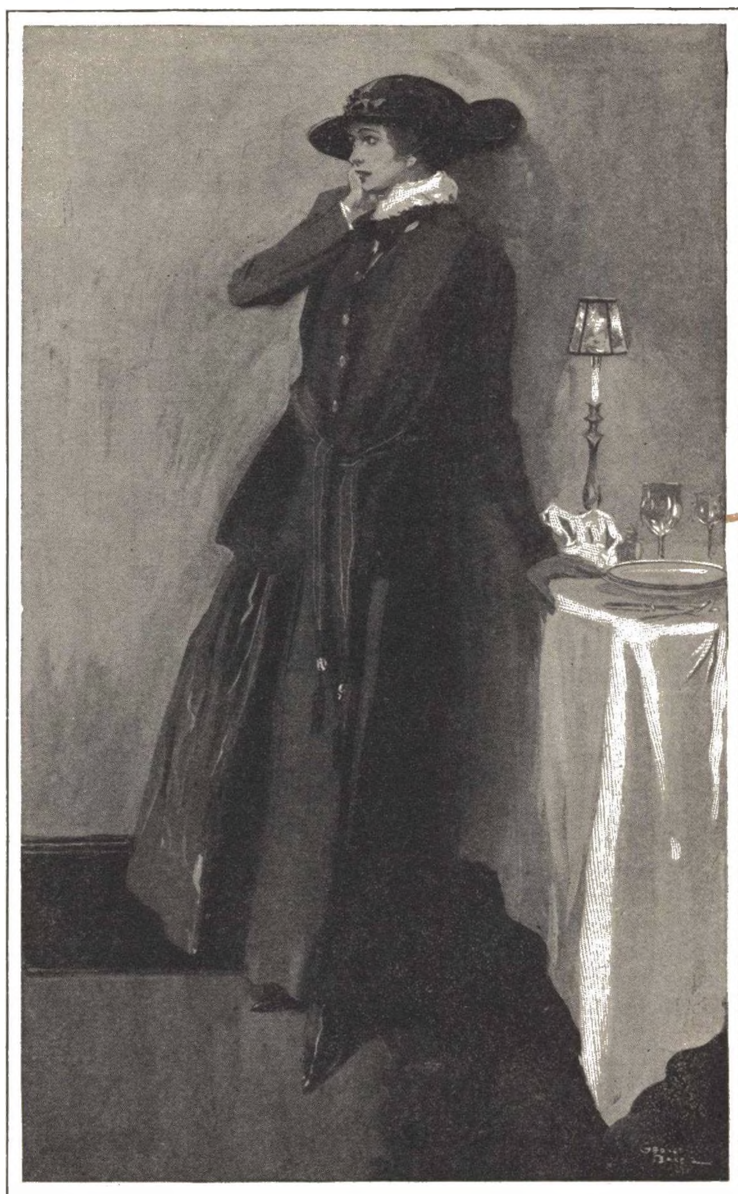
Underneath the jolly veneer of the past few months, her older principles began to stir. It was one thing to realize that she did not love her husband except in a maternal way, and that she had an inalienable right to at least one Great Love in her life. It was quite another thing to listen, unrebuking, to the love-vows of another woman's husband, to arrange to meet him clandestinely. And her lately deadened Puritan conscience throbbed uncomfortably.

She had forced back the moss-covered old scruples that threatened to engulf her new ideas of freedom. She had forced them back, after an all-day battle. And now she was here—here in this dim-lit Lovers' Lane of a tea-room, waiting to hear Archer Dunne tell her

again that he loved her; that she was the One Woman; that she was a Wonder Girl; that she was his adored Lady of Mystery.

And now, after all, he was not here to tell her these glorious things. The anti-climax of the situation jarred upon Joan's taut nerves.

A man parted the curtains and came uncertainly into the room, silhouetted for a moment against the glare of light from the foyer. At sight of his blackly outlined figure, Joan was certain he was Dunne. To her amaze, she was aware of a little pang of sick terror, something perilously akin to disgust—not at all the joyous thrill she expected.



Joan shrank back and crouched against the wall.

Then the man moved forward, and she saw he was not Dunne at all, but one of the ten thousand other New Yorkers cast in the same general mold and clad after the same sartorial pattern. And she felt a sudden glad relief, a relief that bewildered her.

The man glanced about him. A stunningly pretty woman, far down the room, raised a white-gloved arm in signal, and he hastened eagerly toward her.

Joan did not note his progress. She was too much absorbed in wondering at her own unexpected change of mind. From her unbidden emotions at first glimpse of the newcomer, she realized with a shock that she did not at all want to meet Archer Dunne, that she was not in the very least in love with him, that she did not even want to hear him say again that he loved her or call her his Lady of Mystery.

She could not think why she had come here at all. She had not wanted to come. She knew that, now. It was abominable that Dunne should have dared to suggest such a thing, that he should have insulted her by telling of his love.

A wave of righteous indignation against the man and against herself swept over Joan. What had she done, what had she said,—she, a happy wife,—to make *any* man think he had a right to regard her as the type of woman to whom he could make love, whom he could meet, like this, in secret?

With charming dearth of logic, Joan raged against the man she had come to meet. Unsparingly she told herself how vile she was, how ungrateful and disloyal to the dearest husband in all the world.

BY comparison with Dunne, Hugh stood out as a Galahad. This clean-minded, honorable husband of hers at whom she had lately scoffed was worth fifty Archer Dunnes—she realized that now, even if Hugh did snore sometimes. She *liked* to hear him snore. It was normal. It was wholesome. And that was more than anyone could say of a man who tried to steal other men's wives and who tried to disgust those wives with their own husbands—while accepting the husbands' friendship and hospitality.

Inch by inch (her eyes ever furtively upon the curtained doorway), Joan Vedder forced herself to go over the last few months' happenings. And with a belated clearness of view she saw the line of blunders that had led her to the brink where now she stood. So, they say, a criminal, after conviction, looks back with clarified vision at the path he trod so blindly.

With a gush of love and repentance, Joan's heart went out to Hugh Vedder.

On quick impulse she gathered up her wraps and got to her feet. She was going home. And what was more, she was going to tell her husband the whole nasty, horrible story and ask him if he would forgive her. She knew he would. And she wanted to get out before Archer Dunne could arrive. It would avert an unpleasant scene.

HALFWAY to the door, Joan saw the curtains part. A woman came in. At the first brief glimpse of her, Joan shrank back and crouched against the wall, flattening her slender body as much as she could, to avoid notice. For she recognized the newcomer.

It was Archer Dunne's wife.

Mrs. Dunne was alone. Her eyes still unused to the dimness, she passed close by Joan without seeing her and went on toward the lower end of the long room.

Here were tragedy and complication and French farce, all rolled into one! Suppose Archer Dunne had arrived five minutes sooner? Joan turned sick at the thought. This woman would have caught her and Dunne together—and *here,* of all places on earth!

Dizzy at thought of her own miraculous escape, Joan tottered out through the doorway and into the foyer. There were several men and women loitering about. Down the foyer, and moving toward the tea-room, a bell-boy was shuffling.

As the bell-boy advanced, he intoned nasally, at ten-second intervals:

"Mrs. Senoj, please! — *Mrs. Senoj, please!*—Mrs. Senoj, please!"

Joan was minded to flee past him. Then natural pluck came to her aid. Soon or late, she must tell Archer Dunne that she wanted nothing more to do with him. It would be easier to say it over the telephone than face to face—and far safer than by letter. She halted the chanting bell-boy.

That worthy hireling checked his eternal drone of "Mrs. Senoj, please!" and graciously told her to what telephone booth to go.

Once inside the booth, Joan once more took hold of her slipping courage and picked up the receiver. But her quavered "Hello" sounded hoarse and unnatural, even to herself. Nervousness had turned her throat and mouth into desert dryness.

"Hello," came the man's answer, in somewhat faltering tones—tones, however, which gradually gained in strength and steadiness as, without waiting for further word from the suddenly trembling Joan, he went on speaking:

"You will probably think I am a cur or a milksop," he began. "And perhaps

I am. But I can't meet you there, to-day, or any other day. I thought I could. I thought I wanted to. But I can't. And I find I don't want to. Please don't think I'm trying to be rude. I'm not. But it's got to be said, once and for all."

Joan gasped. Then she listened open-mouthed, breathless, as he continued:

"I've been thinking it over, all day, all last night. I haven't been able to think of anything else. And the more I've thought, the more clearly I've seen I can't do it. You are laughing at me for a fool. I don't blame you. But my ways aren't your ways. And now I see they never can be. I—I love my own wife. I love her with all my heart and soul. I love her so much that I can't enjoy even a harmless little flirtation with any other woman. I love her so much that I can't dishonor her by meeting any other woman and taking tea with her alone, at such a place as the Prince Crœsus. I can't. I'm sorry. I tried to. I tried to make myself think it was all right, that even such an innocent affair with you would be a delightful adventure. But it's no use.

"I know what you are thinking of me. I know how a woman of the world regards such things and how you will look down on me for a milk-and-water Puritan. But I can't help it. There are still such things as right and wrong, even here in New York. To you, such a thing would be all right. To me, it would be wrong—hideously wrong. I would despise myself, forever, and I wouldn't dare look my sweet-souled wife in the face again. I suppose you wont want to see me any more. I think it would be wiser and happier for all of us, in the circumstances, to let the whole pleasant acquaintanceship drop, here and now. I'll arrange it with my wife without giving any reason. I can do it. And you can say whatever you think best to Mr. Dunne. Good-by."

Joan listened in dumbly horrified fascination—even to the faint click as her husband, at the wire's far end, hung up the receiver.

Mr. Terhune and one of his beautiful collies at "Sunnybank," the Terhune summer home.

# If You Love Dogs

a rare treat awaits you in the January Red Book Magazine. Mr. Terhune, who also loves them, has written for that issue a romance of dogdom: a story of love and sacrifice and heroism, which is absolutely true to dog nature. The story is beautifully illustrated by Grant T. Reynard.

Watch for

"HIS MATE"

By Albert Payson Terhune

in the January issue of The Red Book Magazine.

FOR pure story quality, this is the best Ray Sprigle has written—and that means a lot!

# Little Italy

## By Ray Sprigle

Author of "Slim Comes Home," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. HENRY

WEBSTER Avenue and Fifth Avenue High School apparently are but five city blocks apart. Actually, six hundred years and four thousand miles separate them.

Fifth Avenue High School is in the United States, in the year of grace 1915. Webster Avenue is in Italy, in Florence or Naples or Palermo, in the day of the Medici or the Borgia. And between Fifth Avenue High School and Webster Avenue there is always silent, hidden, bitter strife. They strive to win the youth of Little Italy.

Sometimes it is Webster Avenue that wins, Webster Avenue of the Black Hand and the vendetta; of the sudden spurt of gun-fire and the knife-thrust in the night.

Then again, it is Fifth Avenue High School that wins, with its order and discipline, its spectacled professors and "old-maid" teachers, its struggling classes and their hopes.

In business, in the law, in medicine, in other professions, are the graduates that the School won from the Avenue.

In the slums of all the cities in America, in the prisons of all the world, in the sink-holes of Italian crime in New York, in Chicago and even in London and Palermo and Naples, are the graduates that the Avenue won from the School.

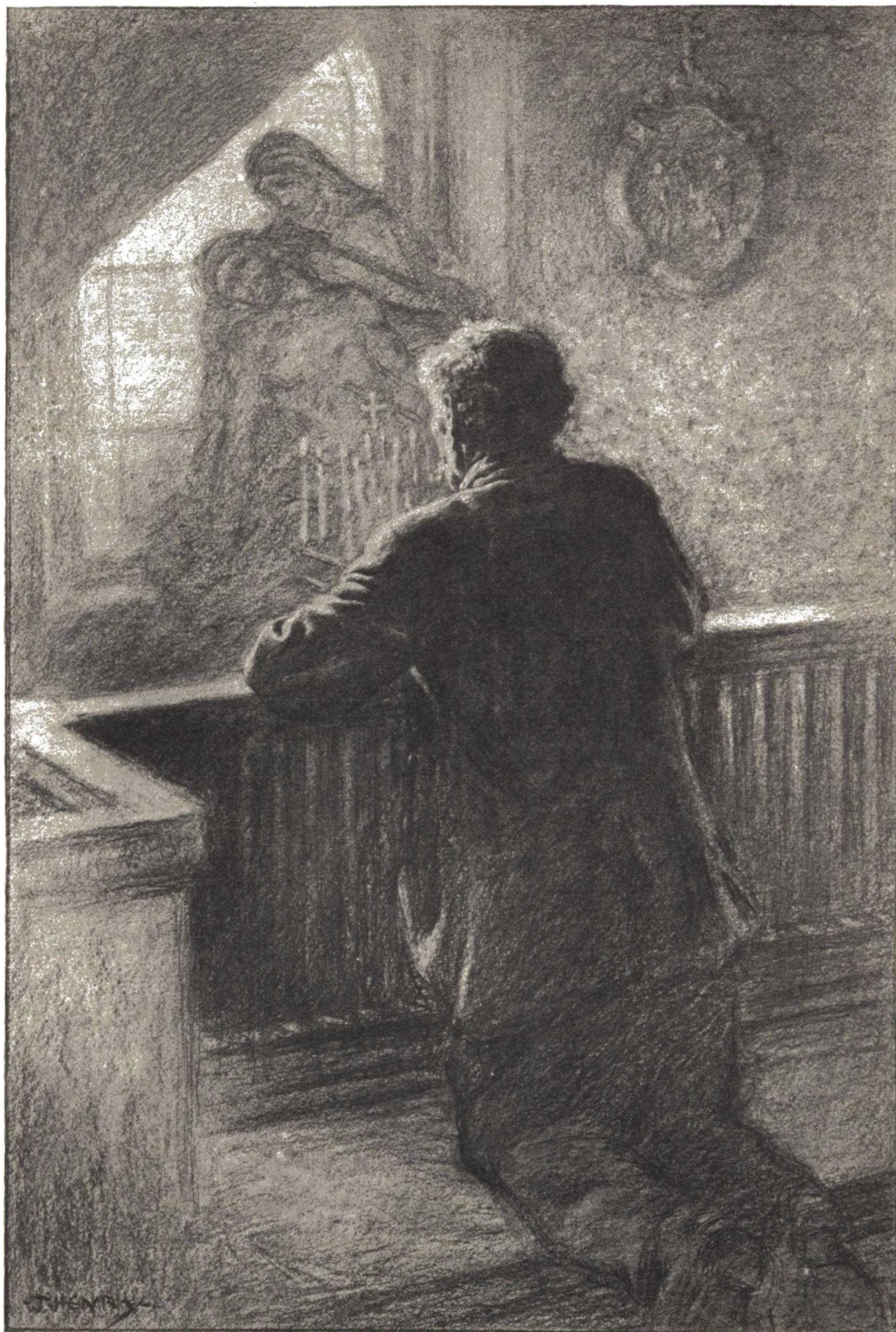
YOUNG Tony Donafrio was a senior in Fifth Avenue High School, eighteen—and a man, according to the standards of Little Italy. But in Fifth Avenue High School he was a boy, a schoolboy, subject to beck and call and galling reprimand—and this was one of the reasons why the Avenue seemed to be winning in the fight for young Tony.

Old Giuseppe Donafrio, his grandfather, had reared Tony since the night Webster Avenue claimed the lad's father and sent him home with a bullet through the back of his head, to lie in state for a time in the garish little parlor and then move on to the big cemetery where Little Italy buries its dead.

The old man could only watch in silence as young Tony drifted toward the Avenue. One by one the lad discarded the ideals of the School and substituted those of the Avenue. Old Giuseppe only nodded when Tony told him he had decided not to go to the Polytechnic. But he sat for hours without moving, after the lad had gone. He spent more hours in front of the shrine of the patron saint of his province in the home-land, in the dim cathedral. And at night he lay staring into the darkness of his and old Maria's tiny bedroom.

Why, even the selection of the school had been a wonderful adventure. A dozen times Giuseppe had been in halting but earnest conference with the principal of Fifth Avenue High School, with Tony a silent listener. And when the principal had mentioned the Polytechnic, old Giuseppe's choice was made because of the name.

In Milan, the Polytechnic was a dim fairyland that few peasant lads might hope ever to achieve. But here in this



Old Giuseppe spent hours in front of the shrine of the patron saint of his province in the home-land.

new land, Antonio, grandson of Giuseppe, was to go to the Polytechnic; if not the Polytechnic of Milan, why then a Polytechnic equally wonderful, equally mysterious.

But now the rose-dream of Giuseppe was ended. No grandson of his would learn in the Polytechnic. Tony had laughed as he told his grandfather he was tired of going to school, that he wanted to quit and go to work, that he didn't intend to "waste four years more" of his life.

And while the old man turned over plan after plan in his mind, for the winning back of his boy to the old ideals and the old standards, the Avenue struck again. Tony told him he was about to quit high school. And in six months he was to graduate!

The old man knew the hopelessness of trying to drive the boy. There was but one place he could drive him, and that was away from home. The High School had lost. The Avenue had won. And now there was left but a white-haired old man to battle the Avenue, with his grandson as stake. He must win back his boy. But how?

IT was Webster Avenue that had won the boy, true. But it was Carlo Eripodi who personified Webster Avenue. And if old Giuseppe was to pit himself against the Avenue, it was Carlo that he would find himself fighting.

Italian gun-men or gangsters run true to type. They might all have been poured to the same mold. One or two murders to his credit; some dealing in women; more blackmail, and much plain, American "bluff," and the Italian gangster is complete. He leads a workless, if somewhat precarious, existence and dies quickly by knife or gun. Only then does he become famous—when some newspaper reporter writes a "story" of the taking-off of a dread leader of the "mysterious Mafia" and the night-editor puts it on the front page with a headline to catch the reader's eye.

Carlo Eripodi was in the height of his power. He ruled Webster Avenue. Every week he collected his pittance from the fruit dealers, the sweetmeat vendors, and even from the laborers on half a dozen contracts. Nothing was too small for his net. At election time he always enjoyed a brief prosperity; for if a man can exact tribute, surely his power will also extend to controlling the votes of his tributaries. He held court at the Ristorante Sarto, and young Tony was among his courtiers.

Youth loves Romance, and to Tony, Carlo was Romance. Eripodi was accounted dangerous. There were tales up and down Webster Avenue of at least one Italian grocer who had refused him tribute and who had been found dead in an alley way, knife-wounds telling how he died. Carlo had been victor in a gun battle with a countryman and had been acquitted on a plea of self-defense. So young Tony had entered his train, dazzled by the twin lures of Romance and "easy money."

As yet Tony was utilized only to run errands for the older members of the gang, to fetch and carry, and to learn. A little later he might be trusted to collect tribute, perhaps to frame a Black-Hand letter; by and by to wield knife and gun.

Old Giuseppe knew how it would be done. Had he not seen it often in the years he had moved up and down Webster Avenue, how the Avenue won youth to its service?

But the Avenue—Carlo Eripodi—was not to have *his* grandson without a struggle.

AND so one night Giuseppe kissed his wife, Maria, good-by. He had brushed his well-worn, cheap black coat and put on his purple necktie as for a fête. There was about him an air that frightened the toil-hardened and wrinkled, but black-eyed and sweet-faced old woman.

"And where to to-night, *Giuseppe mio?*" she asked. "Shall I wait for thee?"

"Wait," he assented. "For I shall come back with the boy—or alone—perhaps. I go for the boy, *carissima*. These three months he has followed at the heels of the jackal-pack that calls Eripodi leader. I fear they have won him. But they have not yet made him a criminal. And so, before they do, to-night, he will

come back to his grandparents and the School and the Polytechnic, or—well, Eripodi's pack will pick a new leader.

"To-night Eripodi sits at the Ristorante Sarto. Sarto has told me. The boy will be there too—and I."

Maria clung to him a moment; he went; then she sat down to wait. So, all her life, she had been bidding him good-by in his arms and then sitting down to wait. The first time—that May-day in 1860, when the youth of seventeen kissed the girl of sixteen good-by and then flung himself, hot-eyed and eager, into the van of that little forlorn hope that tagged at the heels of "Madman" Garibaldi. And in twenty-six days they had won Palermo and in three months Sicily. And the girl had waited and watched, now to the south, to Sicily, now to the north as the tide of battle flowed toward the Alps, until finally Austria had been hurled from the Italian plains.

Then Giuseppe had come home to the girl. And the years went on as the babies came,—and died,—while Giuseppe wrestled with the rocky soil of the little farm he held under the same lease his grandfather had signed. He was middle-aged when he came to America. And again the wife waited while he began life anew in a new country. And after a time she joined him. It had been a struggle; bitterer and longer than the struggle years before to free his country, was this struggle to free himself.

But they had won. First he worked in the trenches in the street, then in the great steel mills. And then his violin that had lightened the marches for his comrades in Italy and cheered his neighbors in the new country, showed him an easier livelihood. As he earned money, he saved it. So now he rested in his old age, proud owner of two tenements and a store.

Now it was good-by and the wait again. True, he but went to the ristorante of his friend, Sarto, but this might be the longest wait of them all. For they were no cowards in Little Italy, and yet they feared Eripodi.

SO Giuseppe came to beard Eripodi in his den, a kindly smile above the purple necktie, black violin-case under his arm, a bow for every one of the little groups about the round tables.

A strange place, this one of Sarto's. Here gathered anarchist and priest, syndicalist and schoolmaster, blackmailer and blackmailed, thief and panderer and murderer. A man might sit here and see the faces and hear the dialects of all the provinces and half the villages of old Italy.

Eripodi and his pack held revel. There had been a sudden fattening of coffers after a long period of leanness, and the gang celebrated. Here was young Tony. And none was more eager-eyed, none laughed louder at shameful tale or joke, none better mimicked the manner of Eripodi.

Here the boy of the High School was the man of the Avenue. Here he was treated as an equal. His opinions, if disregarded, at least were listened to. And he, the man, was to be treated as a boy and chained to book and pen and weary lesson? Was to be a creature of rule and law and rote? Not he. To-night he celebrated freedom. He had intended to finish out the week at the High School. But what was the use? He would not go back.

He was annoyed for a moment when old Giuseppe came in. Then he reflected that there was little the old man could do, even if he would.

His grandfather came down the room, and Tony was surprised to see the deference with which the group at each table greeted him. None but returned his bows, none but gave him back his smile. Half a dozen times he was stopped by importunate ones begging him to join them for a chat and a bottle of wine.

At a little table, next to where Tony and Eripodi and the others sat, were two old men. They talked now and then, but oftener were content to sit silently and smoke. Each time they drank they pledged each other formally.

As Giuseppe approached them, they rose stiffly and stood at attention. They saluted him and greeted him as "Captain," and then waited until he had exchanged greetings with them and seated himself before they returned to their own chairs. Tony, who had lost no word or move, was surprised for a moment, until

he remembered that above the bed of his grandparents hung a framed commission as captain of infantry, at the bottom the signature of Italy's beloved Garibaldi.

The three old men sat and chatted volubly while the noise grew and the calls for wine came oftener from Eripodi's table.

Eripodi, too, had watched the entry of old Giuseppe. He had long hated him. In an evil day Eripodi had demanded a share of the rents that came to the old man every month from the tenements and the store. And Giuseppe had answered by seeking Eripodi out in his own home, and, backed by a huge blue revolver, prefacing his refusal of tribute by a blazingly profane description of the Eripodi characteristics. Since then Eripodi had left him alone, although nursing his hatred and promising himself vengeance some day. He had vaguely planned to strike through the grandson but had no definite plot yet.

The old man's entrance this night added fuel to his hate. Every indication of respect in which Giuseppe was held by the groups at the tables, every bow, every smile, every sign of pleasure which greeted the old soldier, was a direct insult to Eripodi. Much wine had made him forget caution and his plans for a more stealthy revenge. He would bait the old man now.

"Hi there, graybeard," he shouted, "see if the arm you have cheated the gravedigger of can wring any music from the fiddle."

The two with Giuseppe would have risen to resent the insult, but the latter silenced them with a word and a gesture.

"Music?" he smiled. "With pleasure. I shall give you my poor best."

Tony felt doubly guilty. He felt his face burn with shame that he should sit by while his grandfather was insulted. And he felt guilty, in an after-thought, of treachery to his leader because of the impulse to strike that surged in his heart at the leader's words.

But there was no hint of resentment as Giuseppe put his violin to his shoulder.

His was the perfect, untaught courtesy of the Italian peasant. There is courtesy and there is courtesy. And there are gentlemen and there are gentlemen. But there never was more perfect courtesy displayed by more finished gentleman than that of the toil-hardened, white-haired Italian peasant. In youth the fires of passion may burn too fiercely for perfect courtesy. In middle-age the struggle for existence may be too keen to leave much space for grace of politeness. But when white hair comes and eyes flash less brightly, there is left the finished gentleman, though he may, in all his life, have known nothing but the fields of Italy and the mines or mills of America.

The big room stilled as Giuseppe played. He was no artist, this rough-palmed section-hand, but he could play the airs they loved, airs from folk-song and opera. And where his bow failed, their hearts took up the music and made it the music of a master. Again and again they cheered him when he would have rested.

And then some one pushed old Giovanni out to sing. His voice was cracked, and there were strange interludes when he gasped for breath; but he sang from the great Italian operas, that every laborer knows.

He had a right to sing operas with a cracked voice, this Giovanni. In his youth he had sung at La Scala in Milan. Critics hailed him as a tenor promising great things. But there was a woman, the wife of a nobleman, and then flight —poverty—desertion—drink. Now the tenor of La Scala was old. He was pastry cook in the Ristorante Sarto. In dirty white cap and apron he sang before shopkeeper and laborer and crook in a dingy restaurant in Webster Avenue —and their plaudits were sweet to his ears.

GIUSEPPE, as he sat down, seemed to overlook the little table where he had been before and took a chair at the big table. Across from him sat Eripodi.

It was a moment before Eripodi noticed him, but when he did, he grinned and reached in his pocket. He threw a quarter across the table.

"Here, old one. Alms for thy music."

As Eripodi threw him the quarter, the wrinkles in Giuseppi's brown, weather-beaten face were wiped out in a flood of

red. The distended veins swelled his cheeks with rage. But his voice was expressionless as he picked up the quarter, laid it on the table before him and turned to Eripodi, with:

"Thank you—signor."

After that, Eripodi left him in peace for a time. The old man sat and watched his grandson. The lad sat silently, all his animation gone. He refused to meet his grandfather's eyes. His glass was untouched before him. The wine he had drunk was clearing from his head.

It was Sarto, keeper of the restaurant, who unwittingly drew Eripodi's attention again to the silent man across from him. Sarto held a bottle before Giuseppe. The bottle was old and dusty.

"For you, Captain," he said. "This is real wine, Chianti, such as even you and my father never tasted on the march in Italy. It was a present to me, and I give it to you. Shall I serve it to you and your comrades here?" He nodded to where the two old men still sat, smoking and drinking, their eyes losing no move of Giuseppe or Eripodi.

Before Giuseppe could reply, Eripodi reached across the table.

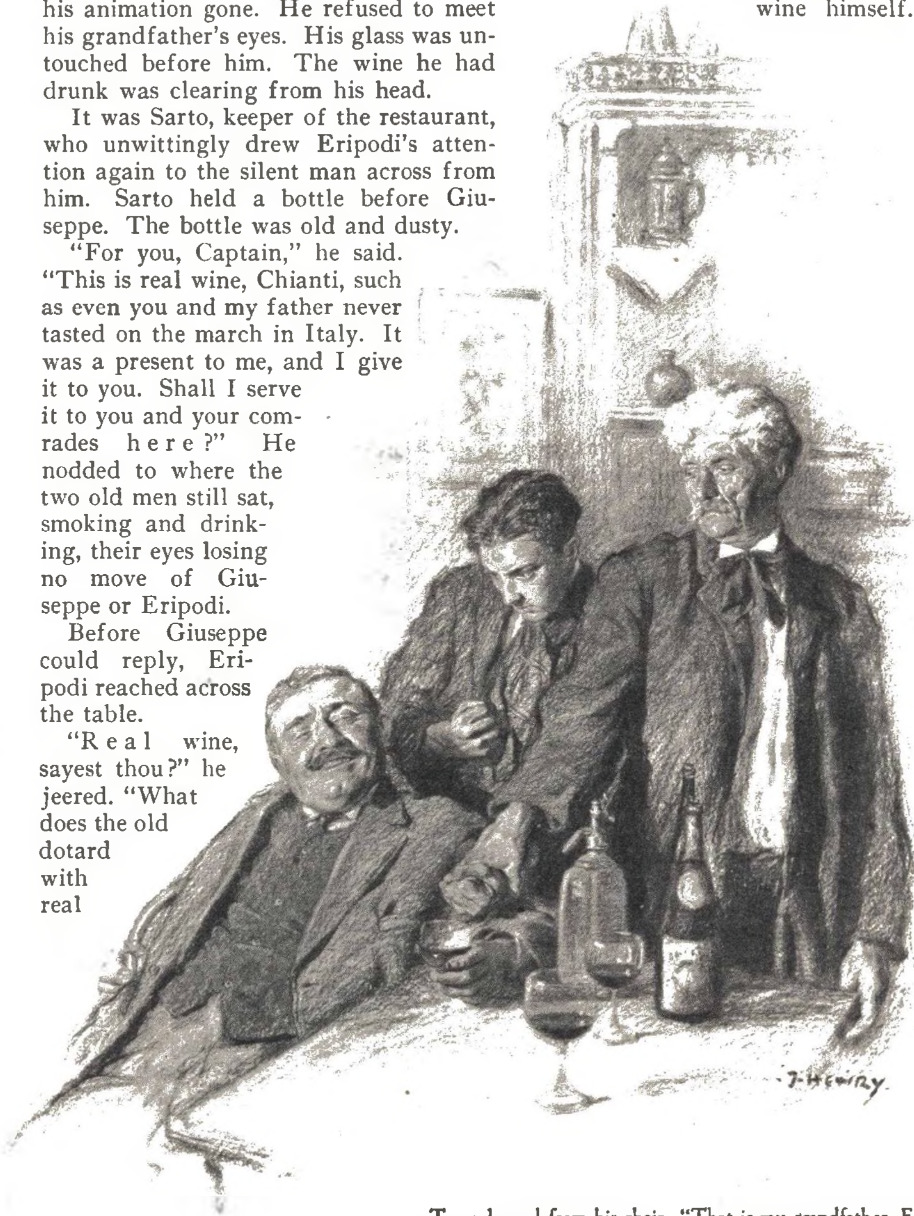
"Real wine, sayest thou?" he jeered. "What does the old dotard with real wine? Real wine is for men." And with a laugh he called to Sarto. "Here, open!"

Sarto would have protested, but Giuseppe broke in.

"Open the wine," he said, but he almost whispered it.

Sarto obeyed.

Eripodi poured the wine himself. He



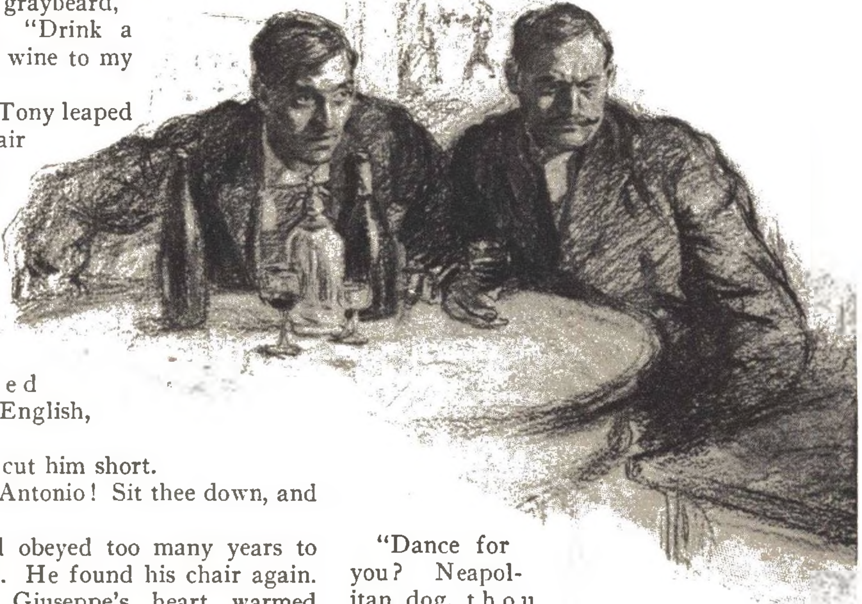
Tony leaped from his chair. "That is my grandfather, Eripodi," he shouted hotly, in English, "and—" Giuseppe cut him short. "Silence, Antonio! Sit thee down, and silence."

drank and refilled his glass and those of his companions nearest him. There was a bit left in the bottle—dregs. These he shook up and poured in another glass and thrust it across the table.

"Drink, graybeard," he shouted. "Drink a glass of my wine to my health."

And now Tony leaped from his chair and started toward his grandfather.

"That is my grandfather, Eripodi,' he shouted hotly, in English, "and—"



Giuseppe cut him short.

"Silence, Antonio! Sit thee down, and silence."

Tony had obeyed too many years to disobey now. He found his chair again.

But old Giuseppe's heart warmed within him. Why, Tony was his boy even yet. He would have dared the gang-leader in defense of his grandfather.

Now Eripodi was looking up the table at Tony, who glowered back at him sullenly. Before the leader could speak, Giuseppe broke in. Leaning across the table, glass in hand, he drank to the gangster.

Eripodi turned back to him. Here was rare sport. He would bait the old one and so revenge himself on grandfather and grandson. Afterward—well, to-night would settle the accounts.

"You have played, old one," he sneered. "Now can you dance as well, or are thy joints too stiff?"

"A moment, signor," answered Giuseppe. "I have played for you. I have given you my wine. I have drunk to thy health. Now a favor."

Before any of them could stir, he had reached into his coat and drawn two knives, broad-bladed, heavy-handled, such as the Italian loves. One he threw across the table so that it rested in front of Eripodi. The other he kept.

"Dance for you? Neapolitan dog, thou fruit of the dunghill, thou—" Giuseppe had spent two years in the guerrilla camps of Garibaldi. The vocabulary he had learned there came back to him. It was a masterpiece of obscenity, of profanity, of insult, that he hurled at the surprise-stricken Eripodi.

"Try a round with the gray-beard, thou dog," he taunted. "Pick up the knife in front of you and come over the table. Or shall I come to thee? Reach in thy pocket and get the pistol there if thou dare. Why! thou coward. See," he laughed to the others, "the killer. See him tremble like the girls he sells."

ERIPODI was trembling. Rage shook him—and fear too. Who could tell what this mad graybeard might do? The bared steel the old man flashed but a foot from his face turned him weak. He had no love for a knife—when another held it.

"Wilt thou not fight?" shouted old Donafrio, again a fighting man, a swashbuckler. And he spat straight across the table into Eripodi's face. Eripodi

"Then if thou wilt not fight—run! Run, coward!" shouted the old man. And before the other could rise from his chair, Giuseppe had vaulted across the table and was seated on its edge beside Eripodi. "Up!" he commanded, and Eripodi rose.

writhed, but still he feared to reach for one of the revolvers on his hip or pick up the knife in front of him.

"Then if thou wilt not fight—run! Run, coward!" shouted the old man. And before the other could rise from his chair, Giuseppe had vaulted across the table and was seated on its edge beside Eripodi.

"Up!" he commanded, and Eripodi rose.

"Now out!" And the keen blade, pressing against Eripodi's neck so that the blood started, backed Giuseppe's commands with an argument that the gangster feared to resist. Around the table they went, and to the street door, Donafrio ever but one step from Eripodi, the knife-blade ever menacing his throat.

At the door they stopped, at Giuseppe's command. Back through the long room he marched his captive, now walking behind Eripodi, an arm over his shoulder and knife against the pulse in his neck.

They stopped at the big table at the rear of the room, at the chair where Donafrio had sat.

"Thy coin," Giuseppe ordered, pointing to the quarter, lying at his place, with his free hand. "Pick it up."

Eripodi's hand shook as he reached out and picked up the coin. His hand sought his pocket.

"Not there," roared Giuseppe. "Swallow it, thou dog, so that thy tender heart no more moves thee to give it to graybeards."

This was a joke that an Italian could appreciate. The room rang with laughter, and Eripodi's quondam followers laughed the loudest. And Eripodi—what could he do, with this madman holding a knife against his neck so that now and then he could feel the bite of its edge and a tiny trickle on his neck that he knew was blood? He put his hand to his mouth and gulped.

Again Donafrio marched him to the street door. He sped him into the darkness with a thrust of the knife where it brought a yell from Eripodi but hampered his running abilities not a whit.

WHEN old Giuseppe freed himself from the flood of wine and laughter and congratulations that showered upon him, he and Tony started home together. They did not talk. Shame for himself and admiration for this new grandfather he had never known kept Tony silent.

Finally:

"I would have fought him, Grandfather, when he shamed you."

The man put his arm across the youth's shoulder.

"I saw, and I was glad. But this was man's business, and thou art but a boy." He smiled. Again there was silence for a time, and then Tony spoke again:

"Tom Andrews wants me to room with him when we go to the Polytechnic this fall. You worked for his father in the mills, you know.

"He'll be a dandy room-mate," he added in English.

The grandfather pressed his arm closer about the lad's shoulders.

Old Giuseppe smiled happily.

It was a great, good country, this. Especially if one had a grandson who was to go to the Polytechnic.

**"Back to Waynesburg," by Ray Sprigle,**

**will be in the January Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands December 23rd. This is the story of advice whispered in a prison cell, of the roads to which the advice led, and of a girl who stood where the roads parted.**

THE struggles of a "smart set" to mix with and dominate a community of the old order of "decent, law-abiding, home-keeping, church-going citizens" make the background of this novel of small-city life, told in the genial, inimitable Nicholson way.

Old Uncle Tim Farley is a wealthy commercial pioneer, whose only social assets are his respectability and the business integrity that built for him a loyal following. Opposed to him is Billy Copeland, spendthrift and member of the "smart set," who has bought an interest in the Farley business and still owes Farley twenty-five thousand dollars. And between them stands Nan Farley, the adopted daughter of Tim Farley, who goes with Copeland's crowd and encourages his attentions, both against Farley's commands.

## A Résumé of the Previous Chapters of "The Proof of The Pudding"

Nan Farley is a beauty and a wit. She was rescued by her foster father from a floating shanty in an Ohio River flood when she was ten. Farley is an invalid and cross, and to Nan, the courting of a man like Copeland, who is rated as one of the "fast" young men of the city, holds piquancy.

The story opens with a luncheon given at the Country Club by the ostentatious Mrs. Kinney, whom Farley has asked Nan to avoid. Billy Copeland is present, and much champagne is drunk. Nan is pressed to amuse the party with an imitation of one of her foster father's tirades against physicians, and does so. Then, disgusted at her own disloyalty, she runs away to the river. There she notices a young man, practising fly casting. His hook catches in a tree near her. In disentangling it, the would-be angler introduces himself as Jerry Amidon, who, as a boy, was her neighbor in the Ohio River town and as poor as she. His fresh though not impudent speech amuses Nan, and she allows him to talk to her.

"I broke from the home plate when I was sixteen and arrived in a freight-car," he tells her. "Began by sweeping out in the well known house of Copeland-Farley, and now I swing a sample case down the lower Wabash. Oh, not vulgarly rich, but I manage to get my laundry out every Saturday night."

In their talk Nan learns that John Eaton, a bachelor and a man of ability and reserve, is much interested in Amidon. Later, when crossing the Club grounds, Nan meets Eaton and tells him young Amidon and she were childhood neighbors. Eaton's interest in her is quickened by her frankness.

THAT night Farley berates Nan for meeting Copeland, whom she had promised never to meet again. He tells Nan "that whisky-soaked degenerate" divorced his wife, a splendid woman, to marry her; that all Copeland wants is her money; and that if she doesn't stop seeing him he is going to fix it so there will be no money for her.

Nan vows that she has no intention of marrying Copeland and cajoles Farley into a better humor, but goes to bed heart-sick, wishing she could be what Farley has asked, "not one of these high-flying, drinking kind, that heads for the divorce court, but decent and steady."

Nan now keeps to her promise not to see Copeland again or go about with the "smart set." Farley is pleased and takes her to visit Copeland's former wife, Fanny Copeland, whom it is rumored Copeland made divorce him, so that he might marry Nan. Fanny is a pretty, able young woman, who is making a success of a dairy farm. She is gracious to Nan and stirs in the girl a new sense of unworthiness.

But the smoother course of the girl's life is changed by a visit from a man representing himself as a lawyer for Nan's brother Rob. The brother has been arrested in a "cutting scrape," and although Nan has not heard from him since her rescue, begs for a thousand dollars to help him off. Nan gives it from her savings without asking Farley's advice. The old man learns of it and is furious. Only the intervention of Eaton, who calls with Jerry Amidon, and who knows of Nan's brother's arrest, pacifies Farley.

# *The* PROOF of the

A Fine American Novel

## By Meredith Nicholson

Author of "The House of a Thousand Candles," "A Hoosier Chronicle," etc.

### CHAPTER VIII

#### Mrs. Copeland's Good Fortune

NOW that they had the car, Farley insisted that Nan should go to market. His wife, like all the thrifty housewives of the capital, had always gone to market, and he thought the discipline would be good for Nan.

One Saturday as Nan returned to the machine, with the chauffeur following with the basket, she found Fanny Copeland seated in the car beside Farley.

"Look here, Nan; I've picked up a surprise for you! We're going to take Mrs. Copeland home to lunch."

"I don't know whether you are or not," said Mrs. Copeland. "This is my busiest day and I've got to catch the twelve o'clock interurban for the farm."

"Don't worry about that; we'll send you home all right," said Farley.

"Then I'm not going to have anything to say about it at all," laughed Mrs. Copeland. "All right; if my cows die of thirst, I'll send you the bill."

"You do that, and it will be paid," said Farley.

"But I've got to stop at the bank a moment—"

"I suppose," said Nan, "you want to get rid of the money I just paid at your stand for two yellow-legged chickens—you can see the legs sticking out of the basket."

Mrs. Copeland had failed to act upon Nan's invitation to call upon her—a fact to which she referred now.

"I really meant to come but I've been unusually busy. I carry on just enough general farming to be a nuisance; and dairying requires eternal vigilance."

"That's because you've got a standard," said Farley, with his blunt praise. "You've got the best dairy in Indiana. The State inspectors have put it strong."

"Oh," said Mrs. Copeland lightly, "they gave me a better report than I deserve, just for being a poor, lone woman!"

Farley's admiration for Mrs. Copeland was perfectly transparent. It was Fanny's efficiency, Nan reflected, quite as much as her good looks and cheerfulness that attracted him. Several times lately he had quoted what Old Bill Harrington, the banker, had said of her—that she was the best business man in town. And there was also Farley's contempt for Copeland, which clearly accentuated his liking for Billy's former wife.

AT the bank door Farley remembered that he had a check to cash and asked Nan to attend to it for him. As Mrs. Copeland and Nan mounted the bank steps together, they ran into Billy Copeland emerging in deep preoccupation. The juxtaposition of the two women plainly startled him. He took off his hat, mumbled something and stood staring after them. Then his gaze fell upon Farley, bending forward in the touring car and watching him with his small, sharp eyes. He instantly put on his hat and crossed the walk.

"Good morning, Mr. Farley," he said cordially, offering his hand. "I'm glad to see you out again."

"Oh, I'm not dead yet," growled Farley. "I've decided to hang on till spring, anyhow."

His tone did not encourage conversa-

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# PUDDING

Illustrated by C. H. Taffs

Mrs. Copeland

tion. The old man's face was twisted into a disagreeable smile that Copeland remembered of old, and there was a hard, ironic glitter in the gray eyes. Farley had witnessed the meeting on the bank steps with relish, and was glad of this opportunity to prolong his enjoyment of his former associate's discomfiture.

"I'm sure you'll see many more springs, Mr. Farley. That's a good machine there. The fact that you've taken up motoring has given a real boost to the auto business. The agents are saying that if you've got in line there's no reason for anybody to hold back."

The old man grunted.

"I had to have air; I knew all the time that was what I needed; these doctors only keep people in bed so they can bulldoze 'em easier."

Copeland was attempting to be friendly but Farley was in no humor to meet his advances.

"That last payment on the sale of my stock is due September first. I wont renew it again," he said sharply.

"I hadn't asked for an extension," Copeland replied coldly.

"All right then; that will be the end of that."

Farley's tone suggested that there might be other matters between them that this final payment would still leave open.

Copeland's ready promise that the twenty-five thousand would be paid irritated Farley, who saw one excuse for his animosity vanishing. He leaned forward and pointed his finger at Copeland, who was backing away, anxious to be gone before his former wife reappeared.

"You're ruinin' the house! You're lettin' it go to the dogs—the business your father and I made the best jobbin' house in this State! You're a drunkard and a gambler, but, curse your fool soul, there's one thing you can't do—you can't marry that little girl o' mine! If you've got that up your sleeve, be sure there's no money goes with her for you to squander. Remember that!"

It was the busiest hour of the day, and the street was thronged. Pedestrians turned and stared curiously. Copeland raged inwardly at his stupidity in giving Farley a chance to abuse him publicly.

"You're very unjust to me," he said hotly. "I've known Nan ever since she was a child and never had any but a friendly feeling for her. I haven't seen her for weeks. Now that I know how you feel toward me, I have no intention of seeing her."

"I guess you wont see her!" Farley snorted. "Not unless you mean to make her pay for it!"

Mrs. Copeland and Nan appeared at the bank entrance at this moment and witnessed the end of the colloquy. Copeland lifted his hat to Farley and walked rapidly away without glancing at them.

FARLEY became cheerful immediately, as he usually did after an explosion. This opportunity for laying the lash across Billy Copeland's shoulders had afforded him a welcome diversion; and the fact that Copeland had seen his former wife in Nan's company

tickled his sardonic humor. He made no reference to Copeland but began speaking of a new office building farther down the street. It was apparent that neither Nan nor Fanny shared his joy in the encounter, and they attacked the architecture of the new building to hide their discomfort.

Nan appeared the more self-conscious. She was thinking of Billy. He had turned away from the machine with a crestfallen air which told her quite plainly that Farley had been giving him a piece of his mind. And Nan resented this; Farley had no right to abuse him on her account.

When they had reached the house, she took Fanny upstairs. If the glimpse of Copeland on the bank steps had troubled Mrs. Copeland, she gave no sign. Her deft touches with the comb and brush, as she glanced in the mirror, her despairing comments upon the state of her complexion, which, she averred, the summer suns had ruined; her enthusiasm over Nan's silk waist, which was just the thing she had sought without avail in all the shops in town—all served to stamp her as wholly human.

"But clothes! I hardly have time to think of them; they're an enormous bother. And I wear the shoes of a peasant woman when I come to town, for I have to cut across the fields when I leave the interurban and I can't do that in pumps! You see—"

The shoes really were very neat ones, though a trifle heavy for indoors. Nan instantly brought her shiniest pumps, dropped upon the floor and substituted them for Fanny's walking shoes. It flashed through her mind that Fanny Copeland inspired just such acts.

"YOU have the slim foot of the aristocrat," observed Fanny. And then with a wistful smile she leaned toward the girl and asked: "Would you mind if I called you Nan?"

Nan was touched by the tone and manner of her request. Of course there was no objection!

"I always knew I should like you," said Fanny. "Of course, I haven't seen much of you lately, but I hear of you from a very ardent admirer: John Eaton talks of you eloquently, and to interest John Eaton is a real achievement! I'm afraid I bore him to death!"

"I can't believe it; he never lets himself be bored; but like everybody else, I'm never quite sure I understand him."

"Oh, I tell him that's one of his poses—baffling people. He surrounds himself with mystery, but pretends that he doesn't. If he were a gossip, he'd be horrible, for he knows everything about everybody—and knows it first!"

"He's the kindest of mortals," said Nan. "He's always doing nice things for people, but he has to do them in his own peculiar way."

"Oh, John has the spirit of the true philanthropist; his right hand never knows, you know—"

"He's a puzzle to the people he's kindest to, sometimes, I imagine," said Nan.

She laughed as she thought of Amidon, and Fanny appealed for illumination as to what amused her.

"Oh, I was thinking of his protégé—a young man named Amidon. He and I were kids together, back in my prehistoric days. He never had any advantages—if you can say that of a boy who's born with a keen wit and a sense of humor. He does something at the Copeland-Farley store—went in as errand boy before Papa left. They had him on the road for a while, but he's in the office now. Mr. Eaton has taken a great shine to him, and Jerry imitates him killingly. That fine abstracted air of Mr. Eaton's he's got nearly perfect; and he does the mysterious pretty well, too. But he's most delicious when he forgets to Eatonize himself and is just natural. He's quite short—which makes him all the funnier—and he wears tall, white-wing collars à la Eaton."

"Tell me more!" said Fanny. "How old is the paragon?"

"About twenty-five, I should say, figuring with my own age as a basis. He looked like a big boy to me in my river days. Mr. Eaton has undertaken his social and mental rehabilitation, and the effects are amazing. They came to the house together to call, and I've rarely been more entertained than by Jerry while his good angel was upstairs talking to Papa. He's trying to avoid any

show of emotion just like his noble example, but once in a while he forgets himself and grins deliciously. After a round of high-brow talk, he drops into reminiscence and tells the most killing stories of the odd characters he's met in his travels with the sample-case. It can't be possible that Mr. Eaton hasn't introduced him to you?"

"He hasn't, and I'm going to complain about it bitterly. The only one of his benefactions he ever confided to me was the case of a girl—the daughter of an old friend who had fallen on evil times—he wanted to send to college. I was the visible instrument—so that he needn't appear in the matter himself. The girl graduated last year, and like a fraud, I had to go down to Vassar and pose as her good angel. She's a great success and is to teach somewhere, I think. But—I shouldn't be telling you this!"

"Oh, it's quite safe! I value his friendship too much to do anything to displease him."

"Well, things like that ought to be told," said Fanny reflectively, "particularly when some people think John Eaton is cold and selfish."

FARLEY had not been to the dining-room for several months, and he made much of the occasion.

"This is a celebration for me too," said Fanny. "I've just had a piece of good fortune. Nobody knows of it yet; you're the first people I've told! You know I haven't many friends to trouble with confidences. An aunt of mine has just died and left me some money. In fact, there's a great deal of it; I'm richer than I ever expected to be."

"Good! Good!" said Farley, interested and pleased.

"It's fine," said Nan; "and it's nice of you to tell us about it."

Nan was afraid that Farley would demand the amount of the legacy, but evidently Fanny knew he would be curious as to all the details, and she went on to explain that it was her mother's sister, the last of the family, who had died recently in Ohio and left her all her property.

"I have visited her every year or two since I was a child and knew her very well, but I never had any idea she meant to do this. It will take some time to settle it up, but there's as much as two hundred thousand dollars in sight—maybe fifty more. She was a dear old woman; I'm so ashamed of myself that I wasn't kinder to her, but she was difficult to handle—hadn't left home for years, though she used to write to me two or three times a year. So there! That's why I'm running into the bank these days, to ask Mr. Harrington about investments."

"If you take his advice," said Farley emphatically, "you'll never lose any of that money!"

"Then what's to become of the farm?" asked Nan.

"Oh, I shall run it just the same. I'd rather lose that legacy than give it up. An unattached woman like me must have something to amuse herself with."

Nan saw a gleam in Farley's eye and a covert smile touching his lips that escaped Fanny. He chuckled softly.

"Two hundred—two hundred fifty—that's a whole lot o' money; and you don't want to let any of these sharks around here get it away from you; they'll be after you, all right. But I guess you'll know how to handle 'em," he added with satisfaction.

When Fanny was ready to go, he called for his car, and he and Nan drove home with her.....

That night, after the nurse had put him to bed, Nan heard an unusual sound from his room. She crossed the hall and stood in the doorway a moment. He was muttering to himself and chuckling.

"Picked up two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, just like findin' it! Turned her out; got rid of her! Well, that's a good one on you, Billy Copeland!"

## CHAPTER IX

### A Narrow Escape

ON a rainy evening in mid-September, a salesman for an Eastern chemical firm invited Amidon to join him in a game of billiards at the Whitcomb House. As

As Mrs. Copeland and Nan mounted the bank steps together, they ran into Billy Copeland emerging in deep preoccupation. his gaze fell upon Farley, bending forward in the tour-

The juxtaposition of the two women plainly startled him. He mumbled something and stood staring after them. Then
ing car and watching him with his small, sharp eyes.

Kirby was one of the stars of the traveling fraternity, Jerry was greatly honored by this attention. Moreover, when he hung up his coat in the billiard room and rolled up the sleeves of his silk shirt, his arms proved to be thoroughly tanned—and this impressed Jerry as indicating that his acquaintance indulged in the aristocratic game of golf and did not allow the cares of business to interfere with his lawful amusements. Kirby played very good billiards, and he did not twist his cigar into the corner of his mouth when he made his shots, as most of Jerry's friends did.

"The lid's on a little looser in your town than it was last winter," remarked the envied one, sipping a ricky. "I suppose by following our noses we could strike a pretty stiff game without going out into the wet."

"Oh, there's always more or less poker around here," replied Jerry, unwilling to appear ignorant of the moral conditions of his own city.

He chalked his cue and watched Kirby achieve a difficult shot. Billiards afforded Jerry a fine exercise for his philosophic temper, steady hand and calculating eye. He had developed a high degree of proficiency with the cue in the Criterion Parlors. It was a grief to him that in trying to live up to Eaton he had felt called upon to desert the Criterion, where the admiration of lesser lights had been dear to his soul.

"Big Rodney Sykes is here," Kirby remarked carelessly. "They chased him out of Chicago that last time they had a moral upheaval."

Jerry was chagrined that he knew nothing of Big Rodney Sykes, presumably a gambler of established reputation. To be a high-salaried traveler, with a flexible expense account, was to be in touch with the inner life of all great cities. Jerry's envy deepened; it availed nothing that he could beat this sophisticated being at billiards.

"Rather tough about that boss of yours," Kirby continued. "It's fellows of his size that Big Rodney goes after. A gentleman's game and no stopping payment of checks the next morning."

"Oh, the boss is no squab; I guess he's sat in with as keen sharps as Sykes and got out with carfare home," replied Jerry.

"Of course; but on a hot night like this many a good man feels the need of a little relaxation. It just happened,"—he prolonged the deliberation of his aim to intensify Jerry's curiosity,—"happened I saw Copeland wandering down the hall toward Sykes' room as I was coming down."

"I guess the boss knows a thing or two," replied Jerry easily in a tone that implied unlimited confidence in Copeland.

He was consumed with indignation that Kirby should be able to tell him anything about Copeland. It had been done with a neatness of insinuation, too, that was galling.

"Well, I guess," persisted Kirby, "you miss old Uncle Tim in the office. I used to have many a jolly row with Uncle Tim; he was one man it never paid to fool with; but he was all right—just about as clean-cut and straight a man as I ever fought discounts with. Uncle Tim was a merchant," he ended impressively as he bent over the table.

In calling Farley a merchant with this air of finality, he implied very clearly that William B. Copeland was something quite different, and Jerry resented this imputation as a slur upon his house. Much as he admired Kirby's clothes and his ways and his manners, he hated him cordially for thus speaking of Copeland, who was one of Kirby's important customers. Mere defeat was no adequate punishment for Kirby; Jerry proceeded to make a "run" that attracted the admiring attention of players at neighboring tables and precluded further discussion of Copeland.

At midnight Kirby said he had all the billiards he wanted and invited Jerry to his room.

"I always like to tell people about their own town, and I'll show you where they're piling up the chips," he remarked.

His room was opposite the elevator on the seventh floor, and having unlocked his door, he piloted Jerry round a corner and indicated three rooms which he said were given over to gambling.

"If you give the right number of taps, that first door will open," said Kirby, "but as an old friend I warn you to keep out."

As they were turning away, a telephone tinkled faintly in one of the rooms, and they heard voices raised excitedly, accompanied by the bang of overturned furniture.

"They've got a tip the cops are coming, or there's a fight," said Kirby. "Here's where we fade!"

He led the way quickly back to his room, dragged Jerry in and shut the door.

While the sounds of hasty flight continued, the elevator discharged half a dozen men. Jerry heard the hotel manager protesting to the police that it was an outrage; that the rooms they were raiding had been taken by strangers and that if there was anything wrong he wasn't responsible.

A few minutes later the arrival of the prisoners at the elevator announced the success of the raid. Several of them were protesting loudly against riding to the police station in a patrol wagon; others were taking the whole matter as a joke. Above the confusion Copeland's voice rose drunkenly in denunciation of his arrest.

Kirby, anxious not to be identified even remotely with the sinners who had been caught in their transgressions, had taken off his coat and was lighting a cigar.

"Try one of these, Amidon. We'd better sit tight until the cops get out of the building. Nice town, this! Gambling in respectable hotels. No doubt all those fellows are leading citizens, including—"

At this instant the electric lights were extinguished. The darkness continued, and Jerry opened the door and stuck his head out. Half the prisoners had been sent down, and the remainder were waiting for the elevator to return. They growled dismally, and somebody said it was a good chance to give the cops the slip.

One of the policemen struck a match and held it up to light the entrance to the car. Jerry's eyes ran quickly over the group facing the shaft, but he recognized none of the men. As the match died out, a prolonged, weary sigh near at hand caused him to start. Some one was leaning against the wall close beside him. He reached out, caught the man by the arm, drew him into the room and softly closed the door.

Kirby demanded to know what Amidon had done, and during the whispered explanation the globes began to brighten. Jerry jumped for the switch and snapped off the lights. He climbed on a chair and surveyed the hall through the transom. The last officer was stepping into the elevator, and some one demanded to know where Billy Copeland was.

"Oh, he went down in the first load," replied another voice. Then the door clanged and the hall was quiet.

"Turn on the lights," commanded Kirby.

Copeland sat on the bed, staring at them foolishly.

"Wherenell am I?" he asked, blinking. "Thish jail or somebody's parlor?"

"Your nerve, young man," remarked Kirby to Jerry, "leaves nothing to be desired. I suppose it didn't occur to you that this is my room?"

"Oh, that will be all right. If the cops aint back here in ten minutes, they'll probably think he's skipped; and they wont waste time looking for him; they know they can pick him up to-morrow, easy enough."

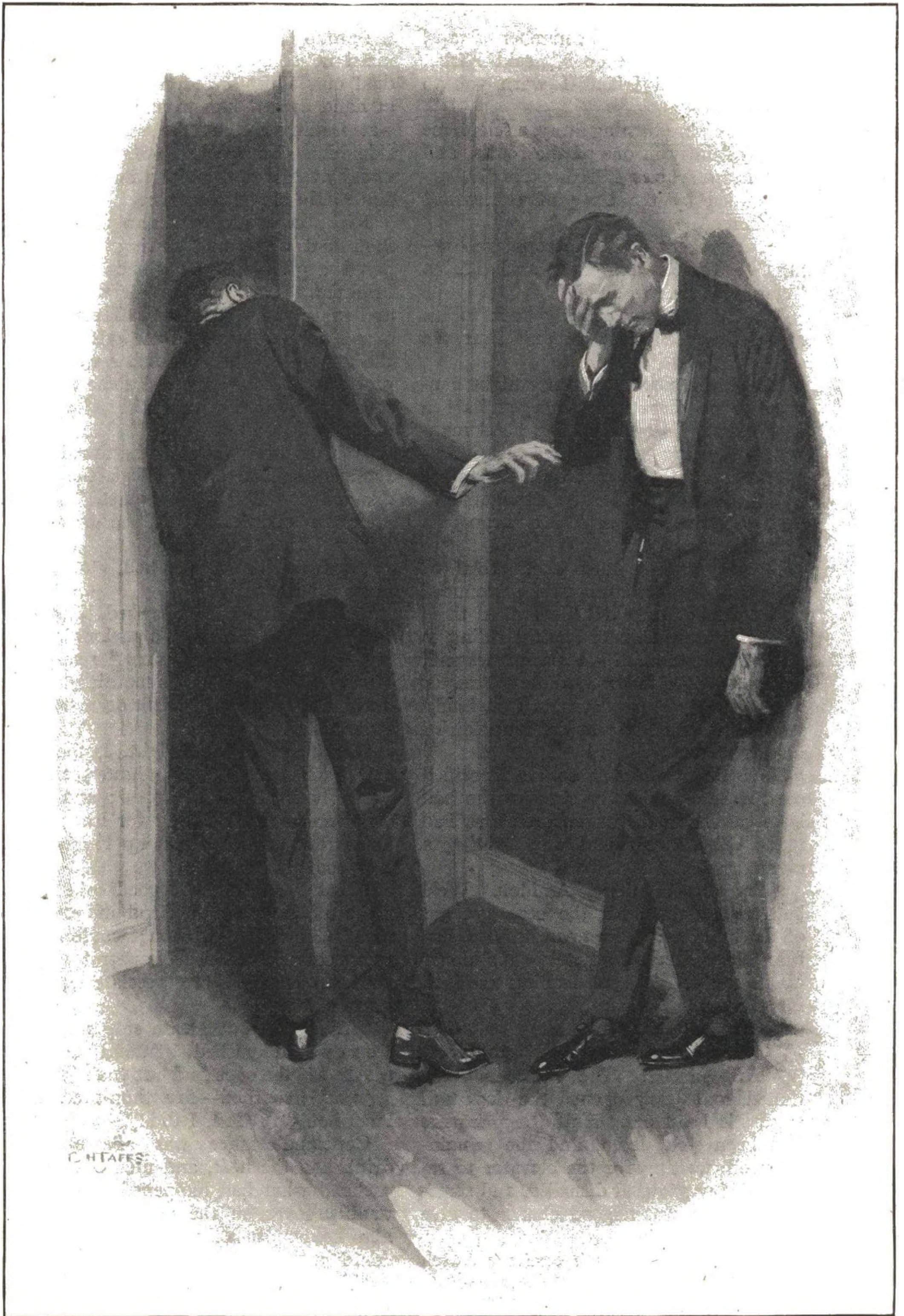
"Zhat you, Kirby, good old boy, right off Broadway? Kind of you, 'm sure. Good boy, Amidon; wouldn't let your boss get hauled off in patrol wagon. Raise wages for that; 'preciate it; mos' grateful!"

"All right; but please stop talking," Jerry admonished. "We'll all get pinched if the cops find out you're here."

"Los' five thou—five thou-sand dollars; hon's' to God, I did!"

Copeland's face was aflame from drink and the heat, and unable to comprehend what had happened to him, he tumbled over on the bed. Kirby eyed him contemptuously and turned upon Amidon.

"This is a nice mess of cats! Would you mind telling me what you're going



Jerry reached out, caught the man by the arm, drew him into the room and softly closed the door.

to do with our fallen brother? Please remember that my reputation's my only asset, and if I get arrested my house wouldn't pass it off as a little joke!"

"Oh, cheer up and be a good sport! I know the boys at the desk downstairs, and I'm going to tell 'em you've cleared out to make way for an old comrade of the Army of the Potomac. I'll have you moved, and then I'll put the boss to bed."

"Anything to please you," said Kirby ironically, as Copeland began to snore. "Your boss is lying on my coat, and I hope you'll have the decency to pay for pressing it!"

AT ten the next morning, Amidon called at the Whitcomb and found Copeland half dressed. He had telephoned to his house for toilet articles and clean linen, and he presented the chastened appearance with which he always emerged from his sprees.

"I thought I'd drop in," said Jerry, seating himself in the window.

"Been at the store?" asked Copeland from before the mirror, where he was sticking a gold safety pin through the ends of a silk collar.

"Yes; I took a look in."

"Any genial policeman lying in wait for me?"

"Nothing doing! Everything's all fixed."

"Fixed? How fixed?"

"Oh, I know the way around the pump at the police court, and I had a bum lawyer who hangs out there make the right sign to the judge. You owe me forty-seven dollars—that includes ten for the lawyer."

"Cheap at the price," remarked Copeland. He had taken a check-book from the table and was frowningly inspecting the last stub.

"I didn't come to collect," said Jerry. "Any old time will do."

"How did the rest of the boys come out?"

"Oh, the big sneeze from Chicago got a heavy soaking. The judge took it out on him for the rest of you. Wouldn't do, of course, to send prominent business men to the work-house. All fined under assumed names."

"Rather expensive evening for me. Much obliged to you just the same for saving me a ride in the wagon."

"Oh, that was easy," said Jerry. "By the way, I guess we'd better slip my lawyer friend another ten. He dug this up for you—no questions, no fuss; all on the dead quiet."

He drew from his trousers pocket a crumpled bit of paper and handed it to Copeland.

JERRY was not without his sense of the dramatic. He rolled a cigarette and watched Copeland out of the corner of his eye.

"See here, Jerry," said Copeland quickly, "I don't know about this. If I gave that check, and I know I did, I've got to stand by it. It's not square—"

"Oh, I wouldn't burst out crying about that!" remarked Jerry easily. "Five thousand is some money, and the Chicago shark was glad enough to have the check disappear from the police safe. You were stewed when you wrote the check; and besides, it was a crooked game. Forget it; that's all!" He stretched himself and yawned. "Can I do anything for you?"

"It seems to me," said Copeland, "that you've done about enough for me for one day—kept me out of jail and saved me five thousand dollars!"

"We do what we can," replied Jerry. "Keep us posted and when in doubt make the high sign. You better keep mum about the check. The deputy prosecutor's a friend of mine, and I don't want to get him into trouble."

"It makes me feel a little better about that check to know that it wasn't good when I gave it," remarked Copeland dryly. "I've only got about a hundred in bank, according to my stubs."

"I was just thinking," said Jerry, playing with the curtain cord, "as I came down from the police court, that five thousand per night swells the overhead considerable. This isn't a kick; I just mention it."

Copeland paused in the act of drawing on his coat, to bestow a searching glance upon his employee. He shook himself into the coat and rested his hand on the brass bed-post.

"What's the odds?" he asked harshly. "I'm undoubtedly going to the dogs, and a thousand or two, here and there—"

"Why are you going?" asked Jerry, tying a loop in the curtain cord.

Copeland was not prepared for this; he didn't at once correlate Amidon's question with his own remark that had inspired it.

"Oh, the devil!" he ejaculated impatiently, and then he smiled ruefully as he realized that there was a certain appositeness in his rejoinder.

THE relations of employer and employee had been modified by the incidents of the night and morning. Copeland imagined that he was something of a hero to his employees, and that Jerry probably viewed the night's escapade as one of the privileges enjoyed by the more favored social class. Possibly in his own way Amidon was guilty of reprehensible dissipations and therefore disposed to be tolerant of other men's shortcomings. At any rate, the young fellow had got him out of a bad scrape, and he meant to do something for him to show his gratitude.

"Well, a man's got to let loose occasionally," he said, dropping his toilet-case into the bag.

"I suppose he has," Amidon admitted without enthusiasm.

"I guess I ought to cut out these midnight parties and get down to business," said Copeland, as though recent history called for some such declaration of his intentions.

"Well, it's up to you," Jerry replied. "You can let 'er slide if you want to."

"You mean that it's sliding already?" Copeland asked.

"It's almost worse than a slide, if you want to know. But I didn't come here to talk about that. There's plenty of others can tell you more about the business than I can."

"But they don't," said Copeland, frowning; "I suppose—I suppose maybe they're afraid to."

"And besides, I don't know much about it," concluded Jerry.

"Well, you're in a position to learn. I want to push you on. I hope you understand that."

"Oh, you treat me all right," said Jerry, but in a tone that Copeland didn't find cheering.

"I mean to treat everybody right at the store," declared Copeland virtuously. "If any of the boys have a kick, I want them to come straight to me with it."

Jerry laid his hand on the door-knob ready for flight and regarded Copeland soberly.

"The only kick's on you, if you can bear to hear it. Everybody round the place knows you're not on the job; every freight handler in the district knows you're out with a paint brush every night, and the solid men around town are saying it's only a matter of time till you go broke. And the men down at the store are sore about it; it means that one of these mornings there'll be a new shift and they're likely to be out of a job. Some of them have been there a long time, and they don't like to see the old business breaking down. And some of them, I guess, sort o' like you and hate to see you slipping over."

During this speech Copeland stood with his cigarette-case half opened in his hand, looking hard at the top button on Amidon's coat.

"Well," he said, lighting a cigarette, "go on and hand me the rest of it."

"I guess that's about all from me," replied Jerry, "except if you want to bounce me right now, go ahead, only—let's don't have any hard feeling."

Copeland made no reply, and Jerry went out and closed the door. Then in a moment he opened it, saw Copeland staring out across the roofs in deep preoccupation, and remarked, deferentially:

"I'll carry your bag down, sir. Shall I order a taxi?"

"Never mind," said Copeland with affected carelessness; "I'll attend to it. I'm going to the store."

## CHAPTER X

### THE AMBITIONS OF MR. AMIDON

NO other branch of commerce is as fascinating as the wholesale drug business. Its stock embraces ten thousand small items. Its warehouses are redolent of

They both recognized Copeland. "Now we're in for it!" said Nan, uncomfortably. "I guess I'm the one that's in for it," said Jerry ruefully.

countless scents that pique a healthy curiosity; the remote fastnesses of the earth are raked to supply its necessities. Poppy and mandragora and all the drowsy sirups of the world are embraced in its catalogue. How superior to the handling of the grosser commodities of the wholesale grocery line! How infinitely more delightful than distributing clanging hardware or scattering broadcast the unresponsive units of the dry-goods trade!

Jerry knew his way around the store—literally. He could find the asafetida without sniffing his way to it. He had acquired a working knowledge of the pharmacopœia, and under Eaton's guidance he purchased a Latin grammar and a dictionary, over which he labored diligently in the midnight hours. His curiosity was insatiable; he wanted to know things!

"Assistant to the President" was the title bestowed upon him by his fellow-employees. By imperceptible degrees he had grown into a confidential relationship with Copeland that puzzled the whole establishment. The latest shifts had been unusually productive of friction, and Amidon had found his new position under the credit man wholly uncomfortable. Having asserted his authority, Copeland gave no heed to the results. The credit man was an old employee, very jealous of his prerogatives, and he had told Jerry in blunt terms that he had nothing for him to do. The auditor thereupon pounced upon him and set him to work checking invoices.

Jerry wrote a good hand and proved apt, and as a result of this contact with the office he absorbed a vast amount of information pertaining to the business, to which, strictly speaking, he was not entitled. Copeland, seeing him perched on a stool in the counting-room, asked him what he was doing there, and when Jerry replied that he was just helping out for a day or two, Copeland remarked ironically that he guessed he'd better stay there; that he'd been thinking for some time that fresh blood was needed in that department.

No one else entered Copeland's office with so much assurance. If Jerry hadn't been so amiable, so willing to help anyone who called for his assistance, he would have been cordially hated; but Jerry was a likable fellow. He prided himself on keeping cheerful on blue Mondays when everybody else about the place was in the doldrums.

The auditor sent him to the bank frequently, and he experienced a pleasurable sensation in walking briskly across the lobby of the Western National. He knew many of the clerks he saw immured in the cages; some of them were members of the Little Ripple Club, and he made a point of finding out just what they did, and incidentally their salaries, which seemed disgracefully inadequate; he was doing quite as well himself.

He liked to linger in the bank lobby and talk to people. He had hit on the happy expedient of speaking to men whether he knew them or not; he argued that in time they would ask who he was, which was a surer way of impressing himself upon them than through formal introductions.

AMBITION stirred in the bosom of Jeremiah A. Amidon. He lavished his admiration upon the "big" men of the "street,"—in the main they were hard workers, and he was pretty well persuaded of the virtue and reward of industry.

Nearly all the leading manufacturers and merchants were stockholders in banks. The fact that Copeland enjoyed no such distinction troubled Jerry; it was a reflection upon Copeland-Farley.

The idea of being a stockholder in something appealed to Jerry. He studied the stock-list, hoping to see something some day that he could buy.

The local stock exchange consisted of three gentlemen calling themselves brokers. Whenever they met by chance on the steps of the Western National or in a trolley going home, the exchange was in session. The "list" must be kept active, and when there were no transfers, the brokers traded a few shares with each other to establish a price. These agitations of the local bourse would be duly reported on the market pages of the newspapers — all but the number of

*Continued on page 400 of this issue.*

IF you haven't grown too old to get a thrill from the blare of a circus band, you'll enjoy knowing Shoestring Charlie: this is the first of a series of stories about him.

# Opals for Luck


## By Courtney Ryley Cooper

One of the few authors who really know whereof they write in a circus story.


ILLUSTRATED BY
R. M. BRINKERHOFF

"What was that song you was singing about a bum nag?"

THE usual symptoms were lacking. The lackadaisical viewpoint of life was missing entirely; there was a nervousness, a fretfulness, an apparent desire for action and achievement, which are never included in the dictionary descriptions of the malady. There was quite the opposite from any desire for rest and quiet and lazy hours. And yet Mr. Charles Grenolds was suffering from spring fever in its most malignant form.

It was a different sort of spring affliction from the one which causes the clerk to slide from his high stool, stretch and gaze longingly out toward imaginary brooks and soft spots beneath spreading trees. It was different from that spring fever which brings puppy love, or the riper sort, for that matter. The spring fever which had gripped the heart of Mr. Charles Grenolds called for the blaring of bands, the roar of the ballyhoo man on his stand before the kid-show, the squealing and trumpeting of the elephants, the glare of the chandeliers o'nights against the dim stretches of the "big top." For Mr. Charles Grenolds bore only that name when he was ill, or home visiting the folks, or in church, or some other position equally unfortunate. Otherwise he was Shoestring Charlie, circus man.

And to him who loves the land of the "white tops," spring fever means anything except lassitude. It means that somewhere the bluebird is singing, that somewhere the great stretches of canvas are going into the air, while downtown the glitter of a parade flashes against the sun as it winds its way through the streets. And when one has owned a circus, when one has known the cares and the joys of it all, one can write testimonials to the actual existence of spring fever.

But Shoestring Charlie didn't own a circus. He was in a worse position. Time had been when he had owned one, but that was far in the past — as far away as last season. Shoestring tried to forget the days of rain which had sent his accounts farther and farther "into the red," with the "blowdown" as a climax to everything. What was the use of thinking of things which hurt? Perhaps that was why he cheerfully fished the makin's from his pocket, rolled another cigarette, and then, his somewhat narrow shoulders hunched forward, turned toward El Paso's pawn-shop region, seeking opals for luck.

Shoestring didn't really believe in opals as luck bringers. It was just a habit with him, that was all. Rather, through a sort of paradoxical desire, Shoestring usually sought his luck in that which brought misfortune to others. And besides, he was searching for a way to divert his attention from a once vacant lot down by the International Bridge, where Matt Grogan's Dog and Pony Show was undergoing its last rehearsals before the start of the season. He turned in a doorway and flattened his chest against the glass showcase of a pawnshop.

"Lemme look at the Mex opals, the two-bit kind," he ordered. A moment later he was pawing over a tray of "matrix," whistling some old tune of the Grand Entry, his gray eyes sparkling. For Shoestring loved opals, and Shoestring—

But there had come an interruption in the voice of the pawnbroker.

"Show man?"

"Huh?" Shoestring started a bit. "Yes—why?"

"Saw that lion-claw on your watch-chain. Pretty stone in it. Let's look."

"Opals for luck," murmured Shoestring. He removed the chain and passed it over the counter. "How much on it?" There was a quick feverishness about the rather undersized man, and the wrinkles about his sharp gray eyes deepened. "I'm playin' a hunch. How much?"

"Fifty," came the answer, after pawnbroker deliberation.

"A hundred!"

"Fifty." The pawnbroker's hands began activity, the prelude to extensive argument. Shoestring dropped in his price. A match flared as he lit his always dying cigarette. He stretched forth a sinewy brown hand, and then walked forth, a diamond-set lion-claw missing, fifty dollars the richer.

Why? Shoestring himself did not know, except that suddenly he had felt the desire for the crinkle of money. He walked forth; he swung his steps toward the International Bridge, and this time he did not hesitate as he approached Matt Grogan's "opera."

BEYOND the flap in the side-wall there came the whirring of a sewing machine, as the canvasmen worked on the seaming of repairs. There was the thudding of hoofs; Shoestring ducked through the opening and stood watching, happily. In the one ring a pony galloped about, a dog upon its back, its trainer trailing the whip as he handled the lead string. Down toward the place where the reserved seats would stand on opening day, a girl in bloomers was swinging contentedly upon a break-away ladder. There sounded from somewhere the *umpah-umpah* of a tuba, as a bandman underwent the agonies of his spring practice. Near the entrance to the pad-room, chips were flying as a result of keen edged blows, as the "roughnecks" pointed their tent "staubs" or stakes, an unfailing labor of the springtime. Shoestring watched, and smiled to himself; then seating himself on a pile of canvas, he picked up a shredded morning paper and read idly the returns of the previous day's racing across the Rio Grande. Back in the atmosphere he loved, Shoestring felt strangely happy. Fifty dollars would buy many a sack of peanuts, many a carton of popcorn, many a lemon and plenty of glasses. And Shoestring had started on nothing many times before. Slowly he read the racing form of the day; then he turned.

" 'Lo, Matt," he said idly, as he gazed into the face of the show owner. "Look peeved. Anything up?"

"A lot," came the answer. "Know anybody wants to buy a horse?"

"No. What kind?"

"Opals for luck," murmured Shoestring. He removed the chain and passed it over the counter. "How much on it?" There was a quick feverishness about the rather undersized man, and the wrinkles about his sharp gray eyes deepened. "I'm playin' a hunch. How much?"

"'Bout a four-year-old. I've been gyped again. Steve Harris shipped her to me. Squarin' up, he said, for a couple of centuries I lent him. Fine squarin'." Matt Grogan's face was long. "It aint worth a finnith as ring-stock."

"Huh." Shoestring was only feebly interested. "Matt, I've changed my mind."

"'Bout what? I'm going to run that nag again this morning on a race tryout; that's about all she's good—"

"'Bout them concessions. Guess I'll take 'em—the juice and popcorn and junk. Kind of got a hunch this morning—"

"Gosh, Shoestring!"—and Matt Grogan' voice bore real sincerity,—"they're gone. Didn't think you'd want 'em after what you said. Jim Dwyer's got 'em. Gave him the rights for a baseball mutual around the show too, and a booze camp. Gosh! I wish I'd known! I'd 've liked to had you with me. Honest! I—"

"My fault." Shoestring Charlie saw his chance fade with the same equanimity with which he once had watched a whole circus depart and leave him cleaned of his last cent. "Don't matter. Just thought I'd take a jolt at it. That was all. What was that song you was singing about a bum nag?"

Matt Grogan rammed his big hands deep into his pockets.

"Want to sell a horse—"

"Maybe," he said; then turning: "Bowlan," he called to a passing ring-stock man, "get Welsh and Green and Fenway and tell 'em I said to bring out the hippodrome stuff. I want to see what that Mary J horse'll do in the races. Have a cigar, Shoestring?" he asked, as he sat beside him.

Shoestring shook his head and reached for his makin's. His thoughts had gone back now, back to other plans and schemes and dreams. The hunch of the pawnshop had not turned out. The fifty dollars would buy no peanuts, no popcorn, no "juice," no—

"Go!"

The clanging of a bell, and Shoestring Charlie's head went suddenly forward. His hands clenched as he watched a thin, white, streaking form as it shot around the hippodrome track, its rider sawing and tugging at its tender mouth to hold it back. It flashed past Charlie, its eyes wild with the excitement of the contest; it swerved and angled at the quarter-poles on the turn; vainly the rider endeavored to hold it for the crossing of the other horses in the staged race. A spurt, and it was tearing down the turf; all of the manufactured closeness of the race gone, while Matt Grogan sat angry and disgusted and fuming.

"Hold her!" he ordered. "Shut down on her wind! She aint got the sense of a goat. A fine stunt for Harris, huh, sendin' me that for ring-stock! What's he think I'm doin', runnin' a derby or something?"

Shoestring turned and faced him, his cigarette hanging dead from the corner of his mouth. A strange expression was in his countenance; somehow the crumpled morning paper had absent-mindedly been folded and rammed into a pocket. His eyes were narrowed, and as he struck a match for his cigarette, his sinewy hands trembled the slightest bit.

"Wont hold on the turns," he remarked absently.

"On the turns or anywhere else," came in the disgusted voice of Matt Grogan. "She aint a ring horse—never was meant for a tent show. Might be all right for a runnin' race at a county fair or—"

"Or the lead horse on a merry-go-round," came from Shoestring Charlie, and there was a trifle of sarcasm in his tone. "But you don't want her, Matt. Not an expert on horses like you are. You don't want her. S'far as I'm concerned,"—and he rose and stretched,—"I'm going to beat it to Juarez and see if I can't let the Mex population get some of my coin on their little games of chance." He walked to the flap of the tent. "But you don't want that nag, Matt — not a judge like you."

SHOESTRING ducked under the flap and stumbled across the lot, forgetting even to puff at his ever present cigarette. His hands clenched once or twice; his eyes were narrowed.

"An expert on horses!" he sneered. "An expert—it's in her to run—like a scared rabbit in front of a shotgun! And Matt dubs around with a dog and pony opera!" He stopped. He took his roll of bills from his pocket and fingered it.

"Make or break!" he announced, and his thin lips went into a queer little smile. "Make or break—and opals for luck!"

The clanging of a bell and Shoestring Charlie's head went suddenly forward. His hands clenched as he watched a thin, white, streaking form as it shot around the hippodrome track, its rider sawing and tugging at its tender mouth to hold it back.

A half hour more, and Shoestring Charlie Grenolds, his head hunched forward, the pupils of his eyes dilated a trifle with the excitement which showed nowhere else, edged to a seat in the great keno room of Juarez. The big wheel clicked as the numbers dropped forth; there came the droning sound of the caller's voice, the blazing of the numbers on the great electric board at the rear. Now and then there sounded the staccato buzzing of the keno bell, the hush which followed, the confirmation of the winner; then the calling of numbers again and the clicking of the little chips, as excited hands hurried them to their paddles. But the rows refused to fill for Shoestring. He left his chair.

"It aint keno," he murmured. "A simp's game, anyhow."

He pushed the few remaining chips he held, to a hard loser across the table. He walked forth, to gaze for a moment at a lumbering squad of revolutionists as they trundled down the dusty street, their uniforms ragged from many a day in the field, their cartridge belts starving for ammunition.

"Poor boobs," he mused. "Hey, you," he called to a straggler, "go get yourself a square meal." He handed the bedraggled one a dollar. "Gosh, that's worse'n being in the circus game. Where do they roll the little ball around this kohokus?"

*"Muchas gracias, señor!"* grinned the revolutionist, and hurried after his company.

"Surest thing you know." And Shoestring grinned also. "I almost got some information."

He ambled on, into the saloons, to drop quarters into the jackpot machines, into the great, unfurnished rooms where the dice rattled over the felt-covered boards, into the El Nacion, where screaming entertainers yelped last year's popular music to the mistaken melody of a last-century piano, and then out again. From far away there came the roaring of the multitude at the Palacio del Toro, where energetic picadors were sticking even more energetic bulls full of pointed decorations, and haughty matadors were posing for the benefit of adoring señoritas. Around the corner, dust-yellowed cars were bearing the crowds from El Paso to the races. But Shoestring did not care for the ponies right then. He was seeking roulette, or at least its Mexican equivalent. He wandered on—then suddenly veered and reached for his pocket. A moment later he had become a part of the crowd which jammed itself about the long board of black oilcloth, where the Mexican croupier (although he did not know he was such) sat in hunched pessimism over the losses and winnings. Shoestring threw a bill across the table.

"Dollar checks!" he ordered. The man at the wheel was calling the command for the placing of bets. A clicking of ivory; twenty chips found their way into the hands of Shoestring Charlie.

"Opals for luck!" said the circus man as he smiled at the croupier; then he laid five dollars on the total of the letters. The droning call of the man at the wheel sounded forth. The little ball twirled here and there, jerked, jumped and then settled. Shoestring watched his checks travel into the maw of the croupier. Once more he tried. Once more he failed. Again. Again. The twenty was gone.

A strange, hot sensation traveled over Shoestring Charlie—not because he had lost twenty dollars, but a hunch had failed, and to a circus man a hunch is religion. He clawed in his pocket. Four bills came forward—all fives. Almost listlessly he threw them across the board and called for his chips. Mournfully the croupier counted them out, placed them in a tall, tottering stack and started to shove them across to the small, wiry man opposite. A slight motion of the hand—then a cessation. Shoestring Charlie's voice had almost barked its order.

"Let 'em lay there!"

For the croupier had counted forth the chips upon the American flag — and Shoestring Charlie was playing his last hunch.

"Let 'em lay," he ordered again and reached for his tobacco and papers.

Here and there the chips clicked, as the players made their bets. A heavy, excitement-perspiring negro woman wobbled through the crowd and dropped twenty cents on a color. A Mexican soldier edged Shoestring's bet, with four ways to win. But Shoestring only rolled his cigarette, pinched it carefully at the end and fished for an elusive match.

*"No mas!"* It was the call of the man at the wheel. A frantic effort at a late bet was checked. A sudden motion—the wheel was whirring; the ball was clicking as it leaped and spun and hesitated. Again and again it dropped to its socket, —then leaped forth; it whirled, it hesitated, it slipped into its niche.

*"La Bandera Americana!"* Shoestring reached for another match. The croupier was counting out four hundred and eighty dollars. Shoestring smiled ever so slightly.

"Let the eighty lay—to repeat," he ordered. The luck had turned.

Once more the order of the man at the wheel. Once more the twirling and clicking of the little sphere. Once more:

*"La Bandera Americana!"*

Shoestring's cigarette was dead now. Across the table came the money in stacks of gold-pieces, twenty-eight times eighty. Around him he felt that the crowd had gathered until it packed the enclosure. He sought his pocket for a match; the cigarette flared. A moment of hesitation; Shoestring clattered a handful of gold pieces above the board—then turned suddenly.

"That's enough!" he said tersely. "The luck wont hold!"

He lowered his head. He pushed his way through the jammed crowd and dived for a passing scenic motor.

"Five dollars to El Paso!" he ordered. "Take me to Matt Grogan's Dog Opera —that dog and pony show right by the bridge."

FIFTEEN minutes later he stood by the flap in the side-wall, staring up into the face of Matt Grogan.

"It's the worst circus horse in the world—I know all that—but I've gone crazy and want it — see? You've got your cash—whatta you fretting about? If I should go ahead and make a whole two-ring show out of it, or something, it's my own lookout, aint it?" Matt Grogan laughed.

"It sure is," he answered.

"Then we're even," came from Shoestring. He sucked at his cigarette and looked far across the lot, beyond the wagons with their new paint and gold leaf, beyond the cook-house, beyond the cars down on the siding, on to where, the mists hung upon the hills, the mists with their castles in Spain.

"You never can tell," he mused. "She might make it—it's a good bet—as good as any—"

"Huh?" the voice was Matt Grogan's. Shoestring Charlie closed the trap door of his dreams.

"Talkin' in my sleep," he answered. "I'll send that Maxwell kid after the nag. He's been feedin' off o' me for a month now—I'll make him pay it back."

And so it was that when night came, Shoestring Charlie Grenolds walked across the International Bridge. A stolid-faced Mexican, leading a blanketed horse, and an undersized boy trudged beside. They stopped long enough to lie to a few sleepy customs men—then hurried far into the back country which lay beyond Juarez. A mile—two—three—the Mexican grunted and pointed to a tiny adobe with its clustering group of shacks. Shoestring nodded.

"Good enough," he answered. "How long's the stretch of the road here?"

"Half mile," the voice was Maxwell's. "That's why I thought it'd be a good place."

"O. K.," came shortly and Shoestring dragged at his unceasing cigarette. "We'll see in the morning."

And when morning came, it brought with it a hunched figure at the side of the road, his arms crossed over his knees, his head alert, his eyes blazing. For there, taking the road with a love of speed which showed in every twitching muscle, Mary J, her head free under the guiding rein-hand of Larry Maxwell, her sinews straining, shot here and there like some being of the air. There was none of the "professional" about the lean, shapely horse of white. None of the track manners were hers, the coddled arrogance and fidgety pride which goes with paddocks, and years of waiting for the dropping flag. Free as the wind she was; grace of the wild life was hers; blood of breeding may have been there or not—Shoestring as he watched her did not care. All that he knew was that his stop-watch was telling him things that were pleasant, as the horse took the short stretches, wheeled and made them over again. And with every tick of the watch's mechanism, there came dreams to Shoestring Charlie, the dream that brought once more the marquee of the World Famous Shows, Charles Grenolds, owner.

"What about distance?" he asked, and Maxwell, petting the smooth neck of Mary J, looked serious.

"Don't know how she'll act. Give her a few short races and then try her, and maybe she'll be all right. But to put her up against an experienced field on the jump-off and expect her to make it—it aint possible!"

"Aint possible?" There was a shade of anger in Shoestring Charlie's voice. "D'you think I've got time to train her? And let these geeks see her develop, day after day? And see the odds chase themselves on the other side of the easy money? D'you think I've got years for it? Or months, Max?" And Shoestring's fingers shook a bit, as he rolled his cigarette. "It's make or break — see, kid? Either we get or we flivver. That's all. Run her again — and give her the needles. Let's see if she'll spurt."

Again the watch came out, to be regarded with a sincerity of close attention seldom employed by Shoestring Charlie. The crumpled paper of the day before was brought from his pocket, and the sporting page scanned.

"If I can only keep her quiet a week—and she don't get stage fright!" he mused. "Then, then I've got it—maybe!"

AND somewhere, the gods of fortune heard. Day after day, Shoestring Charlie Grenolds left his hotel in El Paso, to journey across the bridge, hire a dilapidated rig from the more dilapidated livery stable, drive three miles into the country, then sit hunched on the side of the road as he watched that one thing in the world he gambled on take the paces under the guidance of Maxwell. Day after day—then there appeared the name of Mary J in the entries for her maiden race. Once the bookmakers looked at the name—twice. Then they looked at the horse in her purity of white, her almost Arabian eye, her strength—and slapped on the odds. Over in El Paso, where followers of the track game milled in the big hotels, the name of Mary J caused perhaps a remark or so of curiosity, but that was all. Other horses were in the long nonpareil lists, Iron Mask and Dynamite and Fullsome and Prairie Flower, with something behind them. Other horses were there with Kentucky blood to back them, with the story of many a track victory to stand for their prestige and their power. Mary J? She had nothing, save that an undersized man, his cigarette drooping from a corner of his mouth, the wrinkles deeper about his eyes than they had been in many a long month, ripped the threads which held a wad of bills within a vest lining—then turned his steps to where the golden balls of the pawnshops held forth their triple lure.

"Opals for luck," he said as he entered. "Show me a bunch of 'em—the two-bit kind."

Over the tray of cheap Mexican baubles he bent and let them stream through his fingers. He shoved a few into his pocket, paid for them and started for the track.

Through the crowds at the gate he threaded his way, on down to the paddock. The Mexican was there, stolid-faced as ever, saying nothing to the questions asked him, perhaps thinking nothing to say. Shoestring looked and smiled, a smile impossible to analyze. Slowly he turned and sought Maxwell.

"Well?" he asked. "Roll me a pill," he ordered, handing the papers and tobacco to the jockey. There was just a trace of nervousness in his tone. "I've got something wrong with my fingers. Well—what is it?"—as the jockey folded the oblong tissue. "Do we make it?"

The jockey looked down at the streaming tobacco.

"The bookies are right," he answered shortly.

"What—forty to one? That we don't make it?" Shoestring's head shot forward.

"Forty to one," came the voice of Maxwell. "It's just what I've told you: she can't make it. She strained on it this morning, and I was taking her easy. A mile's a long stretch and she aint used to it, with the field pounding at her every minute. And if we get pocketed—"

Shoestring Charlie stared.

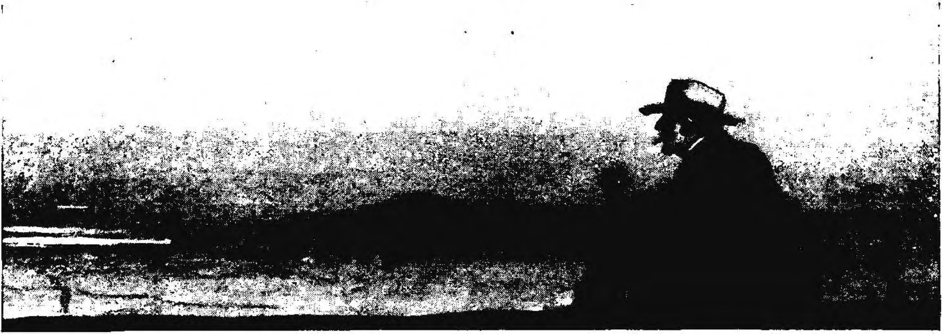
"You've been laying for a mount, aint you?" he asked curtly.

"Yes—why?"

"You've been stalling that you're a regular boy, haven't you?"

"Why sure—I can ride—"

"Then don't get pocketed, that's all!"



There was the staccato bark in his voice which came to the circus man only at a time of crisis. He veered away without waiting for the cigarette. Hurriedly he sought the stable of Mary J and looked at her keenly, longingly. There came the smashing of hoofs from the track, the roar of the multi-colored grandstand. Shoestring Charlie wheeled, vaulted a bit of a railing before him and hurried for the bookies.

Hastily he glanced at the boards. The odds were there, forty to one, untouched by any freak of betting. Shoestring sidled close to the nearest stand and slid a ten-dollar bill toward the waiting hands.

"Mary J," he ordered.

"Mary J," echoed the voice above.

"Mary J," came the response from near by. Shoestring went on. Again he placed his bet. Again came the echoing voices; again a ticket found its way into Shoestring's pocket. On again. Once more. The rounds were made one by one—

And the odds still held. Shoestring halted. Slowly he took his money from his pocket and counted it. His eyes squinted. Hurriedly he replaced his money and rolling a cigarette, puffed hard for a second or so. Then, a queer, grim little expression on his face, he shot forward to the nearest bookie.

"Mary J," he called once more.

"All of it?" There was surprise in the bookmaker's voice.

Shoestring bobbed his head.

"The double century!" he answered, as the two one-hundred-dollar bills brushed the bookmaker's hand. "Mary J to win!"

"Mary J," came the call from beyond. Shoestring noticed some one with an eraser making his way to the boards. He knew the rest. The odds would fall now.

But Shoestring Charlie had made his decision. Another hundred-dollar bill followed the first two. And another. And another. And another. The eraser traveled its track over the odds. They were thirty-five to one now. But Shoestring Charlie only rolled more cigarettes and fingered his money.

"Mary J!" he ordered, "to win!"

"Mary J," they echoed him; "Mary J, to win!"

The churning of the grandstand sounded above. Shoestring glanced about him anxiously, and his mouth straightened a bit. He was gaining his group of followers—the name of Mary J sounded more frequently now. Once more the eraser traveled its course across the board. Once more the odds dropped. Shoestring felt that his hatband was damp against his forehead; that his last cigarette long had frayed and scattered its tobacco on the cemented floor.

"If they'll only hold off!" And there was a gritty something in his voice. "If they don't rush 'em with the bets—"

BUT the calls for Mary J became more frequent now. Shoestring looked furtively about the ring. Suddenly he shot forward. Hastily he grasped at a figure just listing into the ring and drew him to one side.

"A sawbuck to stall!" he ordered and slipped a ten-dollar bill into the expectant hand of the tout. "Now whisper something to me—tell me the grass is green—that it'll be a nice day Sunday—anything! Can't you grab me, you boob?"

A sudden activity on the part of the tout; Shoestring bent forward, listened

to the whispered conversation—and then, his face tragic, his hands working somewhat convulsively, he rushed back to the ring.

"Five hundred on Prairie Flower!" he ordered hoarsely. "Quick!"

And the come-ons caught it even quicker than Shoestring had hoped. The plunger was hedging; the plunger had learned that his tip was bad. And if a plunger could hedge by betting on the favorite, so could they. Hastily they changed their bets. The eraser faded from view. From far away there sounded the call of the bugle, the call to the track. Unnoticed now, unwatched, Shoestring Charlie slipped far to one side and raised his last hundred dollar bill.

"On Mary J, just for luck!" And he smiled when he said it, the smile of a man who makes or loses and grins either way. Calmly now he rolled his cigarette, hardly noticing those about him. Calm, at least, he seemed to be; yet within him was a strange quivering of anxiety, a strange, gripping sensation which gnawed and tore at his heart. They were out on the track now, and Mary J, white as marble against the field, was—

And that was what gnawed and ate. Was she standing it? Was she fretting with the rest of them for the position? Was she quivering with the sure excitement of a race to win, or was she plunging and frothing and holding the start? Shoestring Charlie could have seen. But Shoestring Charlie could not trust himself the sight.

The clanging of the gong at the post. A sudden clattering of boards, the sound of thousands of feet from above as the grandstand rose, a restless churning as the milling betting ring surged to the rail, while just one man stayed behind, Shoestring Charlie Grenolds.

A wait, a craning of necks. From far away a muffled shout.

"Go!"

The roar of the grandstand and the rail. A laugh. The voice of some one:

"Huh! Left at the post."

A dynamo had suddenly leaped to existence in Shoestring's body, "Left at the post!" He leaped forward, his small, sinewy arms outstretched, and threw from him a man who obstructed. "Left at the post—Mary J!"

But no. It was a bay gelding, floundering hopelessly in the rear, while there, there ahead, increasing her lead with the leaps of a grayhound, Maxwell bent far upon her neck, ran Mary J, a streaking flash of white against the dun of the track. From high above, the shrieks of the grandstand had half hushed, then turned sullen. On and on and on the flash of white went, the sky showing now and then between her and the field; past the quarter and on—

A gasp from Shoestring Charlie. She had floundered—just for the merest part of an instant.

"Can't last. Getting heavy!" It was the voice of the man at Shoestring's side. Quickly the little man turned.

"Lemme those glasses!" he ordered as he snatched them from the hands which held them. "That'. my horse!"

The field suddenly had pulled closer. Through the lenses Shoestring could see that Maxwell was petting and coaxing and urging, his face agonized, his whip-hand upraised for the blow he hated to

"You've been stalling that you're a regular boy, haven't you?"

deliver. 'It fell. Mary J gave another of those great plunges, and for a second the old lead was hers again. Then slowly, surely, there began the thundering approach of Prairie Flower from behind.

Shoestring saw it and groaned. Shoestring saw too that the advice of Maxwell had been true, that Mary J had not been built for the strain. But still she plunged on, and fought and struggled to drown in space the thudding of the hoofs behind her. But the breath of Prairie Flower was hot on her haunches, and the three-quarter pole was flashing ahead.

Maxwell was "fanning" her now. The whip hand rose and fell, slowly at first, then faster. Instinctively Shoestring knew that the rowels of the jockey's "needles" were deep in the flesh of Mary J, deep, and digging and galling. But Prairie Flower came on.

The man at Shoestring's side asked in a half-hearted way for his glasses. The circus man barked at him and leaned farther over the rail.

Somewhere within him, Shoestring felt that his heart was straining with an excitement it never had known before, straining and tugging and throwing the blood through his arteries like raging rapids. Shoestring felt that his face was contorted; his throat was dry and hot and aching. Vaguely he knew he was shouting—shouting something, but the words were lost.

Down the track the race-maddened horses had rounded into the stretch, and the head of Prairie Flower was against the knees of Maxwell, straining forward, farther forward with every plunge.

An inch—two—a half a foot—gaining, ever gaining, while the blood-reddened froth flew from the mouth of Mary J, while the goading whip of Maxwell lashed her withers until the carmine stained them. But the Prairie Flower came on.

And on. A neck behind now, thundering forward like a plunging Nemesis, fifty yards from the wire. A head behind—with twenty-five yards to go. Nose and nose, with barely two lengths, nose and nose—

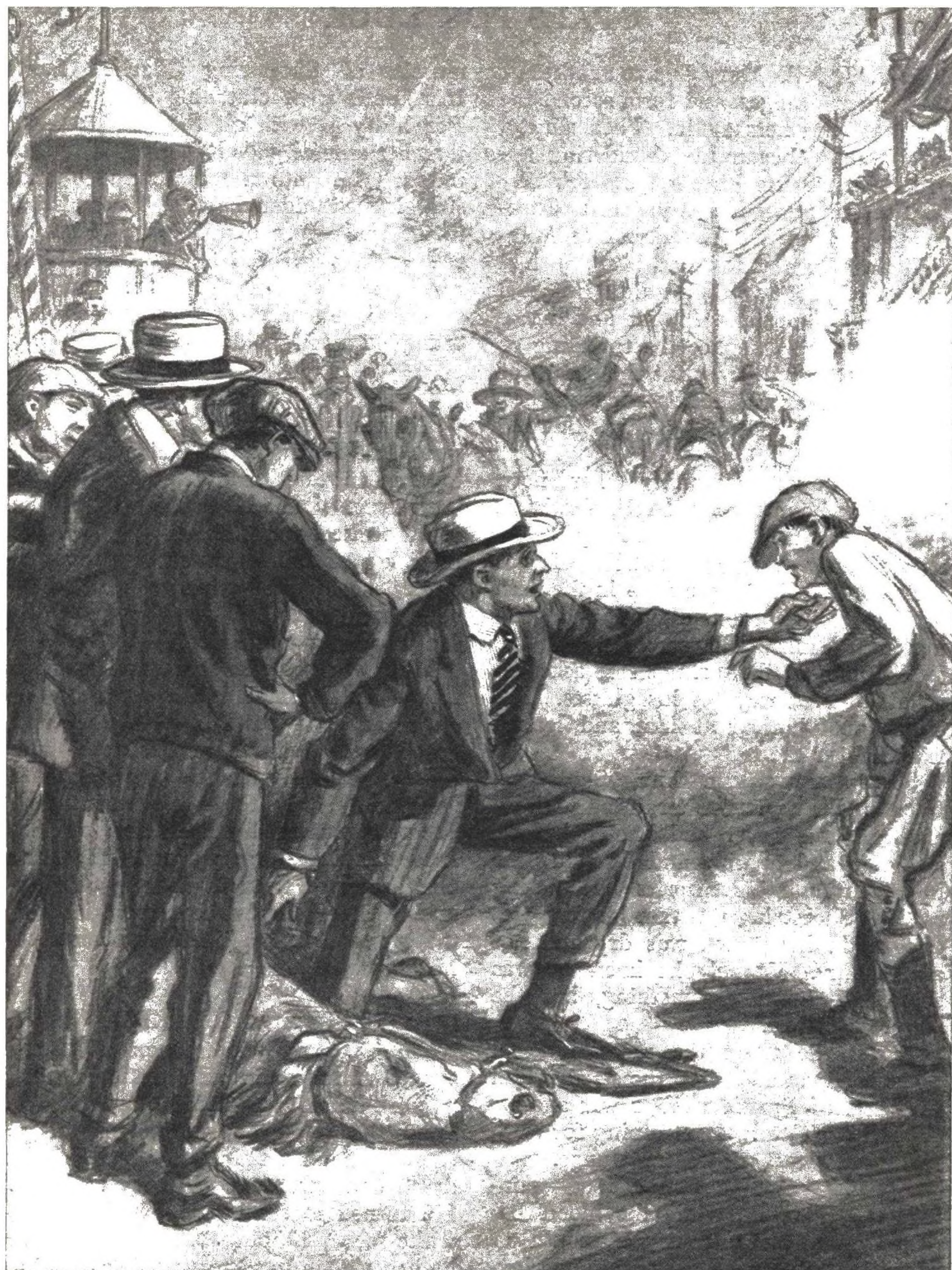
A great, choking cry from the grandstand. A straining, convulsing, of the muscles of Shoestring Charlie's face. His hands went clutching into the air. For Mary J, with all the last strength that her animal gods had given her, had plunged far into the air, strained and straightened under the wire, a good head in the lead—then doubled and fallen to the track, while the field plunged and reared and circled about her and the sprawled, unconscious jockey who lay crumpled up in the dust.

SOMEHOW, vaguely, Shoestring Charlie heard and knew that Mary J had won. But the thousands which had come to him as a result of it were forgotten for the moment. All he could feel, all he could realize, was that out there on the track lay a quivering, trembling thing of white, the blood flowing from her nostrils, her be-frothed jaws sagging, the end of a fight to the death—for him.

Half wildly he leapt the rail and ran forward. The field had cleared now—some one was howling to the excited grandstand that Mr. Maxwell, the jockey, was only shaken up, that quite fortunately only the horse was killed. Shoestring sneered at him and ran on. Into the dust he went and lifted the blood-smeared head of Mary J into his arms. Then slowly he replaced it on the ground. Mary J had won her race. Mary J was gone.

SHOESTRING CHARLIE stared into the beyond, then suddenly started at the sound of clanking chains. A work-horse was approaching. Charlie knew the rest—to drag her from the track; the horse that had fought to the death—and won! His hands clenched. He turned to see beside him Maxwell, white-faced, limping back to the horse he had ridden to victory and to death.

"Cash these," he ordered, as he jerked forth the tickets. "Bring back the money—quick. I'll need it." Then he turned. "Never mind that drag-horse," he called, and his voice was low and soft with a something Shoestring Charlie did not often allow to become apparent. "I own Mary J. I own her—and she aint going to be dragged off of any track! I've got a few hundred to spend for having her carried—carried back to the paddock.



"Cash these," he ordered, as he jerked forth the tickets. "Bring back the money—quick. I'll need it."

And for burial — and a monument! I guess I can do that much."

And as he turned away, some one in the crowd pointed him out as Shoestring Charlie of the Old World Famous, who had turned a lion's claw into fifty thousand cool. He'd start another show now, lucky stiff. It was the way with 'em all, fifty thousand and the spring fever—a circus all his own was all that any showman could think about. But some one else, who had not heard, remarked something about soft-hearted horse-owners—and tears in men's eyes.

**Another Shoestring Charlie story next month.**

# Mutual Exchange

A new story by "Q"—of course you remember "The Delectable Duchy" and other fine stories he's written.

## By A. T. Quiller-Couch

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

MILLIONAIRE though he was, Mr. Markham, "the Insurance King," never let a small opportunity slip. To be sure, the enforced idleness of an Atlantic crossing bored him and kept him restless: it affected him with malaise to think that for these five days, while the solitude of ocean swallowed him, men on either shore with cables at their command were using them to get rich on their own account—it might even be at his expense.

The first day out from New York he had spent in his cabin, immersed in correspondence. Having dealt with this and exhausted it, on the second, third and fourth days he found nothing to do. He never played cards; he eschewed all acquaintance with his fellow men except in the way of business: he had no vanity, and to be stared at on the promenade deck because of the fame of his wealth merely annoyed him. On the other hand he had not the smallest excuse to lock himself up in his stuffy stateroom. He enjoyed fresh air, and had never been seasick in his life.

It was just habit—the habit of never letting a chance go, or the detail of a chance—that on the fourth morning carried him the length of the liner, to engage in talk with the fresh-colored young third officer busy on the high deck forward.

"A young man, exposed as you are, ought to insure himself," said Mr. Markham.

The third officer—by name Dick Rendal—knew something of the inquisitiveness and idle ways of passengers. This was his fifth trip in the *Carnatic*. He took no truck in passengers beyond showing them the patient politeness enjoined by the Company's rules. He knew nothing of Mr. Markham, who dispensed with the services of a valet and dressed with a shabbiness only pardonable in the extremely rich.

Mr. Markham, "the Insurance King," had arrayed himself this morning in gray flannel, with a hand-me-down overcoat, cloth cap and house slippers that betrayed his flat instep. Dick Rendal sized him up for an insurance tout, but behaved precisely as he would have behaved on better information. He refrained from ordering the intruder aft, but eyed him less than amiably—being young, keen on his ship and just now keen on his job.

"I saw you yesterday," said Mr. Markham. (It had blown more than half a gale, and late in the afternoon three heavy seas had come aboard. The third officer at this moment was employed with half a dozen seamen in repairing damages). "I was watching. As I judged, it was the nicest miss you weren't overboard. Over and above employers' liability you should insure. The Hands Across Mutual Exchange—that's your office."

Mr. Markham leaned back and put a hand up to his inner breast-pocket—it is uncertain whether for his cigar-case, or for some leaflet relating to the Hands Across.

"Take care, sir!" said the third officer sharply. "That stanchion—"

He called too late. The hand, as it touched the breast-pocket, shot up and

clawed at the air. With a voice that was less a cry than a startled grunt, Mr. Markham pitched backwards off the fore-deck into the sea.

The third officer stared just for a fraction of a second, ran, seized a life-belt as the liner's length went shooting past, and hurled it—with pretty good aim, too—almost before a man of his working party had time to raise the cry of "Man overboard!" Before the alarm reached the bridge, he had kicked off his shoes; and the last sound in his ears as he dived was the *ping* of the bell ringing down to the engine-room—a thin note, infinitely distant, speaking out of an immense silence.

IT was a beautifully clean dive, but in the flurry of the plunge the third officer forgot for an instant the right upward slant of the palms, and went a great way deeper than he had intended. By the time he rose to the surface the liner had slid by, and for a moment or two he saw nothing; for instinctively he came up facing aft, towards the spot where Mr. Markham had fallen, and the long sea running after yesterday's gale threw up a ridge that seemed to take minutes—though in fact it took but a few seconds—to sink and heave up the trough beyond. By-and-by a life-belt swam up into sight, then another,—at least a dozen had been flung,—and beyond these at length, on the climbing crest of the swell two hundred yards away, the head and shoulders of Mr. Markham.

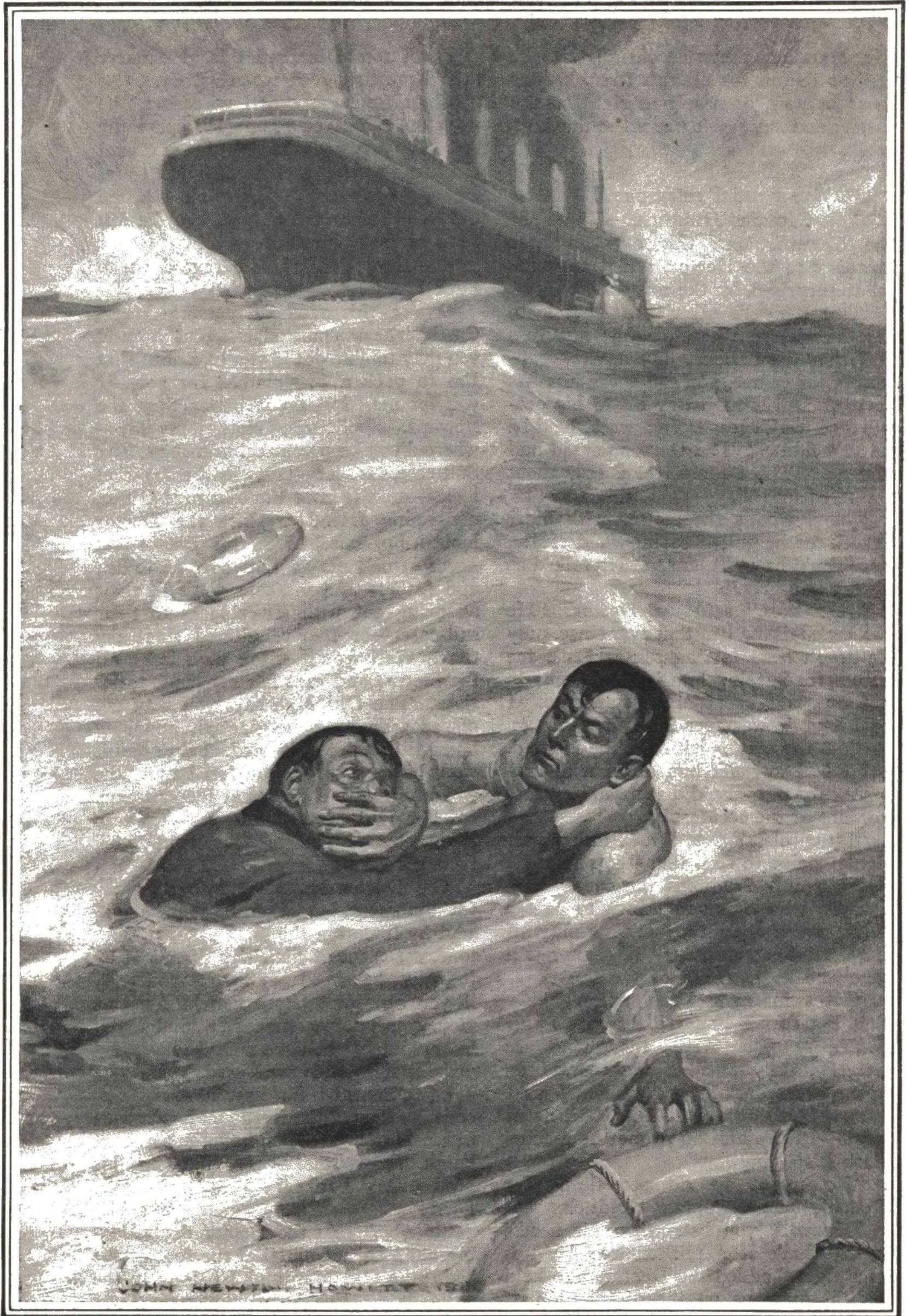
By great good luck, the first life-belt had fallen within a few feet of him, and Mr. Markham had somehow managed to get within reach and clutch it—a highly creditable feat when it is considered that he was at best a poor swimmer, that the fall had knocked more than half the breath out of his body, that he had swallowed close on a pint of salt water and that a heavy overcoat impeded his movements.

But after this fair first effort, Mr. Markham, as his clothes weighed him down, began—as the phrase is—to make very bad weather of it. He made worse and worse weather of it as Dick Rendal covered the distance between them with a superlatively fine side-stroke, once or twice singing out to him to hold on, and keep a good heart. Mr. Markham, whether he heard or no, held on with great courage, and even coolness—up to a point.

Then of a sudden his nerve deserted him. He loosed his hold of the life-belt, and struck out for his rescuer. Worse, as he sank in the effort, and Dick gripped him, he closed and struggled. For half a minute Dick, shaking free of the embrace—and this only by striking him on the jaw and half stunning him as they rose on the crest of a swell—was able to grip him by the collar and drag him within reach of the life-belt. But here the demented man managed to wreath his legs and arms in another and more terrible hold. The pair of them were now cursing horribly, cursing whenever a wave quit choking them and allowed them to cough and sputter for breath. They fought as two men whose lives had pent up an unsparing hate for this moment. They fought, neither losing his hold, as their strength ebbed, and the weight of their clothes dragged them lower. When the liner's boat at length reached the spot, Dick Rendal's hand still clutched the cord of the life-belt, but both bodies were under water, fast locked. They were hauled on board, as on a long-line you haul a fish with a crab fastened upon him, and laid in the stern-sheets, where their grip was with some difficulty loosened.

IT may have happened in the struggle. Or again, it may have happened when they were hoisted aboard and laid, for a minute or so, side by side on the deck. Both men were insensible, so far gone indeed that the Doctor looked serious as he began to induce artificial respiration.

The young third officer "came round" after five minutes of this; but strangely enough, in the end he was found to be suffering from a severer shock than Mr. Markham, on whom the Doctor operated for a full twenty minutes before a flutter of the eyelids rewarded him. They were carried away—the third officer, in a state of collapse, to his modest berth, Mr. Markham to his white-and-gold deck-cabin. On his way thither,



For half a minute Dick, shaking free of the embrace, was able to grip him by the collar and drag him within reach of the life-belt. But here the demented man managed to wreath his legs and arms in another and more terrible hold.

Mr. Markham protested cheerily that he saw no reason for all this fuss; he was as right now, or nearly as right, as the Bank; and anyway it was all in the day's work.

"HOW'S Rendal getting on?"

Captain Holditch, skipper of the *Carnatic,* put this question next morning to the Doctor, and was somewhat surprised by the answer.

"Oh, Rendal's all right. That is to say, he will be all right. Just now he's suffering from shock. My advice—supposing, of course, you can spare him—is to pack him straightway off to his people on a week's leave. In a week, he'll be fit as a fiddle." The Doctor paused and added: "Wish I could feel as easy about the millionaire."

"Why, what's the matter with him? Struck me he pulled round wonderfully, once you'd brought him to. He talked as cheery as a grig."

"H'm—yes," said the Doctor. "He has been talking like that ever since, only he hasn't been talking sense. Calls me names for keeping him in bed, wants to get out and repair that stanchion. I told him it was mended. 'Nothing on earth is the matter with me,' he insisted, till I had to quiet him down with bromide. By the way, did you send off any account of the accident?"

"By wireless? No, I took rather particular pains to stop that—gets into the papers; only frightens the family and friends, who conclude things to be ten times worse than they are. Plenty of time at Southampton. Boat-express'll take him home ahead of the scare."

"Lives in Park Lane, doesn't he—that big corner house like a game-pie? . . . Ye-es, you were thoughtful as usual. . . Only some one might have been down to the docks to meet him. Wish I knew his doctor's address. Well, never mind—I'll fix him up so that he reaches Park Lane, anyway."

"He ought to do something for Rendal," mused Captain Holditch.

"He will, you bet, when his head's right—that's if a millionaire's head is ever right," added the Doctor, who held radical opinions on the distribution of wealth.

The Captain ignored this. He never talked politics, even when ashore. "As plucky a rescue as ever I witnessed," he went on. "Yes, of course I'll spare the lad. Slip a few clothes into his bag, and tell him he can get off by the first train. Oh, and by the way—you might ask him if he's all right for money. Say he can draw on me if he wants any."

The Doctor took his message down to Dick Rendal.

"We're this moment passing Hurst Castle," he announced cheerfully, "and you may tumble out if you like. But first I'm to pack a few clothes for you—if you let me. I'll do it better than the steward. Shore-going clothes, my boy—where d'you keep your cabin trunk? Eh? Suit-case, is it?—best leather, nickel locks—no, silver, as I'm a sinner! Hullo, my young friend!" Here the Doctor looked up, mischief in his eye. "You never struck me as that sort of dude; and fathers and mothers don't fit their offspring out with silver locks to their suit-cases—or they've altered since my time. Well, you'll enjoy your leave all the better; and give her my congratulations. The Old Man says you may get off as soon as we're docked, and stay home till you've recovered. I dare-say it wont be long before you feel better," he wound up with a glance at the suit-case.

"The Old Man? Yes—yes—Captain Holditch, of course," muttered Dick from his berth.

The Doctor looked at him narrowly for a moment, but, when he spoke again, kept by intention the same easy, rattling tone. "Decent of him, eh? Yes, and by the way, he asked me to tell you that, if you shouldn't happen to be flush of money just now, it needn't hinder you five minutes. He'll be your banker, and make it right with the Board."

Dick lay still for half a dozen seconds, as though the words took that time in reaching him. Then he let out a short laugh from somewhere high in his nose. "My banker? Will he?—good Lord!"

"Maybe," said the Doctor dryly, laying out a suit of mufti at the foot of the bed, "the Old Man and I belong to the same date. I've heard that youngsters save money nowadays. But when I was

your age, that sort of offer would have hit the mark nine times out of ten."

He delivered this as a parting shot. Dick, lying on his back and staring up at a knot in the woodwork over his bunk, received it placidly. Probably he did not hear. His brow was corrugated in a frown, as though he were working out a sum or puzzling over some problem. The Doctor closed the door softly, and some minutes later paid a visit to Mr. Markham, whom he found stretched on the couch of the white-and-gold deck-cabin, attired in a gray flannel sleeping-suit, and wrapped around the legs with a traveling rug of dubious hue.

"That's a good deal better," the Doctor said after an examination in which, while seeming to be occupied with pulses and temperature, he paid particular attention to the pupils of Mr. Markham's eyes. "We are nosing up the Solent fast—did you know it? Ten minutes ought to see us in Southampton Water—and I suppose you will be wanting to catch the first train."

"I wonder," said Mr. Markham vaguely, "if the Old Man will mind."

The Doctor stared for a moment. "I think we may risk it," he said, after a pause, "though I confess that, last night, I was doubtful. Of course, if you're going to be met, it's right enough."

"Why should I be met?"

"Well, you see—I couldn't know, could I? Anyway, you ought to see your own doctor as soon as you get home. Perhaps, if you gave me his name, I might scribble a note to him, just to say what has happened. Even big-wigs, you know, don't resent being helped with a little information."

Mr. Markham stared. "Lord!" said he. "You're talking as if I kept a tame doctor! Why, man, I've never been sick nor sorry since I went to school!"

"That's not hard to believe. I've auscultated you—sound as a bell, you are; constitution strong as a horse's. Still, a shock is a shock. You've a family doctor, I expect—some one you ring up when your liver goes wrong, and you want to be advised to go to Marienbad or some such place—I'd feel easier if I could shift the responsibility on to him."

Still Mr. Markham stared. "I've heard about enough of this shock to my system," said he at length. "But have it your own way. If you want me to recommend a doctor, my mother swears by an old boy in Craven Street, Strand. I don't know the number, but his name's Leadbetter, and he's death on croup."

"Craven Street? That's a trifle off Park Lane, isn't it? Still, 'Leadbetter,' you say? I'll get hold of the directory, look up his address and drop him a note or two on the case by this evening's post."

A COUPLE of hours later Mr. Markham and Dick Rendal almost rubbed shoulders in the crowd of passengers shaking hands with the ever polite Captain Holditch, and bidding the *Carnatic* good-by with the usual parting compliments; but in the hurry and bustle no one noted that the pair exchanged neither word nor look of recognition. The Skipper gave Dick an honest clap on the shoulder. "Doctor's fixed you up, then? That's right. Make the best of your holiday, and I'll see that the Board does you justice." And with that, he turned away for more hand-shaking. One small thing he did remark. When it came to Mr. Markham's turn, that gentleman, before extending a hand, lifted it to his forehead and gravely saluted. But great men—as Captain Holditch knew—have their eccentric ways.

Nor was it remarked, when the luggage came to be sorted out and put on board the Boat Express, that Dick's porter, under his direction, collected and wheeled off Mr. Markham's; while Mr. Markham picked up Dick's suit-case, walked away with it unchallenged to a third-class smoking compartment and deposited it on the rack. There were three other passengers in the compartment. "Good Lord!" ejaculated one, as the millionaire stepped out to purchase an evening paper. "Isn't that Markham? Well!—and traveling third!" "Saving habit—second nature," said another. "That's the way to get rich, my boy."

Meanwhile Dick, having paid for four places, and thereby secured a first-class solitude, visited the telegraph office and

shrank the few pounds in his pocket by sending a number of cablegrams.

On the journey up, Mr. Markham took some annoyance from the glances of his fellow passengers. They were furtive, almost reverential, and this could only be set down to his exploit of yesterday. He thanked Heaven they forbore to talk of it.

IN the back-parlor of a bookseller's shop, between the Strand and the Embankment, three persons sat at tea: the proprietor of the shop,—a gray little man with round spectacles and bushy eyebrows,—his wife and a pretty girl of twenty or twenty-one. The girl apparently was a visitor, for she wore her hat, and her jacket lay across the arm of an old horsehair sofa that stood against the wall in the lamp's half-shadow: and yet the gray little bookseller and his little Dresden-china wife very evidently made no stranger of her. They talked, all three, as members of a family talk, when contented and affectionate — at haphazard, taking one another for granted, not raising their voices.

The table was laid for a fourth; and by and by they heard him coming through the shop—in a hurry, too. The old lady, always sensitive to the sound of her boy's footsteps, looked up almost in alarm; but the girl half-rose from her chair, her eyes eager.

"I know," she said breathlessly. "Jim has heard—"

"Chrissy here? That's right!" A young man broke into the room, and stood waving a newspaper. "The *Carnatic's* arrived! Here it is under 'Late News,'—I bought the paper as I came by Somerset House, — '*Carnatic* arrived Southampton three-forty-five this afternoon. Her time from Sandy hook, five days, six hours, forty-five minutes.' "

"Then she hasn't broken the record this time, though Dick was positive she would," put in the old lady.

"You bad little mother!" — Jim wagged a forefinger at her. "You don't deserve to hear another word."

"Is there any more?"

"More? Just you listen to this: 'Reports heroic rescue. Yesterday afternoon Mr. Markham, the Insurance King, accidentally fell overboard from the fore-deck, and was gallantly rescued by a young officer named Kendal'—you bet that's a misprint for Rendal—error in the wire, perhaps. We'll get a later edition after tea—'who leaped into the sea and swam to the sinking millionaire, supporting him until assistance arrived. Mr. Markham had by this afternoon recovered sufficiently to travel home by the Boat Express.' "

"But don't they say anything about Dick?" quavered the mother, fumbling with her glasses, while Miss Chrissy stared at the print with shining eyes.

"Dick's not a millionaire, Mother—thought it seems he has been supporting one—for a few minutes, anyway. Well, Chrissy, how does that make you feel?"

"You see, my dear," said the little bookseller softly, addressing his wife, "if any harm had come to the boy, they would have reported it for certain."

They talked over the news while Jim drank his tea. A warm flush showed on the cheeks of both the women, and the little bookseller found it necessary to take out his handkerchief at intervals and wipe his round spectacles.

He was wiping them perhaps for the twentieth time, and announcing that he must go and relieve his assistant in the shop, when the assistant's voice was heard uplifted close outside—as it seemed, in remonstrance with a customer.

"Hullo!" said the little bookseller, and was rising from his chair, when the door opened. A middle-aged man, carrying a suit-case, stood on the threshold and regarded the little party.

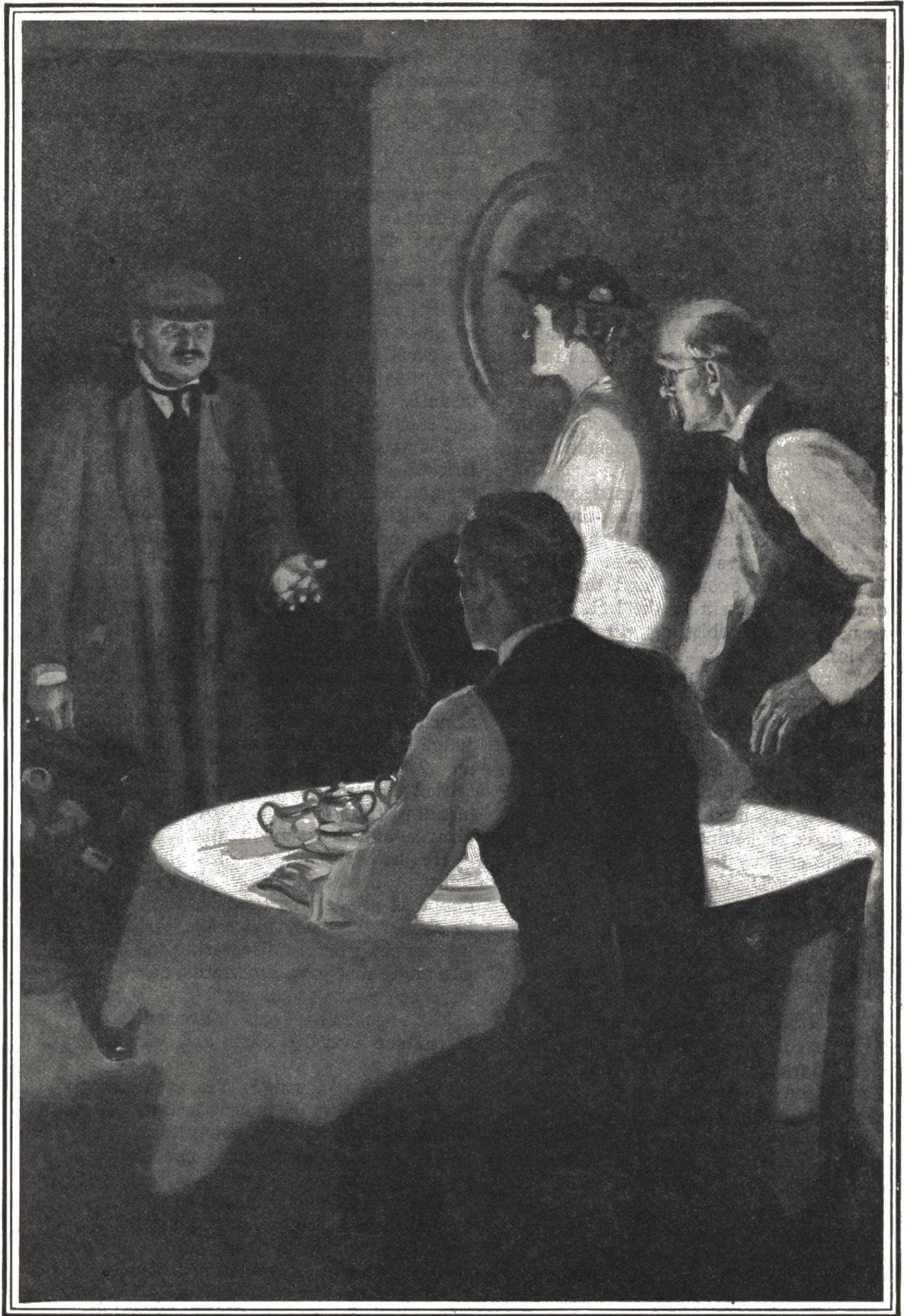
"Mother!" cried Mr. Markham. "Chrissy!"

He set down the suit-case and took two eager strides. Old Mrs. Rendal, the one immediately menaced, shrank back into Jim's arms as he started up with his throat working to bolt a mouthful of cake. Chrissy caught her breath.

"Who in thunder are you, sir?" demanded Jim. "Get out of this, unless you want to be thrown out!"

"Chrissy!" again appealed Mr. Markham, but in a fainter voice. He had come to a standstill, and his hand went slowly up to his forehead.

Chrissy pointed to the suit-case. "It's



"Hullo!" said the little bookseller, and was rising from his chair, when the door opened. A middle-aged man stood on the threshold, and regarded the little party.

—it's Dick's!" she gasped. Jim did not hear. "Mr. Wenham," he said to the white-faced assistant in the doorway, "will you step out, please, and fetch a policeman?"

"Excuse me." Mr. Markham took his hand slowly from his face, and spread it behind him, groping as he stepped backwards to the door. "I—I am not well, I think." He spoke precisely, as though each word as it came had to be held and gripped. "The address," (here he turned on Chrissy with a vague, apologetic smile) "—faces—clear in my head. Mistake — I really beg your pardon."

"Get him some brandy, Jim," said the little bookseller. "The gentleman is ill, whoever he is."

But Mr. Markham turned without another word and lurched past the assistant, who flattened himself against a bookshelf to give him room. Jim saw him cross the doorstep and turn away down the pavement to the left, and returned, softly whistling, to the little parlor.

"Drunk's the simplest explanation," he announced.

"But how did he know my name?" demanded Chrissy. "And the suit-case!"

"Eh? He's left it—well, if this doesn't beat the band! Here, Wenham—nip after the man and tell him he left his luggage behind!" Jim stooped to lift the case by the handle.

"But it's Dick's!"

"Dick's?"

"It's the suit-case I gave him—my birthday present last April. See, there are his initials!"

DICK RENDAL, alighting at Waterloo, collected his luggage—or rather, Mr. Markham's—methodically, saw it hoisted on a four-wheeler and handing the cabby two shillings, told him to deliver it at an address in Park Lane, where the butler would pay him his exact fare. This done, he sought the telegraph office and sent three more cablegrams, the concise wording of which he had carefully evolved on the way up from Southamption. These do not come into. the story, which may digress, however, so far as to tell that on receipt of one of them the vice-president of the Hands Across New York office remarked to his secretary that "the old warrior was losing no time. Leisure and ozone would appear to have bucked him up." To which the secretary answered that it was lucky for civilization if Mr. Markham missed suspecting their effect, or he'd infallibly make a 'corner' in both.

Having despatched his orders, Dick Rendal felt in his pockets for a cigar-case, was annoyed and amused (in a subconscious sort of way) to find only a briar pipe and a pocketful of coarse-cut tobacco. He filled and lighted his pipe, and started to walk.

His way led him across Westminster Bridge, up through Whitehall, and brought him to the steps of that building which, among all the great London clubs, most exorbitantly resembles a palace. He mounted its perron with the springy, confident step of youth; and that same spring and confidence of gait carried him past the usually vigilant porter. A marble staircase led him to the lordliest smoking-room in London. He frowned, perceiving that his favorite armchair was occupied by a somnolent judge of the High Court, and catching up *The Révue des Deux Mondes,* settled himself in a window-bay commanding the great square of the Horse Guards, and the lamp-lit Mall.

He had entered the smoking-room lightly, almost jauntily, but—not a doubt of it—he was tired, so tired that he shuffled his body twice and thrice in the armchair before discovering the precise angle that gave superlative comfort.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

Dick opened his eyes. A liveried footman stood over his chair and was addressing him.

"Eh? Did I ring? Yes, you may bring me a glass of liqueur brandy. As quickly as possible, if you please. To tell the truth, George, I'm not feeling very well."

The man started at hearing his name, but made no motion to obey the order.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but the Secretary wishes to see you in his room."

"The Secretary? Mr. Hood? Yes, certainly." Dick rose. "I—I am afraid

you must give me your arm, please. A giddiness—the ship's motion, I suppose."

The Secretary was standing at his door in the great vestibule as Dick came down the staircase on the man's arm. "I beg your pardon," he said, "but may I have your name? The porter does not recognize you, and I fear that I am equally at fault.

"My name?" With the same gesture that Mr. Markham had used in the little back parlor, Dick passed a hand over his eyes. He laughed, and even to his own ears the laugh sounded vacant, foolish.

"Are you a member of the club, sir?"

"I—I thought I was." The marble pillars of the atrium were swaying about him like painted cloths, the tesselated pavement heaving and rocking at his feet. "Abominably stupid of me," he muttered, "unpardonable, you must think."

The Secretary looked at him narrowly, and decided that he was really ill; that there was nothing in his face to suggest the impostor. "Come into my room for a moment," he said, and sent the footman upstairs to make sure that no small property of the club was missing. "Here, drink down the brandy——feeling better? You are aware, no doubt, that I might call in the police and have you searched?"

For a moment Dick did not answer, but stood staring. At length—

"They — wont — find — what — I —want," he said slowly, dropping out the words one by one. The Secretary now felt certain that here was a genuine case of mental derangement. With such he had no desire to be troubled; and so, the footman bringing word that nothing had been stolen, he dismissed Dick to the street.

THE brandy steadying him, Dick went down the steps with a fairly firm tread.

The streets, the traffic, meant nothing to him. Their roar was within his head, and on his ears, nostrils, chest, lay a pressure as of mighty waters. Rapidly as he walked, he felt himself all the while to be lying fathoms deep in those waters, face downwards, with drooped head, held motionless there while something within him struggled impotently to rise to the surface.

The houses, the shop-fronts, the street-lamps, the throng of dark figures, passed him in unmeaning procession. Yet all the time, his feet, by some instinct, were leading him towards the water: and by and by he found himself staring —still face downwards—into a black, inverted heaven wherein the lights had become stars and swayed only a little.

He had, in fact, halted, and was leaning over the parapet of the Embankment, a few yards from Cleopatra's Needle. And as he passed the plinth, some impression of it must have bitten itself on the retina, for coiled among the stars lay two motionless sphinxes, green-eyed, with sheathed claws, watching lazily while the pressure bore him down to them, and still down.

Suddenly on this dome of night, there broke the echo of a footfall. A thousand footsteps had passed him, and he had heard none of them. But this one, springing out of nowhere, sang and repeated itself and re-echoed across the dome, and from edge to edge. Dick's fingers drew themselves up like the claws of the sphinx. The footsteps drew nearer while he crouched—they were close to him. Dick leaped at them, with murder in his spring.

Where the two men grappled, the parapet of the Embankment opens on a flight of river-stairs. Mr. Markham had uttered no cry; nor did a sound escape either man as, locked in that wrestle, they swayed over the brink.

They were hauled up, unconscious, still locked in each other's arms.

"Queer business," said one of the rescuers as he helped to loosen their clasp, and lift the bodies on board the Royal Humane Society's barge. "Looks like murderous assault. But w'ich of 'em done it, by the looks, now?"

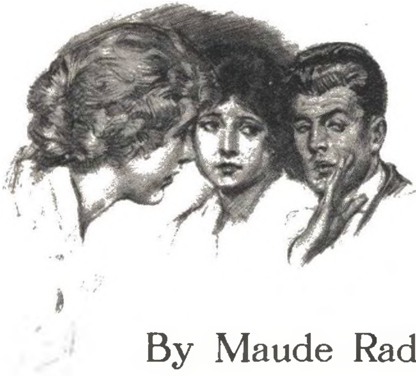
Five minutes later Dick's eyelids fluttered. For a moment he stared up at the dingy lamp swinging overhead; then his lips parted in a cry, faint yet sharp:

"Take care, sir! That stanchion—"

But Mr. Markham's first words were:

"Plucky! devilish plucky!—owe you my life, my lad."

THE second of Mrs. Warren's delightful stories of Harold Lambert, the wallflower who became a social czar.



# My Friend Douglas

## By Maude Radford Warren

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A GRAEF

HAROLD LAMBERT stood beside his sister Elsie, receiving their guests, the élite of the little city of Royal, who had all responded to Elsie's invitation to a Sunday night buffet supper. Harold, in his glasses with the black horn rims, looked very distinguished. He had assumed the mildly superior air and the cultivated accent which so impressed his friends. The girls lingered before him as they greeted him; he was not only their host, but he was the social leader of their set.

A blue-eyed girl entered, paused in the doorway in the charmingly unconscious manner taught in the best New York finishing school, came forward like a gentle wave of the sea, flowed over Elsie, and halted at Harold's feet. She was Caroline Walton, daughter of the banker who, she thought, was honored by having Harold work for him in his bank. As he looked at her, Harold's heart beat more quickly.

"Why didn't you come to see me this afternoon, Harold?" she whispered, with tender reproach.

"I had a fierce headache, Caroline," he murmured; "you've no idea how I *wanted* to be with you."

The tide of girls swept her on—to Harold's relief, for in the doorway was another girl whose presence made his heart beat quickly: Flossie Harlowe. She came forward swiftly, her pansy-colored eyes fixed on his, her piquant little face a trifle determined. Big dark Bud Henderson followed heavily in her wake, trying to disguise a look of truculence. Flossie got quickly over her greetings to Elsie.

"Harold," she asked, rather sharply, "where were you this afternoon?"

"You've no idea how I wanted to be with you, Flossie," he explained; "but I had a fierce headache."

He shook hands heartily with Bud Henderson, and passed him on with Flossie. There! that was over!

His guests, regarding his calm countenance, would never have guessed the perturbation it concealed. Harold, making a subtle but strenuous struggle, had taken away the social leadership of the younger set from Bud Henderson, using as a lever his trip to New York, his horn-rimmed glasses and a sophisticated accent. He had won completely the admiration that went with his position. A month before, he would have been in the ultimate heaven of delight if Flossie Harlowe or Caroline Walton had thrown him a smile. Now, while he still adored them, he wished that one or both of them would go out of town on a visit, and thus render his course clear.

"What I need," mused Harold, as, bowing and smiling among his guests, he felt the occasional glances of blue eyes and pansy eyes, "is quiet."

Quiet! There had been a time when.

nobody wanting him, he had sat in his bedroom dreaming of adventures in which he was the central figure, or else modestly penning detective stories. Now everyone wanted him: President Walton had ordered him to request his admirers to respect bank hours, and call him up between five P. M., and nine A. M.; his sister Elsie had refused to answer the family telephone after five o'clock on the score that it was always some silly person wanting Harold. He was expected to know and to speak with authority on the latest niceties of New York fashions; he was supposed to have intimate acquaintance with the great of the metropolis. It was demanded of him, in short, that he make good every moment of the time. This was where the shoe pinched. Achieving social leadership was not like getting a position in a bank or getting married. You got your job or your wife and you had them; no one tried to take them away from you. But you got to be cock of the walk, and it became the instant aim of all the other youths to crowd you off the walk, while all the girls expected you to be doing something delicately conspicuous all the time. Every evening was getting to be considerable of a chore.

"Life," thought Harold, "is a constant fight. I used to admire Alexander the Great, but I can't see now why the fool cried for more worlds to conquer, or why, in those days, they ever let him hang on to the first one he conquered."

WHEN supper was served, Harold sat with Caroline and Flossie, and Bud. It was the one spot he would have preferred to avoid, but that was his natural place. Besides, he was like the small boy who wants to feel his bruise to be sure it still hurts.

"Say, Harrie," Bud remarked, "what makes you so sure the tucks on that shirt of yours are right? You can hardly see them, but all the shirts in the stores—the shirts that just came in yesterday from New York—have tucks ever so much wider."

Harold had got his shirt from a smart New York maker, having written for the very latest advance style. He felt sure, and yet Bud's menacing eye demanded real authority, and signified that Harold himself was not enough.

"My friend Douglas is wearing them, and of course he knows," said Harold, with an air of simple finality.

There was no such person as Douglas. Harold had made him up as his social backer in New York. He quoted him as a concrete symbol of all that was correct, especially when he felt his own spirit weakening. Douglas had been very useful to him.

"Well, your friend Harris isn't the only man in New York," remarked Bud, his eyes on the ceiling.

A cold chill teetered along Harold's spine. He knew his Dickens; he had thought to find eternally amusing *Sairy Gamp's* mythical friend *Mrs. Harris*. Now he wished that Dickens had never written "Martin Chuzzelwit."

"Not Harrison—Douglas," he said. "I may have mentioned Harrison, but I only know him slightly, and don't consider him anything like as good an authority on style as Douglas."

Flossie and Caroline looked at Harold admiringly, and indignantly at Bud.

"I didn't say Harrison," began Bud, unabashed; "I said—"

"Perhaps," interrupted Caroline, her bright blue eyes snapping fire, "perhaps Bud would have more respect for Mr. Douglas if you invited him to come and see you."

"Confound Caroline!" thought Harold; "she's just making it worse for me."

"He was coming this month," he said aloud, "but he's got to go abroad."

*"Got* to go abroad," murmured Flossie, enviously.

"Oh, if he thinks so much of you as he seems to," said Bud, maliciously, "he could get a week in here before he started. Maybe he'd take us all on a trip with him. I bet that fellow could do anything he wanted to. Anyhow, he could do one thing as easily as he could another."

"You seem to have a prejudice against Douglas, Rosebud," laughed Harold, pleasantly.

"I guess you'd better invite Mr. Douglas here," said Flossie unexpectedly, and very firmly; "I think you owe us that, Harold."

Harold always knew just where to find Caroline, who did not care much for Bud, but he was never quite sure of Flossie, who veered sometimes to him, and sometimes to Bud, being one who liked to be on the side that was for the moment safer.

"Oh, invite him!" exclaimed Harold; "you don't realize that man's family ties and engagements. He thinks I should be the one to visit him."

"Well, names don't cut any ice with me," mumbled Bud, finishing a chicken paté.

"Let me get you more," Harold said, seizing his guest's plate. He went into the kitchen with glazed eyes and clammy brow. A glance into the mirror over the sink reassured him; his glasses were there, and he looked serene—but he felt beaten. Then he threw back his head, defiantly.

"Shall I let that big boob discountenance me?" he asked in his best and most languid accent. "Ah, no; I don't think so—quite."

DURING the next few days, Harold was preoccupied. If it had been bitterness to keep his leadership, it would be still greater bitterness to lose it. Fashion in shirts and ties would not save him; the admiration of Caroline and Flossie would not save him. Bud Henderson, his opponent, was the one who had delegated to himself the right of naming the obstacles over which Harold must hurdle upon his difficult course, and they must be hurdled.

Something had to be done. Harold came to that conclusion the morning President Walton sent him over to Batavia on an errand. Harold was going down the street at a pace which tried to reconcile an air of serene leisure with the necessity of catching the ten-ten train. Bud leaned out of the window of the Electric Light Building, where he was employed, and shouted.

"Harold Lambert! Say, Leg o' Lamb! When is Harris coming?"

Harold walked on, pretending not to have heard, but his ears were crimson, and his breath came hard. "Leg o' Lamb!" No one had dared to call him that for weeks. He had to do something and do it soon. He occupied himself with pondering all the way to Batavia. He could manage to get a steamer letter sent him, on the stationery of some palace ship, and show it to his friends as the parting letter of Douglas. Or, just possibly, he might meet a train at some point before it reached Royal, and picking out some likely passenger, engage him in conversation, take him out on the platform at Royal for a breath of air, and then tell everybody that the man was Douglas, flying through on his way to Honolulu.

As he left his train at Batavia, Harold figured that he told as many lies nowadays as a statesman. President Walton had sent him to carry some important securities to a brother banker who was convalescing in a sanitarium in Batavia. As Harold walked up the hill to the aggressively cheerful building, he was still figuring in vain, ways and means of creating a convincing image of Douglas in the mind of Bud Henderson. He was set to wait on a long, wide porch where a number of rug-covered patients sat watching the glories of the young summer, while others walked to and fro with languid steps, measuring the return of health. Harold stared at them with the non-comprehension of those to whom rude health is a matter of course.

The invalid banker came out in a wheeled chair, took his papers, sent a few croaking messages to Walton, warned Harold that he ought not to presume on youth and vitality, and then dismissed him. Harold walked down the wide porch with a sense of relief. As he reached the steps, a voice hailed him.

"I say, you know, may I ask you a question?"

Harold turned. A gaunt, good-looking young man, a few years older than himself, was struggling out of a steamer chair. He had fine, inscrutable eyes, over which any girl would have raved, but it was his voice which lured Harold—a cool, superior voice, of the sort which he had himself imitated since his memorable visit to New York.

"I say," the stranger continued, having got himself to a standing posture, "you're not a stranger to these parts?"

"No; it's my native shores," Harold replied.

"Then," said the other, hopefully, "perhaps you can aid me. They chucked me over here from the hospital three days ago to convalesce. I cannot convalesce in this valetudinarian place. No one smiles, except when some one sicker than himself is carried in. The conversation deals too exclusively with internals to suit my taste. No one will ever see fifty again, except the nurses, who are machines. What I want is some little hotel or boarding-house in a town where people are young, gay, not unsociable to strangers, and not too curious."

Harold's eyeglasses quivered. He never failed to see an opportunity, and for the past few weeks, he had never failed to grasp one. He scanned the stranger's face — and then he made a clean breast of all his difficulties, and proffered his request.

"My word!" cried the other. "You're what in this country they call 'some little inventor,' aren't you? Still, if some people make up ancestors, I don't see why you shouldn't make up a bosom friend."

"But will you do it?" begged Harold. "I like you a lot. I bet we could be friends in half an hour. My mother would like to coddle you; she's the sort of woman that knows when you need a pillow at your back, and puts it there without asking you if you'll have it. You never have to tell her to give you a second cup of coffee or a second anything; it's there for you before you know you want it. Elsie, my sister, isn't so thoughtful, but she's easy to look at."

"My word! what an extraordinary go!"

"And all you have to do is to pretend to be my friend Douglas for two weeks."

"My name is Thomas Deane Marston," said the other firmly, "and I wont call myself anything else."

Harold's face fell. Then he said: "Well, your middle initial's 'D.' Can't you go so far as to sign yourself 'T. D.'? I can say I've always called you 'Douglas.' "

"Your mother calls me 'Tom,' or I sha'n't go," said Marston.

"But you don't care if I call you 'Douglas'?"

"My dear fellow, if you'll rescue me from this slough of the shuddering sick, you may call me anything you like. It's a very rum proposal, altogether."

"I'm going on your face," said Harold recklessly; "I'll trust you."

"That's about all you'll have to go on, my lad," said Marston, his eyes deeply inscrutable. "I have told you my name. I'm an Englishman of a decent family. My people got me something in the West — I've reasons for not saying what, just now. I left the West for a reason, got a gunshot wound, for another reason; was taken to the Batavia hospital, then here, and as soon as I'm fit to travel, I'm going to New York."

"I'm not curious about your affairs," said Harold, "but I expect my mother would like to know how many sisters you have, and their names, and how your mother keeps house."

"Quite all right. I'd like to talk about home."

"To pull off my little stunt," said Harold anxiously, "you'd have to know quite a bit about New York restaurants and theaters. They all think Douglas lives in New York. You don't have to say you don't, do you?"

"I'm not besottedly truthful, d'ye see?" said Marston, with a slow smile; "I wont give you away, and I do know quite a bit about New York life. But I will not talk about clothes. I'll wear what you tell me."

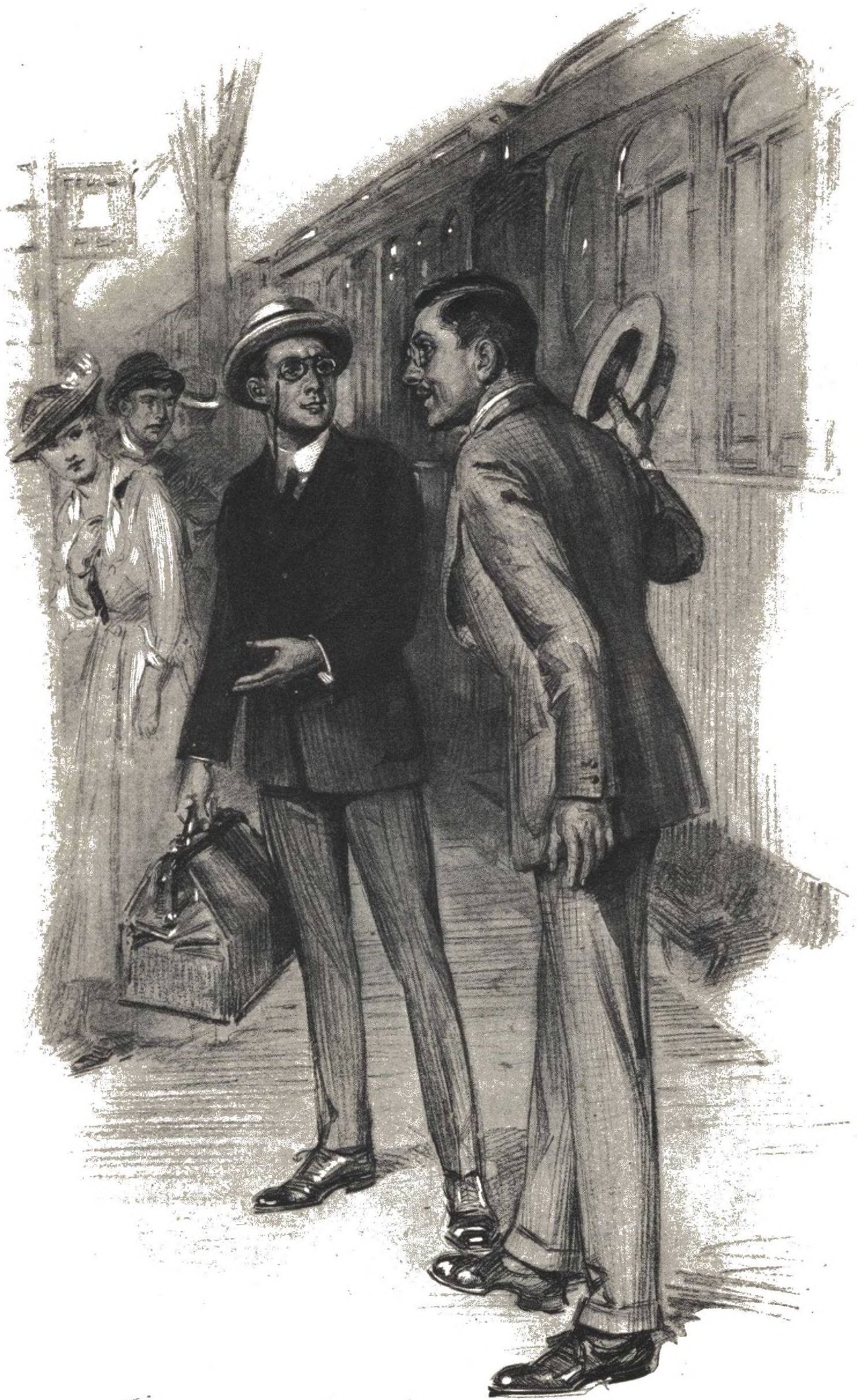
"If you just talk about anything," cried Harold, with boyish admiration, "you'll convince them."

"It's a nice treat for me," said Marston.

THEY arranged that Harold was to come on Saturday afternoon and convoy his guest home. With singing heart Harold took his way down the hill, stopped at the telegraph office, where he was not known, and sent himself a telegram signed "Douglas"—then boarded the train for Royal. Arrived, he stole a few minutes of the bank's time to acquaint his hospitable mother with the pleasure which awaited her. Then he went to work with peaceful heart.

He was sure that his plan would work. "Douglas," with his superior age, his

The train stopped, and when all the other passengers had dismounted, Harold appeared, glancing behind him and presented to Elsie. A dozen feminine hearts fluttered and



solicitously at Marston, who got off the train, bore inspection with inimitable unconsciousness, and was led up envied Elsie. "He's the real thing," said Caroline to Flossie.

unquestionable sophistication, and his accent, would indubitably cow Bud Henderson. Needless to say, he would impress the girls. Best of all, thought the Macchiavellian Harold, Douglas would relieve his harassed host of the embarrassment engendered by the devoted friendship of Flossie and Caroline.

For what girl could resist a stranger come to town? No girl, in Harold's experience, ever had. Caroline and Flossie, being Elsie's dearest friends, would come often to the house; they would fall under the spell of Douglas. One of them would get the inside track, and then he himself would take the other. After Douglas had gone, the one who had played him false needn't think she could have him back. In plain justice he must stand by the other who had been loyal (or in other words had not been able to get the inside track with Douglas). Harold told himself he was nothing if not honorable. Things would fall out just that way. It did not occur to his innocent mind that if neither girl had got the inside track with him, perhaps Douglas would be just as skilful in maintaining a balance.

Harold saw Bud Henderson that afternoon, at the post office, but he said nothing of the telegram reposing in his waistcoat pocket. He walked home with Flossie Harlowe, however, and showed it to her.

"I don't tell all my affairs in this town, Flossie," he began; "nor all of Douglas Marston's, either—"

*"Whose?"* demanded Flossie.

"My friend Douglas. When you told me you thought I owed it to all of you to ask him, I'd have said then, if Bud hadn't been so unbecomingly facetious, that Douglas was sick, and I wanted him to come when he'd be well enough to have a good time."

"Yes, but did you say his name is Marston?"

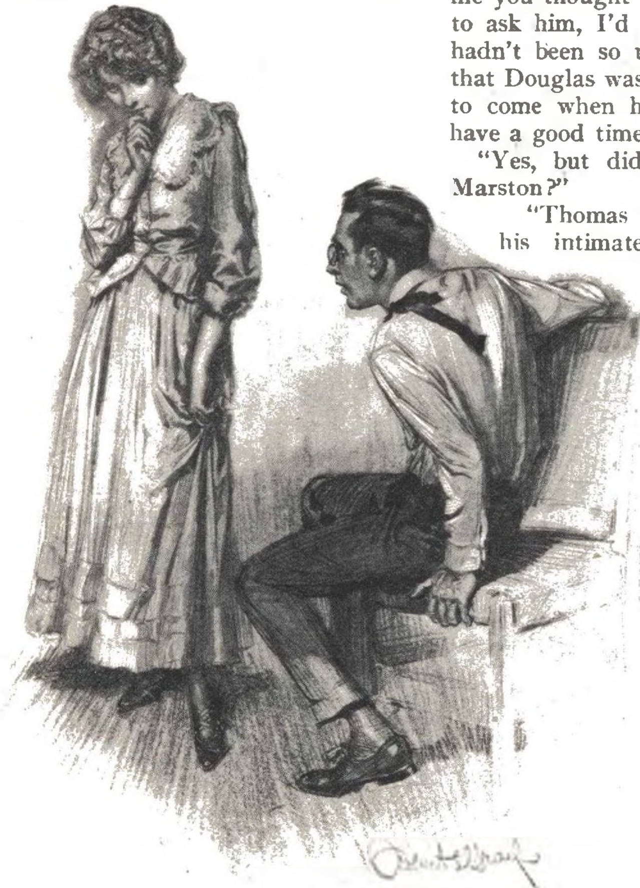
"Thomas D. Marston. A few of his intimates call him Douglas. Surely I've told you all about him, Flossie?"

"Nothing except that he's a kind of tailor's guide and society steerer."

"Wait till you see him," said Harold, in a tone of quiet superiority. "It is because of *your* wanting him, Flossie, that I've invited him to come and convalesce here. You'll like him, sick or well. He'll arrive Saturday."

"Not *really?"* cried Flossie, all the Bud-inspired doubts fleeing her mind.

"I like to do what you want as soon as I can, Flossie," said Harold simply.



"Why—yes, I do," said Elsie, slowly. "I do, Harold. I want Tom to have a chance to—er—I want Tom to have a chance." Harold sat down helplessly, his tie leaning rakishly over his shoulder.

"Harold, you're a dear," cried Flossie. "Who else have you told?"

"Why, nobody, yet," he said, not thinking it necessary to mention that he had written a note to Caroline which he had dispatched by Elsie.

Harold departed, knowing that it was Bud's night for calling on Flossie, knowing also that in just an hour everyone in town would hear of the expected visitor. It was meat and drink to him next day to receive Bud's surly nod, as they passed each other on their way to work. Harold exultingly thought that he had put one over on Bud. If no accident happened, Bud would have to sing small for a good many weeks, and Harold's ascendency would be correspondingly safe.

CAME Saturday, and Harold went to Batavia. Quite by chance, when the train pulled into Royal, a good many of his friends happened to be on the platform. Bud had chosen that time to inspect the electric lights of the station. Caroline had come down in her car, thinking that perhaps her father would be returning from New York on that train, though her mother was expecting him next day. Flossie had come down to see how her protégée, the girl who presided over the lunch counter, was getting on. Elsie, in her little electric, had the best right to be there, since she was to drive the guest home.

The train stopped, and when all the other passengers had dismounted, Harold appeared, glancing behind him solicitously at Marston, who got off the train, bore inspection with inimitable unconsciousness, and was led up and presented to Elsie.

A dozen feminine hearts fluttered and envied Elsie.

"He's the real thing," said Caroline to Flossie.

Flossie resented Caroline's air of being the one person in town whose verdict was needed to set the seal of approval on Douglas.

"He's only what Harold said he was," she remarked. "Harold describes very well."

Sunday afternoon a score of young people informally dropped in at the Lambert house for a cup of tea. "Douglas" met them all; Harold, bursting with pride, admired his friend's deftness as he passed sandwiches and cake, saying nothings in his charming voice, while Mrs. Lambert beamed at him with an air of motherly proprietorship, and Elsie somehow managed to convey the implication that the Lamberts were quite accustomed to entertaining distinguished visitors.

Bud Henderson was there, grudging, hostile and, as Harold decided, completely floored. Flossie had no time for Bud; she was too much occupied sitting at the feet of the stranger, listening to casual allusions to the glory of New York. Caroline sat there, too, but in the shifting course of things she found herself near Bud.

"Isn't he wonderful!" she cried.

"Huh! good enough, I guess," Bud replied; "but he's not the first traveled foreigner who has come to Royal."

"I know that," Caroline said, "but no other person has ever been so romantic."

"Huh!" snorted Bud, "what's romantic? You mean sick? I could point you out a whole raft of sick persons in this town right now, more romantic than Douglas Marston, because they got their germs right here."

"Oh, my, aren't you funny?" Caroline said scornfully, but feebly, for when she came to think of it, Marston's illness was the only romantic trait she could muster. Not liking Bud's look of triumph, she flew to her own rescue.

"I'll tell you something, if you wont tell, Bud," she whispered. "Promise?"

"Oh, all right."

"Well, the illness he is recovering from is a gunshot wound. I had it from Elsie, who had it from her mother, who put on a bandage for him last night, when he had a little fever."

"Gee! who was he scrapping with?" asked Bud, anxiously.

"Scrapping!" cried Caroline, daintily revolted and falling back on invention, "—with the whole German army, if you like. He was fighting for his country in the trenches."

"Gee," murmured Bud, impressed. "Say, I'd like to ask him—"

"You're not to ask him one thing!"

Caroline said. "Remember, you promised."

"But I should think—"

"He doesn't like to talk of it; Englishmen are terribly reserved."

"Oh; all right," growled Bud. "But it wouldn't hurt him to tell us a few things about the trenches. I wasn't going to ask him to praise himself."

Harold observed that Bud's hostility had died, and he attributed it solely to the charm of his friend Douglas. His spirits rose to an inordinate height, and he had never thought quite so well of Harold Lambert.

THE next week proved how popular the visitor was. Elsie, naturally, took him all about town in her little electric. Caroline took him over the adjacent country in her larger machine. Flossie took him for walks in the woods. Save for the mornings, when Mrs. Lambert insisted on keeping him in bed, there was scarcely an hour of the day and evening when "my friend Douglas" was not with some member or group of the social élite of Royal. If Harold had any objection at all, it was that Marston was not yet giving the inside track to either Flossie or Caroline. He saw one girl as often as he did the other, and Harold's only consolation was that they were so much interested in the newcomer that they did not make any special demands upon him. Nevertheless, he wanted Marston to get matters settled for him before the visit should be over.

Towards the end of the second week, Elsie came into his room while he was struggling with a new tie.

"Harrie," she said, in a tone equally compact of sweetness and firmness, "I want you to do something for me."

"Whaddyahwant?" he muttered, absently. Elsie took his two hands in hers and forced him to look close into her distinctly attractive hazel eyes.

"I want you to take Caroline Walton and Flossie Harlowe off of Tom Marston," she whispered.

Harold's hands fell lax in hers, and his jaw dropped.

"Eh?" he said, stupidly.

"Tom doesn't want to go walking with Flossie; Tom doesn't want to go swallowing dust in Caroline's bumpy car. Tom wants to go driving with me in the electric—and he doesn't want me to have to stop the car every time they hail us. Tom wants—"

"Oh, yes, Tom wants a lot," Harold said, with brotherly candor. "I suppose you don't want anything at all, do you?"

"Why—yes, I do," said Elsie slowly. "I do, Harold. I want Tom to have a chance to—er—I want Tom to have a chance."

Harold sat down helplessly, his tie leaning rakishly over his shoulder. He could, if he had to, readjust himself to the fact that friend Douglas was not going to give the inside track to Caroline or Flossie, but to Elsie! There was no accounting for tastes, of course, and besides, Elsie was a taking girl. Yes, by Jove, she was. Just what did she mean by this talk of letting Tom have a chance?

"Say, Elsie," he muttered; "say, you don't mean—say, you're just having a little fun with him—and with me—aren't you?"

Elsie hid her face against her shoulder—and nothing could have so thoroughly disconcerted him, for ordinarily his sister looked one straight in the face.

"You see, Harrie," she murmured, "you're only twenty-two, but I'm twenty, and, for a girl, that's at least five years older than twenty-two. I've seen lots of men."

"But Elsie, you're crazy," he admonished her; "you've only this fancy because he's close to thirty, and an older man fascinates a girl, they say—"

"The closer to thirty he is," Elsie said, "the more ready he'd be to settle—ready financially, as well as other ways. Kids like you and Bud Henderson would have to wait years—"

Harold groaned.

"But you don't know a thing about him, Elsie—"

"I've known him in the same house for two weeks; that is equal to ten months if we were in two different houses. Besides, what do I need more than your knowledge of him? Isn't he your dear friend Douglas?"

"Gwout o' here and let me think," he said, dismally.

HIS sister having departed, Harold spent a half hour of misery. Who was this man with whom his sister was falling in love? The man who wished people not to be curious about him and who would tell nothing about his affairs except that he had some vague business in the West. Well, he'd just have to speak to Marston; he had his sister to protect.

Just as he reached the decision, a knock came at his door and Marston entered.

"I say, Lambert," he said, in a hard, cool tone, "what's all this story that's going round about my having fought the Germans, and got shot in the trenches?"

"Wh— what?" gasped Harold.

"I particularly asked you to make no statements about me beyond this Douglas business, and New York rot."

"I didn't," declared Harold.

Marston was a judge of character.

"Right; I absolve you," he said, "but it's deuced awkward. Both reporters have come to interview me. Your mother handled that for me; she said I was too exhausted at this time to give an interview. She also said," added Marston, making a wry face, "that perhaps I might give a public talk later for the benefit of the Dorcas Guild."

"Holy smoke!" murmured Harold.

"And the one thing I demanded is privacy. I'd like to know how that story got about."

"I can find that out," Harold said. "It was Elsie, or Caroline or Flossie, that started it, you bet."

"Not Elsie," Marston denied; "there is a girl who respects a man's privacy."

Here was Harold's opportunity to protect his sister, and ask his friend who he was, anyhow—and when and where and why! But Harold did not take it. For one thing, he had not on his courage-inspiring eyeglasses. For another, Marston had put him in the wrong, and he did not yet feel morally able to scramble out.

After Marston had left him, he went into Elsie's room. She had to be protected somehow, and so he would tell her the whole truth. He did so, and was rewarded with a look of something as akin to admiration as her natural sisterly contempt would permit.

"Well, if you aren't the everlasting limit," she said. "You ought to be a novelist."

"I'm a brother before I'm anything else, I hope," Harold said, with dignity. "Now that you know the truth, be careful. Don't lead him on; don't let yourself fall in love with him."

"What in the world are you talking of!" cried Elsie.

"Of what you said this afternoon. You said you wanted to get Doug— Marston."

"I said no such thing," said Elsie, firmly; "don't you know that a nice girl never dreams that a man's in love with her till he says so?"

"Do you mean to say you didn't say all that this afternoon about Marston being old enough to settle, and you being able to judge him and—"

"I was merely generalizing," Elsie said.

"I'll never believe another word you say!" cried Harold.

"Who are you to talk of lies?" she replied.

Harold flung out of the room, delivering himself, over his shoulder, of man's world-old way of ending an argument in which he is worsted, and also of having the last word.

"You talk like a woman!"

Harold traced the origin of the story of Marston's experience in the trenches to Caroline. He taxed her mournfully with having got him into difficulties. Her brilliant blue eyes clouded.

"But Harold, I did it for you," she murmured; "that stupid, obstinate Bud was so queer and suspicious, and I knew if I told him Mr. Marston had been wounded in the trenches he'd get so excited that he'd feel friendly towards him."

"I do not deny that your knowledge of Bud's psychology was good, Caroline," said Harold sadly, "but my dear girl, the truth is always best."

"I suppose it is," she murmured.

"If life has taught me anything, it has taught me that," said Harold, vigorously.

"You are so good and high-minded,

Harold," she said, admiringly. "I know you wouldn't tell a lie even to help a friend, far less to help yourself; but please remember that I did it to help you."

He took her hand and pressed it. What a sweet, adoring creature she was!

"Dear Caroline," he said, "I forgive you, if I have anything to forgive. Marston will get out of it somehow; it is his problem now."

At that very moment, Bud and Flossie were conversing on the subject of Marston, more in accord than they had been for some days.

"Sickening, the way Elsie isolates that man Marston," Flossie said. "Not that I care much about him. I hate that calm, superior sort. He acts as if he expected you to ask his age and were planning ways of setting you down for doing it."

"Say, he's a great little hand to turn aside questions," Bud said, lowering his voice. "I don't like these mysterious guys. I wouldn't have thought much about it, except that I was over at Batavia, visiting my cousin. One of the doctors from the sanitarium was calling on her, and when I mentioned Marston, he said he'd been in the sanitarium before he came here. Why was he so mum about that? Harrie Lambert led us to think he'd come straight from New York."

"I don't know that Harold *said* so," Flossie pondered.

"No, but he didn't peep about Batavia. I'm going to look into this thing, Flossie; if a man's been in the trenches, why wont he talk of it—unless he's a deserter!"

Excitement is always desirable in a small town. Flossie thrilled.

"Oh, Bud, suppose there *is* some mystery!" she breathed.

"If there is, I'll ferret it out," he promised her.

Caroline and Flossie appeared at the bank to draw money, merely so that they could show him how sorry they were. He had expected sympathy from Caroline, but he had thought Flossie would have gone over to Bud's side. That girl always kept him guessing.

MARSTON'S visit had extended itself close to three weeks, when events began to happen. On Friday afternoon when Harold returned from the bank, Marston informed him that he had received news which necessitated his instant departure.

"Look here, old chap," he said, "I'm going without a word of explanation, but Elsie has told me that—that—in short, I'm coming back, and then I'll talk to you like a man and a brother, d'ye see?"

Like a man and a *brother!* Harold gave it up. There was no use asking Marston any questions. There was no use trying to get anything out of Elsie, who sat pensive and misty-eyed all evening; and as for Mrs. Lambert—Elsie always could manage her mother.

Saturday, as Harold was going home to luncheon, Bud Henderson joined him. His manner conveyed such a mixture of amusement, sympathy and knowingness that Harold at once felt alarmed. He tried to conceal it with a jocular remark.

"What's the matter with your face, Bud? Got toothache?"

"Oh, my face is all right," Bud said; "I guess Marston dug out to save his

face, didn't he? Did you help him to hush it up?"

"I haven't the remotest idea what you're talking about," said Harold truthfully.

"Why, you can't keep such things hidden; Marston ought to know that," said Bud, patronizingly. "One of the reporters at Batavia told me all about it. Nobody knows who shot him, or why; some low scrap, I suppose. Anyway, the fellow got the better of him and pitched him off the train pretty nearly in the hospital yard. No wonder he shut up when we asked him questions about the trenches!"

Harold gathered together all his forces, and eyed Bud menacingly.

"Bud," he said slowly, "if you can manage to keep your mouth shut over this, it will be the best day's work you ever did for yourself."

"If you're threatening me —" said Bud truculently.

"Not in the least. I mean that you don't understand the circumstances. I can't tell you at present what they are, but if you spread this story you'll be sorry the longest day you live."

Bud turned in at his own gate with a scornful laugh, while Harold went on, a prey to the most dismal forebodings. His depression continued during that afternoon, and the next day. It reached its height Sunday night when Caroline called him up on the telephone and asked him if he had the New York Sunday paper; there was something dreadful in it about Mr. Marston. Harold muffled the telephone and dashed out to the post office. Arrived, he walked languidly to the Lambert box, and skillfully avoiding those of his friends who wished to speak to him, strolled out, and then dashed home and tore open the newspaper.

There it was: an account of a fight in a notorious gaming-den in the worst quarter of New York. One Thomas D. Marston had started an unprovoked quarrel, had wounded two men, had himself been wounded, and was at present unconscious in a hospital. His pockets were full of money and papers, and letters. The latter showed that he had been recently a patient in the hospital at Batavia; that he had been visiting friends named Lambert, in Royal; that he was the owner, in partnership with a Cheney Willis, of a mine in New Mexico; that he and Willis had been arrested on the charge of salting a mine.

Harold read, his face petrified. Elsie stole up softly behind him and snatched the paper. He tried to get it from her.

"Let me break it to you," he begged.

She read the account, and then she looked at him with flashing eyes.

"I don't care if it is in print," she stormed. "I don't believe a word of it!"

The door-bell rang. It was a messenger boy with a telegram for Elsie. She read it, and passed it to Harold.

"I'm glad I read the paper first," she said; "I didn't need the telegram."

Harold read the message:

> Expect to be with you soon all is well.
>
> T. D. Marston.

"All is well," murmured Harold. "I wonder what kind of circumstances he would call *not* well."

He went about next day with determined jauntiness. Bud Henderson took occasion to grin jeeringly at him. Caroline and Flossie appeared at the bank to draw money, merely so that they could show him how sorry they were. He had expected sympathy from Caroline, but he had thought Flossie would have gone over to Bud's side. That girl always kept him guessing. How sweet they both were—and it was going to be as hard as ever to steer a course between them.

That evening, shortly after dinner, the bell rang, the door opened, and Marston appeared. Elsie, with a cry, went straight to his arms. Harold rose, with a stern face.

"It's all in here," said Marston, handing Harold a New York morning paper.

For the second time in twenty-four hours, Harold read metropolitan news. The item was called "The Romance of a Miner." It related that Thomas D. Marston had for a partner Cheney Willis. They had two mines, one good, one worthless. When the war broke out, Marston, an Englishman, went to the front. He was wounded and sent to England on a six-weeks' furlough. There

he received a cable to the effect that Willis had salted and sold the worthless mine. He went to New Mexico, discovered that his friend had become insane, reimbursed the purchasers of the bad mine, and started with his friend for a sanitarium in the East. The friend, en route, became violent, and threw Marston off the train. After recovering from the shock of the fall, Marston, convalescing in the town of Royal, put detectives on his partner's trail. When Willis was found, Marston went to New York and joined him. At their hotel that evening Willis attacked Marston, bound him, rifled his pockets of money and papers, and went out to paint New York. When, after shooting two men, and being shot, his possessions were examined, it was assumed that he was Marston. Marston, the account concluded, was going to Royal to complete his convalescence, after which he would return to the front.

Harold gazed at his future brother-in-law. Mrs. Lambert went into the circle of Marston's free arm. The door-bell rang, and callers trooped in. There were the reporters, asking for an immediate interview. There was the President of the Dorcas Society wishing to know when the public lecture could be given. There was Caroline reproaching Harold for not having told her that her inspiration was true.

"I was in honor bound not to," Harold said, "and 'I could not love thee, dear, so well, loved I not honor more!' "

There was Flossie murmuring:

"Harold, it was I who kept Bud from telling about the Batavia accident to the reporters here. I knew we could trust your friend Douglas."

There was everybody but Bud. And everybody worshiped Harold's friend Douglas, and admired Harold for having acquired him and brought him to town. And Harold wore his glasses in a nonchalant, superior way, and felt elated. Only a little, little drop was bitter on his tongue as he met the glances of pansy-colored eyes and blue eyes. For in one thing his friend Douglas had failed him. Still he must bear the burden of two dear charmers, neither of whom would away.

# The Inexorable Tooth

## By Ellis Parker Butler

The Foremost Humorist in America

PHILO GUBB, the paper-hanger detective, graduate of the Rising Sun Detective Bureau's Correspondence School of Detecting (in twelve lessons), sat on a bundle of wall paper in his bedroom-office-decorating-shop.

"Wet or dry?" he asked.

Lawyer Lynch stopped short in his vehement striding up and down the room.

"What—what do you mean?" he demanded fiercely. "What do you think I'm talking about, the weather? The week's wash? Wet or dry! I said the child had a nurse."

Philo Gubb blushed. He was a bachelor, and speaking of such things made him blush; but a detective must know the facts. He coughed apologetically.

"It was in regard to the nurse I was speaking about," he said. "The inquiry I asked from you was: Was the nurse wet or dry?"

"I suppose if she went out in the rain, she'd be wet, and if she stayed in the house, she'd be—" Lawyer Lynch exclaimed with vexation at the interruption of his flowing description of the crime. "Oh!" he said suddenly and rather sheepishly. "I see! Why, the child—the baby—was raised on a bottle, as I understand it. Ardelia must be a dry nurse, if that's got anything to do with it."

"It has quite a considerable much to do with it," said Philo Gubb. "If the nursing person was of the other kind of sort, it would make quite a considerable difference into the way I would handle this case."

## A New Story of Philo Gubb, The Correspondence School Deteckative

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN

"Then you will handle it?" asked Lawyer Lynch eagerly. "You'll get right at it?"

Philo Gubb cast his birdlike eyes over the long row of disguises hanging on his wall—the disguises furnished, at twenty-five per cent off catalogue prices, by the Rising Sun Supply Bureau and which he was accustomed to wear in tracking criminals to their lairs.

"I might start to begin the preliminary getting ready work," he said, "but I couldn't commence to start the real work for about three days."

"Mr. Gubb," said the lawyer, stopping and facing him, "I urge haste! This woman, this mother whose little child has been torn from her arms, is prostrate on her couch with grief. She is in an agony of motherly—ah—agony. Each moment her little babe is kept from her is an eternity to her, Mr. Gubb. Imagine yourself, Mr. Gubb, a fond mother—"

"That's one thing," said Mr. Gubb flatly, "I haven't no ability to imagine myself into."

Lawyer Lynch ran his hand through his red hair and scowled at Mr. Gubb. Lawyer Lynch was a young man; he had been a lawyer about six months; he took himself and this first case of his most seriously. He had always taken himself seriously. While telling Philo Gubb the history of the misunderstanding that had led up to the crime of abduction, he had walked the floor, he had shaken his fists at the ceiling, he had called on the gods to bear witness, he had rumpled his stiff, upstanding red hair and had grasped it with both hands. He had held his trembling hands toward the floor as he tremulously mentioned the poor little child wrested away from its mother. He had beaten his breast as he cried for vengeance.

"Three days!" he exclaimed now. "Three days? And must that poor mother wait three days before you set out to find her poor little child?"

"No deckative couldn't be expected to set out onto a baby business dressed into a cowboy disguise," said Philo Gubb firmly. "The criminal classes is most keenly shrewd, and a baby-stealer would look with suspicion onto a deteckative that disguised himself up as a cowboy—or even as a Scottish Highlander with bagpipes. No, Mr. Lynch, I can't get to work onto the case no sooner than three days, because"—and he put out his hand and took up the Rising Sun Supply Bureau's catalogue—"three days is the soonest period of time into which I can expect to receive this disguise Number Sixty-two — Female nurse — Eighteen dollars—Cap fifty cents extra."

Lawyer Lynch stood in his best attitude, his hand in the breast of his coat, and scowled.

"And if the aforesaid Ardelia had turned out to be a wet nurse, I wouldn't have took the case at no price. No, sir! A deteckative gentleman can't be expected to carry out the disguise of a wet nurse to full and complete perfection in all respects. Now, what was this Ardelia nurse like?"

"She's sixteen and about five feet tall, very plump and rosy-cheeked."

Philo Gubb arose. It has been said again and again that he looked, when standing, like a flamingo—a six-footer. It will do no harm to say it again.

"Details like them are necessary to a deteckative to help him fix up the complete likeness of his disguise," he said, and he went to his desk and jotted down the information Lawyer Lynch had given him.

The abduction case was not one of entire mystery, but it had its exceedingly puzzling features. Mr. Lynch had already related the case to Mr. Gubb. A certain Samuel Johnson had married a certain Mary Smith. To this couple

child was born. When the child was a year and eight months old, Mary Johnson, through the efforts of Lawyer Lynch, had secured a divorce from her husband, and the court had rightly enough given her custody of the child. All this excitement had had an effect on Mrs. Johnson's nerves, and she hired the girl Ardelia to take care of the child. Samuel Johnson had, seemingly, disappeared from the town, but one late afternoon Ardelia had rushed into the house crying that Mr. Johnson had waylaid her and had stolen the baby, baby carriage, nursing bottle and all. Mrs. Johnson was immediately prostrated and had remained in bed ever since. It was to find Mr. Johnson and secure the return of the stolen child that Lawyer Lynch had come to Philo Gubb.

One puzzling feature of the case was that Mr. Johnson had, evidently, not left Riverbank. A man with a baby in a baby carriage cannot board a train without being seen. He could, perhaps, have abandoned the baby carriage and have hidden the baby under his coat, but no abandoned baby carriage had been found, and Lawyer Lynch assured Mr. Gubb that the baby was not the kind that could be hidden under a coat and smuggled aboard a train. While the baby already had five teeth, it was cutting a sixth, and this sixth tooth was a large and painful one to cut. The baby was, as Lawyer Lynch said, "one continuous howl." It may be possible to smuggle thirteen-inch guns, diamond necklaces, Mexican ex-presidents and such things, but the imagination is staggered by the idea of smuggling a baby that is one continuous howl. Mr. Johnson had so far, however, been able to sequestrate the child. The baby, Mr. Johnson and Ardelia seemed to have disappeared off the face of the earth.

For Ardelia had also disappeared. No sooner had she thrown Mrs. Johnson nicely into hysterics by her brazen announcement of the theft of the child than she rushed from the house. She had not been seen since.

Ordinarily Mr. Gubb would have proceeded to the home of Mrs. Johnson at once, to ask the necessary questions, but this was not possible. At any mention of the baby, Mrs. Johnson's grief took the form of hysterical convulsions, and, as Lawyer Lynch said, "she tries to stand on her head." On this account, Mr. Lynch was himself barred from her room and was obliged to conduct all business through Mrs. Wentz, a fat, strong-armed practical nurse who was taking care of Mrs. Johnson.

Mr. Lynch described the missing child for Philo Gubb—black hair, five teeth and one arriving, plump, just able to walk, able to say a few utterly indistinguishable words and to howl like a hyena. When the description was completed, Mr. Gubb studied his memoranda carefully.

"And nourishment?" he asked.

"Nourishment? Oh! Milk, out of a bottle—out of a nursing bottle."

"I should wish you to fetch me one of a similar sort of kind," said Mr. Gubb gravely. "And I should also wish you to find out and let me know what proportions is put into it."

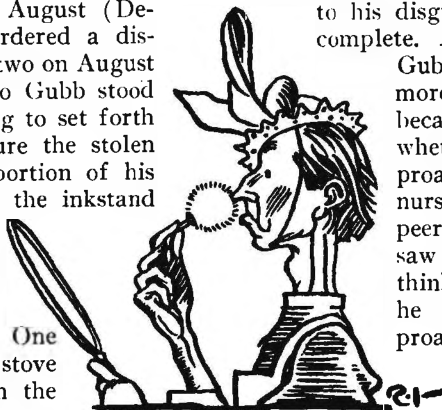
"To find out what?" asked Lawyer Lynch.

"What proportions of milk, et cetery and so forth, is put into it," explained Philo Gubb. "I'm going to detect where this child is at into the disguise of a nursing maid, and if I find the child I may have to induce it to accompany itself along with me by feeding its accustomed food into it. I want you should get me the make-up of the formula of the milk into the nursing bottle."

This was a proper precaution. Children accustomed to one style of nursing bottle will not accept another kind. This is a fact well known to all nursing-bottle manufacturers and accounts for the surprising promptness with which they attempt to get printed matter in praise of their particular type of nursing bottles into the hands of female parents after the coming of the little darling. Nursing-bottle manufacturers spend thousands of dollars annually buying names and addresses of parents of recently born children. The lists are secured from newspaper clippings and from bureaus of vital statistics. When Mr. Green walks proudly to the office of *The Bingtown Daily Whooper* and

blushingly hands across the counter, an item reading, "Born, to Mr. and Mrs. Jason J. Green, a son," he is inevitably pulling a trigger that will react by shooting into his home the advertising matter of at least eight nursing-bottle manufacturers. A child may be mistaken in its mother, but after two days' experience with a nursing bottle, it will not take any other. A detective has to know all these things. To acquire this knowledge at second hand is an enormous task; to acquire it at first hand is easy; that is why so many detectives are married men and fathers. A few, however, who were once babies themselves—as Philo Gubb had been—know these things by instinct. That was how Philo Gubb knew. He had himself been a bottle baby.

On the eighth of August (Detective Gubb had ordered a disguise Number Sixty-two on August fifth, by wire), Philo Gubb stood in his room preparing to set forth to discover and secure the stolen baby. On the flat portion of his roll-top desk, where the inkstand usually stood, rested a small two-burner gas stove from which a rubber tube ran to the nearest gas jet. One burner of the gas stove was unlighted; from the other burner forty or more small blue flames wavered and gave forth heat. Lawyer Lynch, his hands clasped behind his back in a more-or-less Henry Clay style, tramped up and down the room, his brow creased by impatience. From time to time he cast an impatient glance at Philo Gubb.



Mr. Gubb had disguised himself as Ardelia Metherthwaite.

"Not ready yet?" he would ask, and as Mr. Gubb vouchsafed no reply, he would resume his nervous walking.

Mr. Gubb was disguised as Ardelia Metherthwaite. The costume consisted of a dark blue cotton gown, fitting neatly at the waist; a large white apron with a bib that pinned at the shoulders; and a white cap with a blue bow and streamers. As this would not otherwise remain on his head, Mr. Gubb had slipped a large rubber band over the cap and under his chin. This accounted for his reluctance in answering Lawyer Lynch. The rubber band fitted so tightly that whenever Mr. Gubb opened his mouth, the band snapped it shut again suddenly. He had thus bitten his tongue twice, and he was loath to indulge in useless conversation.

The costume, quite properly, was built for a young and sprightly nursemaid, and the skirt was correspondingly short. In fact, the costume was sold or rented most frequently for private theatricals of the comic opera sort, and in such dramatic affairs nursemaids invariably make up in stockings what they lack in skirt. In the good cause of modesty, however, Mr. Gubb had discarded the stockings and retained his trousers, and these, with his large, yellow leather shoes, added a touch of the unexpected to his disguise and made it more complete. A criminal, seeing Mr. Gubb approach, would be more apt to be confused because he could not be sure whether he was being approached by a man or a nursemaid. If the criminal peered under a box-car and saw Philo Gubb, he would think he saw a man, but if he saw Philo Gubb approaching behind a low board fence, he would think he beheld a nurse-maid. Although Mr. Gubb did not think of it, he could practically change his identity in an instant by hopping suddenly from behind a fence to behind a box-car.

At the moment, Mr. Gubb was engaged in an operation that demanded all his faculties. His brow was creased with the lines of deep attention that are seen on the brows of alchemists at the moment when they are just completing an experiment that may end in the transmutation of a base metal into gold. In one hand Mr. Gubb held a watch and in the other a spoon. In the watch hand was also clasped a bath thermometer and in the spoon hand a small bottle of limewater. On the lighted gas burner stood an aluminum saucepan, and in this was a quantity of milk. It was on this that Mr. Gubb's attention was so closely

fixed. Suddenly he glanced at the thermometer and put his watch into the hot milk.

"Drat it!" he exclaimed, with annoyance. "That's what comes from you walking down and up all the continuous time!"

Mr. Lynch stopped short.

"For heaven's sake, don't overboil this kettleful," he cried. "It's the sixth! You'll never get started."

"And if you keep talking a conversation at me, there's no telling when I'll get started," said Philo Gubb. He jerked his watch out of the hot milk and inserted the thermometer. A glow of exultation overspread his face. With a deft opening of his hand he dropped both the watch and the thermometer on the floor, shut off the gas, took the spoon in the hand thus emptied and began stirring the milk while he dribbled lime-water into it. "There!" he exclaimed. "I got it correctly right according to the directions of the formula this time. This milk should be wholly satisfactory unto the infantile child."

He let the lime-water bottle and the spoon fall after the watch and the thermometer and took hold of the handle of the saucepan.

"Wowp!" he cried, or something like it.

"Burn yourself?" asked Lawyer Lynch coldly.

Mr. Gubb was trying to suck the entire inside of his right palm.

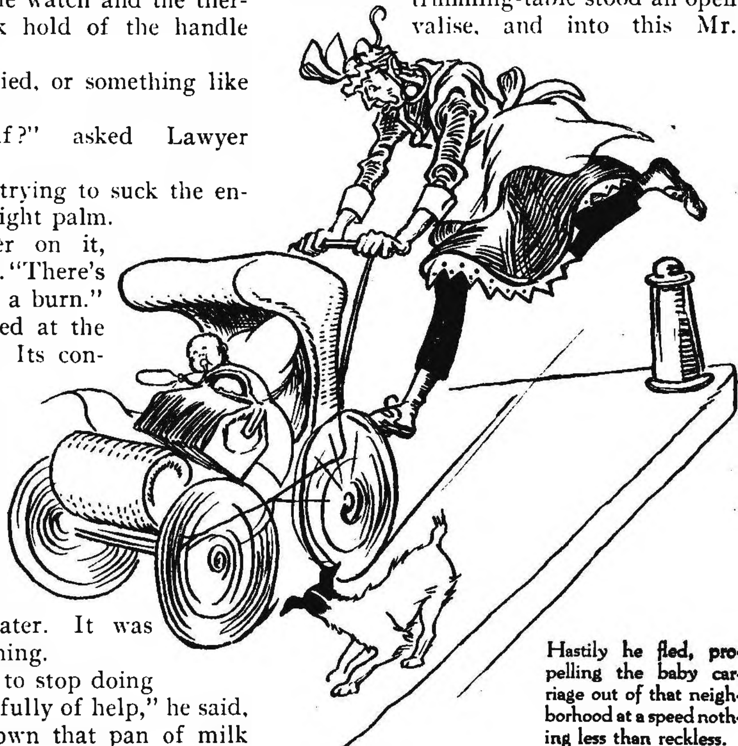
"Put lime-water on it, said Lawyer Lynch. "There's nothing better for a burn."

Mr. Gubb looked at the lime-water bottle. Its contents were running down one board of the floor. He tucked his skirt around his waist, got upon his hands and knees and held his hand in the stream of lime-water. It was grateful and soothing.

"If you wished to stop doing nothing and be usefully of help," he said, "you could lift down that pan of milk and them thermos bottles so as I could be filling them up with it whilst giving myself some relief from the pain."

Lawyer Lynch did as he was instructed. There were four thermos bottles, and Lawyer Lynch stood them in a row. Mr. Gubb kneeled with his hand in the puddle of lime-water and with his left hand carefully tilted the pan of milk. Quite a little of it entered the necks of the thermos bottles. More perhaps would have been saved had Mr. Gubb not used his left hand and had he not wrapped his handkerchief around the hot handle of the saucepan.

I have always held that no life work holds so many moments of intense interest as the life work of a detective. All the fox-like shrewdness of the criminal is pitted against the eagle-eyed, keen-brained skill of his pursuer. Mr. Gubb inserted the stoppers into the necks of the thermos bottles, screwed on the tops and inserted the bottles into their cases, two bottles to the case. Each of the leather cases had a shoulder strap, and Mr. Gubb hung one case over one shoulder and one over the other. On his trimming-table stood an open valise, and into this Mr.



Hastily he fled, propelling the baby carriage out of that neighborhood at a speed nothing less than reckless.

Gubb packed six hygienic nursing bottles, two rubber nipples that he had already sterilized, a bone teething-ring, a tin rattle, his revolver, a box of cartridges, three false mustaches,—in case he needed to change his disguise,—a small bottle of talcum powder and a ham sandwich wrapped in oiled paper. The sandwich was for himself and not for the child. He had been so busy he had not had time to eat.

"There!" he exclaimed thankfully. "I'm ready to start to commence beginning."

Lawyer Lynch rubbed his hands with satisfaction. He took up his hat.

"Where are you going to?" asked Mr. Gubb as he snapped the lock of the valise.

"I'm going with you," said Lawyer Lynch. Detective Gubb looked at him.

"A deteckative sleuth don't have nobody go along with him whilst he is trailing after a clue," he said firmly, "—especially into baby cases. It aint the usual custom generally used."

"I don't care what it is," said Lawyer Lynch, no less firmly. "I'm paying you and I'm going along."

Mr. Gubb began to unshoulder the thermos-case straps.

"Into that case I decline to proceed further along onto this case," he said flatly. "Into an ordinary case I might not say you a negative refusal, but into a baby case I've got to be solidly firm. Suppose you try to imagine a supposition that the baby is asleep when I discover upon it!"

"Well, suppose it is?"

"Into that case," said Philo Gubb, "a deteckative would ought to observe the most finest kind of silence, especially when the babe is teething its teeth like this one is. A detective can't have a grandstand gallery coming along to wake up the baby. No, sir! If you go, I don't go!"

"Oh, well!" said Lawyer Lynch. "Have it your own way! I only thought I might hasten you a little. You've been time and eternity, almost, getting ready."

Detective Gubb swung the straps upon his shoulders again. He took up the valise in one hand.

"And what disposal shall I make of the child when I recover it back?" he asked. "Do you want I should fetch it to your office?"

"Great Scott, no!" cried Lawyer Lynch. "Take it to the mother. She's mourning for it; I'm not. I'm not the child's affectionate parent. Take it to Mrs. Johnson."

"I'll so do," said Mr. Gubb; and he accompanied Lawyer Lynch into the corridor and parted from him there.

SELDOM had the graduate of the Rising Sun Detective Bureau's School of Detecting undertaken a more seemingly hopeless case. He had not a single tangible clue—nothing he could put under the microscope: not a button off a coat, not a lock of hair, nothing! And yet Philo Gubb was not daunted. He had, it is true, the various facts and descriptions supplied him by Lawyer Lynch—the description of the stolen baby, the description of Mr. Samuel Johnson, the description of Ardelia Metherthwaite, the description of the baby carriage. With his usual keen perception that a detective must, as far as possible, put himself in the criminal's place, Mr. Gubb went directly to Ninth Street, selected the house that most closely answered Lawyer Lynch's description of the Johnson residence, and followed from there the route most likely taken by the criminal as he bore off the child.

As he walked he held the valise before him, both hands on its handle, and tried to imagine he was pushing a baby carriage. He tried to imagine the feelings of a father stealing his own child and fearing pursuit; and he did not long find it difficult to imagine the fear of pursuit, for before he had wheeled the imaginary baby carriage quite a block, pursuit materialized. Eight of the pursuit were boys, and one was a wide-eyed, open-mouthed girl who repeated over and over as she hurried along, "Say, Jimmy, what's he doin'? Say, Jimmy, what's he doin'? Say, Jimmy, what's he doin'?" until Jimmy said, "Aw, how d' I know? He's crazy," and then she approached Mr. Gubb and put the question frankly: "Say, Mister, are you crazy?"

Mr. Gubb stopped short in intense vexation. He moved the valise back and forth as one moves a baby carriage to sooth a restless infant.

"Ssh!" he whispered. "Run away. I'm a deteckative deteckating. and I'd admire to have you all run away and let me alone."

The effect was instantaneous. The pursuit, so far as it was boys, immediately placed its hands to its mouths and shouted. In general effect the shouting was: "Ye-ow, Billy! C'm on! C'm on quick! Here's a deteckative deteckating! Hurry!"

This clinging and faithful pursuit—which was so close that at times a part of it got in front of Mr. Gubb and was stepped on — suggested that the baby stealer must have done all possible to puzzle it. Mr. Gubb therefore turned the first corner, and the next corner and the next corner after that. As he proceeded in this zigzag path, he increased his speed until he hardly paused to ease the imaginary wheels of the imaginary baby carriage up or down the curbs at the crossings. As he fled he was able fairly well to imagine the brain condition of a fatherly baby-stealer. In such a position a baby-stealer would seek a safe hiding place in one of two places, viz:

(A) In the slums.
(B) In some remote hut in the woods.

Riverbank had no slums but it had what must, under the circumstances, serve as slums. On the edge of town it had:

(A) The Italian quarter.
(B) The Negro quarter.
(A-B) The place where the Italian quarter merged into the Negro quarter.

While not slummy, these three quarters, or two quarters and a half, were populated by families that left their garbage cans on the sidewalk longer than the other families of Riverbank. That was something, and gave the section a slummy odor, at least. To this was added the remarkable abundance of child life. A baby-stealer taking refuge in "A" or "B" or "A-B" could turn his loot into the street with reasonable security that no ordinary sleuth would be able to identify the stolen child among so many other children. The only danger would be that the child-stealer might himself never be able to separate his loot from the common mass of one- to ten-year-old blacks, whites and yellows.

Mr. Gubb, pushing his valise before him, made directly for the near-slums and thus unwittingly rid himself of his pursuit. At a certain corner two blocks from the "A"-"B"-"A-B" sections of Riverbank, his pursuit stopped short and put its thumbs in its mouths. The reason for this was that if it went further it would suffer from the endless feud existing between the Ninth Street Gang and the Fourteenth Street Gang. Reluctantly the pursuit watched Philo Gubb enter the zone of influence of the Fourteenth Street Gang; then it turned and went back to Ninth Street.

Midway between Thirteenth Street and Fourteenth Street, Philo Gubb seated himself on a horse block and unslung one of the thermos cases. He opened the valise and took out one nursing bottle and one rubber nipple. He filled the nursing bottle carefully from the contents of the thermos bottle, placed the rubber nipple where it belonged, returned the thermos bottle to its case and the case to his shoulder, arose and proceeded. Beginning at "A-B," Detective Gubb slowly worked his way through "A," offering the nursing bottle to every white child of the requisite youth. Seventy-six out of a possible ninety-four took the nursing bottle greedily. Of the seventy-six who thus qualified as possible candidates for the honor of being the stolen child, eighteen gave evidence of teething. Of the eighteen thus culled from the mass, four, upon their mouths being pried open, revealed five teeth already sprouted.

Detective Gubb felt his pulses beating high with approaching triumph. He placed the four infants on the edge of the plank walk and studied them closely. Except for the dirt that smeared their faces they were as unlike as four children could be, and while any one of

the four might be the child he sought, this was equally true of the remaining three. In such a quandary Philo Gubb was at a loss for but a moment. Beginning with the child at the left of the row as they faced him, Mr. Gubb pointing his long forefinger at them, and moving it from one to the next as he spoke, he repeated these celebrated lines:

Eeny meeny miney mo,
Crack a feeny finey fo,
Omma nootcha,
Poppa toocha,
Rick, stick, stan, straw,
*O-u-t* spells *out!*

Three times Detective Gubb repeated these talismanic words, and at each final "out" he lifted one child from the row and set it aside. Before the remainder, consisting of one child, he knelt, opening his valise and taking from it the paregoric bottle and a spoon, and dropping ten drops of the liquid into the bowl of the spoon, he was about to drug the innocent creature into silence and sleep when he cast a hasty glance to right and to left to assure himself he was not observed. Instantly he stood erect. The paregoric dripped harmlessly into the dust at his feet.

Down the sidewalk, pushing a respectably white baby carriage, came a young female person who, in every detail, met the description of Ardelia Metherthwaite, the recreant nursemaid, as given by Lawyer Lynch. In the baby carriage sat a child of approximately the age of the stolen Johnson. The child lay back in the carriage, yelling and kicking, biting one finger of its left hand while it pounded angrily with its right. Mr. Gubb, following the rule laid down in Lesson VIII of the Rising Sun Correspondence School's course of twelve lessons, hastily concealed himself behind a tree and awaited the approach of the nursemaid and the carriage. Behind his back he deftly concealed the nursing bottle and the vial of paregoric, and he held the spoon in his teeth, which clasped it firmly, aided by the rubber band that held his cap. Not until the carriage was immediately opposite the tree did Philo Gubb spring to the middle of the sidewalk, full in front of the baby carriage.

With a wild cry of fear, the unsuspecting nursemaid turned and fled.

There was no time to be lost. Detective Gubb knew that if the father of the child were concealed somewhere in the near-slums, it would be but a few moments before the recreant nursemaid regained her senses and ran to Mr. Johnson with the tale of the attack. He worked quickly. With a dexterity hardly to be expected in a bachelor—even if a graduate of the Rising Sun Detective Bureau's School of Detecting — Mr. Gubb glanced into the child's mouth and counted its teeth. Five on hand and one a-comin'! With equal skill he placed the nipple of the nursing bottle in the child's mouth. Instantly the infant ceased howling. It grasped the bottle with both hands and imbibed its contents with every evidence of joy and gratitude. Hastily Mr. Gubb tucked his valise under the child's feet, and hastily he placed himself behind the handle of the carriage, and still more hastily he fled, propelling the baby carriage out of that neighborhood at a speed that must be called nothing less than reckless. With one hand Mr. Gubb held his skirts out of the way. With both legs he ran. The baby carriage swayed and jumped like a ship in a gale. Twice it rolled around corners on two wheels. Once it all but lost its precious cargo going over a bump. Not until he had put many blocks between him and the scene of his meeting with Ardelia did Mr. Gubb wheel the baby carriage into the snug harbor of an alley, where he hid behind a rubbish barrel. He sought the paregoric bottle, but he had lost it in his hasty flight.

Luckily the infant did not need to be drugged. The haste of the flight had disarrayed it somewhat. Its garments were awry; it lay partly on its head and partly on one shoulder, with one foot over the side of the carriage and the other nestling against its neck, but it still held the bottle with a death grip, and it still imbibed the delicious fluid with gurgles of satisfaction.

With trembling hands Detective Gubb prepared a second bottle against a time of need, and after a glance over his shoulder to make sure the coast was

clear, he wheeled the carriage up the alley in the direction of the spot on Ninth Street from which he had originally taken up the trail. He reached the house without further adventures.

As Mr. Gubb wheeled the baby carriage through the gate and up the walk to the house, the front door opened and a large, heavily built lady of a dark brown shade of countenance stepped out upon the small porch. It was evident that she had been weeping; she wiped her eyes as she stood there.

The colored lady drew back from the baby carriage . . . . "Ar-r-r-r!" she growled. "What yo' mean white man, swindelatin' me lak dis?"

"Whut yo' want?" she asked.

"I am Gubb, the deteckative," answered Philo Gubb, not without pride in his tone, "and I have found and fetched back the lost child."

The heavily built colored lady raised both hands above her head in a highly emotional manner.

"Glory be!" she cried. "Mah chile! Ma chile! Ma li'l' los' Em'ly! Come to yo' ma, you honey girl!"

She rushed—no, she did not rush; she couldn't; but she waddled hastily forward and threw herself upon the baby carriage. Detective Gubb turned pale. Instinct told him there was going to be trouble and without delay. He steeled himself to meet it. He assumed a haughty, uncompromising air. He was none too soon. The colored lady drew back from the baby carriage.

"Ar-r-r-r!" she growled. "What yo' mean, white man, swindilatin' me lak dis? Fotchin' me mah li'l' los' Em'ly, when she aint fotched at all? What yo' mean, white trash?"

Mr. Gubb stared at the woman coldly.

"Mrs. Wentz," he said, using the name of the practical nurse Lawyer Lynch had said was caring for Mrs. Johnson, "into a matter of this kind of sort I don't choose to wish to deal with the hired

help. I prefer to speak my conversation directly at the mother of the infant babe. Where is Mrs. Johnson?"

"Yah!" snarled the colored lady unamiably. "Don' you call me none o' dem Dutch names! Ah's Missus Johnsing."

"I mentioned the cognomen of Mrs. Johnson," said Philo Gubb.

"Well, whut Ah say but Johnsing? Ah's Missus Johnsing. Ah's de lady whut los' a baby chile."

"Then," said Philo Gubb firmly but kindly, "this is your child. I recovered it back for you."

Mrs. Johnson looked at the baby.

"Huh!" she exclaimed. "Dat ain' mah chile!"

"It most certainly surely is," said Philo Gubb. "Wasn't your child toothing a teeth?"

"Yas, sah, but—"

"This infant child is toothing a teeth," said Detective Gubb. "In the deteckative profession, clues is the surest things to go by, and you can look into the inside of this child's mouth and see the most inexorably teethed tooth you ever saw. This infant child answers all the plans and specifications that was give to me. I got the child, and the case is finished."

"Dat aint mah chile!" laughed Mrs. Johnson scornfully. "Mah chile is a black chile; mah chile aint no white chile."

Mr. Gubb sighed patiently.

"Connoisseuring infantile babies aint no part and parcel of the business I'm into," he said. "I didn't never study up onto the ways and habits of youthful infants. Maybe it faded."

"Fade? Mah chile fade? Mah li'l' Em'ly don' fade. She fas' black."

"Madam," said Philo Gubb, "every mother is apt to be mostly partial to the good merits of her own child, but sometimes she is mistaken. There's no question of doubt you thought your child was fast black, but this is your child! If this child did not fade, how did it get white?"

"Why — why —" stammered Mrs. Johnson. "'Co'se Ah aint never *heard* of a black chile fadin', but—"

"Here is the child," said Philo Gubb. "You can look to see the tooth it is teething yourself."

PERHAPS Mr. Gubb, by his earnest argument, might have convinced Mrs. Johnson. She seemed to hesitate. Philo Gubb was gathering his logic for another assault, and he might have won had Lawyer Lynch not at that moment chanced to pass.

"So! so!" he cried. "You have found the boy, Mr. Gubb!"

Mrs. Johnson let her thick lips curl with scorn. She opened them to speak.

"Ma! Ma!" cried a shrill voice from her house. "I foun' li'l' Em'ly. She was under the washtub."

Mrs. Johnson did speak.

"Yah!" she exclaimed. "Yo' white folks think yo' mighty smart! Yo' try to work off a white chile on me. Maybe Ah'm fool enough to stand that ef mah li'l' Em'ly ain' found herse'f jus' now. Maybe Ah been persuaded mah chile fade out white. Maybe so! But dey ain' no white pusson can persuade me mah li'l' gal chile tu'n into a boy chile in no half hour! No, sah!"

Mr. Gubb stared blankly.

"But—but the child is most unquestionably teething a tooth—" he said.

"Right! Quite right!" exclaimed Lawyer Lynch. "I don't know what you are talking about, and I don't know why you stopped here to talk to this colored person, but if you are now ready to proceed, Mr. Gubb, we will hasten up the street to the home of Mrs. Johnson, where that poor woman is waiting in dire impatience for the return of this little darling. For it is her baby, Mr. Gubb—you have accomplished a miracle in recovering it so quickly."

With admirable duplicity, Detective Gubb hid his surprise.

"I was just immediately about to proceed onward into that direction," he said, grasping the handle of the baby carriage and turning the vehicle toward the gate. "I had to stop temporarily off at this house to prove to that colored female lady that this wasn't her female infant baby."

**Another Philo Gubb story in the next issue.**

# A Complete Résumé of the Previous Chapters of Gilbert Parker's Novel, "WILD YOUTH."

THE law of the love of youth for youth is the background of this latest novel by Sir Gilbert Parker. Immutable as the law of gravitation, he sets it forth, and paints in his men and women with the same broad, powerful sweep or delicate touches with which he pictures the Canada that he knows so well.

Louise Mazarine, a willowy slip of a girl, and Joel Mazarine, her husband, sixty-five—these are the violation of the law. Then comes Orlando Guise, a neighboring ranchman, and young. And the law begins to work as surely as gravitation pulls the falling apple to earth.

Joel Mazarine is a hard old calf-skin-booted man of the soil, who had buried two gray-haired wives before he saw Louise. She stands to him, first, as payment for a ten-thousand-dollar mortgage, and second, as the fulfillment of the belated hunger of a coarse manhood. He stands to her as a jailer.

The girl wife appears always in the company of her morose husband. Gruesome jealousy takes possession of Mazarine if her glance or word goes out without his sanction. This jail life saps the strength of the girl, and she falls ill.

The Young Doctor, beloved by all Askatoon, comes, and sees that what ails the girl is old age. Then young Orlando Guise rides over to the Mazarine ranch to buy cattle from Mazarine.

Orlando and his mother own one of the richest Askatoon ranches. And to the astonishment of everyone,—they only know Guise, or "Giggles," as he is called, by his dudish clothes and gay manner,—the ranch is growing richer.

"Giggles" laughs even while he drives a hard bargain. He laughs this day. Louise hears. She moves cautiously to the window, looks into the merriest eyes she has ever seen—"and for the first time in all her life she is wholly alive."

THE young ranchman pays Joel in cash. Tom McMahon, of the McMahon gang, learns of this. That night, while carrying the money, Joel is attacked. The intervention of Orlando, who is riding past, saves his life and money. Orlando is wounded, and Joel has to take the young man to his house to be cared for.

Joel fears to have Louise see Orlando and bribes his Chinese servant to watch and report if the two are together; but the Chinaman is devoted to Louise. He takes tea for both to Orlando's bedside. While they are enjoying the minutes the slender repast gives them, Joel returns. The Chinaman sees him, rushes to the room, grabs up the tea-tray and cries: "Old Mazaline, he come. Be queeck."

But Joel is already making for the stairs. The Chinaman, with Oriental duplicity, drops the tray as if he were falling and lets it crash down at Joel's feet, while Louise slips away to safety.

The kicking Joel gives Li Choo starts an enmity in the Oriental that is increased a few days later when the old ranchman threatens Louise with his riding whip. Li Choo glides between and receives the blows.

JOEL'S cruelty arouses revolt in the girl. Against his orders she goes to ride on the prairie. Her horse breaks a leg and throws her. Orlando finds her, and while helping her, his own pony runs away. They are forced to spend the night on the prairie.

Joel becomes a demon of vengeance. Only the testimony of a man tramping the prairie, who spent the night near the two, stays his attack on them. "He's a gentleman, and she is the best of the very best," says the man.

Louise is guarded day and night. Finally Li Choo helps her to escape. She goes to the Young Doctor, who puts her under the care of Mrs. Doyle at the Doyle ranch.

Joel rages like a madman at the escape, but Li Choo tells him nothing, and disappears. Joel follows Orlando, whom he hears is hurrying to catch a train with a woman. Joel berates Orlando till he finds the woman is Mrs. Guise. Orlando controls his wrath. But he tells the ancient husband that if they ever meet and Joel does not get out of the way, it will be the worse for him.

That evening Orlando rides out to the Doyle ranch to tell Louise she may always depend on him if she needs him. On the way home he comes on Joel's body, out of which the life has been strangled. The lean fingers of Li Choo had vented their hatred on their brutal master, but Orlando does not suspect the Chinese. And while he is examining the dead man, the insurance agent, Scarsdale, who had heard Orlando's threat against Joel, drives up. He suspects Orlando.

The Final Installment of

# Wild Youth

A Spirited Novel of the Northwest

## By Gilbert Parker

Author of "The Right of Way," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK B. HOFFMAN

### CHAPTER XVII

THE SUPERIOR MAN

STUDENTS of life have noticed constantly that moral distinctions and differences are not matters of principle but of certain peremptory rules founded on nice calculations of the social mind. In the field of crime, responsibility is most often calculated, not upon the crime itself, but upon how the thing is done.

In Askatoon, no one would have been greatly shocked if, when Orlando Guise and Joel Mazarine met at the railway-station or in the main street, Orlando had killed Mazarine.

Mazarine would have been dead in either case; and he would have been killed by another hand in either case; but the attitude of the public would not have been the same in either case. The public would have considered the killing of Mazarine before the eyes of the world as justifiable homicide; its dislike of the man would have induced it to add the word *justifiable*.

But that Joel Mazarine should be killed by night without an audience, secretly — however righteously — shocked the people of Askatoon.

Had they seen the thing done, there would have been sensation, but no mystery; but night, loneliness, secrecy, distance, mystery, all produced, not a reaction in Mazarine's favor, but a protest against the thing being done under cover, as it were, with concentrated savagery, unassisted by popular observation.

Also, to the Askatoon mind, that one man should stand up to another and kill him in an open quarrel was courageous, —or might be courageous,—but for one man to kill another, whoever that other was, in a hidden way, was a barbarian business.

IT seemed impossible to have any doubt as to who committed the murder, though Orlando had not waited a moment after the body had been brought

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to Mayo, but had gone straight to the police, and told what had happened, so far as he knew it. He had nothing to hide, and he stated the exact facts.

The insurance man, Scarsdale, would not open his mouth until the inquest, which took place on the afternoon after the crime had been committed. It was held at Mayo. Great crowds surrounded the house, but only a few people found entrance to the inquest room.

Immediately on opening the inquest, Orlando was called to tell his story. Every eye was fixed upon him intently; every ear was strained as he described his coming upon the isolated wagon and the dead man with the reins in his hands. It is hard to say how many believed his story, but the Coroner did, and Burlingame, his lawyer, also did.

Burlingame was present, not to defend Orlando, because it was not a trial, but to watch his interests in the face of staggering circumstantial evidence. To Burlingame's mind Orlando was not the man to kill another by strangling him to death. It was not in keeping with his character. It was too aboriginal.

The Coroner believed the story solely because Orlando's frankness and straight-forwardness filled him with confidence. Men of rude sense, like Jonas Billings, were willing to take bets five to one that Orlando was innocent.

The Young Doctor had not an instant's doubt, but he could not at first fix his suspicions in a likely quarter. He had examined the body, and there were no marks save slight bruises at the throat. In his evidence he said that enormous strength of hands had been necessary to kill so quickly, for it was apparent that the attack was so overpowering that there was little struggle.

The Coroner here interposed a question as to whether it would have been possible for anyone but a man to commit the crime. At his words everybody moved uneasily and impatiently. It was clear that he was referring to the absent wife. The idea of Louise's committing such a crime, or being able to commit it, was ridiculous. The Coroner presently stated that he had only asked the question so as to remove once and for all this possibility from consideration.

The Young Doctor immediately said that probably no woman in the hemisphere could have committed the crime, which required enormous strength of hands.

The Coroner looked around the room. "The widow, Mrs. Mazarine, is not here?" he said questioningly.

Nolan Doyle interposed. "Mrs. Mazarine is at my ranch," he said. "She came there yesterday evening at eight o'clock and remained in the presence of my wife and myself until twelve o'clock. The murder was committed before twelve o'clock. Mrs. Mazarine knows nothing of the crime. She does not even know that her husband is dead. She is not well to-day, and we have kept the knowledge from her."

"Is she under medical care?" asked the Coroner.

Nolan Doyle nodded towards the Young Doctor, who said: "I saw Mrs. Mazarine at the house of Mr. Nolan Doyle last evening between the hours of eight and ten o'clock. To-day at noon also I visited her. She has a slight illness, and she is not in a condition to take part in these proceedings."

AT this point, Scarsdale, who had come upon Orlando and the dead man at the Cross-Trails the night before, told his story. He did it with evident reluctance, and also with an air of trouble and anxiety.

He spoke with evident hesitation, yet firmly and straightforwardly. He described how he saw Orlando climb down from the wagon where the dead man was. He added, however, that he had seen no struggle of any kind, though he had seen Orlando close to the corpse.

Questioned by a juror, he described the scenes between Orlando and Mazarine in the main street of Askatoon and at the railway-station, both of which he had seen. He repeated Orlando's threat to Mazarine.

He was pressed as to whether Orlando showed agitation at the Cross-Trails. He replied that Orlando seemed stunned and dazed but not agitated.

He was asked whether Orlando had shown the greater agitation at the Cross-Trails or in the town when he

threatened Mazarine. The answer was that he showed agitation only in the town.

He was asked to repeat what Orlando had said to him. This he did accurately.

He was then asked by a juror whether he had arrived at any conclusion, when at the Cross-Trails or afterwards, as to who committed the crime, but the Coroner would not permit the question. The Coroner added that it was only the duty of the witness to state what he had seen. Opinions were not permissible as evidence. The facts were in the possession of the Court, and the Court could form its own judgment.

It was clear to everyone at this moment that the jury must return a verdict of willful murder, and it was equally clear that the evidence was sufficient to fix a suspicion upon Orlando which must lead to his arrest. Two constables were in close attendance, and were ready to take charge of the man who, above all others, or so it was thought, had most reason to wish Mazarine out of the way. Indeed, Orlando had resigned himself to the situation, having realized how inexorably was all the evidence against him.

PRESENTLY recalling Orlando, the Coroner asked if it was the case that the death of Mazarine might be an advantage to him in any way. Orlando replied that it might be an advantage to him, but he was not sure. He added, however, that if, as the Coroner seemed to suggest, he himself was under suspicion, it ought to appear to all that to have murdered Mazarine in the circumstances would have put in jeopardy any possible advantage which might come to him. That seemed logical enough, but it was presently pointed out to the Coroner that the same consideration had existed when Orlando had threatened Mazarine in the streets of Askatoon.

Presently the Coroner said: "There's a half-breed woman and a Chinaman, servants of the late Mr. Mazarine. Have the woman called."

It was at this moment that the Young Doctor and Orlando also were suddenly seized with a suspicion of their own. Orlando remembered how Mazarine had horsewhipped and maltreated Li Choo. The Young Doctor fixed his eyes intently on the body, and presently went to it again, raised the beard and looked at the neck. Coming back to his place, he nodded abstractedly to himself. He had a clue. Now he understood about the enormous strength which had killed Mazarine practically without a struggle. He had noticed more than once the sinewy fingers of the Chinaman. As the inquest proceeded, he had again and again looked at the hands and arms of Orlando, and it had seemed impossible that, strong as he was, his fingers had the particular strength which could have done this thing.

THE Coroner stood waiting for Rada to come, when suddenly the door opened and a Chinaman entered—one of the two who had appeared so strangely on the scene the day before. He advanced to the Coroner with both hands loosely hanging in the great sleeves of his blue padded coat, his eyes blinking slowly underneath the brown forehead and the little black skull-cap, and in curious, monotonous English with a quaint accent he said:

"Li Choo—Li Choo—he speak. He have to say. He send."

Holding up a piece of paper, he handed it to the Coroner and then stood blinking and immobile.

A few moments afterwards, the Coroner said: "I have received this note from Li Choo the Chinaman, sometime employed by the deceased Joel Mazarine. I will read it to the Court." Slowly he read:

" 'I say glod-dam. That Orlando he not kill Mazaline. I say glod-dam Mazaline. That Mazaline he Chlistian. He says Chlist his brother. Chlist not save him when Li Choo's fingers had Mazaline's throat. That glod-dam Mazaline I kill. That Mazaline kicked me, hit me with whip; where he kick, I sick all time. I not sleep no more since that time. That Louise, it no good she stay with Mazaline. Confucius speak like this: "Young woman go to young man; young bird is for green leaves, not dry

branch." That Louise good woman; that Orlando hell-fellow good. I kill Mazaline—glod-dam, with my hands I kill. You want know all why Li Choo kill? You want kill Li Choo? You come!' "

As the Coroner stopped reading, amid gasps of excitement, the Chinaman who had brought the note—with his brown skin polished like a kettle, free from wrinkles as a piece of marble, expressionless, save for the twinkling mystery of the brown eyes—made three motions of obeisance up and down with his hands clasped in the great sleeves, and then said:

"He not come you; you come him. He gleat man. He speak all—come. I show where."

"Where is he?" asked the Coroner.

The Chinaman did not reply for a moment. Then he said: "He saclifice before you take him. He gleat man—come." He slip-slopped towards the door as though confident he would be followed.

TWO minutes afterwards the Coroner, Orlando, the Young Doctor, Nolan Doyle and the rest stood at the low doorway of what looked like a great grave. It was, however, a big root-house used for storing root vegetables in the winter-time. It had not been used since Mazarine arrived at Mayo. Into this place, not far from the house, Li Choo and his two fellow countrymen had disappeared the day before, when Mazarine, in his rage, had gone forth with the horsewhip to punish the "Chinky," as Li Choo was familiarly known on the ranch.

As they arrived at the vault-like place in the ground, which would hold many tons of roots, another Chinaman appeared in the doorway. He was one of the two who, in their sudden appearance and disappearance, had seemed like magic people to Mazarine the day before. He made upward and downward motions of respect with his clasped hands in the blue sleeves, and presently, in perfect English, he said:

"In one minute Li Choo will receive you. It is the moment of sacrifice. You wish him to die for the death of Mazarine. So be it. It is right for him to die. You will hang him; that is your law. He will not prevent you. He has told the truth, but he is making the sacrifice. When that is done you will enter and take him to prison."

The two constables standing beside the Coroner made a move forward as though to show their courage and determination to enforce the law without any palaver.

The Chinaman raised the palms of both hands at them. "Not yet," he said. Then he looked at the Coroner. "You are master. Will you not prevent them?" he asked.

The Coroner motioned the constables back. "All right," he said. "You seem to speak good English."

"I come from England—from Oxford University," answered the Chinaman with dignity. "I have learned English for many years. I am the son of Duke Ki. I came to see my uncle, the brother of Duke Ki. He is making sacrifice before you take him."

"Well, I'm blasted," said Jonas Billings from the crowd. "Chinese dukes, eh! What's it all about?"

"Reg'lar hocus-pocus," remarked the brother of Rigby the chemist.

AT that moment little colored lights suddenly showed in the darkness of the root-house, and there was the tinkling of a bell. Then a voice seemed calling, but softly, with a long, monotonous, thrilling note.

"Many may not come," said the Chinaman at the door to the Coroner, as he turned and entered the low doorway.

A minute afterwards the two constables held back the crowd from the doorway of the root-house, from the threshold of which a few wooden steps descended to the ground inside.

A strange sight greeted the eyes of those permitted to enter.

The root-house had been transformed. What had been a semi-underground place composed of scantlings, branches of trees and mother earth, with a kind of vaulted roof, had been made into a sort of Chinese temple. All around the walls were hung curtains of black and yellow, decorated with dragons in gold, and above, suspended by cords at the

four corners, was a rug or banner of white ornamented with a great tortoise—the sacred animal of Chinese religion—with gold eyes and claws. All round the side of the room were set colored lights, shaded and dim. Coming from the bright outer sunlight, the place in its mysterious and shadowed state seemed half-sepulchral.

When the Coroner, Orlando, the Young Doctor and the others had accustomed themselves to the dimness, they saw at the end of the chamber—for such in effect it had been made with its trappings and decorations—a figure seated upon the ground. Near by the figure, on either hand, there were standards with banners, and the staffs holding the banners were bound with white silk, with long streamers hanging down. Half enclosing the banners were fanlike screens. Along the walls also were flags with toothed edges. The figure was seated on a mat of fine bamboo in the midst of this strange scheme of decoration. Behind him, and drawn straight across the chamber, was a sheet of fine white cloth, embroidered with strange designs. He was clothed in a rich jacket of blue, and a pair of sandal-like shoes was placed neatly in front of the bamboo mat. On either side and in front of all, raised a little from the ground, were bowls or calabashes containing fruit, grain and dried and pickled meats. It was all orderly, circumspect, weird and even stately, though the place was small. Finally, in front of the motionless figure was a tiny brazier in which was a small fire.

BEFORE the spectators had taken in the whole picture, the Chinaman who had entered with them came and stood on the right of the space occupied by the mat, near to the banners and the screens, and under a yellow light which hung from the vaulted roof.

The figure on the fine bamboo mat was Li Choo, but not the Li Choo which Mayo and Askatoon had known. He was seated with legs crossed in Oriental fashion and with head slightly bowed. His face was calm and dignified, and had an impassiveness which made an interminable distance between him and those who had till now looked upon him as a poor Chinky, doing a roustabout's work on a ranch, the handy-man, the Jack-of-all-trades. Yet in spite of the menial work which he had done, it was now to be seen that the despised Li Choo had still lived his own life, separate, Eastern and removed by centuries and innumerable leagues from his daily slavery.

As they looked at him, brooding, immobile, strange, he lifted his head, and the excessive brightness of his black eyes struck with a sense of awe all who saw. It was absurd that Li Choo, the hireling, "Yellow-phiz," as he had been called, should here command a situation with the authority of one who ruled.

Presently he spoke, not in broken English, but in Chinese. It was interpreted by the Chinaman standing on the right by the banner and the screens, in well cadenced, cultured English.

"I have to tell you," said Li Choo—the other's voice repeated the words after him—"that I am the son of greatness, of a ruler in my own land. It was by the Yangtze-Kiang, and there were riches and pleasant things in the days of my youth. In the hunt, at the tavern, I was first amongst them all. I had great strength. I once killed a bear with my bare hands. My hands had fame.

"I had office in the city where my cousin ruled. He was a bad man, and was soon forgotten, though his children mourn for him as is the custom. I killed him. He gave counsel concerning the city when there was war, but his counsel was that of a traitor, and the city was lost. Now behold, it is written that he who has given counsel about the country or its capital should perish with it when it comes into peril. He would not die—so I killed him; but not before he had heaped upon me baseness and shame. So I killed him.

"Yet it is written that when a minister kills his ruler, all who are in office with him shall without mercy kill him who did the deed. That is the law. It was the word of the Son of Heaven that this should be. But those who were in office with me would not kill me, because they approved of what I did. Yet they must kill me, since it was the law. What was there to do but in the night to flee, so

"She was sittin' on a bench in the gardin', lookin' in front of her and seein' nothin' but what was in her mind's eye."

that they who should kill me might not obey the law? Had I remained, and they had not obeyed the law, they also would have been slain."

He paused for a moment and then went on. "So I fled, and it is many years since by the Yangtze-Kiang I killed my ruler and saved my friends. Yet I had not been faithful to the ancient law, and so through the long years I have done low work among a low people. This was for atonement, for long ago by the Yangtze-Kiang I should have died, and behold, I have lived until now. To save my friends from the pain of killing me I fled and lived; but at last here at this place I said to myself that I must die. So, secretly I made this cellar into a temple.

"That was a year ago, and I sent to my brother the Duke Ki to speak to him what was in my mind, so that he might send my kinsmen to me, that when I came to die, it should be after the manner ordained by the Son of Heaven; that my body should be clothed according to the ancient rites by my own people, my mouth filled with rice, and the meats and grains and fruits of sacrifice be placed on a mat at the east of my body when I died; that the curtain should be hung before my corpse; that I should be laid upon a mat of fine bamboo, and dressed, and prepared for my grave, and put into a noble coffin as becomes a superior man. Did not the Son of Heaven say that we speak of the *end* of a superior man, but we speak of the *death* of a small man? I was a superior man, but I have lived as a small man these many days; and now it is so that I am drawing near to my end as a superior man.

"I desired that nothing should be forgotten; that all should be done when I, of the house of the Duke Ki, came to my superior end. So, these my kinsmen came, these of my family, to be with me at my going, to call my spirit back from the roof-top with face turned to the north, to leap before my death-mat, to wail and bare the shoulders and bind the sackcloth about the head.

"I have served among the low people doing low things, and now I would die, but in the correct way. Once to the listeners Confucius said: 'The great mountain must crumble; the strong beam must break; the wise man must wither away like a plant.' So it is. It is my duty to go to my end, for the time is far spent, and I should do what my friends must have done had I stayed in my ancestral city."

AGAIN he paused, and now he rocked his body backward and forward for a moment; then presently he continued: "Yet I would not go without doing good. There should be some act among the low people by which I should be remembered. So, once again, I killed a man. He could not withstand the strength of my fingers—they were like steel upon his throat. As a young man my fingers were like those of six men.

"Shall a man treat his wife as she, Louise, was treated? Shall a man raise his hand against his wife, and live? Also, was he to live—the low man—that struck a high man like me with his hands, with the whip, with his feet, stamping upon me on the ground? Was that to be, and he live? Were the young that should have but one nest to be parted, to have only sorrow, if Joel lived? So I killed him with my hands" (he slightly raised his clasped hands, as though to emphasize what he said, but the gesture was grave and quiet) "—so I killed him, and so I must die.

"It was the duty of my friends to kill me by the Yangtze-Kiang. It is your duty, you of the low people, to kill me who has killed a low man; but my friends by the Yangtze-Kiang were glad that the ruler died, and you of the low people are glad that Joel is dead. Yet it is your duty to kill me......But it shall not be."

He reached out his hands quickly and drew the burning brazier close to his feet; then, suddenly, from a sleeve of his robe he took a little box of the sacred tortoise-shell, pressed his lips to it, opened it, poured its contents upon the flame, leaned over with his face close to the brazier and inhaled the little puff of smoke that came from it.

So for a few seconds—and then he raised himself and sat still with eyes closed and hands clasped in his long

sleeves. Presently his head fell forward on his breast.

A pungent smell passed through the chamber. It produced for the moment dizziness and confusion in all present. Then the sensation cleared away. The Chinaman at the right of Li Choo looked steadfastly at him; then all at once he bared his shoulders and quickly bound a piece of sackcloth round his head. This done, he raised his voice and cried out with a curious, monotonous ululation, and at once a second voice cried out in a long wailing call.

Li Choo's kinsman, with his face turned to the north, was calling his spirit back, though he knew it would not come.

AT the first sound of the voice crying outside, the Chinaman beside Li Choo leaped thrice in front of the brazier, the mat and the moveless body.

At that moment the Young Doctor came forward. He who had leaped stood between him and the body of Li Choo.

"You must not come. Li Choo, the superior man, is dead," he protested.

"I am a doctor," was the reply. "If he is dead, the law will not touch him, and you shall be alone with him, but the law must know that he is dead. That is the way that prevails among the 'low people,' " he added a little ironically.

The Chinaman stood aside, and the Young Doctor stooped, felt the pulse, touched the heart and lifted up the head and looked into Li Choo's sightless eyes.

"He is dead," he said, and he came back again to the Coroner and the others. "Let's get out of this," he added. "He is beyond our reach now. No need for an inquest here. He has killed himself." Then he caught Orlando's hand in a warm grip. There were tears in Orlando's eyes.

As they left the chamber, the kinsman of Li Choo was gently laying the body down upon the bamboo mat. At the doorway the other son of the Duke Ki was still monotonously calling back the departed spirit.....

The inquest on Joel Mazarine was ended presently, and Nolan Doyle and the Young Doctor set out to tell Louise that a "low man," once her husband, had paid a high price for all that he had bought of the fruits of life out of due season.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Youth Has Its Way

"AW, Doctor dear, there's manny that's less use in the wurrld than Chinamen, and I'd like to see more o' them here-away," remarked Patsy Kernaghan to the Young Doctor in the springtime of another year. "Stren'th of mind is all right, but stren'th of fingers is better still."

"You're a bloodthirsty pagan, Patsy," returned the Young Doctor.

"Hell to me sowl, then, didn't Li Choo pull things straight? I'm not much of a murd'ring man meself — I haven't the stren'th with me fingers, but there's manny a time I'd like to do what Li Choo done. Murder is murder, of course, and ould Mazarine didn't have much time to make ready, but then, wasn't he a holy man in his own sight? He wouldn't ha' thought there was anny need for pinitence or prayer. Aw, no, that kind don't need absolution. It's with them in their pockets always...... Shure, I don't want to be speakin' ill of the dead, but look at it now. There he was breakin' the poor child's heart, as fine a fella as iver trod the wurrld achin' for her, and his life bein' spoilt by the goin's on at Mayo. Then in steps the Chinky and with stren'th of mind and stren'th of fingers puts things right."

"Yes, that's all very well, Patsy," remarked the Young Doctor, "but the population of Chinkies hereabouts would have to be much larger if, whenever things were to be put right, the fellow that put them right must kill himself as Li Choo did. No, no, Patsy, you've got bad logic and worse morals in your head. As you say, things were put right, but trouble enough came of it. Youth didn't have its way all at once, and there seemed a chance of its not having its way at all, even after Li Choo had done his work."

"Divils, me darlin' Doctor, it was bound to come all right some time. Shure, wasn't it natural that the child

should be all crumpled up like, and lose her head for a while? Wasn't it natural she should fight out against takin' the property the Leviathan left her, whin she knew there was another will he'd spoke on a paper to the lawyer the night he died, though he hadn't signed it? Wasn't it like her not to want to take a penny of it? And isn't it so that yourself it was that talked her round! Man alive, but the way you done it was clever enough even for a clever man, as y' are."

The Young Doctor waved a hand reprovingly, but Patsy continued:

"Now, lookin' back on it, don't ye think it was clever enough that you said till her? 'Do justice to yourself and to others, little lady,' sez you. For there was other children that Joel had by his first two wives, and he hadn't willed them a penny, havin' left it all to the young wife, in his will made soon afther he married her, bein' pleased with her, as why shouldn't he be, the ould rapscallion! So you said till her, 'Be just—divide the place up; give two-thirds of it away and keep one-third, which is yours by law in anny case. For why should it be that you should give iverythin' and get nothin'? He had the best of you — of your girlhood and your youth,' sez you. 'Shure y'are entitled to bread and meat, and a roof over you, as a wife, and as one that got nothin' from your married life of what ought to be got by honest girls like you, or by anny woman, if it comes to that,' sez you. Aw, shure then, I know you said it, because, didn't she tell it all to Norah Doyle, and didn't Norah tell Nolan, and me sittin' by and glad enough that the cleverest man betune here and the other side of the wurrld talked her round! Aw, the tongue you have! How you talk, y'r anner! Shure, isn't it the wonder that you don't talk the dead back to the wurrld out of which you help them? Mother of Moses, you could, you know, for y'are a great man. I might ha' been a great man meself" — he grinned—"if I'd had your eddication, but here I am, a 'low man' as Li Choo said, takin' me place simple as a babe."

"Patsy, you save my life," remarked the Young Doctor. "Many a time when body and soul were parting company—one of the earth earthy, the other of the heaven heavenly—you've kept them together."

Patsy took off his hat and scratched his head. "Now, how's that, Doctor dear," he said. "I can't follow you there!"

"Never mind," answered the Young Doctor, "but I'll tell you this: I like the ridiculous, and I'd rather laugh at a burlesque than cry at a tragedy, and you're a permanent burlesque, Patsy. You save my life daily. That's why I'm glad you're getting a good home at last."

"At Slow Down Ranch, with her that's to be its queen! Well, isn't that like her to be thinkin' of others? For what with her own money, and what'll be hers from the Leviathan, and what her husband-to-be owns — which'll be hers as much as his, for that's the nature of the two—she'll be a rich wumman. As a rule the rich is so busy lookin' afther what they've got that they're not worryin' about the poor; but she thought of me, didn't she?"

THE Young Doctor nodded, and Patsy pursued his tale. "Haven't I see her day in, day out, at Nolan Doyle's ranch, and don't I know her for what she is, and don't I understan' why it is she's not set foot in Mayo since the ould one left it feet foremost, for his new seven-foot home, housed in a bit of wood—him that had had the run of the wurrld? She'll set no foot in Mayo at all anny time, if she can help it—that's the breed of her.

"Yet I'm thinkin' she's glad Nolan Doyle bought Mayo, for there's somethin' of her that belongs there, and she'd have it taken care of by those that love her. That's me fancy, y'r anner, that somethin' of us stays in the place we lived in, almost as real as the flesh and bone of us—somethin' that'll reach out and touch a friend on the shoulder, and say, 'I'm here!'

"Well, I'm an ould fool, you think; but niver mind; we were both born in a country where fancy was truer than fact. Now, isn't it so?—though, sure enough, you only come from Inniskillen, not much of a place, neither north nor south, and I come from the blessed

south, full of vim and virtue. Still, you'll be knowin' the truth I'm tellin'."

"Yes, even a man from Inniskillen can understand what you mean, Patsy," replied the Young Doctor.

"Well, it is as it is, and what's goin' to be will plaze every mother's son in Askatoon. Giggles they called him! A bit of a girl they thought him! What's he turned out to be, though he's giggling still? Why, a man that's got the double cinch on Askatoon. Even that fella Burlingame has nothin' to say ag'in' him; and when Burlingame hasn't anny mud to throw, then you must stop and look hard. Shure, the blessed Virgin, or the Almighty himself, couldn't escape the tongue of Augustus Burlingame — not even you, Doctor dear."

The Young Doctor burst out laughing. "'The Virgin Mary, or the Almighty himself—even you, Doctor dear!' Well, Patsy, you're a wonder," he said.

"Aw, you're not goin' to get off by scoffin' at me," remarked Patsy. "Shure, what did Augustus Burlingame say of you?—well now, what did he say?"

"Yes, Patsy, what was it?" urged the other.

"Shure, he criticised you. He called you 'Squills,' and said you'd helped more people intil the wurrld than out of it."

"You call that criticism, Patsy?"

"Whichever way you look at it, hasn't it an ugly face? Is it a kindness to man to bring him into the wurrld? That's wan way of lookin' at it. But suppose he meant the other thing, that not being married, you—"

"Patsy Kernaghan," interjected the Young Doctor sternly, "you're not fit company. Take care, or there'll be no Slow Down Ranch for you. An evil mind—"

NOW it was Patsy's turn to interrupt: "Watch me now, I think that wan of the most beautiful things I iver saw was them two, Orlando and Louise—well, why shouldn't I call them that? everybody does now — was them two comin' together.

"Five long months it was after Mazarine was put away before she spoke with him. It was in the gardin at Nolan's ranch, and even then it wasn't aisy till her. Not that she didn't want to see him all the time; not, I'll be bound, that she didn't say, when you and Nolan first told her the mastodon was dead, 'Thank God, I'm free!' But the way of her bein' free made her sorrowful enough, for if he'd lived on he might ha' seen the wrong he'd done and been a better man. But, there he was, flung out of the wurrld without a minute's notice, and with the black thing in his heart. Shure, you'll be understandin' it a thousand times better than mesself, y'r anner."

He took a pinch of snuff from a little box, offered it uninvitingly to the Doctor and continued his story.

"Well, as I said, whin five months had gone by they met. By chanct I saw the meetin'. Only for a minute did I look at them; and I done it because I wanted to see that everything was right with them. That's why I took wan look before I run out of the place as if the polis was afther me. Watch me now, I'll tell you how it was.

"She was sittin' on a bench in the gardin, lookin' in front of her and seein' nothin' but what was in her mind's eye, and who can tell what she would be seein'! There she sat sweet as a saint, very straight up, the palms of her hands laid on the bench on either side, as though they was supportin' her—like a statue she looked. I watched her for manny a minute, but she niver moved. Divil me darlin', I'd like to have stood inside her mind that minute, and heard what she was sayin' to herself.

"Well, there she was, lookin'—lookin' in front o' her, when round the big tree in the middle of the gardin he come and stood forninst her. They just looked and looked at each other without a word. Like months it seemed. They looked, and looked, as though they was tryin' to read some story in each other's eyes, and then she give a kind of joyful moan, and intil his arms she went like a nestlin' bird.

"He raised up her head, and—well, now, y'r anner, once when I was young there was a girl. I was twenty-one and she seventeen, and wan beautiful mornin' I found me way to her lips—but there, I'm tellin' ye what happened to them two. I niver saw anything I liked better.

"She gave a kind of joyful moan, and intil his arms she went like a nestlin' bird."

Children, children, that's what they were —that's what they were! There niver had been a girl in his life, and there niver was a man in hers—not one that mattered, till they two took up with each other, and it's a thing—well, y'r anner, I'd be a proud man if I could write it down. It's a story that'd take its place beside the ancient ones."

The Young Doctor looked at Patsy meditatively. "Patsy," said he, "the difference between the north and the south of Ireland is that in the south they are all poets—" He paused.

"Well, you haven't finished, y'r anner," said Kernaghan.

"And in the north they think they are," continued the Young Doctor. "I'd like to see those two as your eyes in front of your mind saw them, Patsy."

"Aw, well then, you couldn't do it, Doctor dear, for you've niver been in love. Shure, there's no heart till ye," answered the Irishman, and took another pinch of snuff with a flourish.

FLAMINGO-LIKE in her bright-colored, figured gown, with a wild-flower in her hair and her gray curls dancing gently at her temples, a little old lady trotted up and down the big sitting-room of Slow Down Ranch, talking volubly and insistently. One ironically minded would have said she chirruped, for her words came out in not unmusical, if staccato, notes, and she shook her shriveled, ringed fingers reprovingly at a stalwart young man who had something of her variety but none of her garishness.

Once or twice as she seemed to threaten him with what the poet called

"The slow, unmoving finger of scorn," he giggled. It was evident that he was at once amused and troubled. This voice had cherished and chided him all his life, and he could measure accurately what was behind it. It was a willful voice. It had the insistence which power gives, and to a woman — or to most women — power is either money or beauty, since, in the world as it is, office and authority are denied them. Beauty was gone from the face of the ancient dame, so quaintly like the ill-starred Empress Eugénie after whom she was named, but she still had much money, and, on rare occasions, it gave her a little touch of arrogance. It did so now as she admonished her beloved son, who would have at any time renounced fortune, or hope of fortune, for some willful idea of his own. A less sordid modern did not exist. He was a great hand at a bargain, and he had a good head for business, but that was because, in the competition of life, he would not be "bested" if he could help it.

He was not very effective in the contest of tongue between his mother and himself. As the talk went on he foresaw that he was to be beaten; yet he persisted, for he loved a joy-wrangle, as he called it, with his mother, and he had argued with her many a time, just to see her in a harmless passion, and note how the youth of her came back, giving high color to the wrinkled face, and how the eyes shone with a brightness which had been constant in them long ago. They were now quarreling over that ever-fruitful cause of antagonism—the second woman in the life of a man. Yet, strange to say, the flamingo-like Eugénie Guise was fighting for the second woman, not against her.

"I'll say it all again and again and again till you have sense, Orlando," she declared. "Your old mother hasn't lived all these years for nothing. I'm not thinking of you; I'm thinking of her." She pointed towards the door of another room, from which came sounds of laughter — happy, boisterous laughter — in which a man's and a woman's voices sounded. "On the day she comes into this house—and that's the day after tomorrow—I shall go. I'll stand at the door and welcome you, and see that you have a good wedding-breakfast and that it all goes off grand, and then I shall vanish."

Orlando made a helpless gesture of the hand. "Well, Mother, as I said, it will make us both unhappy—Louise as much as me. You and I have never been parted except for a few weeks at a time, and I'm sure I don't know how I could stand it."

"Rather late to think about it," the other returned. "You can't have two women spoiling you in one house and being jealous of each other—oh, you needn't shake your head and toss your fingers! Even two women that love each other can't bear the competition. Just because I love her and want her to be happy, off I go to your Aunt Amelia to live with her. She's poor, and I'll still have some one to boss as I've bossed you. I never knew how much I loved Amelia till she got sick last year when everything terrible was happening here. I'm going, Orlando.

"Two birds hopping on one branch would kill the joy of Slow Down Ranch—

"There, I made that up on the moment. It's true, even if it is poetry."

"It isn't poetry, Mother," was the reply, and there was an ironical look in Orlando's eyes. "Poetry's the truth of life," he hastened to add carefully, "and it's not poetry to say that you could be a kill-joy."

The little lady tossed her head. "Well, you'll never have a chance to prove it, for I'm taking the express east on the night of your wedding. That's settled. Amelia needs me, and I'm going to her.....Your wedding-present will be the ranch and a hundred thousand dollars," she added.

"You're the sun-dried fruit of Paradise, Mother," Orlando said, taking her by the arms.

"I heard the Young Doctor call me a bird of Paradise once," she returned. "People don't know how sharp my ears are.....But I never stored it up against him. Taste is born in you, and if people haven't got it in the cradle, they never have it. I suppose *his* mother went around in a black alpaca and wore her

hair like a wardress in a jail. I'm sorry for him—that's all."

"Suppose I should get homesick for you and run away from her!" remarked Orlando slyly.

"Run away *with* her to me," chirruped Eugénie, with a vain little laugh.

Suddenly her manner changed, and she looked at her son with dreamy intensity. "You are so wonderfully young, my dear," she said, "and I am very old. I had much happiness with your father while he lived. He was such a wise man. Always he gave in to me in the little things, and I gave in to him in all the big things. He almost made me a sensible woman."

There was a strange wistfulness in her face. Through all the years, down beneath everything, there had been the helpless knowledge in her own small, garish mind that she had little sense; now she realized that she was given a chance to atone for all her pettiness by doing one great sensible thing, and leave a young wife to absorb her young husband, at great cost to her who had adored him ever since she gave him birth.

Orlando was about to embrace her, but she briskly turned away. She could not endure that. If he did it, the pent-up motherhood would break forth, and her courage would take flight. She was something more than the "parokeet of Pernambukoko," from a zoölogical garden, as Patsy Kernaghan had called her.

She went to the door of the other room. "I want to talk to the Young Doctor about Amelia," she said. "He's clever, and perhaps he could give her a good prescription. I'll send Louise to you. It's nicer courting in this room where you can see the garden and the grand hills. You're going to give Louise the little gray mare that you lassooed last year, aren't you? I always think of Louise when I look at that gray mare. You had to break the pony's heart before she could be what she is—the nicest little thing that ever was broken by a man's hand; and Louise, she had to have her heart broken too. Your father and I were almost of an age—he was two years older, and we had our youth together. And you and Louise are so wonderfully young, too. Be good to her, son. She's never been married. She was only in prison with that old lizard. What a horrible mouth he had! It's shut now," she added remorselessly.

Opening the door of the other room, she disappeared.

A MOMENT later, Louise entered upon Orlando.

The vanished months had worked wonders in her. She was like the young summer beyond the open windows and doors, alive to her finger-tips, shyly radiant, with shining eyes, yet in their depths an alluring pensiveness never to leave them altogether. Knowledge had come to her; an apprehending soul was speaking in her face. The sweetness of her smile as she looked at the man before her was such as could only be distilled from the bitter herbs of the desert.

"Oh, Orlando!" she said joyously, as she came forward.

THE END


## THE LAST SIWASH STORY

**WHEN death robbed the world of the fine humor of George Fitch, he was at work on a series of his famous Siwash stories for The Red Book Magazine. Only one was completed of the six stories he had planned. That one story—"Kettles and Bells" is the title—will be in the January Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands December 23rd. In many ways it is the best story George Fitch wrote.**

ELAINE was a sham from head to toe, but that was the least of her worries.

# A Wife From the Peacock Sextette

## By Ida M. Evans

Author of "Virginia," "The Kind Words Club," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F JAMES

ELAINE LORRAINE was a sham. A lovely, languid, scented, sacheted, affected, vain young sham, from her gold-brown knot of hair — which once had been a somewhat dull brown — to the lisle soles of her slim feet—for at the edge of her satin slippers that economical lisle changed abruptly to the sheer silk that it pretended to be all the way over heel and toe.

Elaine knew that she was a sham. But did she worry and give her lovely young self over to sad introspection, gloomy self-analysis or brooding?

Well, not so any audience, manager, dramatic critic or millionaire brewer's son could notice it.

Elaine would have shrugged pert, white-velvet shoulders at the idea. Didn't hundreds—thousands—nearly a million pert, white-shouldered chorus ladies share that sham? And didn't a big and perspicacious world tumble over itself paying two dollars a seat to look at her and her kind?

Her landlady knew that she was a sham. And Mrs. Jansen worried a trifle. But not excessively. Because, as she sagely confided to Mrs. McMullan, who kept the adjoining three mildewed, red-brick floors of Rooms-to-let, "I get my money in advance, *strictly*. Or out they

go. Hussies — that's what them chorus girls are. Every one of 'em would let a landlady starve to death as long as a pair of silk stockings hung on sale in a down-town store!"

Her roommate, Mildred de Courtney, —formerly Katy Plunski,—knew what Elaine was. But Mildred likewise was a sham, and worried only when she took time to reflect that the supply of millionaire brewers' sons was so small and the demands of chorus ladies so large.

Critics and managers knew very well that Elaine was a sham. But they had no thought or worry to squander on that trivial fact. Far more vital affairs busied their lives: criticisms written and unwritten, brand new calcium effects, the malignant shadow of ever-increasing photoplays, and the Decline of Musical Comedy, as evinced by ever-decreasing box-office receipts. As long as Elaine had big-enough eyes, pretty-enough poise of lovely-enough head, and graceful-enough bearing to inhabit correctly the sumptuous gowns of the Peacock Sextette of the "Lass We Adore" company, they did not care the price of a gallery seat in a nickelodeon that she was not really beautiful, that big eyes, lovely hair and rose-flame cheeks were offset by a weak, white, indeterminate line of chin over which a sculptor would have groaned.

Elaine's real name was Ella Lonnigan. But no one in theatrical or literary circles thought the worse of her for the euphemistic change. Mildred de Courtney often declared pettishly that there ought to be a law against such consonantal malformations as Lonnigan and Plunski.

Elaine's past— Well, that past, as Elaine retailed it, was not a sham. It was a series of shams. It was almost a thousand and one shams. It varied according to the credulity of the hearer and according to Elaine's mood and potency of imagination at the moment.

More than one pink-bulbed electrolier of Broadway restaurantdom knew it with the trite poor-proud-old-Southern-family setting. And the rosy lights twinkled mirthfully as Elaine, pensively sipping crême de menthe, her brown eyes tear-dewy, mourned over the slaves-and-fields-that-never-were of the grandfather-who-hadn't-been.

And a certain purple fountain in a certain gold grill tossed its waters high in amusement because Elaine under it had boasted prettily of the pluck that had brought her from a crude middle-West village to the tumultuous heart of the Thespian world. In that Western-crudeness setting, Elaine's parentage varied. Sometimes she mentioned a proud banker father who had disowned her; sometimes a mortgage-laden farmer father; once in a while a sad-eyed widowed mother. Sometimes she dispensed with parents and was simply an ambitious orphan; occasionally an aspiring and talented waif from the Golden State. And she had utilized the windy cornfields of Kansas as picturesque background for a dreamy, neglected, unkempt childhood.

However, she rather shied from Western nativity after one rude cosmopolite skeptically commented on the unwestern brevity of her *r's*.

But as for the clean-cut young business man back home, who had sulkily yielded her to the call of art, or the boy on the adjoining farm whose life was saddened by her departure, or the young divinity student, childhood chum, whom she had put aside for glory, or the harsh family friends who had cast her adrift because she sought a career — these Elaine had described so often and so deftly that they were not shams. They were creations.

The truth was that Elaine was born and passed most of her teens not very far from Fourteenth Street, and there her father still puttered unlucratively in a basement shoe-repair shop. And there her stepmother, a fat, untidy woman, vinegary of complexion and disposition, still alternately railed to the younger children at their half-sister's ungrateful departure for more congenial environment, and bragged to the neighbors over the family's proud connection with the Peacock Sextette.

And there occasionally — very occasionally—a duty visit was paid by Ella, — ex-Elaine for the nonce, — gowned smartly in velvet, cotton-backed, and wearing wide furs called ermine by

Occasionally—very occasionally—a duty visit was paid by Ella,—ex-Elaine for the nonce,—gowned smartly in gan's sand dunes in the form of cotton-tail. These duty visits were looked forward to

courtesy, but which once had roamed Michigan's sand dunes in the form of cotton-tail.

These duty visits were looked forward to and enjoyed by the neighbors of the Lonnigans and by Elaine's young half-sisters.

THE same purple fountains and pink-bulbed electroliers that splashed and glowed amusedly over Elaine's picturesque pasts, heard her pretty, pathetic allusions to her ambition, a mighty thing, which harried her mercilessly. And purple spray and rose light shook with merriment.

For, with Elaine, ambition too was a sham; the biggest of her big shams. It was a myth, a joke, a piece of humbug. If any unwitting manager—though one so unwitting had never appeared—had suddenly shoved a three-line part at her, with growled orders for her to burn a little midnight oil getting letter-perfect in it in, say, three days, Elaine Lorraine would have removed her lazy young self shudderingly and hastily from that brutal manager's vicinity. The only oil in whose consumption around midnight Elaine was interested was superfine olive oil stirred succulently over romaine and crab-meat and accompanied by a tasteful-tinted liquid such as a pousse café.

And with Elaine, love also was a sham. Though she frequently and ar-

velvet, cotton-backed, and wearing wide furs called ermine by courtesy, but which once had roamed Michi-
and enjoyed by the neighbors of the Lonnigans and by Elaine's young half-sisters.

dently assured Hanny Kauser, middle-aged son of old Kauser, a rich brewer, that she counted each night lost whose high, ascending moon viewed not him in his wistaria limousine waiting to gladden her eyes and save her carfare, she confided to Mildred de Courtney frequently and peevishly that she'd almost rather take the subway than listen to the fat, pompous little worm's prosy, pompous line of talk.

But such peevish confidence was likewise tinctured with sham—as strongly as Elaine's complexion was tinctured with artificial rose-flush. For when one night Mildred took her at her word and relieved her of Hanny and herself rode off in the wistaria car (it developed later that Hanny was more pompous than obtuse and did not quite accept all of Elaine's ardent assurances), Elaine pouted with jealousy and for three frosty days ignored her roommate.

But Elaine's jealousy was a substanceless emotion, and lacked staying power. At the end of the three days she had a supper engagement with the cultured young son of the uncultured old owner of an endless chain of cheap but profitable eating-houses. Her own bleached-cotton-tail ermine seemed inadequate to the occasion. Mildred's near-seal coat edged with near-martin tantalized her with its appropriateness. So she airily ignored the previous ignoring and requested its loan.

"Sure," said Mildred at once, and friendlily fastened some sweet peas on the near-martin revers. Mildred had her failings. She was prone to borrow small sums which she never repaid, and she grafted her rice powder from a friend's cache. And she was quite disrespectful to her father, Abram Plunski, a bearded, unbathed dealer in second-hand clothes, when the old gentleman happened to meet her in the street and in an excess of paternal feeling allowed passers-by to become aware of the relationship between them. But she had the one big virtue of being a peace addict; especially toward Elaine, with whom she shared her bed and chiffonier. Quarreling at such close quarters made Mildred nervous.

As she fastened on the sweet-peas—Hanny's purchase, by the way—she tendered tentative apology: "If I'd dreamed that you'd care, dear! Anyway,"—soothingly, — "you've still got the innings, Elaine. He said—"

"Oh, you're welcome to him," Elaine declared generously. Like a gormand, she gently sniffed the fragrance of the pink and mauve flowers, and then preened in the fur coat before the mirror. Against the high, dark collar, her neck was a white-velvet curve of temptingness. She saw it. Satisfaction lay bright in her brown eyes. And then she turned her generous declaration inside out and frankly exposed its very selfish lining by bragging of Hanny's successor in her favor.

"Hanny,"—with a slighting emphasis that put Hanny in the category of such trivialities as goobers, canceled postage stamps and empty cold-cream jars,—"is hardly worth quarreling over."

And Elaine, coated in fur and vanity, sailed out, her brown eyes topaz pools of complacency.

ALAS for Elaine! She was due to be chastened, and the chastening was even then on its way. For Harold O'Carney had his own share of complacency; that intolerable complacency which so often sprouts, weedlike, in the pampered, silk-socked grandsons of pick-wielding, sockless grandfathers. Young O'Carney's grandmother had dragged a plow over a field in her native land. Young O'Carney was finicky about the temperature of finger bowls in his native land, and he had a large idea that iced champagne, hothouse cantaloupes, yachts, Pullman porters, Havana tobacco and Peacock Sextettes were manufactured by an all-loving Omnipotence simply to make pleasant his way from rosewood cradle to rosewood coffin.

His tone toward Elaine was the same that a Pullman darky, white teeth wide in a tip-expectant smile, joys to attend.

Elaine sulked under it. Hanny's pomposity had had a deference that spoiled her. She raised her weak, pretty chin in the high-and-mighty manner that a stage director had spent many tense hours teaching the Peacock Sextette to assume.

Young O'Carney's short, applauding, patronizing laugh was precisely the same which he emitted when he sat in the dress circle.

Elaine resented the laugh. As applause it was out of place.

Young O'Carney was irritated by her resentment. He did not admire conceited women. To take some conceit out of her, he descended to personalities—his grandparents had been inclined to rudeness—and made fun of Elaine because her fur coat had no right to the name by which it went. Elaine, furious, was tempted to disown the garment. But she would not give him the satisfaction of knowing that she had borrowed clothes to do him honor. She finished her supper sulkily. But she finished it. Elaine was fond of supper.

At its close, she yanked down a curtain of dislike on her acquaintance with the rude young man paying for it. And the next day when her eyes fell upon Hanny Kauser pompously but patiently waiting in his wistaria car, they lighted amiably, and she stepped in and leaned against the orchid-tinted leather seat-back with a comfortable sense of getting home.

Hanny was fond of Elaine; against his will, against his intuition, against all his pompous, uneasy, middle-aged judgment. He was gloomily certain that she was not the stuff out of which good wives are made. But he had arrived at a frame of mind and desire to resent this certainty. At times he almost persuaded

himself to be hopefully certain that she was too sweet and lovely and white-chinned to make anything but the best of wives.

And now her pleasant little sigh of content as she leaned back in his car pleased him.

"I guess you don't exactly hate me, at that," he hazarded. A certain wistfulness of longing took away some of the pomposity of his small round face.

Elaine looked affectionately at him. In that same affectionate way she often looked at lobster à la Newburg. After the hot, tiring matinée, the swift ride cooled her and made her feel tender toward anyone who happened to be near.

"I don't know anyone in the world whom I like any better," she assured him with prompt politeness. And the assurance was a truthful one. At the moment she was indeed quite fond of Hanny, his attitude and his car. Hanny had relighted the torch of vanity which O'Carney had extinguished. Anyway, besides her own ease-loving young self, there really was no one in the world of whom Elaine was fond.

But Hanny was not clever. Instead of keeping that relighted torch turned rather low, which would have insured a longer and more appreciative fondness from Elaine Lorraine, he turned it so high that its bright flare dazzled her.

Shoving aside judgment, will and intuition, he asked her to marry him.

Elaine's brown eyes blinked. She had not expected this. Gratification put sparkles in each brown iris. And her very excellent opinion of her desirable young self shot up several degrees.

She declined, very promptly, but very politely.

"I'm afraid we aren't—just suited to each other," she said, with a suggestion of humility.

It was a fraudulent suggestion. What Elaine really meant was that Hanny Kauser's middle age, prosy ways and round, pompous features didn't suit her critical young taste—or at least wouldn't until she should have lived a few years longer and could be sure that nothing better in the way of romance and comfort would be proffered to her on this planet.

Hanny caught the humility. But he did not dissect it.

"Oh, I am sure we are," he protested, though he had spent many past weeks doubting it,—"perfectly suited."

"I'm afraid not," sighed Elaine, positively, with sparkling eyes.

"I'd be good to you,"—wistfully.

It was wasted wistfulness — at the time. Elaine, vanity-puffed, looked regretfully at Hanny's round, middle-aged face — and ungratefully wished that a less pompous-featured man owned the comfortable car and loved her.

"I couldn't think of giving up my career," said she, nicely, quite in the manner appropriate to the sentiment.

"Oh—your career!" Hanny said it shortly. He had a portion of wisdom.

Elaine took this aspersion with Christian gentleness. "It isn't much of a career yet, I know,"—pathetically. "But by hard, conscientious work I hope—" Bitterly: "Do you know how that stupid, pale-eyed Langley happens to be leading woman? Simply because her sister's brother-in-law happens to be a second cousin of the stage director's wife!"

Hanny apologized.

Mildred, hearing the next day, expressed herself with candor and disgust. "Well, believe me, my dear Elaine, Hanny Kauser is as excellent a career as *you'll* ever achieve!"

Elaine took this aspersion with pique. "Oh, I don't know! Some day I might meet—"

Rudely Mildred interrupted: "A beautiful, blond, well-proportioned youth who owns a super-soul and a third of Wall Street, I suppose! But, dearie, the combination is scarce, and there's a mighty mob of us waiting to give it the glad hand."

"Oh, I know," sighed Elaine, sadly. With world-weary eyes she examined the luster of her oval finger-nails.

Suddenly the world-weariness dissolved and a happy radiance replaced it. From her German-silver handbag Elaine took a small box. From the box a five-strand string of cream-white beads. "I forgot I had 'em,"—radiantly, as she clasped them about her neck.

"Pretty?" she pridefully demanded, tilting her gold-brown head this way,

then that, like a vain oriole preening over its own charming plumage. There was nothing of shy-woodland-violetism about Elaine.

"Swell," declared Mildred. "Where did you get 'em?"

"Would you believe me if I said they were real?" countered Elaine. "Real pearls!" Her voice lingered liquidly and caressingly over the words.

Mildred promptly answered: "Nope!"

At this frankness, Elaine crossly pouched her lips. "How do you know they're not real?"

Mildred snickered. "I don't, dear. But I know you."

"Maybe some man gave 'em to me!" Elaine again tilted her head vainly. "Such generosity has been known to happen to ladies in our profession."

"Most of such happenings take place in the exciting and gaudy Sunday supplement," — cynically. "My dear Elaine, if any unwary fellow ever let go of a present like that—real, I mean—to one of us, he'd have to flee the country for his life. Every theatrical female from the Keystone reels to the Brieux clinics would coop on his front doorstep for the rest of her natural life."

Elaine was pained, and pouted accordingly.

"That's all right! But if I was lounging in some darned old billionaire's grand-opera box wearing these and a bored look between a diamond aigret and a thousand dollars' worth of imported dressmaking, you'd think of course they were real, and you'd be blue with envy! They *look* real!"

"But you are not lounging in a billionaire's box, dear one," taunted Mildred. "Nor are you gowned by Poiret. You are hunched in a holey cane rocker in old Jansen's halliest bedroom, wearing a worse-for-wear Japanese cotton-crêpe kimono that in its palmiest days was worth only eighty-nine cents. Therefore I adduce, taking into consideration"—with soft giggle—"the very brassish appearance of the clasp, that the jewels came from Wanacooper's basement, and stood

Young O'Carney was irritated by her resentment. He did not admire conceited women. To take some conceit out of her, he descended to personalities—his grand parents had been inclined to rudeness—and made fun of Elaine because her fur coat had no right to the name by which it went.

you—say, honest, Elaine, how much were they?"

"They look *just* as pretty as the real ones!"

"They do look good,"—admiringly. "How much were they?"

"Two-ninety-five,"—crossly.

"Where? I want some too."

"At Wanacooper's," — mournfully. "Right back of the hair-goods." Then Elaine sniffed softly. "Of course they're not real, and no one will ever think they are! Nothing of ours is real, but some lucky women—"

"Since there's no matinée to-day, we can poke around the stores," said Mildred. She scrambled out of her kimono and plastered her brunette skin with cold cream. "Come on."

An expression of weary gloom spread over Elaine's pretty face. "I can't,"—sadly. "I've got to go home to-day and see the folks."

"Dear me!"—sympathetically. "What a shame! Do you really have to go?"

"I haven't been there for months."

BUT though Elaine's pretty voice held melancholy, it was not the melancholy of *Heimweh*. And though a variety of emotions was stamped in her pretty face as later, her pretty skirts finically drawn tight, she toiled up a narrow and ugly stairway, you could have looked long and hard and not discovered yearning affection in that variety. Instead, there were distaste, impatience, dissatisfaction, a sort of irritable pity and a sort of pitying pain as she greeted a small mob of half-sisters and half-brothers, a neighbor or two and her untidy stepmother.

Elaine's greetings were short; they ended in a shrill, horrified cry. There was a person there whom Elaine had never seen, whom she never expected to see, of whom she had never heard. It was a very small person, about eleven inches long, sixteen days old, red-faced, squirmy, squawky, robed in soiled white Canton flannel. Its squawk was ear-splitting. Obviously it did not like this world into which it had so lately been ushered.

"Ma!" cried Elaine. "Not another! Surely not!"

Mrs. Lonnigan shifted it from one arm to the other while she got a chair for Elaine. "Yes," — peevishly, — "another."

"Awful!" breathed Elaine, distaste-filled eyes on the tiny, unsightly Canton flannel *robe de nuit* of her newest half-brother.

Now, Mrs. Lonnigan had often, loudly and bitterly expressed precisely the same sentiment, both before and since the undesired arrival of her small, squally son. She had held indignantly that nine offspring were enough, and more, for any woman to add to the population of a hard world. But lingering maternalism was aroused and antagonized by her pretty, prosperous—in her eyes — stepdaughter's disapproving attitude.

She gathered the small chunk of red-crinkled, squawking flesh close to her breast.

"I guess it's just as awful for him, poor little devil, as it is for anybody else," she remarked bitterly. "I guess he aint enjoyin' himself terribly well here with us. And he aint likely to!"

"I don't suppose he is," admitted Elaine, meekly. She gave the money in her Geman-silver bag, about two dollars, to her small sisters who hung near her, hungrily admiring her finery. Then she soon departed, with a last distasteful glance at the baby's nightgown. And outside she shivered daintily.

That night, while the Peacock Sextette was changing from emerald-spangled trains to turquoise-spangled tights, Mildred complained: "Say, Elaine, that sale of pearl beads lasted only that one day. And there were none for me to buy when I went this afternoon."

"You may have mine," said Elaine. "I don't want them."

"What's the matter with 'em?" Mildred suspiciously demanded.

"Nothing," Elaine assured her. "But —I don't need 'em. I've given my two-weeks' notice. I'm going to marry Hanny."

"My!" exclaimed Mildred. "But I thought" — maliciously — "you couldn't bear him—"

Elaine's pretty, petulant face assumed something of the meek look with which

she had accepted her stepmother's chiding.

"I guess there are worse lots in the world than Hanny," she said pensively.

And the next day Elaine spent one-fourth of her week's pay for flannel—soft, silky, embroidered white flannel.

Capricious Elaine! An hour later she found a marked-down chiffony embroidered white waist and wished she still had her money. But she pensively seemed not to hear Mildred's reminder that she could take the flannel to the return desk.

HANNIBAL KAUSER'S family and friends displayed none of that opposition to his marriage which is popularly supposed always to flare forth at such union of wealth and tarnished art.

For one thing, Hanny had very few friends, and none of those he had was intimate enough with him to poke an unfriendly finger of advice into his personal business.

His father had managed the brewery so wisely and so well that he had lost the habit of taking an interest in the affairs of other folks, even his own children. He judged that Hanny was old enough to take care of himself, anyway. Hanny's mother had never been encouraged by her husband to hand out her opinions on any subject whatever. Naturally she was too timid to do so in the case of her important oldest son.

Hanny's two married brothers were busy business men and too annoyed by their own wives to waste fretting minutes over Hanny's acquisition. His one single brother had been in Asia Minor some fifteen years, and only two postcards every other year linked him with the home folks. Naturally he didn't rave. Hanny's two sisters, both married, lived in another State. They were unfashionable, unimportant, unaggressive women, and were rather exhilarated by the addition of a real, live wonderful chorus girl to their unwonderful family circle. So Elaine had no cause to feel aggrieved by her welcome. And she didn't feel aggrieved. She didn't, in fact, bother her fair young head over the matter of her being welcome or unwelcome. She was too busy, for the first few months at least, testing the length of charge account over which Hanny's affection would stretch.

It stretched over considerable. Elaine went around singing to herself. And whatever the temperature of her wifely affection, her pretty face acquired a sweet serenity of expression that it had not known in chorus days. And she spent many satisfying hours contemplating her white neck in its many satisfying rows of real pearls.

But when Hanny asked her to drop Mildred de Courtney, she refused.

"Hanny!"—indignantly. "How could I do such a thing? Mistreat a girl who was my friend when I"—in gentle pathos—"had only a few friends!"

"Well, she isn't the kind I like to see my wife trailing around with," grumbled Hanny, with all a husband's pomposity.

But he was touched, nevertheless, by Elaine's gentle point of view.

As a matter of fact, the trailing around had consisted of two or three patronizing luncheons and motor rides. And Mildred, whose spirit was neither meek nor lowly, had been rather irritated by her former roommate's lady-of-leisure airs and benefactress-to-a-poor-girl-I-used-to-know attitude. At least, Mildred accused Elaine of such attitude. Elaine injuredly denied it.

"How can you imagine such a thing, Mildred?" she queried plaintively.

But there came a day when Elaine met Mildred in a tea-room and blandly did not see her. Mildred was accompanied by young O'Carney, which may or may not have had more to do with Elaine's poor vision than had her husband's wish. At any rate, Elaine rather ostentatiously flung open her long fur coat, which was sealskin, the realest seal that ever floundered from Arctic Ocean to ice-cragged coast. Hannibal Kauser had yielded four thousand good dollars for that coat.

Later Mildred called upon her and reproached her. "Is that the way to treat an old friend? Don't tell me you didn't see me!"

"My dear girl," said Elaine, languidly, patronizingly and kindly, "you should be more particular about the sort of men you pick up."

"Indeed!" snapped Mildred. "I like that—"

But Elaine compensated for the patronage by giving Mildred a brand new apricot chiffon gown.

"But it's new!" exclaimed Mildred, forgetting that she had ever been snubbed. "How very kind of you—"

"Not at all,"—candidly. "I can't wear it out. There's no sense in letting it hang on a nail while it goes out of style. Those sleeves wont be in next spring!"—mournfully.

Mildred examined the dress suspiciously. "Why can't *you* wear it?" she demanded.

"I am not going to be able to go any place to wear it," plaintively explained Elaine. "That is, for a while."

Mildred let the gown drop. "Oh—you mean—"

"Just that,"—with a sigh. "And I don't care a bit for children,"—woefully. "They're so noisy when they're little—and so cluttery around a house when they're bigger. And homely,"—with a shudder.

"Maybe it will look like you and not like Han—" Mildred stopped short, in some confusion.

"Heavens, I hope so!" cried Elaine. Then she stiffened, in tardy offense. "But I am *very* fond of Hanny."

"I should think you would be,"—enviously, folding the apricot chiffon. "I could be fond of a Billiken if he bought stuff like this. And thanks, awfully,"—with gratitude. "I need it to-night the worst way. Young O'Carney—son of *the* O'Carney who owns those doughnut-and-coffee places, you know—is taking me—"

Elaine tilted her soft white chin. "I can't see how you can endure the fellow!"

"We don't eat at Father's establishments," laughed Mildred. She added, rather cattily: "He isn't so bad. I've seen less desirable specimens." And, as if by accident, she looked toward a large, expensive picture of Mr. Hannibal Kauser which stood pompously on a dressing-table.

The glance was wasted. Elaine did not notice it. She was pensively looking into vacancy.

THEN for several months Elaine traveled toward a Valley concerning whose painful depth she had heard plenty. But in her shallowness and young ignorance, she had carelessly assumed that this painfulness and depth had been grossly exaggerated. And it was more in pettishness than in fear that she stepped down into it.

And immediately she learned that not one-fifth of its terrors had been appreciated or described.....

The old doctor in the room muttered angrily about late suppers, wine and high heels and mentioned the good old days when women lived naturally and had bodies that could stand a strain. A young doctor in the room spoke abstractedly of diet in general. The nurse looked for the chloroform.....

In another room, Hanny, who was fonder of Elaine than he was when he married her, laid his pompous, middle-aged face down on a green leather-covered writing-table and cried noisily.

After a long while, Elaine crept back and took hold of living again. Rather uninterestedly she acknowledged the small, red-crinkled, squawking item beside her. It did not seem, just then, worth all that travail.

Her chin, however, was no longer soft and white. It was blue. The flesh seemed to have been pinched away, leaving it hard and as sharp as a stalactite.

IT was several weeks later that Mildred de Courtney called.

Elaine was huddled in a chair. Her face seemed whiter and smaller and her brown eyes bigger than Mildred ever remembered having seen them. Nor did Mildred remember ever having seen so much worriment in those dusky eyes, even when landladies clamored loudest for non-existent dollars.

Hanny was at home. He had the habituated air of a man who has lately spent much of his time at home. Smirking with love and pride, he held out a small, red-round-faced, pompous-featured edition of himself.

Mildred inspected it dubiously.

"It's perfectly beautiful," said she, distastefully.

"That's what your son will be doing some eighteen years from

"Isn't it?" beamed Hanny. "And so big for his age! And strong!"

Mildred remarked that Elaine looked tired.

Elaine raised sad eyes. "I haven't slept for ten nights. The baby cries."

"If you'd let me take him into the next room where he couldn't disturb you, Mrs. Kauser," the nurse broke in.

Elaine looked at her resentfully. Then she turned back to Mildred. "We are afraid there is something seriously wrong with him. He is so restless sometimes."

"All babies—" began the nurse patiently.

Elaine looked at her hostilely. "And Dr. Robbins doesn't seem to understand—"

"I think I better call in a specialist," said Hanny, decisively.

"Couldn't you give him a sleeping tablet—or syrup—or whatever dope they keep for crying babies?" asked Mildred, sympathetically.

"What!" Hanny yelled in horror. "I guess not!"

"How *cruel!*" cried Elaine. And she too looked at Mildred with dislike.

Mildred began to feel uncomfortable—as well as bored. So she rose to go, explaining—in apology and in boast—that young O'Carney waiting below in his car would become impatient.

"He's got some car," she added. "And he's some spender,"—laughing.

Elaine's nose crinkled distastefully.

now. My! wont he scatter your cash down Broadway!"

That nettled Mildred—already considerably nettled.

"That's what your son will be doing some eighteen years from now," she said with a little, slightly rancorous laugh. "My!"—to Hanny,—"wont he scatter your cash down Broadway!"

Hanny laughed. "I dare say," indulgently.

But Elaine did not laugh. She straightened rigidly in her chair. And for once in her life, there was no sham connected with Elaine. Her lovely brown eyes distended with horror—real horror — absolute horror. Mildred was aghast. This was a stranger.

"My boy!" cried Elaine. *"My* son! Why, if ever I catch him *looking* at an actress or a chorus girl—" She turned in panic to Hanny. "Those awful, designing creatures—Hanny, I really don't think we ought to raise him in a city! There's so much temptation for a boy—"

"Well, for the—" But words failed Miss de Courtney. She silently turned to the door.

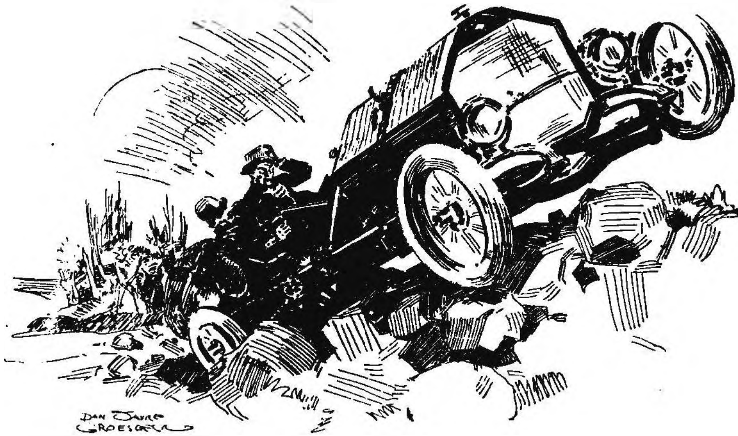
There, however, she bethought herself of a requiting shaft. She flung it back.

"He's the image of his father, Elaine dear!"

As a shaft, it was feather-frail and not the iron that she had imagined.

For Elaine looked down at her son, and she looked down pridefully. Moreover she looked down admiringly.

"The perfect image!" she agreed.



A STORY for those who like automobiles.

# The Chase of the Black Prince

By Edwin L. Sabin

Author of "The Hero," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

A FELLOW has a curious sensation when he hastens confidently out to mount his car—already starting it, in his mind, and rolling away — and doesn't find it. That sensation was Phillips'. He had left his car properly backed in to the curb, while he had transacted a little business on the fourth floor of the office-building; and now, when he had emerged, after a lapse of certainly not more than twenty minutes, the car had vanished.

There was the area which it had occupied; there even were, on the pavement, a few drops of grease, still fresh, marking the recent location, above, of the transmission case. Bewildered, Phillips thoughtfully felt the grease with his finger, to make certain of it. He knew that he was acting rather oddly, and he hastily responded to the quizzical gaze of a bystander.

"You didn't see anything of a car that was here?"

The man shook his head.

"No. What's the matter?"

"I left it here a few minutes ago, and now it's gone."

"What kind of a car?"

"A new Black Prince roadster."

"Yours?"

"Certainly."

"You'd better get busy then, Mister," advised the man, with a laugh. "Your car's probably been stolen. According to the papers, auto thieves are working overtime in this town."

"But they wouldn't take a car—a new car—from here in broad daylight," expostulated Phillips, further bewildered.

"Of course they would," retorted the man. "Why not? You got out; they got in." And several other persons, attracted by the conversation, nodded wisely.

"Sure," affirmed one of them. "Those auto-thief guys'll steal anything any time. They'll take the hind wheels off for the sake of the tires. I know a woman who had that done to her—and they left a note telling her she'd save money by using demountable rims instead of letting her casings freeze onto the wheels."

"Better get busy with the police, Mister, if you want your car again," urged the chorus.

"I guess you're right," agreed Phillips, alarmed, and he trudged away with a last backward look to make certain lest, after all, his new roadster might be somewhere among the other cars parked along the curb of the block. It wasn't.

AS a good citizen, Phillips went straight to the nearest traffic policeman and endeavored to interest him.

"My car's just been stolen, Officer."

The officer halted one pair of cross-currents, released the alternative pair and grudgingly lent Phillips an ear but not an eye.

"Who stole it?"

"How do I know?"

"How do I know, either?" returned the officer. "Move ahead, now; move ahead!"—this not to Phillips, but to a slow huckster. "What kind of a car?"

"A Black Prince roadster—new," informed Phillips. "I thought maybe you might have seen it pass."

The officer's answer was final.

"Aw, if I watched the make of every car that passed, I'd be bug-house in a day." He removed his ear and gave his back in place thereof. *Toot-toot!* he blew his whistle, signaling the other pair of cross-currents to flow. "Go down to the Station and report there; that's the quickest for you," he said over his shoulder.

Phillips hastily retired. His route to the police station took him by the service garage that he patronized, and he halted for a moment to apprise them of his misfortune and to ask them to keep a lookout.

"I know who can get your car back," put in one of the mechanics, hearing the proprietor readily promise to do all that he could.

"All right. Who?" invited Phillips.

The mechanic scratched his head and appealed to the boss.

"That little red-topped fellow who used to hang round here. Remember? *You* know him. Kind of a mechanic himself. Was making a machine out of a lot of junk. Pshaw! What was his name, now?"

The boss idly flipped the ashes from his cigarette.

"I don't know him," he said. "Know who you mean, is all. A red-haired kid."

"Sure, that's him," cried the mechanic, delighted. "Crazy about cars." He addressed Phillips. "I hear he's turned motor-car detective now. Some kid! That's what he calls himself—motor-car detective. If you can find him, I bet he can beat the police."

"Well, where can I find him?" demanded Phillips, agreeable but by no means convinced.

"Darned if I can tell you," confessed the mechanic. "Round some garage. I never did know where he lived. If I get onto him, I'll have the boss send you word."

"I think I'll try the police station, just the same," announced Phillips, starting away.

"'Phone," suggested the proprietor. "You can 'phone from here and save time."

"No, I'll go on down," answered Phillips. "I can stir them up more."

"All they'll do'll be to take your numbers and name, and say they'll let you know," called the mechanic after him. "You look up that red-headed kid. He's Johnny-on-the-Spot. See?"

PHILLIPS did not see that, yet, but he saw the desk-sergeant at the station, who, as the mechanic had indicated, wrote down his address, the name and numbers of the machine, and also gruffly informed him that they would do what they could. Really, there was not much else *to* be done; and having vainly essayed to impress upon the sergeant the great value of this particular car and the utmost necessity that it be recovered immediately, Phillips proceeded, rather hopelessly, to leave—when on the steps outside the station threshold he was hailed. A young fellow who had been in the sergeant's room had followed him out.

"I heard you talkin' to the Sarge," he continued. "Say—do you want to get that car back?"

"Certainly I do, and I intend to get it back," responded Phillips, sharply. "Why?" Was this a go-between?

"Let's take a walk, or some of these fly cops will hear and think I'm buttin' in." They walked. " 'Cause if you do, and want to do it quick, I know a party who's in the business and can beat the police a mile."

"A red-haired kid, I suppose," alleged Phillips, at a venture.

"You're on," approved the young fellow—who might have been anything in the loafing line. "Say! Who told you? The cops?"

"No."

"Not in a thousand years. He's only a kid amateur. But while the police are 'phoning and printin' handbills, he'll be Johnny-on-the-Spot." The coincidence in expression as well as in advice struck Phillips smartly. "You go find Brick Chapelli. Tell him somebody bummed your car and you need it bad, and if he doesn't get it back, he'll give you a good run for your money, anyhow. He lives up on Monson Street, in the nine hundred block, west side the street, third house from the corner."

"I see," quoth Phillips thoughtfully. "What's your interest in this?"

The young fellow laughed.

"Mine? I aint got none, except I'm a friend of Brick's. Everybody likes Brick."

"What will be *his* charges?"

"I don't know what. Whatever anybody wants to hand him, I s'pose, when he's made good. But he aint in it for the hand-out. He's in it for the fun. He's crazy on auto-*mo*-biles—gas engines and all that. If you don't find him at home, you'll find him at some garage—Pickering's, like as not."

"Brick, you say?"

"Brick Chapelli. Half Irish, half Italian—Monson near Ninth."

"All right. I'll see him — though I don't know who the dickens he is."

"Well, you will," assured the young fellow emphatically. "And you'll get your car, if it aint been scrapped."

That last remark spurred Phillips to undertake Brick Chapelli or any other possible source of succor. "If it aint been scrapped!" Horrors! His new car —his pride and treasure—"scrapped!" But thieves who would appropriate a car in broad daylight on a downtown thoroughfare would go to any lengths to handle it to their own advantage. He had no time to wait for a laggard trolley, and he toiled hotly up the short hill to Monson at Ninth — which wasn't far.

"Hello, yourself!" repeated the voice, alertly.

THE third house from the corner was a yellow cottage set slightly back between two larger houses which were not nearly so neat, Monson Street at this end being somewhat run down at the heels. A driveway ran back to a frame story-and-a-half garage in the rear. The doors of the garage were open; a machine was part in and part out; and from somewhere about it issued a cheery whistle—a human whistle.

Seeing nobody in front, Phillips followed the whistle. It guided him to a pair of legs projecting straight out from the interior of the machine—which appeared, in truth, to be very much of a rattle-trap, stripped to the bones—and rather weather-beaten bones, at that. But the whistle was inspiring.

Having no time for ceremony, Phillips interrupted.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello yourself." The legs, in their greasy overalls, lengthened, sought the floor, brought after them a body in shirt-sleeves, and a head. The head was thatched with closely curling thick hair of the richest bright auburn—not brick red, but auburn. Catch me? There the Roman had got a little the better of the Celt. The face which turned upon Phillips was a mixture. The good-humored mouth was Irish; so was the puggish nose; so was the flatness, sprinkled with freckles; so were the outstanding ears. But the eyes, of glowing brown, lustrous, almost doggish brown, historic in their depths, piercing in their scrutiny—they were Italian.

"Hello yourself," repeated the voice, alertly.

"I'm looking for Brick Chapelli," proffered Phillips—stammering slightly, for this evidently was Brick, and he was certainly a "kid," and a slight kid at that—wiry, perhaps tough, but not more than nineteen or twenty.

"Present," challenged Brick—it being Brick. "What's the trouble!"

"Somebody stole my car," blurted Phillips, "and I was told to come to you."

"I didn't take it," retorted Brick quickly (much as the traffic officer had said, before him). And his laugh revealed even white teeth. His eyes narrowed, and he wiped his hands on a piece of waste. "Pshaw, that's too bad," he murmured reflectively, scanning Phillips. "When?"

"About three quarters of an hour ago."

"Where?"

"From in front of the Exchange Building, while I was inside."

"New car or old?"

"A new Black Prince roadster."

"Huh!" And Brick seemed to revolve the matter under his auburn thatch while he absently re-wiped his hands, carefully cleansing the fingers. Phillips observed that they were tapering, shapely fingers.

"I was fixing a clutch and brake scheme I've got," Brick volunteered, half apologetically, half eagerly. "Great stunt! When I connect 'em up, I set the brake as I throw out the clutch. That's for traffic. Can keep the other foot on the floor-throttle for a quick get-away. If I don't want 'em to work together, like in the country or on a short coast, I can kick 'em apart. Climb in and we'll talk there," he bade. "I can think better when I'm in the car."

THEY climbed in. It was a divided seat, perched on the frame behind the rusty hood. The car, stripped speedster type, impressed Phillips as a toy. It was an old right-hand drive, outside control—an ugly, battered thing.

"How do you like the feel?" queried Brick, expectantly—referring to the seat.

It indeed was very comfortable, after all, and Phillips said so.

"Sure," affirmed Brick. "I made it—hung it to suit me. You can ride in this seat all day. Most seats are pitched too much, or else not enough. Give a fellow an ache in the knees or the back. But this is a peach. I made this car too, the whole thing. Cut down the body, slung it to the springs, hooked up the engine, geared her high. That's a sixty-horse-power engine, and the whole car weighs only a thousand pounds. She's as fast on second speed as lots of cars are on third." Enthusiasm had lighted his face, but suddenly he came down to business. "How long did you have your car?"

"About a month."

"How far had you run her?"

"Only some six hundred miles."

"New, was she? What model?"

"Model H, 1915, Black Prince roadster — electric starter, electric lighted throughout, Cyclops headlight—"

"I know," intercepted Brick. "Special motor; bore three and an eighth; stroke five and a quarter; geared four to one, on high; rated thirty-two and delivers about twenty-five; siphon cooling system; water capacity three and a half gallons. They geared her low so as to make it seem she had power, but with her high-speed engine I bet you she overheats. Doesn't she?"

"Oh, well, gets a little hot while she's new," granted Phillips, uneasy at the startling array of practical facts reeled off by this remarkable youth. "But it's a good car, and I want to get it back before it's scrapped or otherwise damaged. Can you do anything?" he added, impatiently.

"Sure I can," promptly encouraged Brick. "They wont scrap her. Scrap a new car—new as that one? Not on your life. Naw, and they can't change her much. They dasn't. They could wipe the varnish off her and tone her down and re-stencil her engine number—but that model's been on the streets too short a time yet for any of the cars to get used up. Besides, there's a new clutch throw-out, and none of the old ones will fit. They were darned fools to take a car like that one." He studied a moment; his brown eyes grew introspective. "Well, we wont find her in this town now; that's a cinch," he declared.

"We wont find her anywhere if we don't get a move on us," reminded Phillips, still impatient, "—unless the police have 'phoned ahead and stopped them."

"Do you see what time it is?" retorted Brick, pointing to the clock on the dingy dash. "Four. They took your car a little after three, didn't they? Some of the cops report every hour and some every two hours, and it'll be five o'clock before all the patrol boxes have rung up. You can bet that those fellows beat it past any patrol boxes. Either they were lucky or they did it on purpose. They wont risk tearing down a car like that in any local fence; they're out in the country for a joy-ride or else to sell her, first chance they get. They can re-stencil her engine number easy enough and change her State numbers and fake a bill of sale."

"Then for heaven's sake let's *do* something," urged Phillips. "If you're a motor-car detective, get busy."

"Sure," averred Brick. "I'm busy. An hour—she can't do forty miles in an hour without boiling, I bet you — not where there's grades."

"You don't seem to have a very good opinion of that car," accused Phillips.

"She's all right, for that kind of a boat," placated Brick. "But I know cars —that's my business, see? And I know her. She's new, besides. Any new car except the demonstrator is liable to overheat at first. And those fellows will drive for all she's worth. How's her crank-case? Full?"

"No. I was going to fill it again tomorrow morning. I put in about a pint and a half every hundred miles."

"She'll do worse than that on a long pull," nodded Brick. "How was the gas?"

"Plenty. Filled up yesterday."

"Well, it doesn't matter. Gas is easy to get. How about water?"

"Haven't noticed."

"They're liable not to, either," mused Brick. "The gas'll satisfy 'em. How's she shod? Original equipment—Paradox non-skids on rear, smooth treads in front?"

"Yes," said Phillips.

"How are they holding out? That first lot of Paradoxes was over-cured. Your Model H is equipped with the first lot—serial numbers up to five thousand."

"One of the front treads seems rather brittle. Sort of breaks. I've been stuffing it with tire dough," admitted Phillips.

"On the tread or sides?"

"Both. There's one bad place on the tread."

"How long ago?"

"Not long."

"Big spot?"

"Covers about an inch. I stuffed it in and hammered it flat."

"Wont last, on the tread. It'll stick out and roll at the edges and wear off. Good to keep the sand out, though. Which wheel?"

"Right."

"Huh! If those fellows are wise, they'll switch rear tires to something more common. Engine tire pump, haven't you? 'Twont take 'em long, then. All right. Ready to start? Wait till I put in the floor boards." He vaulted out.

"Start? Where?" ejaculated Phillips, thrown aback by the abruptness of the query—and of the activity which already was thrusting the floor boards under his feet.

"To get your car."

"Going to chase it?"

"I dunno. Might try to get near enough to smell it. What gas do you use?"

WHAT gas? Rather, what degree of amateur detective was this auburn haired "kid," rummaging so briskly amidst the clutter of his garage and at the same time hinting of tracing a car by smell!

"Talk sense," rebuked Phillips. "Think you *can* catch it?"

"I was bluffing you about smelling the gas," genially confessed the busy Brick. He sobered, and moved mechanically. "There might be something in that," he soliloquized. "Depends on the mixture, too. But there's a difference between the straight and the blends. Guess I'll work that out." He woke up. *"Catch* her! I can catch anything on wheels. I could catch her, running backward!" He removed the screw top of a pint can, sniffed critically, and with approving air replaced the top and tucked the can under the front seat, which had a drop door. "That's the stuff," he commented.

"What?"

"Wait and see. May not have to use it. Stand up a minute, will you?"

Phillips obediently stood. Brick raised the seat cushion, exposed a square tank, unscrewed the cap, peered in.

"Plenty," he remarked. "Thought there was, but always look. That's an auxiliary gas-tank—five gallons—feeds by gravity. Got a pressure twenty-five tank behind. Can use this little one in emergency, case I need more gas or big tank doesn't feed. Got it cut off now. All right."

He grabbed a battered old derby hat, with brim trimmed to a visor, and sprang in. "Ready? Let's beat it. What do you think of my top? Can't blow off and shades the eyes. Sheds water, too. Great invention."

With a smile Phillips rendered tribute to the ridiculous head-garb. Plainly enough, Brick was an independent cuss.

He kicked the switch to "On," shoved a pedal with his heel, and in a thunderous snort the engine began to drone.

"Made my own starter," he informed, proudly. "She works with a kick, but she always goes." He threw in a gear, and the car fairly shot from the garage. "Always start on third speed," he further informed. "Never monkey with first or second except on a grade or in the mud." They were into the street, and had turned up. "Now you're going to have some ride."

"But when do we get back?" faltered Phillips. "Where you going?"

"Going for your car. Why? You married?"

"Yes."

"Well, we wont stop to send word to your wife," chuckled Brick. "You'll see her again some time."

"Do you know where you're going?" demanded Phillips, jamming his hat tighter, for the car was picking up speed.

"Have an idea. Got a gun on you?"

"No."

"Neither have I."

"There's one in a pocket of the car, though," said Phillips, bethinking ruefully. "I do some night driving."

"The deuce there is," responded Brick, cheerfully. "We may have to use my dope after all."

"You make this a business, do you?" queried Phillips. "Finding stolen cars?"

"Sort of."

"Ever find any?"

"Sure. I've run down all that I've tackled, so far."

"Well, what are your charges?"

The car suddenly slacked.

"Want to quit it?" inquired Brick.

"No."

"If you do, that's up to you. But *I'm going to get that car.* I charge fifty dollars flat, when I fetch the car, and expenses while I'm doing it."

"Go ahead," bade Phillips. "That's not much."

The car shot forward.

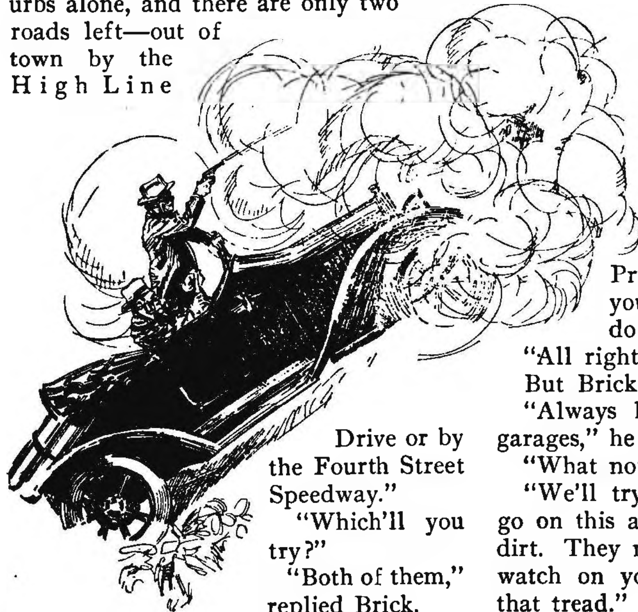
"It's enough for some people. Made a flat rate because a car's a car, and a cheap car means as much to its owner as a high-priced car does to another owner. My expenses aren't very fierce. Get twenty-five miles to a gallon of gas, and eight hundred to a gallon of oil, and I don't stop to eat. But if you didn't want to pay, you could have your car anyway, and I'd have had the fun."

"I'll pay, and glad to," assured Phillips. "But now that I've employed you, where are you going?"

"I figure if I was those fellows," reasoned Brick, staring straight ahead with keen lookout for cross-streets, as his machine gradually lengthened into its stride and at forty miles tore off the blocks, "I'd—"

"Aren't you afraid of the speed limits?" interrupted Phillips, nervously.

"Naw, I got a permit," scoffed Brick. "We aren't going fast, yet. But I figure if I was those fellows, with that car, I'd make for the open country by the shortest route, and I wouldn't run any chance of those suburban towns where the cops were waiting. First thing the police did was to 'phone out to the suburbs, you bet. So we'll let the suburbs alone, and there are only two roads left—out of town by the High Line Drive or by the Fourth Street Speedway."



"Which'll you try?"

"Both of them," replied Brick.

THE car swished along, now at forty-five miles. It answered without an effort to the least pressure on the throttle. Phillips had ridden in many cars, some of them large ones, the best made, but never before had he been in a car that had been stripped down to nothing *but* power—a car so full of bottled energy that it constantly threatened to run away with itself. What a dangerous, plug-ugly brute it was! However, Brick, driving easily, kept it in leash.

"There's no doubt that we can overhaul them in short order if we see them," ventured Phillips, admiringly.

"Shucks!" uttered Brick. "You'd think they were coming toward us instead of going away. But that Black Prince'd be only a mess of junk. Naw, we don't want 'em to wreck her. That's not the scheme. Wait a minute."

They were on the outskirts of the city, and here beckoned a sign: GARAGE. Brick halted sharply and jumped out, leaving the gaunt machine a-tremble with pent eagerness. He hailed the man who appeared in the garage doorway.

"Hello, Chris."

"Hello, Brick. Where you going?"

"Just trying her out. Did you sell that party a pair of tires?"

"What party?"

"Black Prince roadster. They wanted Diadem tires."

"Naw. I aint seen any Black Prince roadster, and I haven't sold a tire for a week."

"All right. Good-by."

"Say! Hold on, Brick."

"I'm in a hurry. But let me give you a pointer. If you see any Black Prince roadster come through, you telephone the police and do it quick. I'm warning you."

"All right, Brick."

But Brick was away.

"Always like to keep next to these garages," he said.

"What now?" asked Phillips.

"We'll try the other road. Want to go on this a piece yet, till I strike the dirt. They might have gone past. You watch on your side for the tracks of that tread."

They struck the dirt, but among the numerous tire tracks appeared no Paradox tread.

"Either they re-tired while they had time, before they got this far, or they didn't come through," vouchsafed Brick, turning off on a crossroad. "There's another garage on that other route."

"What makes you think they'd re-tire right in town?" asked Phillips.

"They'd have to. Your car wears a thirty-four, three and a half, rear. That's a size country garages don't carry, as a rule. Besides, they'd re-tire while they had time, before the police got busy. It's only twenty or thirty minutes out from downtown."

Brick was driving with disregard of bumpy crossings. After a cross-flight of a mile over dirt roads, he accurately debouched upon the Fourth Street Speedway, and in another block drew up before a second outskirts garage. The conversation here started off in much the same vein as before.

"Hello, Brick."

"Hello, Mike." Brick seemed to know everybody in the garage line. "Did you sell that Black Prince party those tires?"

"Naw, I didn't sell any Black Prince party those tires. You must think you've got something coming to you."

"You fellows couldn't sell a tire to a baby carriage," accused Brick, derisively. "Bet you haven't sold a tire for a week."

"Take you," replied the other. He called back through the doorway. "Oh, Joe! Sold any tires to-day?"

"Sold two half an hour ago," asserted Joe, defiantly.

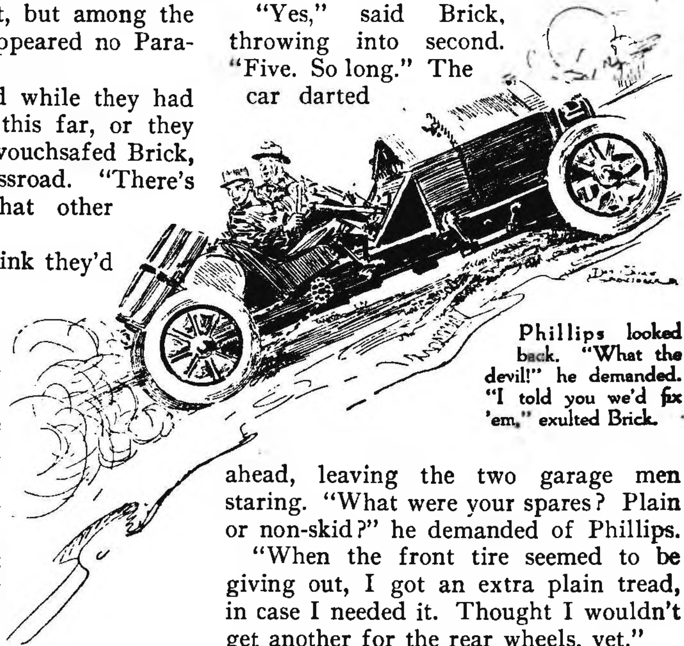
"Who to?" asked Brick.

"I dunno. Fellow came around on foot, paid his money and rolled 'em off."

"What size?"

"Goodspeed non-skids, thirty-four, three and a half." Joe appeared, in his creepers. "What's the matter with you? Lost any tires?"

"Yes," said Brick, throwing into second. "Five. So long." The car darted



Phillips looked back. "What the devil!" he demanded. "I told you we'd fix 'em," exulted Brick.

ahead, leaving the two garage men staring. "What were your spares? Plain or non-skid?" he demanded of Phillips.

"When the front tire seemed to be giving out, I got an extra plain tread, in case I needed it. Thought I wouldn't get another for the rear wheels, yet."

"That's the trouble in a car with two sizes of wheels," grumbled Brick. "But what do we care?" he added. "Now we know where we're at. We've got those fellows dead to rights. Bought two tires at once, see? Our size. Mighty few people buy two tires in a bunch. They're going to change those rear Paradoxes. The tread was a give-away. And they're no joy-riders, either. Joy-riders wouldn't have stopped for tires. They usually sprint as far as they can and trust to luck and quit. These fellows are stealing your car, not borrowing it — or else they're on a long hike."

"Do you think we'll catch them?" invited Phillips again. The matter looked serious.

"Do you want your car wrecked?" retorted Brick.

"Of course not."

"I'd a darned sight rather have my car stolen than borrowed," assured Brick. "You're apt to find a borrowed car in the ditch or lammed against a telephone pole. But these auto-thieves take a car to sell. Catch 'em? Catch 'em if we push 'em too hard; and then maybe we'll wish we hadn't. Wonder if they'll know enough to dose up their crank-case. You said she was low. Watch the road on your side, will you? Those rear

treads will show; they're new. They were pretty foxy to buy Goodspeed tires; the roads are full of Goodspeed tracks. But when they have to turn out, we'll get their front treads."

"Those are plain tread," reminded Phillips.

BRICK grunted. "Catch 'em — and then maybe we'll wish we hadn't," he had said. Watching the road, Phillips pondered over this remark. It sounded portentous. Brick was only a kid in overalls and fantastic derby; Phillips must confess that he himself was not much of a fighter; and they neither of them had a weapon, whereas the revolver in the pocket of the Black Prince probably had now been discovered, even if the thieves were not armed anyway, as no doubt they were. The fact was, no matter how smart on the trail Brick proved to be, the outcome of the chase was problematical when the two machines came together.

The car was making only forty miles —not nearly fast enough, as appeared to Phillips, torn with anxiety; and Brick had lapsed from his Irish buoyancy into a brooding silence which savored of the Italian in him. He musingly, almost moodily, kept his eyes upon the road.

The pavement continued, and automobile tracks were many on the asphalt, but all indistinct. However, at cross-streets dust and sand had been dragged athwart by the wheels of errant vehicles. Rounding a wide curve, Brick on a sudden braked so abruptly that the car slid. He backed up.

"Does your car leak grease?" he queried eagerly.

"A little from the transmission case, sometimes. Especially when it's too full. But," concluded Phillips defensively, "most cars do, don't they?"

Brick took no time to answer. He backed a few yards further, looking behind him, and halted. He jumped out.

"Here's where they changed those tires, I bet you," he cried, exultant. "A car's stood here, anyway. See that grease, where she dripped? Stopped in the right of way, too. They didn't turn off, but stopped in a hurry and got *to it*. Only one car went round 'em. 'Twouldn't take much time to jerk off those rims and casings and inflate the new casings with that engine pump. Sure, somebody stopped, all right, all right." He felt of the drops of liquid grease. "Guess they were warming her plenty," he commented. "You ought to have another gasket on that box."

"Grease hot?" ventured Phillips, excited.

"Naw, I should say not. They've too big a lead on us for that. If they'd have pulled out to one side, I believe I could see their tracks. Can't, here." And he squinted vainly along the pavement.

He resumed his seat, slowly rolled ahead, eyes upon the way. But he did not go far, scarcely beyond his former mark. The very next road intersection brought him to a halt again. Out he sprang. A sprinkling-cart had dampened the sandy clay collected at the pavement's edge, and through the short area were the tire tracks of an automobile.

"They wobbled," exclaimed Brick, highly pleased. "Must have been stowing away those extra casings. There's your new Goodspeed tread, following the plain tread; didn't quite cover. Wait a minute. You said that tire-dough patch was on the right front, didn't you? About an inch of it? Here it is." He measured with a pocket rule. "Little over an inch, but it would spread. I'll put the glass on it." He applied what seemed to be a pocket microscope, but when he passed it to Phillips, now also squatting over the track, it proved to be a reducing, not a magnifying, glass. It sharpened the definition of the small irregular depression which broke the smoothness of the track, and Phillips was almost convinced. "Looks good to *me*," asserted Brick. He hesitated no longer. In the car again, he started with a jerk. "Hold on to your hat. We're going to move," he warned.

THE skeleton car gathered speed. The speedometer rose to thirty—forty—fifty — fifty-five — sixty, with never a break, and only the figures on the dial, and the shrewd rush of the air humming in Phillips' ears and stinging his watery eyes, was warrant of the pace. The wheels clung to the way; the body gently

quivered, as if rejoicing; and the engine sung sweetly, with the low, eager whine of a zestful hound permeating its deep rumble of power.

"Pretty good old boat for a handmade out of junk," shouted Brick, peering before while he gripped the wheel. "That's a DeSelm motor. Bought it for a hundred dollars from a scrap-joint. Fitted it up. Can do eighty easy as sixty."

"Sixty's enough," shouted back Phillips.

Brick grinned.

They flashed past other cars; they surged in a twinkling from the paved to the dirt boulevard; the landscape on either side spun by, scarcely noted ere gone, and the road beneath flowed as swiftly and as steadily as endless belting. On the face of the speedometer mile followed so swiftly upon mile that each seemed to be shoved from place by its successor. Without apparent effort, up the long grade (fifteen per cent, in places) of the Cameo Hill blared the lean car, cut-out open, and went booming and sputtering down at speed unreduced.

"Bet you could lay your cheek against the radiator," shouted Brick.

"Don't want to," answered Phillips. "Aren't you afraid those fellows'll turn off and we'll over-run 'em?"

"Haven't turned off yet. Can see the tracks."

"Where?"

"In soft place, back a bit."

"You couldn't."

"I did."

"They can hear us ten miles, with that cut-out open."

"Hope they do."

"Why? Don't you intend to catch 'em?"

"No."

Phillips leaned back in disgust. Upon what crazy enterprise had he embarked? Brick's flushed profile was imperturbable; his conversation was the same. The car boomed on, relentlessly forcing the speedometer to high-water mark. The country road, not yet boulevarded and only naturally surfaced, stretched on, winding among valleyed hills. It was fairly well traveled. Phillips wondered why Brick did not pause to inquire of some of the machines he met whether they had seen a Black Prince roadster. But Brick evidently was in a rush—until, with one of his characteristically sudden movements, in an instant he had thrown out the clutch, grabbed the emergency brake and, slowing interrogatively at the approach to a fork, as if answering his own question, swung, slewing widely, into that right-hand branch. The car slowed down momentarily to ten miles. Leaning, Brick pointed.

"There they are, again," he vindicated. And where the new non-skid patterns of the rear wheels, not quite overlapping the plain front treads, were distinct in the matrix furnished by a recent rain seepage, he held out the clutch, and waited. "They're going to try the Jim Crow grade; that other road goes through Spring Gardens, and they're afraid of Spring Gardens—too much travel." He dropped in the clutch; the car responded viciously. "And," he added, rapidly gaining speed, "the Jim Crow grade will put 'em on the bum."

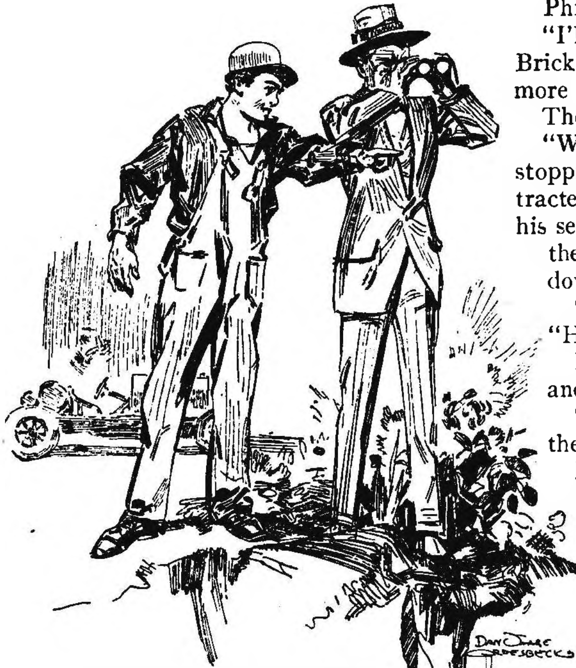
"How?" asked Phillips. "Can we catch them?"

"Can," equivocally replied Brick.

THEY went tearing along the new road, less traveled than the main road, so that the telltale tracks were constant. The Jim Crow grade showed ahead, at the terminus of a graceful curve. For two miles the road now rose in a series of switchbacks, some of them approximating twenty per cent; but the stripped machine pounced upon the first and ate it up at forty miles, hugging the inside bank so close that the front hubs almost brushed the clay. The speedometer fell to thirty, and there Brick held it, while Phillips clung to the edge of his seat with knees and hands.

"Could go faster, but needn't," spoke Brick. He pointed gleefully. "They're boiling her. Told you they would." For, making a line in the middle of the course, was a streak of wetness. "Grease, too," he added, in a voice of triumph. "Knew she'd overheat."

But Phillips felt otherwise. He was indignant. That was his car, and he didn't want it to boil.



"They're at the garage. Thought they'd be," remarked Brick.

Phillips didn't see.

"I'll be jiggered!" he muttered, as Brick started up again, in a fashion more leisurely.

They crossed the table-land.

"Wait a minute, now," quoth Brick, stopping and dismounting. He extracted a pair of glasses from under his seat, and continued to the edge of the table-land, to peer over and down. He beckoned.

"Want to see 'em?" he called. "Here you are."

Phillips advanced impatiently and took the glasses.

"They're at the garage. Thought they'd be," remarked Brick.

Phillips swept the lowland along the road, where he could glimpse it ahead, and found the garage. He could read even the sign—and included in the field was a machine standing in front of the garage. His machine? It certainly seemed to be his machine, or a machine like it. Roadster, anyway—black—State number? He peered. Number one—four—four—nine—naught. Not his number, which was 23622. But of course the number had been changed. He focused on the persons busy about it. The garage man was there, in overalls — a man in an auto coat was pouring water—wasn't he? —from a can into the radiator. Another man, also in auto costume, was standing by the hood, one hand on it, while he gazed fixedly back at the hill. His eyes seemed to be looking straight into Phillips' eyes, and Phillips involuntarily recoiled. The man was a large man, and he scowled. Phillips was also reminded of the revolver in the pocket of the car—but probably now in the pocket of one of the men. However, his blood boiled, like the water in the luckless radiator.

"The dirty sneaks!" he growled. "They're ruining my car. There they are. What we waiting here for? You aren't afraid of them, are you?"

"No, I'm Irish when I need to be," grinned Brick. "If I hadn't been dago too, I'd have had my block knocked off ten years ago. But I'm afraid of your old teakettle." At this insinuation Phil-

"They'll ruin it!" he exclaimed.

"Little boiling wont hurt her any," asserted Brick.

The car climbed like a jack-rabbit, reached the crest with vigor unimpaired and emerged on top. Now the road crossed the flat table-land, with the telltale streak of water, soaked in, bisecting it, and occasional daubs of grease showing blacker. Brick ground his tires in the sandy gravel, halted the car and sprang out to dabble in the trail with his fingers.

"Warm?" asked Phillips, anxiously.

"Almost," mused Brick. "Grease is soft yet. Warmish, too.".

"Get a move on you. We're overhauling them," urged Phillips.

"Got to give 'em time," corrected Brick, returning. "They'll stop for water at that next garage, and they can see us coming for two miles, as soon as we get on the other side."

"Supposing they do. We can catch them."

"Sure we can catch 'em. Can catch anything," responded Brick. "Only we don't want to. See?"

lips bristled. The Black Prince was a good car, and he knew it. Of course, it wasn't a racer. "If they see us coming, you watch 'em hike out of there. I asked you once before if you wanted that car burned out, or the gears stripped. No?" He took the glass and squatted composedly. "They'll start off in a moment. Let 'em get around the first curve so they can't look back."

"What'll we do then?" demanded Phillips. "Amble down and telephone ahead?"

"Naw," said Brick. "What's the good to 'phone? We got 'em where we want 'em, now. Where'd we 'phone to? Next town? They aren't looking for towns. Naw, they're our meat."

"I don't see it," complained Phillips. "You've a chance to catch them, right here, and you wont. Next thing it'll be dark, and then we'll lose them."

"You trust to your Uncle Joe," comforted Brick. "They're starting. Light out, you bums."

The two figures had mounted into the distant car—it moved. The garage man—a dot on the road in front of his garage—seemed to gaze after.

Brick squatted, waiting composedly. The car sped down the road, rounded the curve and disappeared.

"Come on," ordered Brick. He was all energy again as he ran back to his own car, tossed the glasses under the seat, vaulted in and set the engine to humming. Scarcely had Phillips followed him when the machine bounded forward, dipped over the edge of the plateau and, running free, gaining momentum on the long incline, rolled smoothly down at thirty-five miles an hour on the curves, forty on the straightaways. Again Brick was a master driver.

THEY barely halted at the garage, where the proprietor, formerly, by the signs that still remained, a blacksmith, received them expectantly. They halted only space enough for them to note the blotch of liquid grease and the puddle of water drained from the radiator of the car which had preceded them. These Phillips saw with alarm.

"How's the cut-off?" demanded Brick, sharply.

"Nothing doing. Can't make it. All dug up."

"Got to make it," retorted Brick. "Good-by."

"Hold on!" called the garage-keeper. "That's what that other car said, till I explained."

"What was the matter with that other car?"

"What car was it?" added Phillips, eagerly.

"I dunno. No name on her. New car to me. She was overheated, but no car can make that cut-off, anyway."

"This car can," answered Brick, doggedly. "Good-by."

The machine leaped forward again, with the garage-keeper shouting vainly after.

For a mile they followed the main road, until (Phillips watching intently as they rounded the curve) without comment, Brick suddenly turned off. A sign said, pointing with an arrow down the main road: "BEST ROUTE;" and another sign, half blocking the turn-off, said: "CLOSED FOR REPAIRS;" but by a narrow passage circumventing this latter sign, Brick cleverly side-stepped it, and tilting into a ditch and out, with a spurt, continued on down the forbidden road itself.

"Going to try it, are you?" stammered Phillips.

"Sure," cheerily responded Brick. "All I want is traction for one wheel, and I guess we can find that. If we can't, we can get out and push. But you're likely to have some ride."

Phillips peered nervously, awaiting the worst. For another mile the road led innocently—a narrow country road bordered by ditches, but fair and merely a little rutty. The car boomed sullenly under leash of brakes and throttle, as if it too foresaw work ahead.

"What's the dope, anyhow?" inquired Phillips, jolted severely.

"We get in ahead of 'em, and beat 'em to the Remson Hill."

"What good will that do?"

"That's where we get their goat," vouchsafed Brick, as though he already had explained everything. "And your car'll have had time to cool off."

Phillips hung fast, unenlightened and

perturbed. But especially he hung fast, for the reason of the sign "CLOSED" was becoming apparent. Before loomed a pile of small rock, dumped there preparatory to filling a mudhole; the ditches on right and on left were full of water. Without a word, Brick charged the rock-pile. Into second he shot; the front wheels struck the rocks, raised, faltered—he shot into first, and bellowing angrily, racking Phillips half overboard, up the pile climbed the machine, grinding the rocks beneath foot, tilted on the summit, and plunged, pitching and growling, down the other side. Into the mud here it lunged, and burrowing, ripping, skidding as the angry rear wheels spun, it fairly tore through, its great horsepower, now aroused, twitching the light body, like a draught horse with bit in teeth. They struck the firmer earth beyond, and leaped into forty miles.

"Good Lord!" gasped Phillips.

"She's a real boat, all right," muttered Brick, through set teeth. "That was nothing."

From here onward the road was a fright. There were other rock-piles. There were stretches freshly ploughed, awaiting grading; there were other mudholes, yet unmolested; there were deep washouts, burying the front wheels while the rear ones were straining and shoving high behind, until with a roar they too entered, and the whole machine went bucking up on the farther side; there were wretched detours, made for only graders' teams, through sand, mud and sage, and twice through creek beds. A graders' camp stared and gave a cheer.

The engine was well warmed to its work. The fume of the radiator and the odor of hot oil and grease drifted back to Phillips' nostrils. The machine had become to him a living, sentient thing. It growled; it roared; it whined; it bit and worried its work; it reminded Phillips of a bulldog fast to some furry throat.

PHILLIPS could readily see that they were making time, bad as the road was. It was astonishing how Brick, his Irish in the ascendant, wheedled her, forced her, *drove* her. The various and varied obstructions slowed them, but on second she was good for forty miles (as he had claimed), and many a mudhole they struck at this gait, and issued with speed scarcely diminished.

The road seemed interminable; dusk gathered as the sun descended into a horizon of cloud. To Phillips matters began to look dubious again—when, with a satisfied exclamation from Brick (the first word he had uttered for half an hour), at full speed they debouched into an opening ahead, veered short at right angles, and were into the main road once more, at last. Brick leaned back, relaxed. The motor also relaxed and sang contentedly in its deep baritone, as if inviting: "All right-o? What next?" Truly, it was a glutton, this ugly old machine.

But now was no moment for sentimentality. Like the motor, Phillips asked: "What next?" And, anxiously: "Did we beat them? Is this the road?"

"Sure it's the road," declared Brick. "You bet we beat 'em. Don't see any tracks, do you? It's only a mile to the hill. Let 'em come as fast as they want to. That's where we put 'em to the bad."

"How so?"

"Oh, shucks!" deplored Brick. "I'm Irish and dago mixed, and I'm superstitious; so I wont tell. But you do as I say."

Occasionally glancing back through the gloaming, he bowled leisurely on, until presently a road sign informed: "GRADES AND CURVES. GO SLOW." Remson Hill bided, before. Behind, the hasty pantings of another car punctuated the evening quiet.

"There they come," ejaculated Phillips.

At the foot of the first grade, Brick stopped the machine. He slipped out.

"Guess we'll have to have engine trouble," he remarked, his grimy, mud-splashed face bestowing upon Phillips a grotesque wink. He lifted the engine-hood and reached into the carburetor. The motor changed its steady note—hesitated, coughed, skipped a note, tried to pick up, failed, and proceeded to miss discordantly.

"Gimme that can from under the seat," bade Brick hurriedly, slamming down the hood. Phillips assumed that

he meant the can sniffed at in the home garage. He found it and had it ready for the extended hand. Brick worked faster, for the other car was drawing near. From the farther side of the seat-back jutted a short metal pipe with up-turned, funnel mouth — an intake of some sort. Rapidly unscrewing its plug and jerking the cork from the can, Brick poured in a liberal dose. The other car was almost upon them. It was the Black Prince,—the two pirates in it; or at least, it looked to be,—but Brick had thrust can and stoppers into Phillips' fingers, and with a tense "Put those back; keep the can out," was into his seat. He released clutch, threw a gear, and at prick of the throttle, their car, crippled, choking, sputtering, missing, labored in jerky fashion up the grade.

BEHIND, a shrill horn (yes, that was the horn of the Black Prince, all right!) clamored for passage, as the other car pressed impatient. As if deaf to its commands, Brick turned neither his head nor his machine, but hogged the road (none too wide) while his beloved "boat" labored along like the derelict that it appeared to be. Yet nonplused as he was, Phillips was aware that even now the powerful bulldog of a machine was being held in, not urged. The speedometer said ten miles, which was a pace unsatisfactory to those men in a hurry, trailing.

Their voices hailed, furious and hortatory.

"Get out of there!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"Haul that mess of junk to one side!"

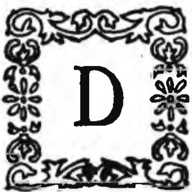
Phillips had the feeling that their front fenders were touching the rear body of the fenderless bulldog. But he did not so much as glance behind. The emotionless attitude of Brick forbade it. Pursued by threats and curses, they rounded the first curve, and limped into a wider and shorter level link in the climb. A revolver spoke smartly from the other car (startling Phillips), and a voice bawled, venomously: "Give us room or we'll shoot you!" Reaching between his legs, Brick twisted a thumb-screw set in the front of the seat box.

"Here's where you get *yours,*" he re-

*(Continued on third following page.)*


# The Wonderful Mission of the Internal Bath

**By C. G. Percival, M. D.**




O you know that over three hundred thousand Americans are at the present time seeking freedom from small, as well as serious ailments, by the practice of Internal Bathing?

Do you know that hosts of enlightened physicians all over the country, as well as osteopaths, physical culturists, etc., etc., are recommending and recognizing this practice as the most likely way now known to secure and preserve perfect health?

There are the best of logical reasons for this practice and these opinions, and these reasons will be very interesting to everyone.

In the first place, every physician realizes and agrees that ninety-five per cent of human illness is caused directly or indirectly by accumulated waste in the colon; this is bound to accumulate, because we of today neither eat the kind of food nor take the amount of exercise which Nature demands in order that she may thoroughly eliminate the waste unaided—

That's the reason when you are ill the physician always gives you something to remove this accumulation of waste before commencing to treat your specific trouble.

It's ten to one that no specific trouble would have developed if there were no accumulation of waste in the colon—

And that's the reason that the famous Professor Metchnikoff, one of the world's greatest scientists, has boldly and specifically stated that if our colons were taken away in infancy, the length of our lives would be increased to probably one hundred and fifty years.

You see, this waste is extremely poisonous, and as the blood flows through the walls of the colon it absorbs the poisons and carries

them through the circulation — that's what causes Auto-Intoxication, with all its perniciously enervating and weakening results. These pull down our powers of resistance and render us subject to almost any serious complaint which may be prevalent at the time. And the worst feature of it is that there are few of us who really know when we are Auto-Intoxicated.

But you never can be Auto-Intoxicated if you periodically use the proper kind of an Internal Bath—that is sure.

It is Nature's own relief and corrector—just warm water, which, used in the right way, cleanses the colon thoroughly its entire length and makes and keeps it sweet, clean and pure, as Nature demands it shall be for the entire system to work properly.

The following enlightening news article is quoted from the New York *Times*.

"What may lead to a remarkable advance in the operative treatment of certain forms of tuberculosis is said to have been achieved at Guy's Hospital. Briefly, the operation of the removal of the lower intestine has been applied to cases of tuberculosis, and the results are said to be in every way satisfactory.

"The principle of the treatment is the removal of the cause of the disease. Recent researches of Metchnikoff and others have led doctors to suppose that many conditions of chronic ill-health, such as nervous debility, rheumatism, and other disorders, are due to poisoning set up by unhealthy conditions in the large intestine, and it has even been suggested that the lowering of the vitality resulting from such poisoning is favorable to the development of cancer and tuberculosis.

"At Guy's Hospital Sir William Arbuthnot Lane decided on the heroic plan of removing the diseased organ. A child who appeared in the final stage of what was believed to be an incurable form of tubercular joint disease, was operated on. The lower intestine, with the exception of nine inches, was removed, and the portion left was joined to the smaller intestine.

"The result was astonishing. In a week's time the internal organs resumed all their normal functions, and in a few weeks the patient was apparently in perfect health.

You undoubtedly know, from your own personal experience, how dull and unfit to work or think properly, biliousness and many other apparently simple troubles make you feel. And you probably know, too, that these irregularities, all directly traceable to accumulated waste, make you really sick if permitted to continue.

You also probably know that the old-fashioned method of drugging for these complaints, is at best only partially effective; the doses must be increased if continued, and finally they cease to be effective at all.

It is true that more drugs are probably used for this than all other human ills combined, which simply goes to prove how universal the trouble caused by accumulated waste really is—but there is not a doubt that drugs are being dropped as Internal Bathing is becoming better known—

For it is not possible to conceive, until you have had the experience yourself, what a wonderful bracer an Internal Bath really is; taken at night, you awake in the morning with a feeling of lightness and buoyancy that cannot be described—you are absolutely clean, everything is working in perfect accord, your appetite is better, your brain is clearer, and you feel full of vim and confidence for the day's duties.

There is nothing new about Internal Baths except the way of administering them. Some years ago Dr. Chas. A. Tyrrell, of New York, was so miraculously benefited by faithfully using the method then in vogue, that he made Internal Baths his special study and improved materially in administering the Bath and in getting the result desired.

This perfected Bath he called the "J. B. L. Cascade," and it is the one which has so quickly popularized and recommended itself that hundreds of thousands are today using it.

Dr. Tyrrell, in his practice and researches, discovered many unique and interesting facts in connection with this subject; these he has collected in a little book, "The What, the Why, the Way of Internal Bathing," which will be sent free on request if you address Chas. A. Tyrrell, M.D., 134 West 65th Street, New York City, and mention having read this in THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE.

This book tells us facts that we never knew about ourselves before, and there is no doubt that every one who has an interest in his or her own physical well-being, or that of the family, will be very greatly instructed and enlightened by reading this carefully prepared and scientifically correct little book.

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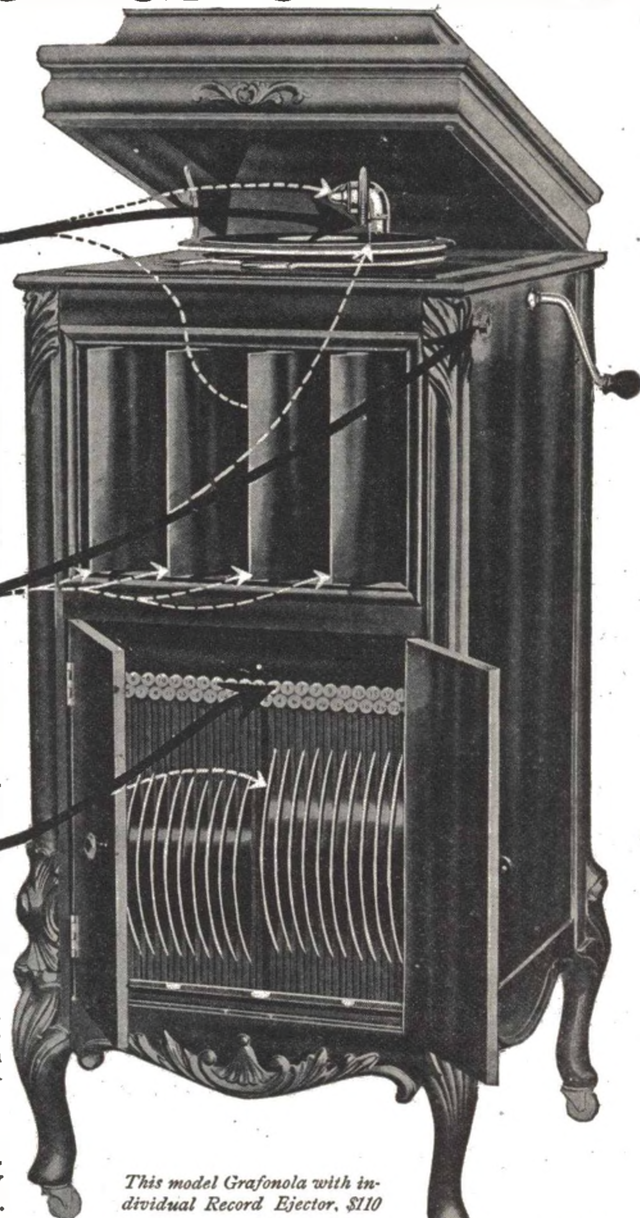

## *Tone:*

Tone perfection depends fully as much upon the scientific exactness of the reproducing mechanism of the instrument itself as upon the original recording process. The perfected reproducer and tone-arm of the Columbia Grafonola is the crowning achievement in this branch of the art.

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With the Columbia you have every possible gradation of tone at your command. The tone-control leaves, built on the one right principle of controlling tone-volume, and the wide variety of needles available, give you any and all degrees of tone-volume, from the lightest pianissimo to the resounding fortissimo to fill the largest auditorium.

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Your Grafonola, equipped with the individual record ejectors, an exclusive Columbia feature, is ideal in its convenience. Your records are racked individually in velvet-lined slots that automatically clean them and protect them against breaking and scratching. A numbered push-button controls each record—a push of the button brings any record forwa·d to be taken between the thumb and fingers.

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**Box L210, Woolworth Bldg., N. Y.**

*This model Grafonola with individual Record Ejector, $110*

# COLUMBIA

torted. But his words were drowned, for as the machine headed into the next grade, he bore hard on the throttle, checking the answering impulse with the foot-brake. The coughy missing instantly welled to a thunderous staccato, under which the whole car shook while the engine fought for breath. Phillips was suddenly conscious of a nauseous stench—worse than the stench of burning oil from any exhaust muffler. Behind arose a hoarse chorus of threat, imprecation, howling protest; emergency brake rasped metallic as it was violently set; the revolver cracked again—and again, and the last bullet clinked somewhere into Brick's machine.

Phillips looked back; Brick was now looking back and holding the bulldog with clutch out and brake on—and all their rear was veiled by a dense blue cloud belched continuously from underneath them. The other car was but a wraith—and even the wraith vanished, dissolved in the cloud. A wave of giddy nausea swept Phillips.

"What the devil?" he demanded.

"I told you we'd fix 'em," exulted Brick. His face was pale with excitement; his brown eyes blazed for a moment as he turned them upon his partner. "That's the dope I put into the emergency gas-tank. Great mixture. Look out. Don't breathe it. It'll make you sick as a dog." He slacked the engine and backed cautiously a few feet. The outskirts of the fog were horrid. Again Phillips felt ill. "Got enough?" yelled Brick, to the outlines of the nebulous car behind. The only response was a thickly muffled protest as from somebody in half conscious distress.

"Guess they have," observed Brick. "They set the brake mighty quick. Did you hear 'em?" He set his own brake and shut off the engine. "Gee!" he said. "It stinks, doesn't it! We'd better wait and let it clear out a bit."

"What is it?" coughed Phillips. Luckily the air was bearing it from them, down the lower ground. Brick had chosen well.

"I invented it. Never used it before except on myself. It's an engine cleaner, too, but she wont pull under it."

"Lord!" coughed Phillips. "They'll be dead."

"Nope," wheezed Brick. "But they'll wish they were. Come on; let's try our luck. The stuff's pretty thin, now."

HE sprang out. Phillips staggered after. The smoke had cleared away to a tenuous vapor; the other car was plain in the dusk; its engine was running idle; the two men were lopped weakly in the seat. Brick trudged boldly to them.

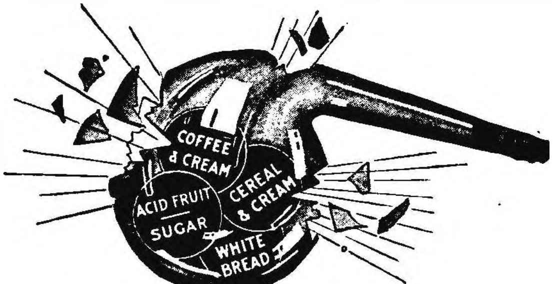
"Well, you got what was coming to you," he addressed. "You'll think you've been fighting stink-pots over there in Europe. How about it? Want another joy-ride in a stolen car?"

He reached in and turned off the ignition switch. The engine ceased its rapid murmur. The silence was ghastly.

"Good God!" groaned one of the men. The revolver—Phillips' revolver—had dropped from his nerveless fingers. "Get us out of here."

Groaning feebly, they lay where they were dragged.

**Some foods that we eat, if hermetically sealed in a thin glass retort as pictured, would literally explode—no wonder we're half sick most of the time!**




# Some Foods Explode In Your Stomach

There are many foods, harmless in themselves, which when eaten in combination with other harmless foods produce a chemical reaction in the stomach and literally explode. If you could look into your stomach right ofter breakfast, lunch or dinner any day, you would understand the cause of over 90% of all sickness, why most men are less than 50% efficient and why the average life of man is only 39 years.

Food is the fuel of the human system—it furnishes the motive power for the day's work. Yet not one in a hundred knows the chemistry of food or the effects of different foods in combination. Some of the meals we are constantly eating have the same effect on our system as dynamite, soggy wood, mud and a little coal would have on a furnace. No wonder we often lack the vital energy necessary to overcome every obstacle in our fight for success! No wonder so many of us are constantly being held back when we should be forging ahead! The trouble is that we're trying to run on fuel our system simply can't get any power out of.

## 24 Lessons in Scientific Eating

By EUGENE CHRISTIAN, F. S. D.

### *No Money in Advance—Only $3 If You Keep Them*

Eugene Christian has long been recognized as the world's greatest authority on food and its relation to the human system. Over 23,000 people have come under his care and the results of his work have bordered on the miraculous. Without drugs or medicines of any kind—simply by teaching the proper selection, combination and proportion of foods under given conditions, he has cured nearly every known ailment by removing the cause and has increased the personal efficiency of his patients to well nigh 100%.

**24 Boiled Down Lessons** Scientific Eating contains the boiled down essence of Eugene Christian's 20 years' experience in actual practice. Every step is logically explained. Reasons are given for each statement which anyone can easily understand and it is an easy matter to follow the simple directions. And the beauty of Christian's methods is that you get results with the very first meal. No special foods are required. You don't have to upset our table to follow the directions. Neither do you have to eat things you don't enjoy—Nature never intended that you should.

**An Aid to Success** You can't do good work unless you feel full of "pep" and ginger. The best ideas, plans and methods—the biggest business deals—are put over when you are bubbling over with vitality. It is impossible to be really fit unless your food is scientifically chosen to supply the nutritive elements your mind and body demand. Man is made up of the sum total of what he eats. You can't add up to a very high state of efficiency if you don't know how to select your food, for the wrong foods counteract the good in right foods—and very often two right foods in combination make a wrong food. Eugene Christian has times without number turned sluggish, slow, unsuccessful men and women into very dynamos of money making efficiency by merely teaching them food values.

**Send No Money.** The price of Eugene Christian's Course, complete in 24 lessons, is only $3.00 and it contains rules, methods and menus that are literally priceless. But we do not ask you to pay a single penny until you have examined this great work in your own home. Merely fill out and mail the coupon enclosing your business card or giving a reference, or write a letter and the entire course of 24 lessons will be sent, all charges paid, the day we hear from you. Keep it five days. Study it at your leisure. Then if you feel you can afford not to be master of the invaluable information it contains, send it back and you owe us nothing. Mail the coupon now, however, as this offer may never again be repeated.

**Corrective Eating Society, Inc.**
2112 Hunter Ave., Maywood, N. J.

### Synopsis of Course

1. Three great laws that govern life.
2. What food is and its true purpose.
3. Digestion, assimilation and metabolism.
4. Chemistry of the body and the chemistry of food.
5. How wrong eating causes disease.
6. How foods establish health by removing causes of disease.
7. Scientific eating explained, sample menus.
8. Harmonious combinations of food tables.
9. How to select, combine and proportion your food according to age, sample menus.
10. How to select, combine and proportion your food according to occupation and season of year, sample menus.
11. Obesity, cause and cure, sample menus.
12. Emaciation, cause and cure, sample menus.
13. The business man—right and wrong ways of living, sample menus.
14. The new Vieno System of Food Measurement.
15. Food and morality.
16. Tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco, etc.
17. Superacidity, fermentation, gastric catarrh and ulcer, intestinal gas and auto-intoxication. Causes, sample menus.
18. Devoted to same subjects as Lesson XVII, with the remedy.
19. What to eat and omit for all stomach and intestinal disorders. Ready reference lesson.
20. Intestinal congestion (constipation), cause and cure, sample menus for the four seasons of year.
21. Appendicitis—cause and cure, sample menus.
22. Nervousness—cause and cure, sample menus.
23. Curative menus; for each season of year for manual laborer and sedentary worker.
24. Diagnosis simplified and made practical.

### What People Say About Dr. Christian and His Work

"I am feeling fine again, thanks to you and your course of lessons on Scientific Eating. There ought to be 100,000 men practicing Scientific Eating in America."—F. A. Fulby, Niagara Falls, South Ont., Canada.

"I am delighted beyond expression with the lessons. They have proved invaluable to me and have revolutionized both my diet and my health."—Olive M. Sees, 725 East Tipton St., Huntington, Ind.

"Your work on Scientific Eating is invaluable. It is with much pleasure that I recommend your course to prospective students everywhere."—Chas. A. Ittel, 1212 Termont Avenue, North Side, Pittsburgh, Pa.

"Your Course in Scientific Eating is wonderful because it has simplified both the chemistry of the body and the chemistry of the food and teaches one how to unite these two branches of science so as to make our food prevent and cure disease."—Eugene A. Ayers, Harrington Park, N. J.

"I think the Almighty sends men on earth at different periods with independent and fearless minds to rectify the wrongs that have been taught and reveal the truth in all its simplicity."—Edward Brook, 10 No. 10th W. Sts., Salt Lake City, Utah.

"I have read of you for years and I have recently looked over some of your work. You are doing much for humanity. I congratulate you on your latest contribution to the health and happiness of man."—Dr. V. M. George, 2305 N. High St., Columbus, Ohio.

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"Sure," blithely responded Brick. "Haul 'em out by the legs, Bill."

"What are you going to do with them?" asked Phillips, thus directed.

"Leave 'em, of course. We're no ambulance. You've got your car, and it isn't scrapped, either. These guys can sit in the brush, and if the police want 'em, they can come after 'em. I don't. Haul 'em out, and let's beat it for supper. You're two tires to the good, as rent of your taxi."

And "haul 'em out" it literally was, the two men being as resistless as grain-sacks. Groaning feebly, they lay where dragged—the spot being a safe depression on the inside edge of the low cut. Brick chuckled.

"Climb into your Black Prince and back down till you can turn around," he said, to Phillips. "She's all right. We'll drive slow and stop for oil at that garage. She ought to have an extra swig. But believe *me,* if we'd have chased these fellows much closer, your bearings would have been frozen so tight you couldn't have budged her with a crowbar, and I'd have had to take her apart and tow you in. That's why I played safe. I'm an artistic lad, I am." And he laughed happily.

Phillips alertly boarded his own car. At pressure of his toe the engine whirred with ready whirr. *Sounded* all right.

"They drilled a hole through my rear number, with that last shot," called Brick, inspecting.

"Hurt anything else?"

"Naw."

Phillips cautiously released his brake; the Black Prince began to roll back. *Rolled* all right, too. Checking or freeing, he navigated the curves; Brick was following.

"O.K.?" yelped Brick, as they struck the bottom.

"Think so."

"Turn 'round and let her go. I'm hungry."

He turned around; at his touch his headlights flared forth, for night was descending from the hills; he threw into second, and still she rolled obedient; he threw into high, and with the shafts of Brick's headlights mingling in his own, to the mutter of his rhythmic cut-out, he proceeded to "beat it" for home.



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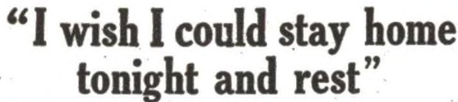

# "I wish I could stay home tonight and rest"

WHEN the nerves have been exhausted by business or anxieties, even pleasures seem but a new drain. Yes, even "rest" is often hard to get, for sleeplessness frequently adds its burdens to loss of appetite and the distress of indigestion. To this crisis Sanatogen brings the common-sense help of a concentrated food-tonic containing the very elements that are actually being clamored for by the nerves.

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*Grand Prize International Congress of Medicine, London, 1913*

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# The Backslider's Wife

**THE unusual story of two brothers and a woman.**

## By Emily Newell Blair

THE moment Jim brought her home after their wedding-trip, I knew there had been a mistake. I don't know how I knew it, a great hulk of a man like me. But I did.

Something about her quiet mouth, her calm, moveless gray eyes, just struck me in a heap. I almost cried out loud: "Why, she's not the one for you. She'll never understand you."

But fortunately, I kept still. Yes, most fortunately, though I did not realize then how that quiet sureness of hers was going to appeal to me, or what she, with her smooth, even-toned skin and the hair that drooped so about her ears, would come to mean to me. But it wasn't jealousy that stirred then. It was years after before I realized what the mistake really was, and that I was the one— Well, I've hardly come to that.

You see, I loved Jim, just as a big, diffident brother can love a little curly-haired, excitable kid belonging to him. I always loved Jim, from the time when I first pulled him out of mistakes in his school-days. Perhaps that's just why I loved him—because he was always doing things I hadn't the nerve to do. I never did bad things,—I never wanted to,—but I often wished that I did want to.

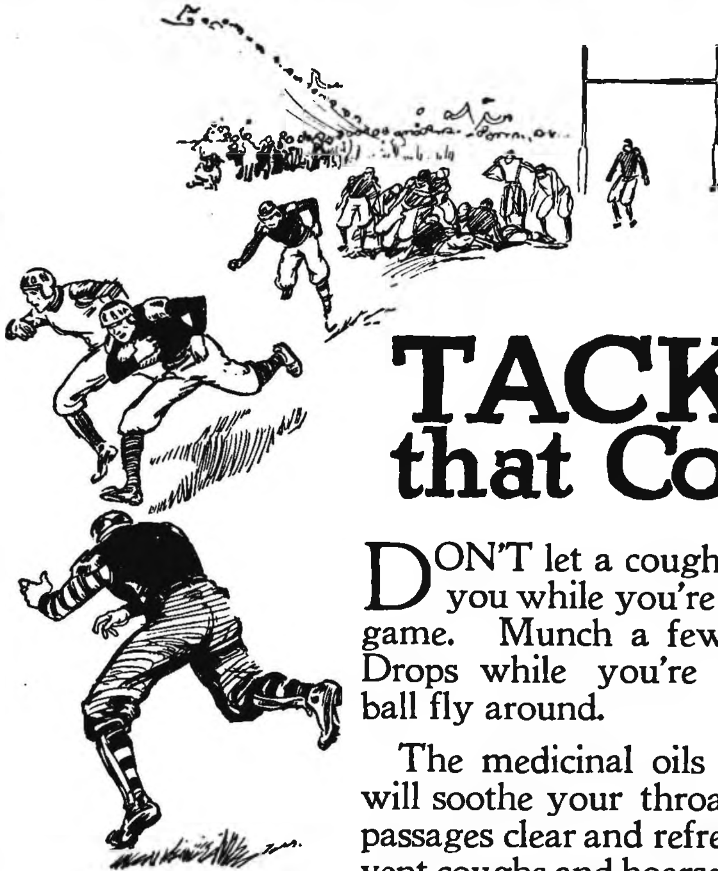
JIM was fair even to paleness, with a face that might have been a girl's, and such eyes—commanding, yearning—well, just the things you would say of a girl's. How many times I've thought of that—his eyes like a girl's and hers like a man's, so calm, so moveless, like the sky on a windless night.

I never knew what had brought them together. How should I? But there she was, a new charge to me, for I knew that Jim was relying on me to be the "sure foundation" of his home life, just as he had always depended on me to square his business accounts. But when little Josephine came, he acknowledged it openly. "I tell you," he almost sobbed, overcome with the responsibility of fatherhood and Jose's sufferings, "—I tell you it's a comfort to know they'll always have you to fall back on, old Sam. They'll always have you if anything happens to me."

That was just it. There was always I to back Jim up, to urge him on and rob his transgressions of results. No wonder that Jose continued to think him the ninth wonder of the world, for that is exactly what a pale man with glowing eyes and curved red lips, domesticated and tied to her fireside, would have been. Jim had a wild imagination. He had evidently used it effectively during his courtship, and Jose had accepted the picture he drew of himself.

And I must confess that, for a time after he came back to Warren with her, he lived up to this picture. There was a lot of good in Jim. I always knew it. That was why I had kept so persistently on his trail. I believed that he would come out all right if only he were propped up at the backsliding moments. But Josephine didn't know it. She thought he was "so good." Jerusalem! there's a heap of difference!

She had not enough imagination to see. She just saw the picture he had handed her—already painted by himself. But Jim *did* try to live up to it. He tried so hard that I began to have hopes of him, myself. In fact, I got entirely fooled. I believed that the wild had left his blood, that love had done the miracle.



# TACKLE that Cough

DON'T let a cough get a hold on you while you're watching that game. Munch a few S. B. Cough Drops while you're watching the ball fly around.

The medicinal oils in these drops will soothe your throat, keep the air passages clear and refreshed, and prevent coughs and hoarseness. Carry a box during Fall and Winter—they're far better than medicine. Take one o' bedtime to loosen the phlegm.

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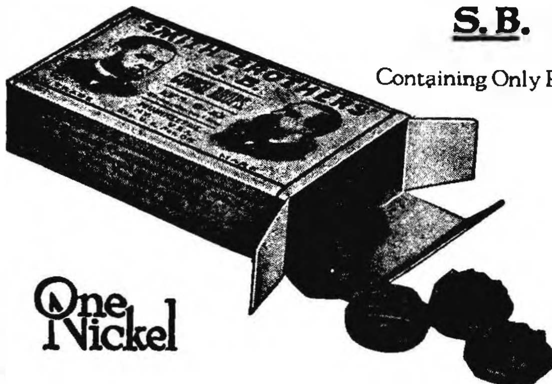


One Nickel

SMITH BROTHERS
of Poughkeepsie

*Your Grandpa Knows Us*

Makers of S. B. Chewing Gum and Lasses Kisses

After a whole year's association with Jose's faith, Jim came to me and told me he was giving up the job in my store. "It's not the place for me," he said. "A little job like that! I want to amount to something. I want to grow. I want to be worthy of Jose's trust."

I liked that. There was something about Jose's quietness—she was as quiet as her looks were—that just made you feel you could do or be anything. I know. It's come to me at times, myself.

It came to me then, about Jim. I accepted it. I helped him into a business of his own. He had ability—lots of it. He could talk one into capitalizing moonshine. He began to sell life insurance. He sold policies by the barrels. The very first year he made enough money to pay off some of his notes I held. The second, he bought Jose a home and ran for mayor. He was elected, too, and though Jose was as quiet as ever, I felt there was a lot of pride smothered there. Pride is a natural outgrowth of faith, I've noticed.

They had two children, both the pictures of Jim. That ought to show what she thought of him. At least I've often wondered if it did.

WELL, it all fooled me, and I'm not a faith-merchant either, nor yet a child. I should have known better, but I thought Jim's character had passed the crisis, and he had settled down for good and all. I should have known that a temperament like his, tied to Jose's quiet assumption of "goodness," would have to relapse. But that very quietness of hers was so satisfying to me that I—well, I suppose it acted on him as it did on me.

Enlightenment came to me through an unexpected trip to a near-by city. Jim had gone up two days before to make his report. When he left, I had no intention of joining him, but a message from my spring buyer called me there at once. I spent the day with my employee, who had unearthed a rich bankrupt stock, and sauntered around in the evening to the Carlton, where Jim and I always stopped.

I asked the clerk, who knew us both, if J. P. Lea was in. He answered promptly: "Yes. He went to his room about two. I haven't seen him since." I got the number, and the bell-boy took me up. No one answered our knock. That seemed funny, and I sent back for a key. I meant, of course, to share the room with Jim. We always did when away together. But the key would not go in the lock. That seemed queerer yet. We pounded. We yelled. No answer! Then the boy broke in the door. Jim's things lay all about, but there was no sign of Jim. The key had been broken off in the door.

"How could he have gotten out?" I asked.

The clerk and boy shook their heads.

I examined his baggage. Unless he had bought new things in the city, his clothes were in the room. I watched the other faces turn pale.

"It's a case for the police," said the clerk.

Instantly I thought of Jose. I did want to protect her, but I couldn't think how, quick enough. I nodded mechanically.

Well, the police came. Questions were asked and answered. I went about with them all night. We found that Jim had left his State with five hundred dollars in his pocket. Then a new kind of fear possessed me. It went out for Jim. Before, I had been thinking of Jose.

I couldn't keep it out of the papers. But I went straight back to help her bear it. I expected to see her overcome, as women are in books. Instead, she met me calmly at the door. She knew that Jim was all right. How did she know it? She knew. But when I told her about the money, just suddenly, without a quiver, the tears fell.

"Then he has been killed," she said. Nothing less occurred to her. This was where her lack of imagination helped her. I wanted to say the right thing to her, but what it would be I didn't know. For myself, I was tortured by a thousand suspicions and doubts from which I wanted to protect her—yes, and protect Jim too. I loved him, loved him so that I cursed him for his folly.

# Resinol Soap

## for a clear skin and good hair

The next day the police unearthed a woman who had come to the hotel. The clerk recalled that Jim had been with her the evening before. The bell-boy recognized her. She knew nothing, not even that Jim had money, so she said; but she did not deny that he had spent the evening before with her. The bell-boy was questioned further. The police began to entertain suspicions. The woman and the boy were held—merely as witnesses, of course. But what they did not say, the papers insinuated.

I TRIED to keep these papers from Jose, but it was impossible. She was a bright woman, with the curiosity of the unimaginative. She sent for the papers and read them carefully. She was holding one in her hand when I came upon her as she sat by the dining-room window, looking out at the sky. My heart opened and shut. Poor girl, she must know at last. She turned to me, but her eyes did not widen. She was as quiet, as contained, as if her whole love had not tottered before her eyes. I clenched my fists involuntarily.

"Sit down," she said, "and tell me what to do."

Then I saw that it was not indifference that sustained her. It was assurance. Her words explained it further. It was horrible. It was maddening that they should lie about her Jim.

She told me about it just as she had always told me things ever since she had married Jim, but for the first time I could not follow her. While I saw that she was suffering, it was in such unknown ways that I could not sympathize. That it could be true did not remotely occur to her; but the foulness of defaming her dead—*that* wrenched her utterly. Yet I've never believed it could be the open agony of faith demolished. . . . . But what do I, a man, know about it?

I could not console her. I became a coward, consumed by a deadly fear that I would reveal my own suspicions. So I left her as soon as I could. I know she thought me cold. But others told me how they too went to sympathize and came away cowards. Her enemies—of course she had no personal enemies, but what better name is there for those who sacrifice friendship to the love of scandal? are they not enemies of all the peaceful?—they spoke out freely.

She felt the general lack of enthusiasm over Jim's faithfulness. Slowly, but with finality, it bore in on her that people doubted. This did not change her attitude; it only made her bitter with her neighbors. But she did not act against this doubt until a neighbor in whom curiosity was greater than kindness said to her: "But how can you be so sure he didn't go with that woman?"

She answered without a quiver: "I know, as women know such things. I know here, inside."

THAT evening I came upon her writing. "Women know — women know—" she was saying to herself, but she quickly concealed what she was writing.

I saw what it was the next day when I read in the paper her letter to the public:

> I want to make a statement to the public in connection with the disappearance of my beloved husband, Jim Patrick Lea, from the Hotel Carlton on May 2. There have been such unkind insinuations in the paper that I feel I should, in justice to myself and innocent little children, announce that my faith in my husband's honor remains unshaken.
>
> The only evidence against his faithfulness that can be presented is the word of a woman of known dishonesty that he was with her the evening of his disappearance. Against that, stands his own established reputation for goodness and loyalty; there stand his devotion as a father and his love as a husband. Besides, there are things a wife knows inside. She knows what her husband is—what he would or would not do.
>
> I know that his disappearance was not by his own act, and I am thus defending him because he is not here to defend himself. I am convinced that he has left this world and has joined his Father in Heaven. And I want the public to know that my trust is implicit and faith absolute. I honor and revere his memory. I thank God for the happiness of the past three years, and I pray for that day when all secrets may be made known and the world shall believe in him as I do now.
>
> JOSEPHINE LEA.

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NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

She was defiant when I went to see her about it. "I had to do it," she said. "It was but right to defend my boy before the world." Then she cried quietly. "It is very hard to bear. Even you—even you do not—do not believe."

I did my best to convince her that I did. I thought, for a minute, I had succeeded. She appealed to me before I left: "Don't think me weak and foolish. I'm not, but I—I couldn't live and think he would leave me this way. I know he's dead. He must be dead." But as I did not answer, she went on: "I'll believe in him though all the world doubts, even his own brother." A new suspicion crossed my mind. Was she afraid to doubt? Was her pride too great to withstand such a blow?

THE mystery of what had become of Jim was not solved, although the police worked diligently. The very day Jose published the letter, they had to let both boy and woman go for lack of evidence. All along, Jose must have had some hope of a solution, for after that she went to bed, ill.

When she got up again, she put on mourning. Later, she gave a memorial window to the church. At last the firmness of her faith affected that of others. Her loyalty seemed in itself evidence of his loyalty. Slowly she built about Jim a myth. Others came to accept him as she saw him, and accepted her as a widow. Indeed, they had to accept her so, or not at all, and finally, by the force of logic, this made them accept his death as a fact.

Occasionally some one repeated the story and shook his head, but for the many it had been ended. Jose's quiet dignity, her sad face,—for the sorrow which never marked her eyes or cheeks laid its finger on her hair and mouth,—became a monument to his tragedy. Even I, to whom suspicion gave room for hope, felt at last the certainty of his death. Finally, so strong became the conviction, that I began to count the years until the law too pronounced Josephine Lea a widow.

That was why the world spun round on its haunches—my world, I mean—one morning when I opened a letter begging me to come to the city instantly, and directing me where to go if I would hear news of J. P. Lea. I did not tell Jose. I could not have done it even if I had wanted to. I caught the first train and, without waiting to register at a hotel, set out for the address in the letter.

I found a cheap boarding-house in a small side-street. I asked for the name given in the letter, was asked in and told to go up to the third door, third flight. I obeyed. My heart banged unpleasantly—whether with fear or hope, to this day, I cannot say. I knocked. The door opened inward, and I was clear inside before I faced the man behind it. He was tall and pale, with eyes red-flecked and defiant.

FOR just a moment I waited, and then the old protective love flooded my heart again. "Jim, Jim, what does it mean?" It was I who sobbed, I who stuttered and clung to him.

Then I realized that this was a new Jim, one that I had never known. I started to speak, stuttered and stopped again. I felt ashamed. And why? I had done nothing. But he seemed to be looking further on than I.

We sat down, silent for a moment, until my thoughts too focused on what he saw. "Tell me," I said at last, "—tell me all."

Slowly he told the story. He had stood it as long as he could,—Jose's goodness and quietness and evenness,—and then had gone off "for just one fling."

"Gone?" I cried. "But the clothes?"

"I was so afraid I would be recognized. I didn't want her ever to know, and so I bought other clothes and sent these back by the bell-boy."

"But the key?"

"The key? What do I know or care about keys? The boy broke it, I suppose. I went away for just a little harmless break-out—just such a one as you'd patched up often. If only I'd done it openly and—and aboveboard; but I was so afraid she'd find it out—"

"But why did you stay so long and leave your room?"

"I'm coming to it—I'm coming to it."

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It seemed hard for him to find the right words. "I couldn't get back. I had that money,—lots, five hundred,—and it was too much for them—that woman and her mother. She drugged me and left me there while she went back to look for more. They nabbed her then and kept her, and—her folks kept me till she got back."

I groaned.

He nodded. "Yes, while you were hunting, you lost me."

"But then, Jim, then? Why didn't you come back then—when you got out?" A horrid fear was hurting me—that I had not hunted enough.

He laughed a derisive laugh. "I couldn't. The door was barred." He leered at me.

"I do not understand," I answered thickly.

"The door you barred—that piece in the paper. I was on the train on my way home when I saw it. How was I to go back then? How was I to tell her her faith was a lie—that I had done the very things she knew I couldn't do?" He rose and tramped his way across the room.

"Heaven knows I tried. I went there one night. I looked in. I saw her. And I understood." He leaned on the bureau. "I suppose she meant it all right. It was her idea of love. But it shut me out completely. I—I hadn't the nerve to break down that door. I had a silly idea of making it all up, of redeeming myself, coming back the conquering hero—always was a fool, you know. You're the wise guy in this family. I turned back. I went to Mexico—worked, slaved, but never rose—never rose." His voice was a wail now.

"I see it all now. That was my chance—my only chance. She could have made me,—she almost did,—and it was such a little fling I wanted. But the door closed fast." He slipped down in his chair. He had forgotten me, but his words burrowed. I gritted my teeth and shot out at him, desperately: "You will come back now."

He looked at me queerly. "You—you, Sam, you want me back?"

"'Fore God, I'd give everything to have you back."

His hand gripped mine. "I believe you, Sam. I've got to believe in you; that's why I sent for you." He smiled as if a load were lifted. "You—you can't know what it means to have you understand. That was the trouble. She never understood. If only she could have had less faith and just a bit of your understanding."

"Less faith and more understanding!" He was right, but in a wave the thought surged over me, I could have done without understanding, and her faith would—but Jim's faith has shut the door for me.

As if he saw this thought, he interrupted quickly: "But that isn't all I wanted to tell you. I—I haven't much faith, old Sam, but I'm long on that understanding. You are the one for her. I've always known it. And I wanted you to know I knew—and was glad." He waved aside my protest. "No, I'm not coming back. I'm—look at me. The doctor says six weeks. I want you to put me away and then—well, it's the open door for you."

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# That Parson

**A fine story of the sea and sailors, with some unusual and most interesting angles.**

## By A. E. Dingle

CAPTAIN JOHN WARDLE has the reputation of being a good, square, easy-going old salt, and his mates have no kick against him as a shipmate; but let somebody mention the Parson to him, and overboard go peace and quiet.

There's a reason. It happened in the year of the gold rush in Western Australia. Like every other windjammer, our bark, the *Lady Elsie,* lost three-parts of the fo'c's'le crowd while discharging, and the remainder while loading, and our sailing had been delayed owing to scarcity of men.

By dint of scouring the drums of Albany, offering double wages, and taking pot luck, the Old Man got together a mob of self-styled seamen, whose sole claim to the title lay in the possession of the full number of arms and legs. He turned them over to me, remarking with a grin:

"There you are, Mister Mate, a reg'lar man-o'-war's crew. They're a bit short on looks, but they're plenty long on language. Don't let 'em shirk; that kind'll thrive on hard work."

Rawle, the second mate, came along and looked 'em over. His remarks matched my own ideas to a hair. "Perish me everlasting pink, Mister Digby, I haven't heard of a fire at the jail, have you? If the Old Man expects us to lick that crowd of husky-toughs into shipshape, I'm going ashore to buy a gun, or a heavier set of knuckles. That bunch spells trouble."

I felt that way myself. But we were lucky to get a complement of any kind, and the best had to be made of a bad job.

We had a passenger. At the last minute, the Agent sent word to the Old Man that he had sold his berth to the Reverend Arthur Stewart, a parson from the diggings, going home for a rest. Passengers were rare enough with us to be welcome when we did get one.

WORKING the bark out kept us busy for a while, and nobody had much leisure in which to weigh up the Parson. But when t'gall'nts'ls were sheeted home and spanker hauled out, I left my station for'ard and joined the Skipper on the poop, to be introduced to the reverend gentleman.

"Mister Digby," said the Skipper, "I want you to meet the Reverend Mister Stewart. Parson, shake hands with Mister Digby, my chief mate."

The Parson held out a hand like a ham, with an unctuous "How fare you, Brother?" and I got my first good look at him. He was a queer duck, that's a fact, and I didn't feel drawn towards him. Tall beyond the average, and built like the Great Pyramid, all corners; a clean-shaven face, furrowed with deep lines; his eyes were hidden by a big pair of blue glasses, and he carried a huge, green-lined, white sun umbrella. For all the expression on his face, he might have been carved in wood, or stuffed and mummified. His voice was deep as the ocean, a reverberating rumble that searched out every cranny of the ship. The tough-looking fo'c's'le crowd, at their various jobs about the decks, were plainly tickled at the Parson's appearance. He soon noticed the fact, and showed resentment in queer fashion. Turning to the Skipper, he pulled from an inside pocket a packet of papers, and selecting an official-looking blue document, read the contents aloud. As his voice rolled out in approved pulpit style, he

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shot dark glances at our jail-birds in the waist. The paper read:

FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD!
For information leading to the capture of Archibald Sloss, or his delivery into custody, dead or alive, the above reward will be paid.

Then followed a list of Sloss' crimes, embracing every offense in the penal code, from picking pockets to murder and arson. As the Parson thundered out the list of heinous crimes standing to Sloss' credit, he fairly shot his words at the crew, more than one of the new men growing uncomfortable under the fire.

When he had finished, the Reverend Arthur Stewart folded the paper and gave the Old Man a little straight talk. Waving the big umbrella with a large gesture, he pointed forward and rumbled:

"My very dear friend,—brother, may I say?—it grieves me greatly to see your fine ship in the grip of evil men. The Devil is ever on the watch to take advantage of human frailties, and it would seem, brother, that he has sent his servants into your service for your undoing. It is a bad crew you have, and if I may presume to say so, it behooves you to keep strict vigil, lest we be undone."

The Skipper snickered behind his hand. He asked with a twinkle in his eye:

"You aint afraid of our little flock of jail-birds, are you, Parson? Maybe you think one of 'em might be Archie Sloss. Is that it?"

"Friend, hast ever heard of the bow shot at a venture?" The Parson produced again his blue notice. "Listen, while I read the description of Sloss. And watch keenly, while I read, yonder big, bewhiskered, evil-visaged ruffian."

He pointed, as he spoke, to the toughest-looking lamb of our tough flock, Charley Wango. He read:

"'Height, five feet ten inches—' Brother, that man is just two inches short of six feet. 'Heavily built—' Friend, he is a very whale for size. 'Weight, about two hundred pounds—' Verily, that man weighs neither more nor less than two hundredweight. 'Black hair and heavy beard—' Captain, note that seaman: a proper gorilla. 'Eyes, black—' Mister Mate, saw you ever eyes of blacker shade? 'An old scar under left eye—' Doubtless there is such a scar under those whiskers!"

The Skipper and I exchanged looks. We had, of necessity, shipped a crowd of wasters, and expected to have some trouble with them. But here was a possibility we had overlooked. To my mind, one thing only seemed incongruous in connecting Wango with the bushranger. Sloss had spent somewhere round thirty years in jail. He was a burglar, cattle-lifter, bushranger and, the notice said, murderer. He could never have spent time enough at sea in his busy life of law-dodging to become a square-rigger sailor. And Wango was, of the whole crew, the solitary sailorman worthy the name. He was a deep-water-man from the hump of his huge-muscled shoulders to the hooks of his gnarled fingers. The Parson might be right or wrong, but all agreed that Wango, as well as the rest, would bear watching.

About the Parson himself, opinions were divided. Rawle called him just a plain, sanctimonious humbug, with a tile loose. I put him down a great, hulking loafer, who was too lazy to work, and would have been a labor agitator if he had not been a sky-pilot. Captain Wardle took our conjectures as a huge joke. Said he: "To hear you fellows talk, one would think you never shipped a bunch of hard cases in the Colonies before. Next thing, you'll be telling me that our reverend friend is a detective looking for this fellow Sloss. Forget it, boys. The sky-pilot's all to the good, and you'll have your hands full licking them farmers for'ard into shape, without bothering about bushrangers."

HE was right. Everything pointed that way. Our troubles began that night in the Second Mate's watch, when the jibs needed trimming. That was about the simplest operation to be performed in a square-rigger, and Rawle never left the poop, singing out the

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order and sending the watch for'ard. The breeze was fresh, and we were sailing full-and-bye, so when the bunch of double-left-legged tailors laid hold on halliards and down-hauls, instead of sheets, it was but a few seconds before the bark was flat-aback, and in a devil of a tangle.

It needed all hands to snug things again, and the Old Man seized the opportunity to point a few remarks. But he didn't get really mad until a chorus of derision broke in on his remarks. Then he started.

"Laugh at me, will you? I'll make you laugh, you wooden soldiers!" he yelled, dancing. "Just grin in daylight, so 's I can see who it is, and I'll break your hearts deep-water fashion. You'll sweat blood and holystone the spots. You'll wish yourselves back on the breakwater. That'll do the watch; go below, you runaway convicts!"

The Skipper's words fired a mine. Out of the blackness whipped a voice like the baying of a huge mastiff. A bulky form followed the voice, and Wango stood at the foot of the poop-ladder, shaking a brawny fist up at the Skipper.

"Them names don't go with me, Guv'nor! I aint no convict, an' no bleedin' *hombre* is goin' to tag me for one. If you calls me a name like that again I'll smash yer ugly face in, skipper or no skipper!"

An approving rumble from the crowd greeted Wango's speech. Other voices chimed in, and matters looked ugly. Captain Wardle, cursing as I never before heard him, dived below for his gun. The situation was on a taut line. Getting no response from aft, the crowd on the deck below grew noisier and bolder. One or two of the boldest set foot on the ladder. I slipped on my brass knuckles, quietly advising Rawle to do the same. But before matters reached a climax a deep voice boomed out on the night, and the Parson emerged from the companionway. His night get-up was in accordance with his day rig. He wore a suit of onward-Christian-soldiers pajamas; his feet were cased in bed-socks; and—he sported a nightcap! He looked queerer than ever. He advanced to the rail, raised one great hand as if addressing a camp-meeting, and thundered:

"Children,—for ye act as children,—refrain from this unseemly demonstration. Presume not to disobey the authority of your lawful commander, in whose keeping ye are. Withdraw, I beseech you, to your several places, and try not the forbearance of your officers, or verily will vengeance be swift to visit you."

Wardle came up from below in time to catch the howl that greeted the Parson's speech, and to hear the tremendous basso of Wango snarl in angry reply:

"Go below an' keep yer mealy mouth shut, you tub-thumping bush-Baptist. Who are you to butt in on ship's business? Keep yer nose out, or you'll get it pulled!"

With a fine gesture of horror at such brazen wickedness, the Parson turned to the Skipper, who stood at his elbow fingering his revolver, and exclaimed:

"Of a verity, Brother Wardle, the lot of a seafarer is hard. May you find in your heart forbearance towards these poor men, who are, alas! in degradation as deep as are the poor wretches in the chain-gangs of the prison hulks."

WHAT reply Wardle would have made, or what move he had in mind, I shall never know. At the Parson's mention of "chain-gang," Wango roared like a shot gorilla:

"Chain-gang now, is it! That's the second time I've been called jail-bird. Come down here, you pulpit-pounding son of a loobra! Parson or no parson, I'll kick seven-bells out o' you, you smug-faced devil's spawn! Come down here!" And a wad of slushy waste took the Reverend Arthur Stewart fair on the mouth.

The Parson went. Ripping out a snappy expletive that sounded astonishingly like "—— ——— your soul, you black-faced cow-son!" the Reverend vaulted over the rail in a bound, and landed with a crunch on the top of Wango. The Skipper, Rawle and I stood aghast. It was dark, and for a moment the crowd was as surprised

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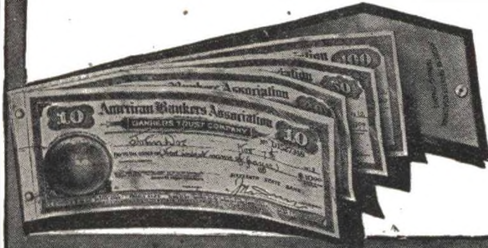


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as we. There, somewhere on the deck, were two giants, fighting like beasts; one we had almost condemned as an escaped murderer; the other we knew as a meek and lowly shepherd of souls. But as for distinguishing them by the remarks passing between them—it was absolutely and hopelessly impossible.

Then the crowd started to take a hand; and we woke up. The Skipper daren't use his gun, in the blackness, for fear of hitting the passenger. Curtly bidding us follow, Captain Wardle snatched a pin from the mizzen-pin-rail and jumped down the ladder.

The fight surged over and around the struggling, swearing forms of the Parson and Wango, snarling and biting like tigers at grips. The order of the ruddy proboscis and the decoration of the somber lamp got dealt out with extraordinary impartiality, and every man in the ship, except the man at the wheel, was dealing 'em out.

In the thick of the fracas, the mob was split asunder as by an explosion, and the Parson staggered to his feet with a yell of triumph. Wango lay still. All hands quit hammering each other for a moment, as the Parson bellowed forth in his most unctuous tones:

"We smote them, yea, hip and thigh we smote them, and their pride was humbled in the dust. Misguided men, cease this unseemly brawling, and let peace descend upon this vessel again. Captain, I beg you have this poor broken sinner carried tenderly to his bed. I fear he may be grievously stricken."

The Skipper called for a lamp and bent over Wango. What he saw caused him to straighten up with a grunt of surprise. The carpenter was called, and Wango was put in irons. The Parson mildly objected, but the Skipper had seen sufficient.

"Throw a bucket of water over him," he ordered, "and drop him down the fore-peak. We'll see to him to-morrow."

At breakfast on the following morning, the Skipper broached a subject which was destined to set the whole ship's company by the ears. The Parson sat at the foot of the table. He had left his glasses off for the first time, and he looked resplendent with one eye shut tight, a crushed-strawberry nose, and an ear that hung to his figure-head only by the aid of a cross-hatching of adhesive tape.

When the steward had disappeared, the Skipper remarked:

"Now, gentlemen, what's your opinion on this fellow Wango? I think the Parson hit the mark when he hinted he might be Sloss, the convict. You saw how mad he got at mention of jail; and when I held the lamp to him I spotted a scar under his eye. Sloss has one. Wango fills the bill exactly. How's it strike you?"

The Parson fished out his blue goggles and put them on. He announced with startling conviction:

"Brother, I do believe you're right. I've thought so since I first saw your ruffianly seaman. I'm a man of peace, Captain, and the presence of so dangerous a criminal alarms me. It's your duty, as a Christian man, to signal the first steamer you meet and transfer him."

"I'm thinking you're right about the man," chimed in Rawle eagerly. "But why transfer him? Why not land him and claim the five hundred? Adelaide's all right, aint it, Cap'n? There you could touch that reward right away. What say you, Digby?"

I was thinking hard along those lines myself. But we were carrying a good, hard nor'easter, and a windjammer can't afford to monkey with her power making a passage. I couldn't fancy the Old Man's starting on a thrash to windward of several hundred miles, unless absolutely sure of his man. And I wasn't so sure.

"The man fills the bill pretty closely, Skipper," I agreed. "It might pay you to land him. If it aint him, it wouldn't pay, though. Any port you figure on will be to windward; we might lose a week, and then draw a blank. The Parson's right. Transfer him. If he's Sloss, the reward'll wait; if you're mistaken, you'll lose nothing."

The Reverend Arthur vigorously nodded approval. Rawle shook his head. I confess, I hadn't a notion the Skipper would take the line he did.

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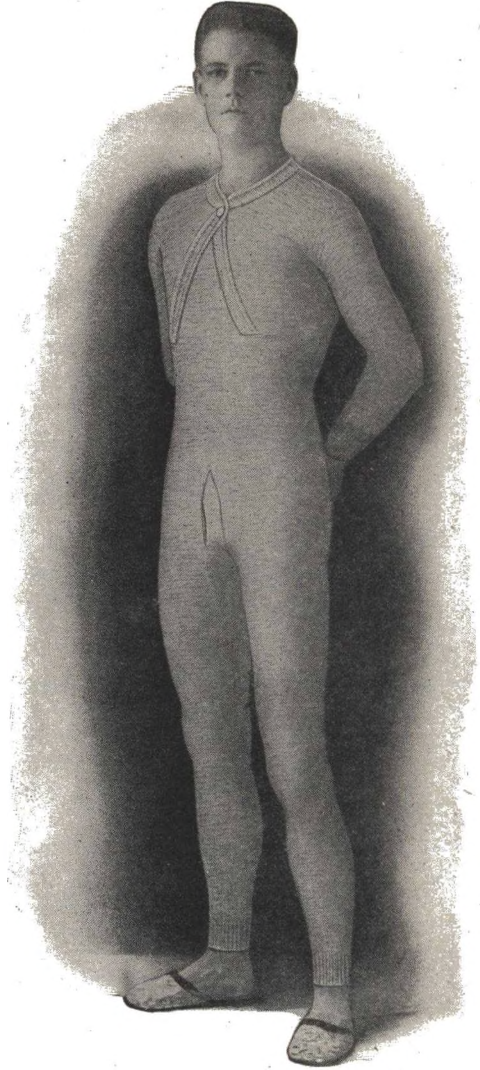

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He staggered all my ideas of running a wind-jammer homeward-bound.

"Listen," he said, screwing up his face until his eyes glinted like points of crystal, "there's five hundred of the best for the man who turns Sloss over. Wango's our man, and I'm hungry for that reward. Trans-ship him, and we may lose him. We're going to land him at Adelaide! Mister Digby, you'll kindly put the bark on the wind, port tack, as close as she'll lie. You'll get the course as soon as I've worked up the reckoning."

Wardle was skipper; lost time was his affair entirely. I started up the companion, when the Parson made an unexpected kick. He switched clear round like a dog-vane. His deep bass rumbled forth:

"But, Captain, it's a sinful waste of time to go so far out of your course. I'm a passenger, and I protest against unduly lengthening the voyage. I wish to see Australia no more. I have every reason for wishing to reach home speedily. Many ships will be met in your regular track. Besides, you're not really sure that your man is Archibald Sloss; you only surmise that. Hold your course, Brother Wardle, I beg of you. Your good chief officer will support me in this, I know."

Rawle and I looked at this strange Parson in surprise. Wardle was nettled at the interference with his business, but he admired his passenger too much to show it. He beamed indulgently as he replied:

"I think, Mister Stewart, you're over-anxious to get home, and that makes you impatient of delay. A moment ago you were as sure as I am that Wango is Sloss. You said so. Never mind, it'll make but a few days' difference anyway, and I'll promise you we'll crack on to make up for it, when we're rid of our man."

WITH the alteration in the course came black looks on the faces of the crew. It seemed to prove that we had a mob of real jail-birds aboard, who, like Wango, would not relish the sight of the coast again. And it was evident that the black looks were not confined to the men. The Parson became grouchy and stand-offish. He kept to his short walk in the waist all day, never joining the mate of the watch on the poop. He barely spoke, except at meal-times. But the smile on the Skipper's face expanded as we crept to the nor'ard. He was already counting over those golden pieces.

But now began a series of accidents which gave all hands a full fare of trouble. We held the port tack all day, and in the first dog-watch Wardle sent up word to go about. The Parson was an interested spectator as I ordered:

"Ready 'bout ship; let go jib-sheets! Helm a-lee!"

The bark came up and hung shaking.

"Lee-sheets!" and a moment after, "Tacks and sheets! Mains'l haul!" And with the first heave, *smash!* went every hauling part, and we were in trouble.

"Ah!" breathed the Parson, and I'll swear he rubbed his hands with joy. The Skipper bawled himself hoarse; the helmsman sweat blood, spinning the wheel up and down and clear over. It made no difference. Wheel tackles as well as braces were gone, cut through cleanly by a knife, to the last strand. Only the extra strain was needed to part the whole business.

Nobody knew how it happened; they wouldn't, least of all, those who had turned the trick. Wardle raved and swore, threatened irons, to no purpose. We could only keep keen watch against further mischief. I saw nothing during the remainder of my watch, and when I relieved Rawle at midnight he had nothing to report. All the same, the watch was not fifteen minutes old before main-royal and t'gall'nt backstays parted with a twang, and away went the main-t'gallant-mast, broken off short in the cap.

This was serious. Not a soul had been seen to go aloft since dark, and what had been done to the main might also have been done to the fore. The ship was shortened down and run off the wind until the raffle was cleared up. Everybody on deck was up to the ears in trouble, when the Parson came on to the poop. He touched the Skipper on the arm.

"Captain," he croaked in solemn

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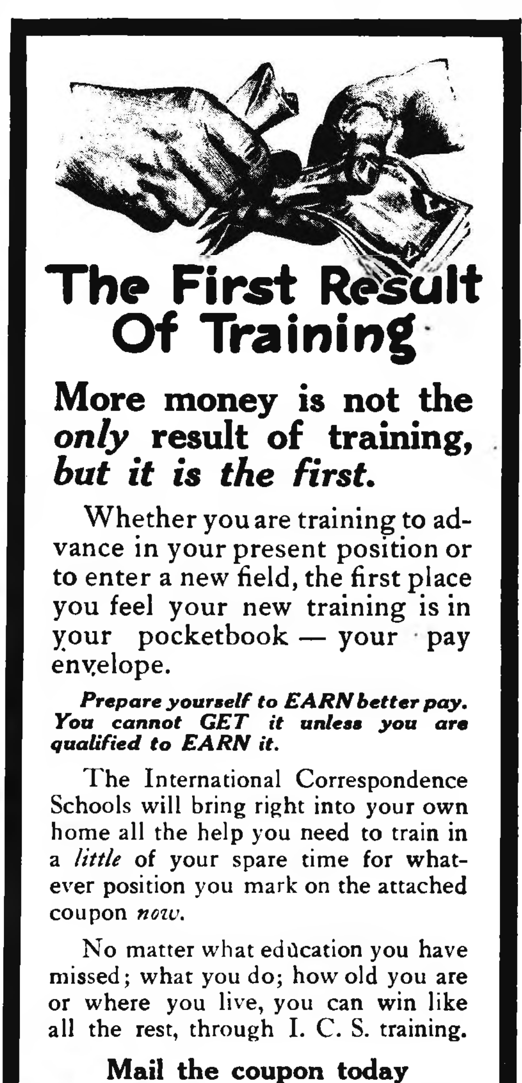


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tones, " this travail is visited upon you to show you the error of your course. No good can come of turning back on your voyage. Resume your right and proper direction before an all-wise Providence further chastises you."

The Skipper nearly burst with the excess of his emotions. He shook off the Parson's hand, stuck his fist under that worthy's already damaged nose, and howled:

"Confound all sky-pilots for Jonahs, anyway! And you along with 'em, Mister Reverend Stewart. You get to blazes off my poop, and mind your own bleedin' business, or maybe you'll get some more of what Black-whiskers gave you. This ship's going to Adelaide, you hear me?"

I expected to see the Parson launch out as he had at Wango, but he turned without a word and descended the ladder. Taking up his old station, in the light of a port under the break of the poop, he pulled out a huge sheath-knife and proceeded to whittle a pipeful of plug tobacco.

Shortened down as we had to be now, the thrash to the nor'ard loomed up formidably. Surely, I thought, Wardle will give it up now. But the Skipper stuck out his jaw and kept all on. He had recovered his good humor at breakfast next morning, and apologized to the passenger for his outburst of the night. The Parson rolled his eyes, threw up his hands, and droned:

"My brother, I am a peaceable man and abhor strife. You were sore pressed, and there is no reproach in my heart for you. Yet I am constrained to say that Providence has set the elements of darkness to warring against your ship, to show you that Australia should be left behind. I will say no more, except to offer my poor services to watch for the tool appointed to compass your undoing."

"Thankee, Mister Stewart; that's very kind of you. Maybe you can see as far into the dark as I or my mates. If you see anybody monkeying with the gear, why, don't wait to tell me; just sail in and give him the same dose you handed Wango. Shake."

The day was spent in hard work, with all hands busy reeving off new rigging. Nobody could get in any dirty work in daylight,—we were sure of that. At eight bells in the evening I relieved Rawle, determined if any more funny business were tried I would be right there to see it. Two hours passed, and nothing out of the way happened. Then four bells struck, and before the "All's well and lights burning bright" of the lookout had died away, far up in the shadows of the bellying canvas I heard the sharp *crack* and *twang* of a taut rope half parting. I awoke from thoughts of home and pay-day, and sent a searching glance aloft. The dark blur at the fore-topmast-head seemed overbulky for the main-t'gallant-stays'l, I thought. Then followed a sharper *crack,* as the upper-fore-tops'l-sheet parted, and a scuffling and cursing as a heavy body stumbled, grabbing wildly at backstays to check a fall.

I ran along the lee side of the fore-rigging. At last I had got the cause of our troubles. At the foot of the mast I stopped, squinting aloft. I saw a huge body lumbering downwards, clutching frantically at the sharp-braced yards, stirrups and foot-ropes. Then the world was blotted out. The falling body flattened me to the deck like an avalanche.

I AWOKE in my own berth, with the Skipper bending over me, looking anxious.

"Bully boy," he cried, holding a caulker of virgin rum under my nose as my eyes opened. "Swig on that, and tell what happened. By cripes! I thought you were a gone coon."

"What happened!" I echoed, sore as a matador fresh from a mangling match with a bull. "Nothin' happened, except the roof of th' universe fell in on me, Skipper. Who in blazes was that fell from aloft? If you've got him, you've got the rigging-ripper."

"Not yet, Mate. It was the poor Parson who fell on you. He'd been aloft to look for the slasher. Mighty high he's paid for the privilege of watching, too."

"Oh, h—! That Parson!" I gasped. "The sanctimonious fool deserved to break his neck; he'd no business monkeying aloft in the dark. What's the damage to him?"

"Why, when I came on deck, you were flattened out to all eternity, and Mister Stewart was hoppin' round on one hoof, swearin' like a breakwater convict. I never heard such language in all my goin' fishing. He stopped it when he saw me, and apologized. He had a broken ankle, and it's lucky it wasn't his neck. We aint got our man, after all, and 'most all the gear from top to truck is cut from Assinoo to Zebedee!"

I was mad enough to think and say almost anything just then. I ripped out at the Skipper:

"That smug-faced duck of a sky-pilot is putting the ship bug-house, Cap'n, and I'm blowed if I don't think he's a queer parson. I've had doubts about him ever since he blew off his mouth and sailed into Wango."

Wardle's eyes popped at my outburst. "What, now, Digby? You aint crazy with the shock, are you?"

"No, I'm not crazy," I retorted, "but between you and me, Skipper, I'll bet my pay-day the Parson's as likely to be Sloss himself as Wango is. I'm darned sorry he didn't bust himself to better effect, that's all."

"Slowly, Mate, slowly," cautioned the Skipper. "You've had a bad knock, and it's peeved you. You mustn't air that kind of guff out loud. He's a passenger, remember, and he got hurt trying to help us out of a mess."

"Help us out!" I snorted, disgustedly. "I believe he got us into the mess. And d'ye see the blasted great knife he packs? That was never meant for a 'baccy slicer. Good and handy for cutting rope! Who made the biggest kick about going north? Faugh! I don't like him."

Captain Wardle smiled indulgently, as at a peevish child. He turned to leave my cabin, saying:

"When you've got over the squashing out, Mate, you'll see different. Soon's you're fit, I'll take you to see our friend. I like him all the better since his tumble. He's a man, anyhow, and if he uses man's talk at times, it only proves him more of a man. As for his knife, well—I carry a gun, don't I? Does that make me a pirate?"

He went off on deck laughing at me. An old saying runs, "He laughs best who laughs last," and it was running through my fuddled head for hours after the Skipper left me. In my bones I felt it would prove true, too. In the afternoon watch I felt right again and went on deck. The Skipper was standing my watch. As soon as I appeared, he sent for Rawle to relieve the deck, and led me to the Parson's cabin.

The Skipper effusively inquired after the wounded foot, and announced that I had come to assure the patient I had suffered no damage. But I saw the Parson was a bit shy of me, and for my life I couldn't resist trying a dig at him. He was smoking, as was the Skipper. I wasn't. So pulling out my pipe and plug, I remarked that I had left my knife in my room, and asked Mister Stewart for the loan of his. I wanted Wardle to see that big knife. I felt like a detective following a pet clue as he felt for the knife. He couldn't find it. I expected he wouldn't, but to make my clue work out properly, the weapon ought to have been found on deck. And it hadn't been.

"I'm sorry, Mister Digby," said Stewart; "I seem to have mislaid my knife. It must have fallen from my pocket when I met with my accident, unless I mislaid it before going up the mast." Then, reaching a can of loose weed, he offered it to me. "Here, this is a good smoke, friend."

All his exaggerated pulpit utterance had left him, and he was plainly uneasy. Wardle tried to rally him with clumsy sea witticisms, telling him no good had ever been known to come of a wind-jammer shipping a sky-pilot. It was no use. The Parson peered through the thick glass of his closed porthole for some minutes; then he turned to the Skipper again.

"Captain," he asked, "how near are we to the land? Do you still intend to make for Adelaide?"

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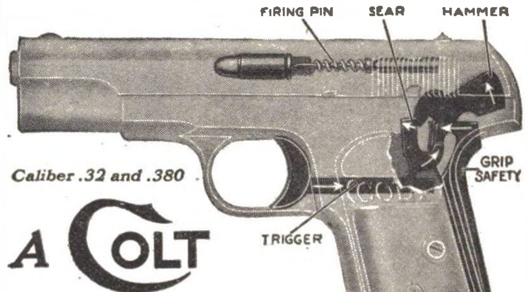


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"Why, surely," laughed Wardle. "As long as I've got a stick standing I'll carry on now. I wouldn't let the dirty scum that's playing Cain with my rigging have the satisfaction of seeing me put about. You'll be glad, too, Mister Stewart, when we've landed that blackguard in the fore-peak. He's at the bottom of all this. It's his mates trying to prevent me reaching port to land him. Try to rest now. We'll soon be bound home again."

Out on deck I couldn't refrain longer from giving the Skipper a piece of my mind. He asked me what I thought of the Parson now. I told him.

"Captain," I exploded wrathfully, "you're blind or wall-eyed in this act. I don't believe Wango is Sloss, any more than I am, or you are. All the mischief's been done since he's been locked up, hasn't it? Land him, or trans-ship him if you're bent on it, but I'll gamble my voyage's pay you'll take up no reward for your trouble. If I had to choose between Wango and this bushwhacker sailing under parson's colors to get that reward—why, I'd take the Parson for my end, that's all."

Then the Skipper got mad. He bristled like a porcupine at bay, and raved:

"See here, Mister Digby, you're forgetting your place, you hear me? Mind your business from now on, and keep your insulting remarks to yourself. I'm skipper of this bark, don't forget that. And Mister Stewart's a passenger, and my guest; don't forget that, either. Who are you, to class a gentleman of the cloth with a bloody ruffian like Sloss? Attend to the ship. If you hadn't been asleep half the time, them pirates for'ard couldn't have put us in the mess we're in."

I shut up, and went desperately to work putting the bark to rights. But strangely enough, there was no further breaking of gear. Not so much as a rope-yarn parted after the Parson's fall.

As we neared our port, my thoughts turned to Wango. Not for a moment now did I believe him to be Sloss; yet he fitted the published description of the bushranger to a dot. Nobody except the Skipper had seen a scar on his face, it's true, but that was hidden by the whiskers, most likely. When Rawle relieved the deck, I slipped below to the fore-peak to see Wango, and satisfy myself once for all. In the gloomy little den, noisy with crashing cable and straining bulkheads, finding my man was difficult. A smell of tobacco and the glow of a burning pipe showed me his whereabouts, and assured me that his mates were looking after him. I went straight to the point.

"Wango, the Skipper believes you're Archie Sloss, the escaped convict, and we're putting in to Adelaide to land you. D'ye know it?"

Wango laughed gruffly.

"Yes, I know it. News like that travels far. He'll only be the loser of his time. He's 'way off."

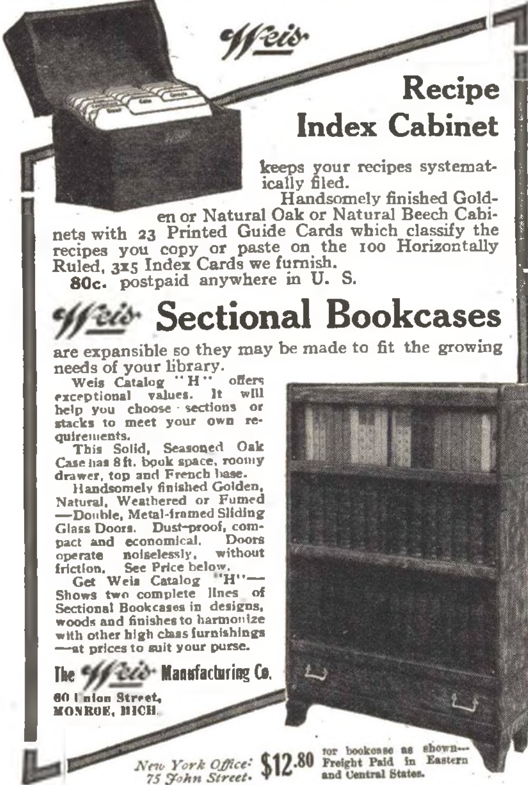
The man seemed sincere. I believed him. I wanted to.

"Well, Wango," I continued, "I'll tell you, I don't think with the Skipper myself. I'm in bad with him for telling him too plainly what I do think. But you fit the description too darned well for him. He saw the scar on your face when the Parson knocked you out, and that clinched the matter in his mind. Tell me why you got so mad when he mentioned jail, and if I can help you out of this mutiny mess, I will."

"Well, I s'pose I've got to face the mutiny gag, but I aint afraid o' the other business," Wango said. "That's a joke. I skipped out o' a man-o'-war, that's the truth, though it's a long time ago; and every time I hear jail mentioned I think I'm spotted. That's why I went for the Skipper. And I took off at that big stiff of a Parson, because it was the ship's chaplain who made such a hell of my life that I was glad to clear out o' the navy. That's the truth. Me Archie Sloss! Gawd blimee, I like that."

He roared with grim enjoyment at the joke.

"So that's all, is it?" I remarked. "If you're not Sloss, when the police come aboard they'll know it. If my idea works out right, the Skipper wont



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press the mutiny charge against you, Wango. More likely he'll thank you for the decorations you put on his pet parson."

Mention of the Parson reminded me of something.

"I can't think how he managed to put you out, Wango," I said.

The big sailor took my hand and guided it to his throat, where my fingers traced a wicked, ragged tear, half healed.

"Sunk his teeth in there, Mister Digby. The bloody cannibal!"

"Good Lord!" I gasped, "what a devil of a parson."

RETURNING to the deck, I found Rawle and the Skipper watching a steamer astern, rapidly overhauling us. With the glass I saw she was a gunboat, flying a signal to us to heave-to. At our own halliards flew communication flags. We were both of a mind. In fifteen minutes the warship ranged alongside, and a cutter put off, filled with men.

"She seems to know what we've got for her," mused the Skipper. "Wonder how she got the news?"

The boat ran up under our lee quarter, and a smart lieutenant came over the side, accompanied by a stalwart sergeant of police and a file of bluejackets. They approached the Skipper, but he forestalled their query.

"Well, gentlemen, I wasn't exactly looking for the gunboat, but the police are welcome. I've got a haul. Archie Sloss is in irons in my fore-peak. I'd have landed him, but you see the mess I'm in aloft."

The officers smiled approvingly. "In irons, eh? Then you've done some smart work, Captain. We've been looking for your bark ever since you left Albany, but hardly expected you'd be smart enough to discover our man. Bring him up; we'll relieve you of him."

Wango was brought up, handcuffed, and I watched the faces of the officers with interest. As I expected, there was no sign of recognition on either. They looked mighty blank.

"Here he is, gentlemen," proudly announced Wardle, "and I'll thank you for a receipt for him. That five hundred reward will be mighty useful."

The policeman snorted: "You're 'way off the track, Captain. That's not Sloss. Is he the only stranger you have aboard?"

"That's all," said the puzzled Skipper.

"No passenger?"

"Why, yes, we've a passenger, the Reverend Arthur Stewart, a right decent man."

"Big fellow?"

"Ye-s, quite sizable, but he couldn't be your man."

"We'll take a look at Mister Stewart, if you'll allow us, Captain," persisted the policeman.

Wardle ruffled up; he caught the grin on my face.

"You can't see him," he snapped. "He's laid up with a broken ankle, which he got trying to detect a rascal who was cutting up my rigging. He's very ill. I'll not have him disturbed."

"Trying to detect—! Why, Skipper, you must be thick! Come, Sergeant."

The Lieutenant moved towards the companionway, thrusting aside the Skipper as he weakly tried to bar the way.

"We'll take all responsibility, if your passenger makes any complaint—I believe he wont, though. Where's his berth?"

Wango was enjoying the fun. He had edged along aft until he was right with us, and when we followed the officers, he was well up. A rap on the Parson's door brought no response, and the handle was tried. The door was locked. A second summons to open getting no result, the Sergeant shouldered the wood, and we trooped inside.

The berth was empty!

"What's the joke, Captain?" demanded the officer, looking ugly. "I warn you not to obstruct us in the execution of our duty."

Wardle was dumbfounded. I slipped outside and looked around the saloon. The lazarette hatch was off.

"Did you leave the lazarette open, Skipper?" I asked.

"Lazarette? Of course I didn't,"

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cried Wardle, scared now. "Somebody's down there with a light, and there's two kegs of powder—"

A muffled smash was heard below.

"Quick!" snapped the officer. "He'll do us yet. Move!"

The Sergeant dropped down the hatch, followed by the Lieutenant—Wardle and I close astern. I knew what blue funk meant the minute I landed. In the darkest corner of the dingy little store-room crouched the Parson. A sputtering tallow dip flared from the top of a case. With a short iron bar the Parson wrenched desperately at the head of a keg.

"Hands up, Sloss!" roared the Sergeant.

The head of the keg parted with a crash, and dropping the bar, Sloss snatched up the flaring dip.

"You fools! You bloody meddlers!" he yelled. "You'll never take me back. I'll blow the ship to glory!"

Like a bolt from a catapult, a heavy body drove between us, and launched itself straight at the fiendish figure with the flare. The dip was extinguished by the impact. The blackness could be felt. We needed no light to know that a terrific contest was going on near us. Rawle heard the racket, and hurried down with a closed lantern. The light shone upon two smashing, plunging furies, fighting like beasts among the ruins of a powder keg.

We moved forward in a body, but before a hand could reach the struggling pair, one man rose triumphant. It was Wango, handcuffs and all. I was nearest to him, and as he wiped blood from his mouth with the back of a hairy fist, he caught my eye, and grinned. It wasn't pretty, that grin.

"Tit for tat, Mister Digby. Me and him's quits now!" he whispered hoarsely in my ear. "I outed him for the count this time."

I didn't need the sight of the Parson's torn throat to know what he meant. Wango was quits.

The Sergeant slipped the bracelets on Sloss, and turned to Wardle.

"Now, Captain, we'll get your decent passenger on deck. I don't like these close quarters. Your Reverend Something-or-other is the man we're after. If it'll soothe your feelings at all, I'll say that I believe you were really ignorant of his identity."

AT the gangway, the Lieutenant added another morsel of comfort to the poor Skipper.

"Captain, I'm sorry I can't recommend you for the reward. You drew the wrong badger."

We watched the party go over the side and pull away for the gun-boat, while Wardle swore deeply and earnestly. He shook his fist at the disconsolate figure of the Parson, and spluttered impotently. His eyes stuck out like hat-pegs when the bo's'n walked aft and presented to him a huge sheath-knife, the Parson's knife.

"Found this stuck in the collar of the fore-top-mast back-stay, sir," said the bo's'n.

Wardle was speechless. I reminded him that Wango had saved the ship, and he was still in irons; the least we could do was to release him.

"To the devil with Wango, the Parson, and the whole darned business," he snarled. "Take the irons off and turn him to. We owe him that much, I s'pose. And Mister Digby, if you dare to mention the Parson in my hearing, or ever say to me 'I told you so,' I'll break you, and send you for'ard along with Wango. D'ye hear? That Parson! Faugh!"

But Captain John Wardle was always a decent, square-dealing old sea-dog. After a few turns to windward, he called me over.

"Wango *did* decorate the Reverend pretty good, didn't he, Digby? Send him aft in the dog-watch, when I've cooled off. I owe him something for that!"

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**WATCHES ON CREDIT**

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# THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

## A NOVEL BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON

*Continued from page 300 of this issue.*

shares changing hands! "A better tone prevailing;" "brisk demand for tractions;" "lively trading in bonds," would soberly greet the eye of students of finance.

FOREMAN, one of the brokers, who had been haunting the store for several days looking for Copeland, accosted Jerry in the bank one afternoon.

"Your boss doesn't sit on his job much," Foreman remarked. "I'm getting tired chasing him."

"He's off motoring with Kinney—they're looking for a place to start another cement mill. Why don't you call for me when you honor the house?"

"Oh, my business with Copeland is too trifling to trouble you about," the broker remarked ironically. "You haven't any money, have you?"

Jerry bent his ear to catch the jingle of coin inside the cages.

"Of, if you want to borrow, Copeland-Farley aint a pawnshop."

"I guess C-F *doesn't* lend much; it's the biggest borrower on the street," said Foreman.

"Every big jobber is a heavy borrower. It's a part of the game," Jerry replied easily.

Foreman's anxiety to find Copeland had piqued Amidon's curiosity.

"Of course, if your business with the boss can wait—"

"It's a trifling matter, that will probably annoy him when I mention it. I've got ten shares of Copeland-Farley for sale. I thought he might want to pick 'em up."

"Must be a mistake," replied Jerry; "there's never any of our stock for sale."

"No; I suppose you've got most of it yourself downstairs in the safety vault!"

"Come through and pour the dope!" said Jerry, grinning amiably.

"Well, I've got 'em, all right. An old party named Reynolds up at Fort Wayne had ten shares, and his executors wrote me that Copeland ought to have a chance to buy 'em. I've worn myself out trying to find your boss. I don't know who'd buy if he didn't. The things you hear about your house are a little bit scary: trade falling off; head of the company drinking, gambling, monkeying with outside things, like Kinney cement—"

"Well, well!" chirruped Jerry; "you're just chuck full of sad tidings."

"Of course you know it all; but maybe you don't know that Corbin & Eichberg are cutting into your business. There will be an involuntary consolidation one of these days, and Copeland-Farley will be painted off the sign."

"You're the best little booster I've heard sing this week! What'll you take for the stock?"

"Par."

"Sold! Bring your papers here tomorrow at two, and I'll give you the money."

JERRY had heard some one say that it was what you can do without money that proves your mettle in business. He had seven hundred dollars, which represented the savings of his lifetime. The balance of the thousand necessary to complete the purchase he borrowed of Eaton—who made the advance not without much questioning.

"Very careless on Copeland's part, but to be expected of a man who takes only a fitful interest in his business. You have about seven hundred dollars! All right; I'll lend you what you need to buy the stock. But keep this to yourself; don't turn in the old certificate for a new one—not at present. Wait and see what happens. Copeland needs discipline, and he will probably get it. Kinney and Copeland seeing much of each other?"

"Well, they're off on a trip together."

"I mean social affairs. They haven't been driving peaceful citizens away from the Country Club by their cork-popping quite so much, have they? I thought not; that's good. The general reform wave may hit them yet."

"On the dead, I think Copeland's trying to cut out the early morning parties," said Jerry earnestly. "He's taken a brace."

"If he doesn't want to die in the poorhouse at the early age of fifty, he'd better!" Eaton brushed an imaginary speck off his cuff as he asked: "How much did your boss give you of that five thousand you got back for him out of that poker game?"

Amidon fidgeted and colored deeply.

"Just another of these fairy stories!"

"Your attempt to feign ignorance is laudable, Amidon. But my information is exact. Rather neat, particularly lifting him right out of the patrol wagon, so to speak. And recovering the check—creditable to your tact—highly so!"

Jerry grinned.

"Oh, it was dead easy! You see, after helping the gang lick you in the primaries last May, they couldn't go back on me."

"If you turned your influence to nobler use, this would be a very different world. Let us go back to that Corrigan matter — you remember?" said Eaton, filling his pipe. "You probably noticed that the gentleman who was arrested for murder down there was duly convicted. His lawyer didn't do him much good. No wonder! I never saw a case more miserably handled—stupid beyond words."

"You wasn't down there?" demanded Jerry, sitting up straight.

"*Were,* not *was,* Amidon! I should think you'd know I'd been in the wilderness from my emaciated appearance. Believe I did say I was going to Pittsburgh, but I took the wrong train. Met some nice chaps while I was down there—one or two friends of yours, road agents, pirates, commercial travelers, drummers, —I beg your pardon!"

AMIDON was moved to despair. He would never be able to surround himself with the mystery or practice the secrecy that he found so fascinating in Eaton. He had not imagined that the lawyer would bother himself further about Corrigan. Jerry had read of the conviction without emotion, but it would never have occurred to him that a man as busy as Eaton or as devoted to the comforts of life would have spent three days in Belleville merely to watch the trial of a man in whom he had only the remotest interest.

"They soaked him for manslaughter. I guess he got off easy?"

"He did, indeed," replied Eaton. "When did you see Nan last?"

"I've been there once since you took me, and the old man sent down word he wanted to see me. He was feeling good and lit into me about the store. Wanted to know about everything. Some of the fellows Copeland has kicked out have been up crying on Farley's doorstep, and he asked me how the boss came to let them go. He sent Nan out of the room so he could cuss better. He's sure some cusser!"

"Amidon!" Eaton beat his knuckles on the desk sharply, "remember you are speaking English!"

"You better give me up," moaned Jerry, crestfallen.

"You are doing well. With patience and care you will improve the quality of your diction. No reference to the Corrigan matter, I suppose—either by Farley or Nan?"

"Not a word. It was the night I read about the end of the trial, but nothing was said about it."

"She needn't have worried," Eaton remarked. "She was a very foolish little girl to have drawn her money out of the bank to hand over to a crooked lawyer."

"I suppose you coaxed the money back—"

"Certainly not! It might have been amusing to gather that fellow in for blackmail; but you can see that it would have involved no end of newspaper notoriety—most disagreeable. I had the best opportunities for observing that fellow in his conduct of the case; in fact, I had a letter to the judge, and he asked me to sit with him on the bench. There's little in the life or public services of Jason E. Harlowe that I don't

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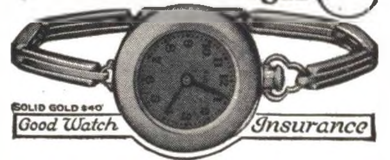


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know." He lifted his eyes to the solid wall of file-boxes. "H-66 is filled with data—Jason E. Harlowe," he repeated. "If I should die to-night, kindly direct my executor to observe that box particularly."

"I've heard of him; he ran for the legislature last year and got licked."

"By two hundred and sixteen votes," added Eaton.

"What's your guess about that thousand bucks? Corrigan must have put Harlowe up to it."

"He did not," replied Eaton, peering for a moment into the bowl of his pipe. "But I'm ready for Harlowe in case he shows his hand again.

"Farley has some relations down that way, a couple of cousins at Lawrenceburg. Do you follow me? Harlowe may have something bigger up his sleeve. He ranges the whole Indiana shore of the Ohio; business mostly criminal.

"The more I've thought of that thousand-dollar episode, the less I've liked it. I take a good deal of interest in Nan, you know. She's a little brash and needs a helping hand occasionally. Not that I'm called upon to stand *in loco parentis,* but there's something mighty appealing in her.

"For fear you may misunderstand me, I assure you that I am not in love with her, or in danger of being; but her position is difficult and made the more so by her impulsive, warm-hearted nature. And it has told against her a little that the Farleys were never quite admitted to the inner circle here.

"This is a peculiar town, you know, Amidon, and there's a good deal of caste feeling—deplorable but true! You and I are sturdy democrats and above such prejudices, but there are perfectly good people who never forget what you may call their position."

"Well, I guess Nan's as good as any of them," said Amidon doggedly.

"She is! But it's the elemental strain in her that makes her interesting. She's of the race that believes in fairies; we have to take that into account."

AMIDON nodded soberly. He had seen nothing in Nan to support this proposition that she believed in fairies, but the idea seemed to please him.

Eaton's way of speaking of women was another thing that impressed Jerry. It was always with profound respect, and that was unfamiliar enough in Jerry's previous existence; but with this reverence was a chivalrous anxiety to serve or protect them. The girls Jerry had known, or the ones he particularly admired, were those endowed with a special genius for taking care of themselves.

"Nan," Eaton was saying, "needs plenty of air. She has suffered from claustrophobia in her life with the Farleys. Oh, yes; claustrophobia—"

He paused to explain the meaning of the word, which Jerry scribbled on an envelope that he might remember it and use it somewhere when opportunity offered.

"I'm glad Farley talked to you. You will find that he will ask to see you again, but be careful what you say to him about the store. He'll be anxious to worm out of you information detrimental to Copeland; but be loyal to your employer. The old gentleman might like such information, but he's the sort to distrust you if you seemed anxious to talk against the house or the head of it, much as he may dislike him."

"I guess that's right," said Jerry. "He asked about the customers on the route I worked last year and seemed to know them all—even to the number of children in the family."

"You've been back once since we called together? Anybody else around—any signs that Nan is receiving social attentions?"

"I didn't see any. She'd been reading 'Huck Finn' to the old gent when I dropped in."

"Isolated life; not wholesome. A girl like that needs to have people about her."

"Well," Jerry ejaculated, "she doesn't need a scrub like me! I felt ashamed of myself for going; and had to walk around the block about seven times before I got my nerve up. It's awful, going into a house like that, and waiting for the coon to go off to see whether you get in or not."

"The trepidation you indicate is

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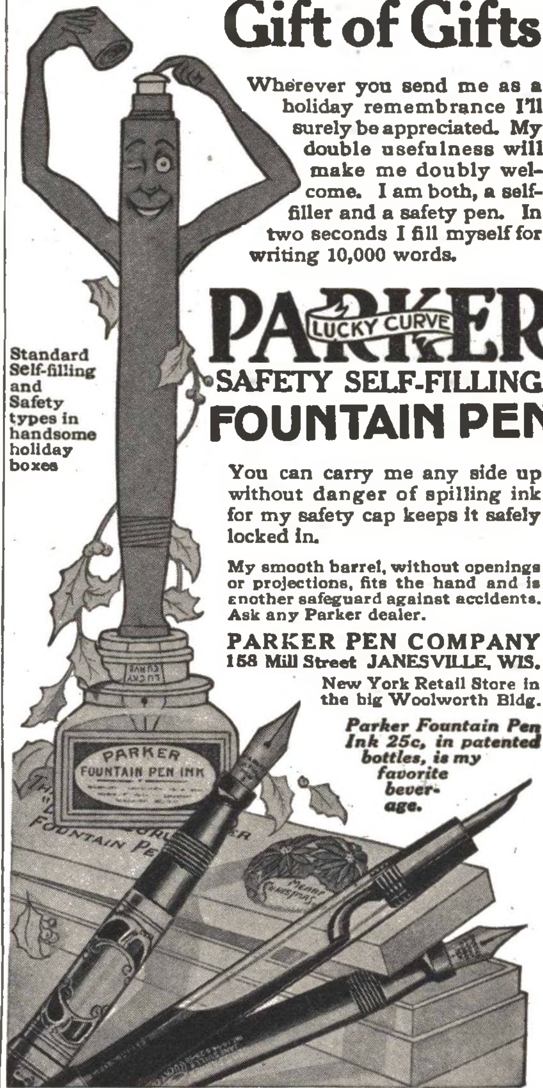


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creditable to you, Amidon. Your social instincts are crude but sound. Should you say, as a student of mankind and an observer of life, that Nan is pining away with a broken heart?"

"Well, hardly; she was a lot cheerfuller than she was that first time, when you went with me."

"Thanks for the compliment! Of course, you get on better without me. 'Twas always thus!

"You say Copeland and Kinney are off motoring, to look at a new factory?" He lifted his eyes to one of the file-boxes absently. "I wish they'd wait till we get rid of that suit over Kinney's patents before they spread out any more. The case ought to be decided soon, and there are times—"

HE rose quickly, walked to the shelves and drew down a volume in which he instantly became absorbed. Then he went back to his desk and refilled his pipe deliberately.

"I think," he remarked, "that we shall win the case; but you never can tell. By the way, what is your impartial judgment of the merits of Corbin & Eichberg—rather wide-awake fellows, aren't they?"

As Jerry began to express scorn by a contemptuous curl of the lip and an outward gesture of his stiffened palm, Eaton reprimanded him sharply.

"Speak judicially—no bluster, none of this whang about their handling inferior goods. The fact is they are almost offensively prosperous and carry more traveling men after ten years' business than Copeland-Farley with thirty years behind them."

"Well," Jerry replied meekly, "I guess they are cutting in a little; Corbin had made a lot of money before he went into drugs, and they've got more capital than C-F."

"That increases the danger of the competition. Eichberg is a pretty solid citizen. For example, he's a director in the Western National."

"I guess that wont help him sell any drugs," said Amidon, who resented this indirect praise of Corbin & Eichberg.

"Not directly, no." And Eaton dropped the subject.

Foreman the broker had intimated that in due course Copeland-Farley would be absorbed by Corbin & Eichberg; possibly the same calamity was foreshadowed in Eaton's speculations.

BEFORE he returned to his boarding-house, Jerry strolled into the jobbing district and stood for some time on the sidewalk opposite Copeland-Farley's store. His ten shares of stock gave him an exalted sense of proprietorship. He was making progress; he was a stockholder in a corporation. But it was a corporation that was undoubtedly going to the bad.

It was quite true that Corbin & Eichberg were making heavy inroads upon Copeland-Farley trade. It was not a debatable matter that if Copeland persisted in his evil courses the business would go by the board.

Copeland hadn't been brought up to work; that was his trouble, Jerry philosophized. And yet Copeland was doing better. As Jerry thought of him, his attitude became paternal. He grinned as he became conscious of his dreams of attempting — he, Jeremiah Amidon—to pull Billy Copeland back from the pit for which he seemed destined, and save the house of Copeland-Farley from ruin.

He crossed the street, found the private watchman sitting in the open door half-asleep, roused him and gave him a cigar he had purchased for the purpose.

Then he walked away, whistling cheerfully and beating the walk with his stick.

## CHAPTER XI

### Canoeing

LIFE began to move more briskly for Nan. She was not aware that certain invitations that reached her were due to a few words carefully spoken in safe quarters by Eaton.

One of the first large functions of the dawning season was a tea given by Mrs. Harrington for a visitor. Mrs. Harrington not only asked Nan to assist, but she extended the invitation personally in the

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Farley parlor, much to Nan's astonishment.

One or two young gentlemen who had paid Nan attentions when she first came home from school looked her up again. John Cecil Eaton was highly regarded by the younger men he met at the University Club, and not without influence. A reference to Nan as an unusual person, some saying of hers, was instrumental in directing attention anew to her as a girl worth knowing. If anyone said, "How's her affair with Copeland going?" Eaton would retort icily that it wasn't going; that there never had been anything in it but shameless gossip.

His Thursday evenings Jerry now reserved for Nan—not for any particular reason, but Eaton had taken him to the Farleys on Thursday, and he dedicated the day to repetitions of the visit. On his fifth call he summoned courage to ask Nan to join him in a Saturday afternoon excursion on the river.

"The foliage is unusually beautiful this year," he suggested with an air of quoting; "and it'll be too cold for canoeing pretty soon."

"I'm afraid—" Nan began.

"I knew you'd say that; but you're as safe in my boat as in your own rocking-chair."

"I wasn't going to say that," laughed Nan. "I was going to say that I was afraid you wouldn't enjoy the foliage so much if I were along."

He saw that she was laughing at him. Nan and Eaton were the only persons whose mirth he suffered without resentment.

"I'll have to ask Papa about it; or maybe you'll ask him."

"I've already asked him."

"When did you ask him?"

"About ten minutes ago, just before I came downstairs. I told him two good stories and then shot it in quick. He said he thought it would do you good."

"I like your nerve! Why didn't you ask me first?"

"Because it was much more proper for me to open negotiations with the man higher up. I hope you appreciate my delicacy," he added, in Eaton's familiar half-mocking tone, which he had caught perfectly.

"You're so thoughtful I suppose you've also arranged for a chaperon?"

"The canoe," he replied, "is more comfortable for two."

"Two have been in it rather often, I suppose."

"Yes; but that was last summer. I've seen everything different this season. I practiced casting on a day in June and met with an experience that has changed the whole current of my life."

"I hope it changed your luck with the rod! You got snagged on everything that would hold a fly, but I must say that you bore your troubles in a sweet spirit."

"I learned that early in the game. Even if you refused my invitation, I'd try to bear up under it."

"I think I'll decline then, just to see how you take it."

"Well, it's only polite to say it would be a blow. I have a pocketful of strychnine, and it might be unpleasant to have me die on the doorstep."

"I could stand that probably better than the neighbors could. You'd better try the kind that's warranted not to kill on the premises."

JERRY tortured himself with speculations as to whether he should hire a taxi to transport them to the Little Ripple Club, but finally decided against it as an unwarranted extravagance, calculated to arouse suspicion in the mind of Farley. However, when he reached the house at two o'clock on Saturday, Nan announced that the nurse was taking her place as Farley's companion for his regular drive and that Farley and the nurse would take them in the car to the club. This arrangement caused Jerry's breast to swell.

"That will give my credit a big boost; you'll see a lot of the boys drop dead when we get there!"

Farley alighted to inspect the clubhouse and the fleet of canoes that bobbed at the landing. It was a great day for Jerry.

"There's something nice about a river," said Nan as Jerry sent his maroon-colored craft far out into the stream. "Ever since I came away, I've missed the old river at Belleville."

This was one of the things he liked

about Nan. She referred often to her childhood, and it even seemed that she spoke of it with a certain wistfulness. He was her one tie with the old life out of which they had both emerged; and she felt more comfortable with him than with the young men born in happier circumstances to whose sphere the Farley's generosity had lifted her.

"The last girl I had out here," Jerry was saying, as he plied his blade, "was Katie McCarthy, who works in the County Treasurer's office—mighty responsible job. I used to know Katie when she stenogged for four per for a punk lawyer, but I knew she was better than that and so I pulled a few wires and got her into the courthouse! Katie could be cashier in a bank—she's that smart! No, she's not much to look at. I studied Katie's case a good deal, and she'd never make any headway in offices where they'd rather have a yellow-haired girl who overdresses the part and is always slipping out for a retouch with the chamois. It's hard to find a job for girls like Katie; their only chance is some place where they've got to have a girl with brains. These perfumed office darlings that's just got to go to vaudeville every Monday night so they can talk about it the rest of the week never get anywhere."

"My heart warms to Katie. I wonder," murmured Nan lazily as Jerry neatly negotiated a shallow passage between two sand-bars, "if I had to do it—I wonder how much I could earn a week."

"Oh, I guess you'd make good, all right. You've got brains and I've never caught you touching up your complexion."

"Which isn't any sign I don't," she laughed. "I've all the necessary articles right here in my sweater pocket."

"Well, somebody has to use the talcum; we handle it in carload lots. It's one of the Copeland-Farley specialties I used to brag about easiest when I bore the weighty sample-case down the line. It was a good stunt to ask the druggist to introduce me to some of the girls that's always loafing round the soda-counter in country drug-stores, and I'd hand 'em out a box and ask 'em to try it on right there. It cheered up the druggist, and the girls would help me pull a bigger order than I'd get on my own hook. A party like that on a sleepy afternoon in a pill-shop would lift the skyline considerable."

"Well, if you saw me in a drug-store wrestling with a chocolate sundae and had your sample-case open and were trying to coax an order out of a druggist, just how would you approach me?"

"I wouldn't!" he responded readily. "I'd get your number on the quiet and walk past your house when your mother was sitting on the porch all alone, darning socks, and I'd beg her pardon and say that having heard that her daughter was the most beautiful girl in town, Copeland-Farley had sent me all the way from the capitol to ask her please to accept, with the house's compliments, a gross of our Faultless Talcum. If Mother didn't ask me to supper, it would be a sign that I hadn't put it over."

"But if Father appeared with a shotgun—"

"I'd tell him it was the closed season for drummers, and invite him down to the hotel for a game of billiards."

"You think you always have the answer, don't you?" she taunted.

"I don't think it; I've got to know it!"

"Well, I haven't seen you miss fire yet. My trouble is," she deliberated, touching the water lightly with her hand, "that I don't have the answer most of the time."

"I've noticed it sometimes," replied Jerry, looking at her quickly

IT was unseasonably warm, and he drove the canoe onto a sandy shore in the shade of the bank. He had confessed to himself that at times Nan baffled him. Even in his brief acquaintance he had noted abrupt changes of mood that puzzled him. Occasionally in the midst of the aimless banter in which they engaged she would cease to respond, and a far-away look would come into her violet eyes. One of these moods was upon her now.

"Do you remember the shanty-boat people down along the river? I used to think it would be fun to live like that. I still feel that way sometimes."

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"Oh," he answered indulgently, "I guess everybody has a spell of that now and then, when you just want to sort of loaf along, and fish a little when you're hungry, and trust to luck for a hand-out at some back door when you're too lazy to bait the hook. That feeling gets hold of me lots of times; but I shake it off pretty soon. You don't get anywhere, loafing; the people that get along in this world have got to hustle. Cecil says we can't just mark time in this world. We either go ahead or slide back."

"Well, I'm a slider—if you can slide without ever being up very far."

"Look here," he said, drawing in the paddle and fixing his eyes upon her intently, "you said something like that the first night Cecil took me up to see you, and you've got a touch of it again; but it's the wrong talk. I'm going to hand it to you straight, because I guess I've got more nerve than anybody else you know: you haven't got a kick coming, and you want to cut all that talk. Uncle Tim gets cross sometimes, but you don't want to worry about that too much. He used to be meaner than fleas at the store sometimes, but the boys never worried about it. He's all sound inside, and if he riles you, the best thing is to forget it. You can't please him all the time, but you can most of the time, and it's up to you to do it. Now, tell me to jump in the river if you want to, but it was in my system and I had to get it out."

He sat with his feet drawn under him, clasping the tops of his shoes.

"Oh, I know I ought to be grateful; but I'm wrong, some way."

"You're all right," he declared. "Your trouble is you don't have enough to do. You ought to get interested in something—something that would keep you busy and whistling all the time."

"I *don't* have enough to do; I know that," she assented.

"Well, you ought to go in good and strong for something; that's the only ticket. Let's get out and climb the bank and walk awhile."

SHE had lost her bearings on the river, but when they had clambered to the top of the bank she found that they were near the Kinneys'. The road was a much frequented highway, and she was sorry now that they had left the canoe; but Jerry, leading the way along a rough path that clung close to the river, continued to philosophize, wholly unconscious of the neighborhood's associations for Nan.

Where the margin between the river and the road widened, they sat on a log while Jerry amplified his views of life, with discreet applications to Nan's case as he understood it. He was a cheery and hopeful soul, and in the light of her knowledge of him she marveled at his clear understanding of things.

As they passed the Kinneys' on their way back to the canoe, a roadster whizzed out of the gate and turned toward town. They both recognized Copeland. As he passed, his eyes fell upon them carelessly; then he glanced back and slowed down.

"Now we're in for it!" said Nan, uncomfortably.

"I guess I'm the one that's in for it," said Jerry ruefully.

COPELAND left his car at the roadside and walked rapidly toward them. He nodded affably to Jerry and put his hand out eagerly to Nan.

"This is great good luck! Grace is at home; why didn't you come in?"

"Oh, Mr. Amidon is showing me the river; we just left the canoe to come up for a view from the shore."

"Why not come back to Kinneys'; I want to see you; and this is a fine chance to have a talk."

Jerry walked away and began throwing pebbles into the river.

"I can't do that. And I can't talk to you here. Papa drove me out, and he's likely to come back this way."

"You seem to be pretty chummy with that clerk of mine," Copeland remarked.

"I am; it began about sixteen years ago," she answered, with a laugh. "We rose from the same ash dump."

He frowned, not comprehending. She was about to turn away when he began speaking rapidly.

"You've got to hear me, Nan! I haven't bothered you for a long time; you treated me pretty shabbily after all

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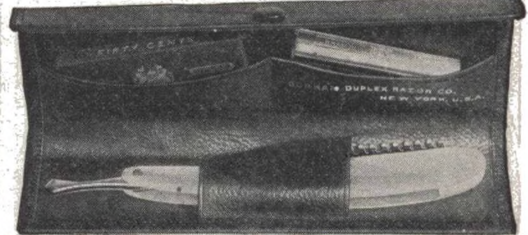

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there's been between us; but you can square all that now. I'm in the deepest kind of trouble. Farley deliberately planned to ruin me, and he's about done it! I've paid him off, but I had to pledge half my stock in the store with the Western National to raise the money, and now my notes are due there and they're going to pinch me. Eichberg is a director in the bank, and he means to buy in that stock—you can see the game. Corbin & Eichberg are scheming to wipe me out and combine the two houses. And Farley's put them up to it!"

His face twisted nervously as he talked. He was thinner than when she saw him last, but he bore no marks of hard living. His story was plausible; Farley had told her a month ago that he had got his money out of Copeland, but it hadn't occurred to her that the loan might have been paid with money borrowed elsewhere.

"Of course you wont lose the business, Billy. It wouldn't be square to treat you that way."

"Square! I tell you it was all framed up, and I've reason to know that Farley stands in with them. It's a fine revenge he's taking on me for daring to love you!"

She shook her head and drew back.

"Now, Billy, none of that! That's all over."

"No; it isn't over! You know it isn't, Nan. I've missed you; it cut me deep when you dropped me. You let Farley tell you I was all bad and going to the dogs, and you didn't even give me a chance to defend myself. I tell you I've suffered hell's torments since I saw you last. But now I want you to tell me you do care. Please, dear—"

His voice broke plaintively. She shook her head.

"Of course, we were good friends, Billy; but you know we had to quit. It was wrong all the time—you know that as well as I do."

"I don't see what was wrong about it! It can't be wrong for a man to love a woman as I love you! If you hadn't cared, it would be a different story, but you did, Nan! And you're not the girl I know you to be if you've changed in these few weeks. I've got a big fight on, and I want you to stand by me. Kinney's in all kinds of trouble with the cement business. If he goes down I'm ruined. But even at that you can help me make a new start. It will mean everything to have your love and help."

He saw that his appeal had touched her. She was silent a moment.

"This wont do, Billy; I can't stand here talking to you; but I'm sorry for your troubles. I can't believe you're right about Papa trying to injure you; he's too fond of the old business for that. But we were good pals—you and I. I'll try to think of some way to help."

He caught her hands roughly.

"I need you; you know I love you! Farley's told you I want to marry you for his money; but you can't tell anything about him. Very likely he'll cut you out anyhow; he's likely to do that very thing."

She lifted her head, and defiance shone for an instant in her eyes.

"I'll let you hear from me within a week; I must have time..... But keep up your spirits, Billy!"

The distant honking of a motor caused her to turn away quickly. Amidon had settled himself halfway down the bank, and she called to him and began the descent.

If Jerry had expressed his feelings, he would have said that Copeland's appearance had given him a hard jar. It was annoying, just when you have reached the highest aim of your life, to have your feet knocked from under you. To have your boss spoil your afternoon with the prettiest girl in town was not only disagreeable but it roused countless apprehensions.

For the afternoon *was* spoiled. Nan's efforts to act as though nothing had happened were badly simulated, and finding that she lapsed frequently into long reveries, Jerry paddled doggedly back to the club-house.

**"I'll let you hear from me within a week," Nan had told Copeland. The result of that promise comes in the next installment of *"The Proof of the Pudding,"* in the January issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands December 23rd.**

# THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

## A NEW NOVEL BY RUPERT HUGHES

*Continued from page 254 of this issue.*

"That's none of your business," Wesley said with a mock bravado. "I've got a right to pay your rent for a while yet. We fixed up the price all satisfactory, her and I."

"I'll bet the place is a sight and the woman a freak," said Mrs. Kip. "Let's go have a look at her."

So all four went up in the elevator to the top floor. They were about to ring the bell of one of the big front apartments like Bayard's, but Wesley checked them.

"It's in the back."

The women exchanged glances and smiles behind the important shoulder blades of Wesley the manager. He rang a bell and a young woman opened the door. As Leila said afterward:

"She had the whole map of New England in her face, and her middle name was Boston." But she was young in a placid Puritanical way, and she looked exceedingly clean and correct. Her very smile was neat and exactly adjusted between the gracious hostess and the landlady.

The room was furnished in impeccable taste with quiet tones and pleasant primness of mahogany and silver and nicely balancing lines.

Through the southern windows one looked out across miles on miles of peculiarly New York roofs, huge steeples of buildings with a few church spires lost in the wells between them. Among so many so lofty structures the Metropolitan tower and the wedge of the *Times* building seemed not far off. Even the Singer and the Woolworth buildings were visible miles away, crowning peaks of the Manhattan Sierra.

Mrs. Chivvis led the way to the room that was for rent. It took Daphne at once. Spotlessness is the first luxury in a rented room, and Puritan simplicity has a grace all its own. The mahogany bed with its twisted posts, the excellent linen and the honesty of everything, won her completely.

She felt a sense of relief from the rather gorgeous beauty of Leila's apartment. She felt that Mrs. Chivvis, who showed such fine restraint in her furniture, would be equally discreet in minding her own affairs.

"I'll take it," she said; "that is, if you'll take me."

Mrs. Chivvis said she would. She said it with a New English parsimony of enthusiasm, but her eyes were kindly, and Daphne decided that she thought nice things but lacked the courage to say them.

As the four Kips were filing out, Daphne paused with a sharp gasp.

"Oh! By the way! where do I—if—in case anyone calls on me—where do I receive him?—her?—them!"

"In the parlor, of course," Mrs. Chivvis answered frigidly. "You would hardly expect to receive them in—"

"Oh, of course not!" Daphne flared back; "but what about you and Mr. Chivvis?"

"We have our own room. We can sit there when you have callers."

Strange propriety of the plural! There is something shocking about *him* or *her,* but *them* is pure. It is vague, neutral, and it has the pomposity of the editorial and the royal *we.*

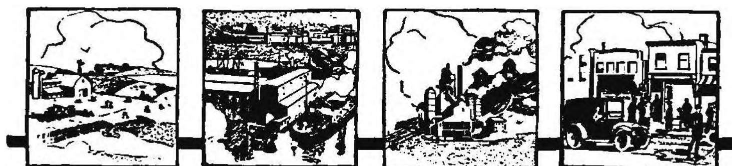
Daphne hung over the doorsill a moment, then asked:

"But suppose that you and Mr. Chivvis have callers on some evening when I happen to have a—er—callers?"

Mrs. Chivvis did not like to commit herself to a promise, because she kept her promises. Yet she did not want to lose a customer; so she said:

"Oh, we'll arrange that, have no fear. You would have the preference, of course, since you are paying us."

"We-ell, all ri-ight," Daphne drawled. "Good-by!"



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*Farmers have had two record crops, at big prices, with big demand at home and abroad.*

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*Over a million merchants have proved our Cash Registers to be a business necessity.*

[*Signed*] John H Patterson

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*The National Cash Register Co.*
*Dayton, Ohio.*

When they returned to Leila's apartment, she was still troubling over this dilemma. It is one of the chief annoyances and dangers of city life. Wesley said the best that could be said of the situation:

"Better try the place, honey. You can't have everything — even in New York. And you might go further, and get worse."

"That's so," said Daphne—and wondered if it were.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

DAPHNE at once moved into the Chivvis apartment such belongings as she had brought on from Cleveland, and her mother promised to despatch the rest of them as soon as she reached home.

Wesley could not be persuaded to stay over an unnecessary night. His business was in perilous condition. The mammoth Cowper firm had gone into bankruptcy owing him a handsome sum of money, which he was not likely to recover. The failure also closed an important and profitable market for his calculating machines. It frightened his banks as well, and he had wrestled like another Jacob with an almost invisible cashier for money enough for his payroll.

Yet he slipped a large bill into Daphne's hand when he bade her good-by at the station late in the afternoon and he whispered to her that she should have other reinforcements whenever she called on him.

She kissed her parents good-by, and pooh-pooh'd their solemn faces. She laughed and flung them kisses and pretended to have no fears. But she had them in plenty. She faced the world alone now, the more alone from the fact that Leila and Bayard were with her.

They regarded her with uneasiness, wondering what trouble she would stumble into first. They asked her to dine with them, but she gave another engagement as an excuse, knowing how well they would enjoy being alone together after the strain of a family visitation. But she had no other engagement.

She left her brother and his wife with a brisk assumption of important errands, but as soon as they were out of sight her pace slackened. Where was she to go? What was she to do with the time she found hanging on her hands?

She wished that she belonged to a club of some kind. Women's clubs were springing up rapidly, but Daphne was a stranger in town.

The world has still to arrange pastimes for working women in their idle hours. A man can go anywhere, sit about in a hotel lobby, drop into a pool-parlor or a saloon, lean on a rail and tell his troubles to a barkeeper, pick up acquaintances at his will. But a girl without friends or family has hardly any facilities for making acquaintances safely or honestly.

Daphne dined alone very slowly at a little restaurant. She reached the theater at seven o'clock and sat in the dark on a canvas rock, watching the stage hands gather, and listening to their repartee.

Batterson arrived in one of his humane moods. He asked Daphne if she had memorized any of her rôles, and she said she had. He told her that he would give her another rehearsal the next day after breakfast. "After breakfast," he explained, was at one o'clock P. M.

He asked Daphne if she knew anything about make-up and she confessed that she did not. He beckoned to the girl who had entered the first act with a tennis racket—Miss Ivy Winsor, her name was—introduced her to Daphne and asked her to instruct Daphne in the A B C of her trade.

MISS WINSOR rather terrified Daphne at first. She was playing a silly young girl, but she proved to be one of a class that has latterly turned to the stage in large numbers. She was an earnest person of excellent family who had graduated from Wellesley College and then prepared herself for the theater as for a professorship. She had taken a course in a dramatic school and played all the great rôles there.

She invited Daphne into her dressing-room and lectured her with a kindly condescension.

"Make-up is a science that no two

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people agree on. About all that you can be sure of is that your own skin will be ghastly unless you put two or three coats on it. Everything I learned at school I had to learn all over again, for I looked a fright at first.

"You have small and exquisite features, Miss Kip, and that's against you on the stage; and you have a fine skin that wont be of the slightest help. I'm not sure just how you ought to be made up, either. You're not my type at all, with your brown eyes and brows and your light hair. But let's see what we can figure out."

She opened a black tin box full of brushes, tubes, boxes, bottles and rags.

"I use a grease-paint make-up that is very elaborate. I build a foundation of exora, and then I use the lip-rouge for my face, but if I were you I would go at it differently. You'd better omit the grease-paint. First put a cap on your hair, then cold-cream your face and massage it well so that you can work in the make-up. Then wipe the cold-cream all off. It's a very messy business, you see. Then take a swan's down puff like this and powder your face completely with pink powder. I use a dark cream color, but I think a pink would suit you better. Then put on a dry rouge of a light shade—number 18 would be about right for you. Put that on over your eyes and temples and carry it all round the cheek. With a face shaped like yours, you ought to carry the red well down to take away that jaw line. It is very fine and beautiful now, but across the footlights it would look rather sharp, I'm afraid.

"Then rouge your ears and leave them quite red. Blue-pencil your eyelids, upper and lower both. Smooth the blue in with your fingers. You've got to learn how to blend it all so that everything shades off into the rest. Then powder again.

"Then take a baby's hair-brush like this and dust off all the extra powder. Then brush out your eyebrows with an eyebrow-brush. Then"—she went on with infinite detail, ending at last with, "And I think that's about all."

"It's enough," said Daphne, who had listened with growing bewilderment. "I didn't know I had to be a house- and sign-painter. I'll never remember half of it."

"I'd make you up now to show you, but I haven't time. I'll come early to-morrow evening. If you want to you can bring your own make-up material and I'll make you up a few times. Then you can experiment by yourself and have your friends tell you how you look from the front. It's very hard to tell, and it's hard to keep it regular."

"How much will the outfit cost?"

"That depends. Five or six dollars will get everything you need." She found a pencil and made out the list for Daphne. Then she said: "Now I've got to make up my own phiz. You can stay and watch me if you want."

"You're awfully kind."

"Everybody is kind on the stage except when you become dangerous. Then it's only business to look out for Number One."

Daphne sat down and Miss Winsor whipped off her street clothes, put on a cap and began to smear her face with exora. It was soon ruined beyond recognition, like a fresh oil painting that a disgusted artist reduces to chaos.

At length her features began to come back in blotches, gross and unreal as a caricature. Daphne watched her, trying to remember the successive steps.

"Were you terribly afraid the first time you acted?" she asked.

"Was I afraid?" Miss Winsor threw her eyes up. "I played a housemaid the first time, and I shivered so I dropped my tray, and I could hardly see to pick it up. I've had two operations, but they were nothing. You can't take ether for your first performance, you know. Fact is, I'm scared to death every night. You never get over it, for every audience is unlike every other audience."

"What did the audience do when you dropped your tray?"

"Oh, it just laughed. And then I spoke my cue instead of my line, and you ought to have seen the face of the poor fellow who was playing opposite to me when he heard me say, 'Is your mistress at home?' I swore I'd never appear before another audience."

"How long have you been on the stage—if you don't mind my asking?"

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9

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This joyous novel of the Great Outdoors has just begun; you will find the adventures of Sylvia, as assistant caretaker of a rich man's camp in the North woods, just about the most delightful episodes you've ever read about.

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The conclusion of this great mystery serial is a fascinating piece of writing, interesting for its own sake even if you haven't read the rest of the story.

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Like another "Trilby," W. Carey Wonderly's spirited romance of New York's Latin Quarter, "Young Gotham," is bound to kindle widespread enthusiasm. The gayety, the sparkle, the froth of life among the young artists and writers and player-folk — as well as stronger pictures of ambition and passion and tragedy — are vividly presented . . . . . Don't miss this memorable novel: it will be published complete in the January issue.

WILL APPEAR IN THE JANUARY ISSUE OF

# The Blue Book Magazine

On Sale December 1st The Story-Press Corporation, Publisher, North American Bldg., Chicago

"Three years."

Daphne wanted to ask how much salary she was getting, but she did not quite dare. Miss Winsor volunteered the information indirectly.

"Reben has promised me sixty-five dollars next season; and we're booked for forty weeks sure."

Daphne pondered. Miss Winsor with all her equipment had been acting for three years. She spent about twenty minutes, altogether, on the stage each evening, and was to get sixty-five dollars a week for forty weeks. She must be getting about fifty dollars a week now.

Daphne managed to calculate without pencil and paper that forty times fifty would be about two thousand dollars a year. That was a long way from the fifty thousand that Sheila Kemble was reported to earn.

And suppose she did not play forty weeks a year? Daphne imagined that few people did. She remembered overhearing one actor say to another in the wings that a friend of his had played only eight weeks in two years. She began to wonder what chance she had.

The worst of it was that she felt within her no crying need to express her personality before the public.

In fact, she rather liked to keep her personality to herself.

Miss Winsor spent an hour getting ready for her twenty minutes of acting. She would spend half an hour more, no doubt, removing what she had so toilsomely constructed.

She finally put on her white stockings and her rubber-soled tennis shoes, and took up her racket. It seemed extraordinarily foolish to Daphne. They walked out into the wings. The same overture was playing remotely. The same actors were waiting. The curtain went up with the same swish.

Miss Winsor whispered "Good-by!" nervously, then took the hand of the highly painted young man in tennis costume, and skipped out into the light. Daphne heard her saying the same speeches she said before. The actor who was a butler straightened his shoulders, and stalked on. Eldon, chatting with Mrs. Vining, left her and began to laugh; then he entered. When he came off, Mrs. Vining asked him how they were to-night.

"Willing, but slow," said Eldon.

That business of saying the same lines over and over again depressed Daphne. Miss Winsor, she noted as she listened, was a "feeder." Daphne did not know the technical term, but she realized the effect: Miss Winsor kept asking idle questions and somebody else made the answers that brought the laughs.

Daphne was losing heart. She left the theater in a state of blues. She walked home in a cloud. She noticed at length that some man was at her side muttering something. She realized with a start that he had been at her elbow for some time. She had no sense of lofty pride. She turned on him with a sick disgust and snapped:

"Oh, let me alone!"

He dropped back into oblivion.

## CHAPTER XXIX

SHE reached her apartment without further molestation and opened the door with her latchkey. She found the Chivvises in their parlor seated at the center table in front of a number of papers. She started to back out, but Mrs. Chivvis rose quickly and presented her husband.

He was Mrs. Chivvis in male form. He was evidently shocked by Daphne's beauty. Mrs. Chivvis started to gather up the papers.

"We were just going over our monthly accounts," she said. "Sit down."

"Can't stop, thanks," said Daphne, and went to her own room. She picked out the part Miss Winsor was playing and began to study it, whispering the lines over to herself. She had said them already scores of times. If she was called on to play the part, she might say them scores of times more and she would have to smear and unsmear her face forever.

She was going to do all this in order to lighten the burdens of her father and her husband. And her father had gone home in a state of melancholia and her expected husband was avoiding her. He was with another girl, probably—a girl

with Leila's philosophy of life: the way to win a man and keep him won is to make him work and work him.

The Chivvis apartment was also a triumph in the transmission of sound, and Daphne could vaguely hear the couple murmuring. They were making an evening's entertainment of their money problem. Bayard and Leila would have taken as much pleasure in visiting a hospital.

Daphne heard Chivvis' voice rise above the murmur in a note of ecstasy.

"Oh, jolly! if we do without that, we can put eighteen dollars a month more in the savings bank."

"Fine! Beautiful!" Mrs. Chivvis cried with equal rapture.

Their feast was turning into a little orgy of bookkeeping.

Daphne smiled with a quiet contempt. She felt a repugnance toward the cheese-parers. She wondered why. She had felt repugnance also for Leila's ruthless extravagance.

THE following morning Daphne went to a drug-store and bought everything on the list Miss Winsor gave her, including a black tin box.

She spent the forenoon in her room experimenting with make-up. She reduced herself to a freshly painted chromo and put some of Mrs. Chivvis' towels in such a state that Daphne washed them out herself.

At one o'clock she presented herself to Batterson and endured one of his rehearsals, his assistant reading all the cues in a lifeless voice. Batterson was more discouraged than she was. He showed it for a time by a patience that was of the sort one shows to an amiable imbecile.

He was so restrained that Daphne broke out for him.

"Do you think I am a complete idiot, Mr. Batterson?"

"Far from it, my dear," said Batterson. "You are a very intelligent young woman. The trouble is that you are too intelligent for the child's play of the stage. It's all a kind of big nursery, and you can't forget that facts are not facts in this toy game."

"Shall I give up, then?" said Daphne.

"I wish you would," said Batterson.

"Then I wont," said Daphne.

Batterson laughed. "You may get it yet. It might come to you all of a sudden and knock you all of a heap."

Days passed, and she went on perfecting herself in the lines till she could rattle them off like a parrot. She had a good memory; she could understand what she was told to do, and could go through all the motions. But she could not give her spirit up to it.

NIGHT after night she reported at the theater and left it when the curtain rose. On one of these evenings, Tom Duane met her outside the stage door. His apology was that he felt it his duty to look after his client.

He invited Daphne to ride home in his car, which was waiting at the curb. She declined with thanks. He urged that she take a little spin in the park. She declined this without thanks. He sighed that it was a pity to lose the moonlight.

She said she would get enough when she walked home. He asked if he might "toddle along." She could hardly refuse without crassly insulting him.

He dismissed his car and they strolled up Broadway. He proffered her refreshments of various kinds at all the restaurants. She shook her head. He invited her to go to one of the dancing places with him. She refused even that.

They loitered slowly up the quiet reach of Seventh Avenue. He questioned her about her work—and there is no more grateful flattery than an appetite for another's autobiography. She found it easy to tell him of her difficulties. He extracted encouragement or indirect compliment out of all of them.

When they arrived at her apartment house, she said:

"Sorry I can't ask you up, but I have no reception room and I'm tired out."

"You have wasted enough of your time on me," he said. "I'll see you to the elevator."

As Daphne stepped into the gorgeous hallway, she found Clay Wimburn there, waiting grimly. He sprang to his feet with a gasp of relief. He caught sight of Duane, and his joy died instantly.

Daphne, rushing forward to greet him,

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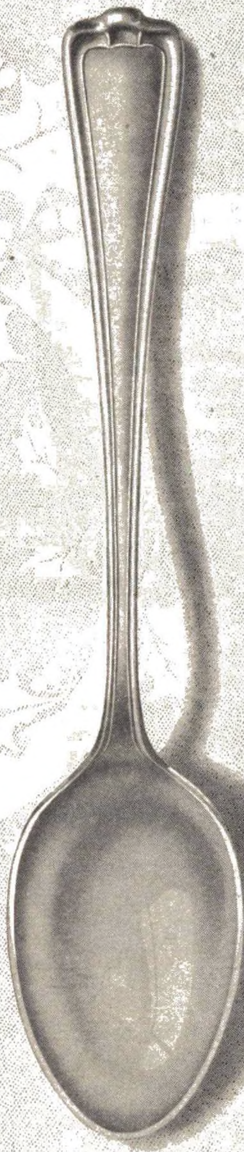

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felt checked by his sudden ice. She burned with rage at the irony of all those lonely home-comings ending in this sudden embarrassment of escort. Clay growled at Duane:

"Hullo, Duane."

Duane smiled back.

"Hello, Wimburn." He saw that Daphne was confused, and he bade her good night and smiled again. "'Night, Wimburn." He could afford to be light. He had nothing to lose.

WIMBURN envied him his flippant graces and hated him for them. Wimburn loved Daphne and wanted her for his own. He still counted her his own, and still had neither returned the engagement ring, nor paid for it. Daphne was more pleased with Wimburn's misery than with Duane's felicity.

"Wont you come up, Clay?" she asked.

"Can we be alone for a little talk?"

"I'm afraid not. The Chivvises are in, you know."

"The Chivvises? Who are the Chivvises?"

He did not even know that she had moved. She told him why, and of her new conditions.

He cursed inwardly. He remembered that front porch in Cleveland, and in all the other American communities except this horrible New York—a ghastly city without a front porch or a hammock.

"Will you take a little walk with me in the Park?"

"All right," she said as she led the way out into the street. "I'm pretty tired. I walked home from the theater."

"With Duane!" Clay snarled. "You weren't too tired for that."

"Are you dragging me out here for the sake of a fight?" Daphne asked.

"There'll be no fight if you'll cut out that man Duane."

"Am I to have no friends at all?"

"You can have all you want, provided—"

"You select them. Look here, Clay: Mr. Duane got me my job. He got it twice. I can't insult him even to please you. If we were married, you'd expect me to let you run your business your own way. I've got to run mine my way."

"You have no business to have any business," he struck out fiercely. "Why can't you marry me and settle down to be a normal, decent little wife?"

"Really, Clay," she gasped, "if you're going back to start all over again, you'll have to choose some other time. I'm worn out and I've got to study."

She faced about and began to retrace her steps, Clay following and not knowing which of his grievances to speak of first. Daphne meant better than she sounded when she said:

"Let me give you one little hint, Clay, for your own information. Every time this Mr. Duane that you're so afraid of meets me, he does his best to help me get my chance and he tells me only pleasant things. Every time you've come to see me lately, you've been either a sick cat or a roaring tiger."

She was planning to urge him to help her and make their meetings rosier. But lover-like, he took umbrage and pain and despair from her advice, and since they were again at the vestibule, he sighed "Good night, Mrs. Duane," and flung out into the dark.

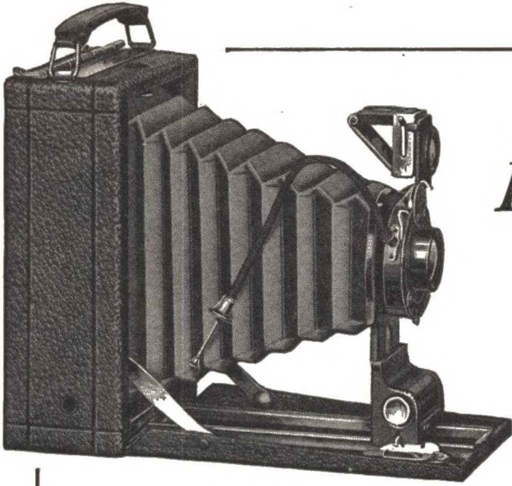
Daphne sighed, and the poor elevator man, who saw so much of this sort of thing, sighed with her and for her.

## CHAPTER XXX

ALL this while Daphne was kept in readiness to take Miss Kemble's part in case the illness of her child should result in death and in the further case that she should be unable to finish her performances. With the theatrical season in such bad estate and most of Reben's other companies and theaters losing money heavily, Sheila Kemble was his one certain dependence. He called her his breadwinner.

Miss Kemble's baby passed the crisis and recovered. And then the mother, worn out with the double strain, caught a little chill that became a blinding, choking cold. She went through the Saturday matinée in a whisper, but the night performance was beyond her.

And now at last Daphne's great chance arrived. The Saturday night house was enormous in spite of the heat.



*For Her—*
*or*
*For Him, a*

# PREMO

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There were enough people there to make fourteen hundred dollars—twenty-five hundred on the day.

Reben regarded Daphne with fluttering anxiety. He knocked at her dressing-room door, where Miss Winsor was helping her with her make up. He implored her to be calm, and he was so tremulous that he stuttered. He told her that if she made good, he would let her play the part till Miss Kemble got well. He would pay her a handsome bonus. He would put her out at the head of a Number Two company.

Batterson came at last and ordered him off the stage. Reben obeyed him. Then Batterson talked to her. He told her that there was no reason to fear the house. A Saturday night audience was always easy. It wanted its money's worth. It would help to get it.

"I'm not afraid of the audience," said Daphne.

"Then what on earth are you afraid of?"

"I'm afraid of me!"

Batterson laughed scornfully. "Oh, you! You're going to score a knock-out. You're going to make a big hit."

"Yes," said Daphne with smiling irony; "so you've always told me!"

There was something dreadful about her calm. It baffled him and it astounded Miss Winsor. Old Mrs. Vining tried to mother the girl, but fell back, thwarted by Daphne's unholy repose. She was like a race-horse groomed for a big handicap. Since all the odds were against her, her victory would be the more thrilling. But she should have been wildly restive, reckless, plunging, almost unmanageable. It was the worst of omens that she was unruffled, sedate, thoughtful.

THE curtain rose. Miss Winsor and the young man skipped on to their job; the butler stalked; Eldon entered and made his exit; Mrs. Vining spread her skirts and sailed on; then Eldon went back. Finally Daphne's cue came.

She was startled a little as Batterson nudged her forward. She went to the door and opened it on her new career, to make her public début with the all-important, "How d'you do?"

She saw before her the drawing-room, in a weird light. Beyond it was a fiercely radiant fog and beyond that an agglomeration of faces—the mass of ordinary people that she was not afraid of. And she was not afraid. She was curious to study them. She was eager to remember her lines. And she remembered them. The cues came more or less far apart, and each evoked from her mind the appropriate answer. She made never a slip, and yet she began to realize that Mr. Eldon seemed unhappy.

At length she realized that the audience was strangely quiet. A sense of vaulty emptiness oppressed her. She went on with her lines. She understood at last that she was getting no laughs. She was not provoking those punctuating roars that Sheila Kemble brought forth. The audience evidently had had a hard week. She decided that she must be playing too quietly; she quickened her tempo and threw more vivacity into her manner. She moved briskly about the scene, to Eldon's bewilderment. He seemed unable to find her.

But the audience grew still more quiet. Then it grew restless. She heard some one coughing, then several coughing. It seemed that everyone had caught cold suddenly. She lifted her voice to drown the competition.

When at length it came time for her exit, she remembered clearly how Sheila Kemble had drawled part of her speech, then opened the door, murmured the finishing words and slipped out. That would plainly never do with these Saturday night folk. She read her last line with vigor as she hurried to the door. And she slammed the door to give emphasis to the joke. The door resounded as in an abandoned home. The applause that Sheila Kemble always won did not follow Daphne off.

She caught an expression of sick fatigue on Batterson's face. Miss Winsor ran to her and said with forced enthusiasm.

"Splendid! You were wonderful. You didn't miss a line."

Daphne felt the dubious compliment this was and answered: "But I missed every laugh."

"Oh, you can't expect to do everything at once."

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Batterson said, "You're all right." But there was a funereal gloom in his tone. She knew that he was trying to buoy her up. She had all the rest of the evening to get through.

She went through to the bitter end and spoke every line. But the audience was not with her for a moment. She used all her intellect to find the secret of its pleasure, but she could not surprise it. She tried harder and harder, acted with the intense devotion of a wrestling bout, but could not score a point.

The company looked worried and fagged. The audience would not rise to anything, humor, pathos, thrill. When the play was over, everyone seemed to avoid. her. Everyone felt too sorry for words.

SHE rubbed off her make-up and resumed her mufti. As she walked out on the darkened stage, she saw Batterson. He tried to escape but she checked him:

"Tell me frankly, Mr. Batterson, what was the matter with my performance to-night."

"Come to the office Monday and we'll have a little talk."

"And I'll get my notice?"

"I didn't say that."

"But you meant it. Anyway, tell me the truth."

"Who knows the truth? I don't. If you want my opinion, I can tell you that."

"I do want it. Try to be honest with me."

"My honest opinion is that your undoubted charms and gifts are peculiarly suited to somewhere else than the stage. I did not see one glimmer of theatrical intuition or suggestion in your performance to-night."

"Can't I acquire them?"

"You might — in a thousand years. But I doubt it. It's no insult to you, Miss Kip; we can't all do everything. I'm a good stage manager, if I do say it, but everybody says I'm a rotten bad actor. I know all about it, but I can't do it. You're the same way, I fancy."

"What would you honestly advise me to do?"

"I understand that you don't have to act. Go home and get married."

"I wont."

"Then go home and don't get married."

"I wont go home."

"There's one other place to go. Good night."

He stole off, and she was left alone. The last scene had been struck and piled up against the back wall as the fire-laws required. The stage hands had gone. The last of the actors had gone. The doorkeeper was in his little alley.

She had the stage to herself. She stood in the big void and felt alien—forever alien. She shook her head. It was not for her. She had been tried in the balance and found wanting. She wondered if there were anywhere a balance that she could bring down.

She felt useless, purposeless, and very much alone.

She went out and bade the doorkeeper not "Good night!" but "Good-by!"

She dreaded the forlorn journey home to her dreary room. As she stepped out of the door, some one moved forward with uplifted hat. It was Tom Duane. He looked very spick and span. Back of him waited his spick and span automobile, its great eyes brilliant. Even more brilliantly, it seemed, Duane's smile illumined the dull street, and his hand clasped hers with a saving strength. It lifted her from the depths like a rope let down from the sky.

Daphne would have been more content if Duane had been Clay Wimburn. It was Clay's duty to be there, at such a time of all times.

Of course he did not know that this night was to be crucial for her, but he should have known. Mr. Duane knew. Some instinct had told him that she would be desperately blue and peculiarly in need of help. If anybody had to throw her a rope, it should have been her betrothed. If he did not feel her need of him and did not carefully happen to be there, perhaps it was because he was not mystically suited to be her soul-companion after all.

And perhaps Mr. Duane was divinely indicated. At that age girls are apt to believe that the selection of their lovers is a matter in which Heaven takes a keen interest. They find hints and commands

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in little things; nearly everything is an augury.

If a Roman general would postpone a battle because a sheep's liver was larger on the right than on the left side, it is small wonder if a susceptible girl pays regard to the astonishing fact that one man instead of another comes at her unvoiced wish, like a familiar angel—or demon.

It never occurred to Daphne that Reben had warned Duane of the début of his protégée and had invited him—in fact had dared him—to watch the test of her abilities.

At any rate, there Duane was, proffering homage and smiles and the prefaces of courtship. Daphne may have failed to gain the hearts of her audience, for all her toil, but here was a heart that was hers without effort. Perhaps Duane was her career. He was at least an audience that she could sway. And she was miserably in need of some one to pay her the tribute of submission.

So now when he said, "Wont you let me take you home in my car?" she could hardly snub a heaven-sent messenger. She said:

"Thank you—you're very kind—but—oh, all right!"

And she bounded in. She did not have to slink home. She was translated in a chariot. It was pleasant to move in a triumphal vehicle up Broadway where she was accustomed to walk, or take a street-car or a dingy taxicab.

The night was beautiful. She noted with reluctance how swiftly the dragon of speed devoured the space between her and her apartment cell.

When Duane said, "You must be hungry after all that hard work. Aren't you?" she said:

"Yes, I guess I am—a little."

When he said, "Where shall we eat?" she answered: "Anywhere."

"Claremont?" he suggested. This startled her, gave her pause. Yet there was something piquant about the proposal.

Satan or Raphael had whispered to her an invitation to revisit the scene of her late humiliation with Clay. With Duane's magic purse there would be no danger of a snub from the waiters; with his own car there would be no risk of footing it home.

There were many respects that made her recoil from the suggestion, but there were others that made it attractive. She did not speak till he urged again:

"Claremont?"

Then an imp of mischief spoke for her:

"All right!"

Duane told the chauffeur, and the car went like a javelin from the lighted street into the deep forest-night of Central Park.

What would Clay say? But after all, he had failed her in a crisis. Perhaps he had turned his heart elsewhere. Men were impatient, vindictive, fickle.

On the shadowy paths that bordered the roadways, park-benches were aligned. On nearly all of them shadowy men were embracing ghost-girls. Perhaps one of the men was Clay Wimburn. Her heart missed fire with jealous fear. But after all, she had freed him from their betrothal.

And in freeing him, had she not freed also herself?

**The next installment of *"The Thirteenth Commandment"* will be in the January issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the newsstands December 23rd. In it Mr. Hughes tells of Daphne's greatest struggle with an enemy most difficult to combat: herself.**

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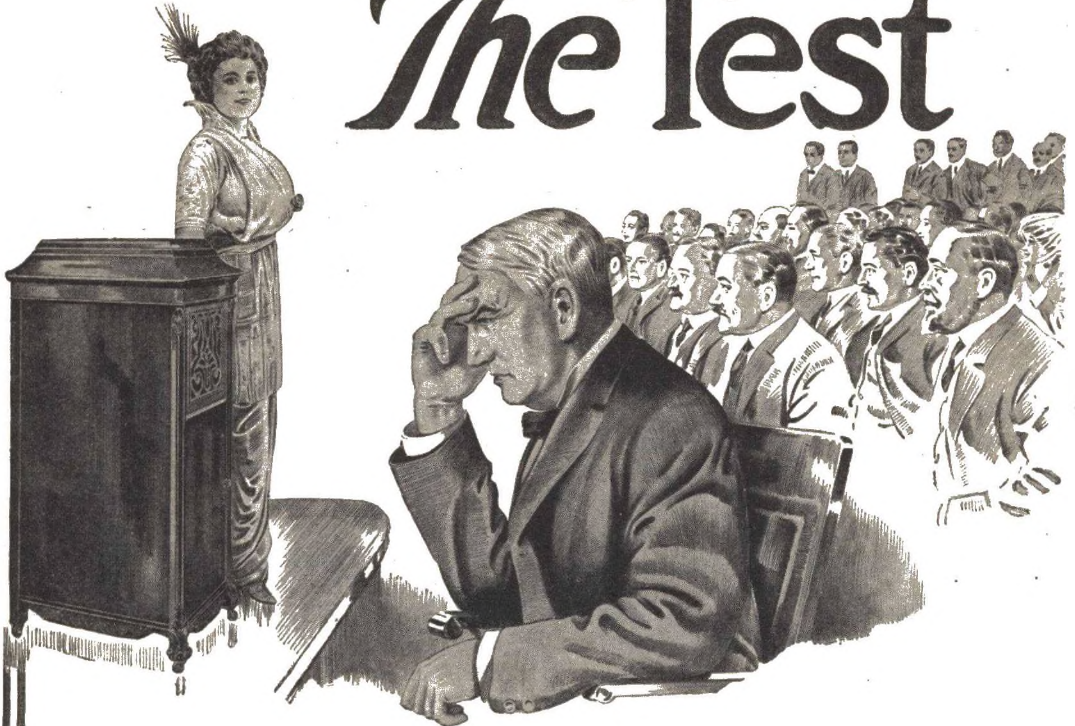
# The Test



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There came the clear notes of the beautiful song, "Caro Nome," from Rigoletto.

Which was singing, phonograph or lady? The ear could not distinguish. Only the eye could discern that Miss Verlet's lips were not moving. The Edison Diamond Disc was singing alone. Then — a greater volume — but *only* a greater volume—Miss Verlet joined her voice with the singing of the Edison Diamond Disc.

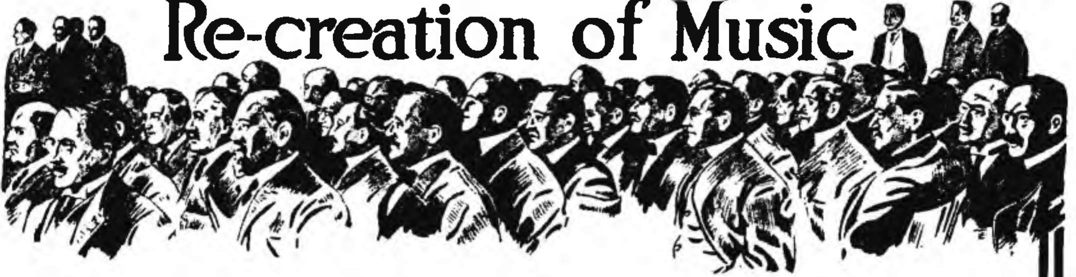
Two voices—exactly the same two—were singing together. No one among the 300 could tell which was the more clear or distinct, or more full of feeling.

The song volume decreased. The ear heard but one voice. The eye must tell again. *Miss Verlet's lips were moving.* It was she who was singing.

Faces were lit up with surprise—even with amazement—a modern miracle was happening just before them.

The phonograph and the lady continued their duet to the end. Enthusiasm, almost unbounded, ran through the audience.

# Nearly 300 Phonograph Experts Held Spellbound By Unprecedented Re-creation of Music



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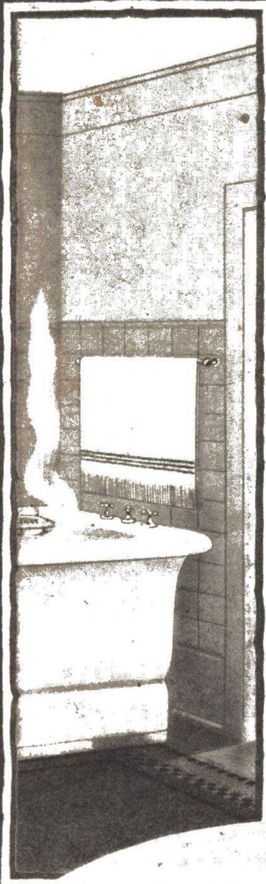

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