

10 STORY BOOK

A Magazine for Iconoclasts

October
1921



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Twentieth Year

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And a few pappy little skits

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The Fish That Lived a Thousand Years

An Interesting Tale of Interstitial Glands
by Capt. W. P. Barron

SO, Senor, you have come to Gaute-mala to study monkeys? To take from the poor little beasts, what you call it? Interstitial Glands? Ha! Ha! Yes, Oh! yes! those organs which God has given them to ——— What? You take that which gives life to make life? I am an old man, and you can make me young again with these glands from the little monkeys? Oh! Oie! that it might be! For in my young days, Senor, the Senoritas did not go begging. And yet, perhaps in the end, the devil might play me as sorry a trick as he did the Cabalero Jose Levaras, who sought long life by eating the fish that had lived a thousand years.

Would you hear the tale, Senor? Very well! Sit thou at this table here, in the shade, and while you drink your Aqua Deliante cooled by the snows from the mountains—do I hear aright, Senor? While we drink our Aqua Deliante I will tell you of the fish that lived a thousand years, and mayhap is living yet, for all I know.

Here, Moso! Take back this jug of Mescal and bring to us the real Aqua Deliante that your master keeps for the Alcalde, when he comes to collect the Federal Taxes. Do you think, obscene pig, that the Senor Americano, the good doctor, would put such devil's brew in his stomach?

To the north of us, Senor, beyond the mountains, there used to dwell in the old

days, a strange tribe of people with strange laws and foolish customs. They dwelt beside a beautiful little blue lake and lived upon the fish thereof, and upon the wild goats that ranged the mountains. Strange customs did I say, Senor?

Listen, and you shall hear. With them, if a woman proved unfaithful, she was in nowise blamed, as with us. Instead of doing one of the two things left for a man of honor to do, namely, to kill the woman, or go seek another one, younger and better looking, these people, seized upon the man in the case. They threw him in a boat and, rowing with him out into the center of this beautiful lake, they cast him, naked, shrieking and howling, into the water. They then rowed rapidly away, leaving him to swim out.

Perhaps, Senor, when I say to you again, that this lake was only a small one, and the water thereof, strangely bouyant and, en- vigorating and all these people excellent swimmers, you will wonder why he should so bemoan his punishment. Because, that was all that was done; the man was cast into the lake, and left to shift for himself.

Ah! Senor, but you will not wonder when I tell you, that in this lake, dwelt a fierce and ferocious fish, large as a shark: swift and cruel to strike. Above all, Senor, he loved to eat the Interstitial Glands of men. His presence in this lake was a mys-

tery, his origin a fable, and these simple folk, worshipped him as a God; instead of the true God that you and I worship, *Senor*.

No one could trace back the beginning of this fish, nor his worship as a God, nor the reason for his love for these glands of men. But, those who worshipped him said, almost the same saying that you have expressed, that from what gave life he got life; a life beyond years of any other fish, because of this diet of glands upon which he fed. He was the fish that had lived a thousand years.

To resume, *Senor*. Thanks, *Senor*! Just a small portion more. *Senor*. of this really good *Aqua Deliante*!

If by chance, *Senor*, the man cast into the lake swam out unharmed, he was deemed innocent, and the woman was killed at once. But if, as was usually the case, *Senor*, as the poor man swam, he would throw up his hands, and with a shriek of agony perhaps disappear for a few moments beneath the water. And then, he would rise and swim sadly and slowly to shore. His shriek for help, *Senor*, would be in the strong hoarse voice of a man; but afterwards—— Well, *Senor*, you know how the voice of even your poor monkeys change after you have taken their glands away from them!

When the well punished man, now a man no longer, had drawn himself from the water, he was free to go among the women unforbidden. No man, looked askance at him, if he saw him talking with his wife, as she drew water from the spring. Nay, even if an old man, with a young wife, he had no fear of him that had been cast into the lake, and had furnished a mouthful for the fish god therein. He was as harmless as a capon among the hens, and not half as useful, for a capon can be eaten, and those mountain people were not cannibals.

So after a time, upon the shores of this lake, thanks to faithless women, and a

hungry fish, there grew to be a great colony of squeakey voiced men, useless to themselves and everyone else. Also among these people, were many beautiful desirable girls for whom no husbands could be found. Among these none were more beautiful, or desirable than *Serephina Flores*.

Senor, she was as light upon her feet as a fawn, and her eyes as lustrous and gentle. Yet, with it all, she had a temper like a tigercat, and would hold revenge in her heart for years if need be; as you will see.

To this, village by the lake, came one night by chance, the *Caballero Jose Levaras*, who, hunting among the mountains, got lost in the storm. In the darkness, hungry and cold, he found his way to the hut of *Serephene's* father. The old man made his guest welcome, and fed and warmed him, as was the custom among these lake people with strangers.

As *Serephena's* father warmed and fed *Don Jose's* body, so did the sight of *Serephene*, in her light nightdress, feed and warm his soul. *Don Jose* was already an old man; but not too old. Therefore, to him *Serephena* was the more desirable, for a man must take on some age before he can really appreciate a beautiful woman.

Morning came and guides were secured to lead the great man back over the mountains to his estate. As he stood to say farewell, he unslung from his waist a money belt containing gold. He counted out its contents on the table and offered them to the old man for the girl. *Serephena's* father shook his head. What was gold to him. His wants were few and simple, all supplied by his garden, or from the common store of the lake people. *Serephena* was a child of his old age. Her mother was long since dead. He would have her remain with him until the end. Then she might marry whom she pleased.

Don Jose offered more gold, and yet more gold; all in vain. Finally in anger.

the old man bade him begone as his daughter was not for sale as a common slave in the market place. And Don Jose, ungrateful for the hospitality shown him, departed cursing.

Evil, Senor, grows in the heart of a man without tending. As the days passed, Don Jose sat in the hall of his great hacienda, that the King of Spain had given him, and brooded upon the fancied wrong of the old Indian's refusal. It seemed to him as the days passed, that above all his desires, the one desire to hold this shy girl against his heart was the strongest, and the most needful. Without her life was intolerable.

At last Don Jose could bear no more. He jerked at his Moso's bell, and when he came, he bade him summon to his presence three of the fiercest bandits in the mountains. They came, fearful of the summons, as Don Jose was a hard task master, and they did not know what he had minded to do. He cunningly counted out before their greedy eyes twenty gold pieces of the coin of Spain. He promised as many more when Serephena should be thrown bound with cords at his feet.

The Bandits departed snickering. They had thought from his manner, and the number of gold pieces, that Don Jose had desired the Alcalde assassinated. What was an old Indian more or less, or his daughter. This was a very simple matter. And so it proved. That night they crept into the hut by the lake, and with a knife between the old man's ribs, it was easy to gallop away with the shrieking Serephena. Serephena had neither kith nor kin; her forced departure, and the old man's death, produced but a ripple in the village. Just such a ripple as is produced when one throws a pebble in the waters of a lake.

Don Jose's troubles, however, had just begun. Three hard lashings upon her bare brown back, lashings cunningly administered, so as not to scar the skin,

were given. The girl would not yield. When she had fainted from the third lashing, she was dragged away, and thrown into the Hacienda's dungeon, in the hope that a few days' loneliness would break her will. Serephena remained firm. She then was given the trial by fire. This, Senor, Don Jose stopped himself, because he feared the girl's beautiful light going feet would be crippled and marred forever. Yet, for all her pain, Serephena looked up at him from where she was bound beside the charcoal fire, and with a smile of hate, shook her head, as a sign that she would not yield.

Then, after two days of silence and waiting for her to yield, she was lowered into the place of the Tarantulas. And here, with the great spiders looking at her with their cruel eyes, that burned in the darkness like little coals of fire, and leaping towards her on their great hairy legs, as she frantically fought them off with a stick, her soul grew sick with terror. The spiders did what lashing and fire the pain of whips and the agony of burning could not do. It caused the terror of the soul; and, Senor, the terror of the soul is a fearful thing. She looked up towards the leering, grinning faces bent over the old cistern, and held out her hands praying Don Jose to take her from the pit of terror, promising to be a true and loving mistress to him as long as he should live. With a smile on his lecherous lips Don Jose lifted her up. In the fullness of time her back healed and her feet became rosy and well. On that day, bathed and perfumed, she was led to the old man's bedchamber.

Senor, her body was healed, but the wound in her soul remained open and festering. Serephena made no outcry; she knew the uselessness of that. She only prayed frantically to her fish god for revenge; and in the silent night

watches, with the sodden drunken old man snoring beside her, she took counsel with herself. Had not this man, this greasy old beast, sinned the sin for which men were thrown to the great fish? Should he not also be so thrown? But how?

Senor, in the Good Book, out of which the kind father reads to us at the Mission, is the story of a great huge giant of a man, befooled by a weak silly woman. Sampson is the Senor's name in the book; but it doesn't have to be a story in a book, Senor. It is true of any man or any woman, if the woman so wills. Except, perhaps, in the Senor's own country!

Be that as it may, Senor! Serephena called daily upon Don Jose for feats of gallantry that would have weakened even a young man. What? A new name Senor? Vamped him? Well, vamping in my country here, Senor, means blood sucking. Blood sucking by a huge bat, that while he sucks, soothes one to sweetest slumber, with cool air from his great fanning wings. It is a good word, Senor, if a new one, for Serephena did just that. She sucked Don Jose's very life blood, as she urged him on to greater and greater feats that would have been prodigious even in the days when a man was allowed all the wives that he could care for. Don Jose should have been a younger and a thinner man. But he was old and fat, and his importunate mistress became a distressful burden to him.

It was then, cunningly, just at the right moment, that Serephena told him the tale of the fish god, of the organs upon which he fed, and how feeding on that which gave life, long life had come to him. Day by day, night by night, softly without rest, she told him of the fish of a thousand years. In this manner, slowly she poisoned the old man's mind with the belief, that if he could only catch and

eat this fish, life, long, new, potent, would be his. And from this new life, would come renewed joy in a new mistress.

It was not done in a day, Senor, but little by little, here a word, there a word, slowly, as one builds an adobe house; stone upon stone, brick upon brick; and time, too, for the work to dry in the sun.

Finally, sucked dry; old even beyond his years, with all power gone to enjoy life, as life was to such as he; with a beautiful girl beside him in the day, and in the night, whispering, cajoling, begging that he seek again for power to love, because she was made for love, broke down the old fool's reason. "No fool like an old fool," you say, Senor? Dios! Is it not true? And so it was with Don Jose! He believed, actually believed, that this girl whose back he had lashed with leathern whips; whose dainty feet he had roasted in the charcoal oven; whom he had thrown shrieking into the den of tarantulas; loved him! Him, the fat, greasy, drunken imbecile of an old man! Old enough for her grandfather!

Deceived by her caressing hand, that longed to throttle him; blinded by her beautiful soft eyes, that if a look could slay, would have made him food for worms! Don Jose did not see Pedro, the slim, handsome moso, that tended him. He did not see the ardent looks between the two; the whispered words, the stolen caresses. As a younger man, he would have seen; and having seen, would have doubted. And having doubted, watched; and then, Pedro would have been thrown to the Tarantulas; or slain by fire. As it was; as with all old fools, Senor, when Serephena said, "Carissima, I love thee," he believed; saying in his heart, "How could she help it?"

Well, to hasten on; for the sun sinks, and soon now, the Senor will see in the

Plaza, brighter eyes than mine, and sweeter voices to tell other tales.

Don Jose, at last convinced, journeyed over the mountains and came down once more to Serephena's native village. Unknown and unrecognized by her own people, Serephena accompanied him. Standing upon the shore of the little blue lake, Don Jose looked out upon it fiercely. In his hand he held a great fish spear, with which he meant to take this monarch, this fish god. With him were the bandits from the mountains, twelve of them, to fight off the simple Indians if they should object to the capture of their fish god.

Don Jose stepped into a boat, Pedro with him. Before they cast off, Don Jose, stripped naked, the more easier to cope with the fish, as Serephena had advised, telling him the fish god was very swift, wise and strong. The native Indians crowded about in wonder. Don Jose stood upright, haughtily, as became one who would fight a good fight.

Just as Pedro dug his oar into the shallow water to push off, a wrinkled, bent, and gray old man, or what had been a man, put out a small paw and plucked at Don Jose's arm. In a squeaky voice, like a very old woman, or a rat, he said:

"What would you, honored Lord? What would you?"

Don Jose turned, and glared down upon him, impatient to be gone. In his heart he felt the journey to be foolishness, this war upon a fish. But what would you? A man will do anything, endure anything that he may renew his youth.

"Begone, mangy dog! What is it to you? I go to seek and slay the fish that has lived a thousand years!"

Rudely rebuffed, the human capon looked up at Don Jose out of sad rheumy eyes. Greatly he feared this man that spoke so gruffly, with a voice loud, harsh,

and deep; so spoke the thunder god, with his voice growling among the hills. He feared, and yet; the big man was a fool. He would try again.

"But honored Lord, do not go! See! I am one upon whom the fish god has fed. Once I . . . Do not go up on the lake! Do not venture in the water! The fish god is swift, sure, strong! Surely, some witch has beguiled thee; surely.!" The words ended in a shriek. Pedro had brought the oar of the boat with all his strength upon the capon's foot as he pushed off from shore. The sudden movement threw Don Jose sprawling upon his back in the boat, his fat legs waiving in the air. Cursing Pedro for an awkward fool, Don Jose scrambled to his seat in the boat as Pedro rowed slowly out into the middle of the lake. Don Jose, clutching his two prong fish spear, looked eagerly down into the clear water for the fish god. With clasped hands and eager cries, Serephena cheered him from the shore. Clustered about her were the old companions of her girlhood to whom she had made herself known.

Suddenly, with an eager movement, Don Jose signed for Pedro to cease rowing. Far below, in the clear water, Don Jose had seen a great fish. With a lazy flirt of his tail, the fish turned partly upon his side. To his dying day, Don Jose swore that the fish winked at him; a wicked challenging wink. Then he lay quiet slowly waving his tail, waiting for the splash that would tell him a victim was ready for the sacrifice. With a bellowing roar of, "It is he!" Don Jose plunged his spear downwards with all his strength. As he did so, the sudden movement upset the boat; or, did Pedro do it purposely? Ah! Senor, that no one knows.

Be that as it was, Senor, the boat upset and Don Jose with a mighty splash fell

in. In some way Pedro quickly turned the boat, climbed in with great agility, as he was young and supple; and with the oar he had retained in his hand, began swiftly to row away. Heedless was he of his master's mighty roaring voice, who roared as a great bull, wounded in the bull fight, bellows and roars. So bellowed Don Jose. "Help! Help!" Pedro gave no heed but rowed swiftly towards the shore, so excited was he. Serephena, equally excited, jumped up and down upon the shore, praying frantically to the fish god.

Disgusted, the object of his quest forgotten in his desire to get out of the cold water, and have Pedro soundly beaten, Don Jose began with lusty strokes to swim towards the shore. Suddenly a great twinge of pain, a struggle in the water, a bubbling cry for help, in the old

bull's voice, and then . . . And then, in the squeaky voice of your poor little monkeys, robbed of their birthright, Don Jose said, "Too late! Too late!" One would have thought that it was the voice of the cañon who spoke to him on the shore before he left on this fateful quest that spoke now, "Too late! Too late!" The fish god had taken his toll!

As slowly and wearily Don Jose swam shorewards, he saw Serephena run to the boat as it grounded on the shore, and clasped Pedro to her breast, in a long passionate embrace. This sight did not anger him. But an hour ago, he would have torn Pedro limb from limb with his own hands. Now, he desired only to get out of the water, and sit dozing in the hot sun. And so Senor, after many days, Serephena was avenged by her own god, and among her own people.

PROTECTION

She was the very pretty daughter of a very pious mother, but she somehow felt that Hell was a long, long way from Manhattan.

"Mother, do you believe that God is Omnipotent?" she asked musingly. "That we lowly mortals travel only those paths designated by His divine will?"

"Of course, my dear, of course."

"And nothing is done without His knowledge and consent? He is always present, everywhere?"

The mother beamed upon the questioning face, seeking to fan the spark of celestial fire that so mysteriously had revealed itself in her worldly offspring.

"Yes—that is my belief."

"When one is alone, He makes a second party; when two are together, a third party? Will He be near me and watch over me, no matter where I am or whom I am with? Wouldn't it be sacrilegious to consider any other protection necessary than His invisible presence?"

"Certainly, daughter; I would not be a Christian if I thought otherwise."

"Oh, how convenient! Then you won't make me take along a chaperon when I go motoring tonight along the road through the Westchester woods; it would show such a scandalous lack of faith." The girl smiled dreamily. "And Gilbert has such nice strong arms . . . but, as you say, God will protect me!"—Lewis H. Kilpatrick.



The Girl Who Was Missed

By Howard Philip Rhoades

MADAME SCHMIDT, fat and pulpy, looked curious as she opened the door, for she saw that her visitor was unusual. As the battered portal closed she bade the visitor, a girl of nineteen, be seated in the hall. Then Madame Schmidt drew aside to confer with Curley, who had brought the girl.

Curley was a youth of swagger, of extremity, and of a loud attractiveness of dress. A cigaret dropped from the corner of his knowing, sensuous lips. Curley was the suave, bright-plumed exponent of Madame Schmidt's colorless establishment, with a tongue as ready as convincing, and a personality as shifty as astute.

"I finds her in de park, near de station," he whispered, "an' I pegs her for new stuff. I says, 'Curley, here's a dame wort' ten a day to Schmidty,' and I shines up to her. She says she's got to have a place to go, and begs me to bring her to de right sort of a place. Did I do it? Huh, did I do it?" He playfully poked the madame in the ribs.

"I guess they can't fool you much, Kid," said Madame Schmidt, approvingly. Then she led the girl through a dark hallway, heavy with the smells of stale beer, bad tobacco, and cookery, until they reached a barn of a dance hall.

"Wait here a minute, dear," said the madame, "and I'll have your room fixed

right away. As she and Curley withdrew to the hall again, Curley leered, "Pretty soft for you Schmidty—such a pretty little chicken as that, and she came so easy!"

Meanwhile Doris Alton, the newcomer, was looking at herself in a huge cracked mirror. She was a girl of some personal charm, dressed in quiet well-fitting garments, settled snugly to her graceful lines. Her whole air was that which one would associate with things refined and delicate. Her fingers were white and long, such fingers as are made to play with jewels and silks. Her cheeks were peachy and clear. She seemed just now a lily above the muck, the sort of girl who not only will not fit in with any but beautiful things, but a girl who simply must have them.

She looked about cautiously. The odors made her sniff for purer air. She was in doubt about the place, and she sat alert and furtive.

The dance hall was a great, bare place, with a floor scratched rough by the hob-nailed shoes of laborers who came to revel of Saturday nights. A divan of hideous form had a broken end, probably the result of some drunken fight. There were a couple of cheap prints on the wall, and a crude picture of nudes which some wag had offensively altered. Heat came from a battered oil stove.

Before the stove huddled another girl,

gazing vacantly in front of her. As Doris Alton watched, she rose and crossed the room to the window. There she stood staring intently out across the street. The girl who had just arrived followed her eyes. She saw the only pleasing sight, since she had entered this dark and questionable street. It was a tall yellow house from which glinted the rays of the late afternoon sun. This house had a warm, distinctive coloring, sharply set off by the green of its window shutters, and by two small shapely trees which stood in tubs by the steps. A negro had just finished washing the marble steps and was now polishing a glistening brass rail.

There was a sigh from the girl at the window. Then her head went against the casement and she sobbed. Another girl, broad and bleached out, bustled in. She gently drew away the girl at the window. She helped her into another room. Then, as she came back to Doris Alton, she imparted, in a cracked but kindly voice: "Thelma got the tinware over to Miss Linears's yestiday, and it kinda got her goat. This is the first time she's ever got down to a place like this. She's a hop-head, and Miss Linear—she has that fine big place over there—she won't stand for her girls usin' no dope."

Miss Alton was looking at the speaker in a strange horror. She held to the arm of her chair and surveyed the place like an animal fearing an unseen danger. The fat girl gazed at her curiously, and wobbled away. She met Curley in the hall. "Who is dis little new skirt?" she whispered.

Curley smiled leeringly, and made a very knowing grimace. The fat girl nodded in warning. "Wasn't a year in the stir enough to keep you off these infants?" she asked.

"Da's all right, Sally da's all right?" hoarsely whispered Curley. "Dis kid's wort' a kick full o'dough to the madame. Nobody's goin' to get wise!"

Sally raised her shoulders as if to say "Ich gebibble" in Italian, and departed.

Left alone, Doris Alton was looking about with the depressed caution of one passing through a tenderloin at 2 a. m. Through a smeary side window she looked into a dirty yard. A walk of tilted bricks led away to a sooty, patched fence, at the crazy gate of which stood an overflowing ash barrel. A mangy dog was greedily snatching for refuse. Gloom, saddening and dull, oppressed the girl, making her feel uneasy, and out of place.

There was a sharp ring, and Sally answered the front door. A man's voice, one of distinction and pleasing tone, asked: "Is Ida in?"

Something about that voice brought Doris Alton to life. She stole to the hall, and saw a face which took her into another world, one of warm and bright and joyous things. Here was a man of attraction, clean-cut, immaculate, and intelligent.

Sally answered: "No, Ida's at the hospital." A word or two more passed and the door was closed. As the young man's face vanished the rift of life and color—the life and color she adored—faded from Doris Alton.

"Hum," sneered Sally, returning. "A rah-rah. Thank Gawd, we don't get many. Over to Miss Linear's they're run over with them."

Doris Alton stirred nervously. For the first time she spoke. "If—if you don't mind—" she started. "I think—"

Sally raised a hand, as if to stay her words. Watching the newcomer, hawk-like, she went to the street door, where she shot a secret bolt. Then she waddled away upstairs.

The girl in the dance hall paced the place like a caged animal. Once she stopped to look over at the tall yellow house of Miss Linear. A negro maid came out with two white fluffy dogs tied with pink ribbons.

The porter still was washing and polishing. A limousine dropped off two fashionably dressed men, who were admitted through the polished mahogany door.

Doris Alton started as there was another ring. Sally ushered in a big bear of a man, whose shock of hair bristled from beneath a faded felt hat, and whose eyes, above sickly, puffy skin, were dark and dull. He swaggered in with an air of possession, asking for "the ol' woman."

Striding into the dance hall, he caught sight of the beautiful girl, who shrunk back from his glance. He stared at her as a loathsome drunkard would have gloated over a glass of wine, looking the very embodiment of things uncouth and boorish. As she shrunk further, when he tried to pinch her arm, he gave an animal bark, meant for a laugh, and lumbered away upstairs.

Then the girl sank upon the divan, feeling as if some reptile had passed.

Sally snickered and observed: "You mustn't mind Dutch. He's the madame's lover. Why he's got a livery stable out there in the alley, and wads of kale."

Miss Alton gripped her suitcase, which was beside her, and once more spoke. "If you don't mind—" She was interrupted by the bell.

Sally answered and, as she said blandly, "Come in, boys," two hulking forms loomed up. They were careening like heavy sailing boats in a troubled sea. Doris Alton felt the horror of one upon whom death is creeping, unable to move or to prevent. Two rough laborers, in shapeless garb, cheap of texture and noisome with sweat and grime, were before her. They blocked the way to the street.

The foremost, a great ungainly creature, puffing alcoholic fumes, his feeble brain dulled, his blood boiling with lust, bore down upon the girl.

Like a heavy log falling upon a forest flower, he stumbled toward her, arms outstretched. She screamed in fear and swung a chair between them. The man gazed at her in blear-eyed amazement. Then his slow brain solved the problem and he took on a smirking grin. To show he was an honest purchaser and not a robber, he drew a coin.

"See, Sweetie—I got money," he stammered drunkenly. The girl crouched in terror. The dullard, mistaking her fear for coquetry, tore the chair away, and closed in, aching to crush her to his body.

There was a ghastly scream, a crash, and a muddle of sounds. Doris Alton had hurled her suitcase through the window and followed it into the alley.

The front door of the house from which she had escaped was not yet open as she sped like an arrow across the street. Up the steps of the house of Miss Linear she flew. To the negro girl who opened the door, she gasped: "Miss Linear—quick!"

In a second a stately, silk-clad, diamond-strung woman was before her.

"I came here a stranger," panted the girl. "I was misled—a man took me to that awful place across the street." As she pointed people were swarming out the front door of Madame Schmidt's house, coming toward her. She sobbed aloud in distress and humiliation. "Pay them for their window—please—please, Miss Linear. I—I have money to reimburse you. But don't let them take me. Even for such as I there are degrees. Three years I have been in the life—but oh, God—never in such a place as that!"

And Miss Linear, understanding in the quick way of women of her experience, that her visitor was unusual, opened the door to admit her.



Dog gone the luck!

You Never Can Tell

by J. C. Retsloff

JIM JONES walked up the railroad track, crossed the cedar foot bridge, and spoke to a tall man leaning against a broken hinged gate.

"Evening, Jake."

"Evening, Jim."

"Summer weather."

"Yes, warming up a bit. Going into the house?"

"No, came to see you on business."

"Me, on business?"

"Yes, I 'spose you might call it that. It is something I never talked about to any one before this," Jim dropped his voice to almost a whisper, "and I don't want to be overheard."

"Jumping frogs! You're getting me stirred up, Jim. My wife's great for mystery and I've a leaning that way. What is it?"

"This is not that kind, Jake. It's as old to the world as—as—as them trees, but it's new to me." He stopped and looked around in the deepening twilight.

"Shoot it out, Jim. Guess the old fence'll hold me no matter how startling it is."

"Well Jake, I want one of your kids. You got seventeen."

"Jumping frogs! Is that all? Why man, what you're trembling for? There's Jake Junior, he can help with most anything. He's sixteen past, good and husky. Tom ain't no slouch when he gets an idea of what's expected of him and Larry—"

Sh! Jake, I don't want any of your boys. It's — it's Nora Emily I want."

"Nora Emily. Well of all things. What you want her for?"

"I—I—I want to marry her. I've hung around this place of yours for three months shining up to her. I'll make as good a son-in-law as you can rustle. See what a help I'll be in these times of high prices. What you spend on her can go for other things."

Jacob Astor Watts stiffened his slanting shoulders, "But—but, Jim, how do I know that you can take care of her?"

Jim wiped his forehead with a red cotton handkerchief and slowly replied: "I get four dollars and thirty-two cents every day. Ain't that enough to marry on?"

The night sounds drifted in around them, chirp and twitter and buzz. The evening dew loosened the perfume of the pines. They floated down on the two men standing under the scraggy cedar by the broken hinged gate.

Jacob Astor Watts puffed at his corn-cob pipe, ran his fingers up and down under his suspenders and rattled the rickety post with the toe of his red and green carpet slipper.

"See here, Jake," Jim began hesitatingly. "Is there any thing I can do for you? I want the girl."

Watts leaned forward. He dropped his hands from his suspenders and placed them on Jim's shoulders. "I was just thinking.

Jim, you make four dollars and thirty-two cents every day on the section. You work six days a week." Jim nodded. Jacob Astor leaned closer, "Six times four is twenty-four and six times thirty-two is-- I never was good at head figuring when the figures work double--"

"One dollar and ninety-two cents, Jake."

The older man tapped his pipe against the post and gave a dry throaty chuckle, "Twenty-four dollars and one dollar and ninety-two cents makes twenty-five dollars and ninety-two cents. I'll tell you what, you give me them ninety-two cents every week. It'll be my tobacco money and I'll take you into my family. See? How does that strike you for a bargain?"

Jim hesitated. He turned his gray eyes toward the house. Through the uncurtained window he saw Nora Emily moving back and forth. A door slammed. A figure in a light dress ran across the back yard. He cleared his throat and swallowed hard. "I'll do it, Jake, I sure will."

Jake laughed softly, "Horse sense, you got, Jim. Now there is one thing more. You don't know my wife. I do. She has always said that she was going to pick out Nora Emily's husband. We got to work up to the point mighty careful. I can generally get her to agree with me by giving her some kind of a present. If you'll give her sort of an engagement present maybe she'll agree to the wedding right off. If not I'll have to take the matter up with her in private."

"But I don't see any sense in giving Mrs. Watts an engagement present. I'm not engaging her."

"Course you're not, Jim. That ain't the point. Females is queer, that is most of them. Nora Emily's like me, hasn't a single trace of her mother's set ways."

Jim emptied his pipe and re-filled it. "What you 'spose she'll want?"

"I dunno, you can be sure it'll be some-

thing she don't need. That's a woman every time.

"I'm giving you ninety-two cents every week, so long as I keep this job and draw the same pay. You might divide with her."

"Me—me divide what will be my own private income? Not by a durn sight. My bargain is my own. And don't you mention it to her, either. She has her own ideas. You go in now and tell her that I'm willing for you to marry Nora Emily, but—" again he pressed Jim's shoulders, "but remember not one word to Manda about the financial part."

The two men walked to the house. Jim Jones entered the kitchen without knocking. Jake took a position just outside the open window where he could see and hear without being observed. Mrs. Watts sat in a backless rocking chair. She held a sleeping baby on her lap. A pair of two-year old twins embraced her knees.

"Evening, Mrs. Watts."

"Evening, Mr. Jones. Shove the cat off that box and sit down. Here you, Lorendo, get out that coal bucket. What'll Mr. Jones think of you?"

Jim displaced the cat and sat down on the box. He put his pipe in his pocket after he had emptied its contents into the coal bucket.

"Been smoking with Jake, Mr. Jones."

"Yes."

"Sara Elizabeth," Mrs. Watts twisted around on her chair. "Sara Elizabeth, go stop Pete and Perry from rolling Peggy in that coal bin. It does beat all, Mr. Jones, what kids will do, 'specially these younger ones. With Nora Emily and Jake Junior, it always was different. Even now though they are grown, neither one of them thinks of as much as sneezing without telling me. It's always 'Ma this and Ma that' with them. Nora Emily has passed her eighteenth birthday but she always consults me about everything. Oh but she's the child

of my heart, my darling first born."

Jim removed his weather beaten hat, twisted it into a roll and pushed it in the pocket of his brown coat.

"Fine girl, your Nora Emily, Mrs. Watts. I was talking to your husband about her. Fact I—I—I asked him if I could marry her. He's willing. What do you say?"

Jacob Astor chuckled. He rose on tip-toe and pressed his face close to the window casing. Mrs. Watts touched the little wad of black hair on top of her head, shifted the sleeping baby to one knee and drew a long breath.

"Fine girl, you say, of course she is. But you take my breath away with your fool talk. You, you marry my Nora Emily, my heart, my joy, the best of all my children? The very idea! A section hand's no great shucks. My child will marry just whom I say. I set everything by her. I intend to pick out her husband, but not the likes of you, Jim, oh, no!"

In the shadowy star light Jake pattered back to the gate shaking his head whispering: "Dog-gone a petticoat, you never know what it is going to do."

He steadied himself against the old post, "Well, Jim," he questioned as the young man stumbled along the path. "How did you strike it off with her?"

"She struck, Jake. She gives me no chance at all. She thinks I'm no great shucks, maybe she's right."

"Brace up, Jim, brace up. You don't know how to handle her. I'm not going to let any fool whim of her make me go back on my word. When I make a bargain I always stand by it. Manda's a good woman in her way, but she's a petticoat and got to be handled as such. Drop 'round tomorrow evening."

An hour later Jacob Astor opened the door of their sleeping room. Manda sat on the side of the bed. For a moment they eyed each other in silence. A frown rested

on Mrs. Watts' face. She cleared her throat, "So you, Jake Watts, been trying to give our first born away to a no count red headed section hand. What you mean by loading our family up with common trash? Want to give her away and shorten my life do you? I need her. She will marry a man of my picking when the time comes. She knows no more about picking out things than you do. All you know is tobacco and grub any way. My child, my best child, my comfort, how dare you —," she paused.

For an instant Jake's mouth weakened, then it hardened. "Listen Manda. Jim is all right. He has as much as we had when we started. Look at us now, two cows, twenty hens and seventeen young things a-growing. Jim makes twenty-five dollars every week. And Manda, he speaks most highly of you. He says you're a fine looking woman. He asked if you ever got that wrist watch you was wanting a while back? I think he has it in his mind to get it for you as a sort of engagement present, see?"

A quick change came over Manda's face. She turned to a cracked mirror on an old fashioned bureau, "Now Jacob Astor, are you sure Jim thinks of getting me a wrist watch? And did he say I am good looking?" She tipped her head to one side, placed her arms akimbo and bent closer to the looking glass.

"Well, I'll own that I've held up with the best of them. I know I'm the only woman in the state who has two personal letters from the Governor, one for the triplets and one for the last pair of twins. Wonder if Jim knows that?"

"Course he knows it, Manda." Mr. Watts spoke without hesitation. "He knows that Nora Emily comes of wholesale stock.

"I'm not certain about the wrist watch. I'll tell him that it is the custom in our family to give the bride's mother an engage-

ment present. He'll ask what you'd like, then I'll say a 'wrist watch.' See?"

"When do you think he'll want the wedding?"

"Dunno, Manda. Better leave something to Nora Emily."

"Nora Emily, nothing. She always does what I tell her. I can have her ready in two weeks."

"Jim's coming in to-morrow night, Manda. You and him can fix the date then and I'll mention the engagement present."

"Do you think he'd get me a pair of silk stockings and the watch too, Jacob Astor? You know Nora Emily's worth a ——"

A rap sounded on the window. Manda pulled aside the shade and cautiously raised the sash. Jake turned the lamp low.

"Who are you and what do you want? Why are you knocking on respectable people's windows at this time of night?"

"Don't be frightened, Mother. It's me, Nora Emily."

"Nora Emily, what you doing out there? I thought you went to bed before Jim Jones came in."

Manda raised the window higher. Her husband crossed to her side.

"Who you got with you?" demanded Mrs. Watts as she saw two shadowy forms.

"Charley Shane, Mother."

"Charley Shane, didn't I tell you never to speak to him again. He's no fitting company for a Watts."

"Don't get excited, Mrs. Watts," said a young man's voice. "Nora Emily and me have—have just come from Judge Pearson's. We—we got married half an hour ago. We are going over to my mother's."

A pane of glass cracked and fell inside as Mrs. Watts slammed down the window. She moistened her thin lips, "The little sneaking huzzy! Cheating me, her own mother, out of a wrist watch. I might have known that she'd crowd me out of society. Everybody who's anybody has a wrist watch. She's just like you, always making fool bargains."

Jacob Astor dropped on a stool. He bowed his head on his hands. His breath came in quick catches. He swayed from side to side and muttered: "Might have known it. Never heard of a petticoat that could be counted on, when it came to marrying—not even among the Vanderbilts. Dog-gone the luck!"

- A SURE TEST

Wife—Hubby, when you die I am going down on Fifth Avenue and catch a couple of the "chickens" that parade there on Saturday afternoon. I'll bring them home and walk them past your coffin, and if you don't rise up and say "Hello Kid," then I'll bury you.

Hubby—Oh death, where is thy sting?—Nemo.

"See here, Slinnit, did you steal my money?"



A Rat in the Cabin

by Paul Everman

"HER eyes are like the violets blue-ue-ue," sang Big Un Boyne jubilantly as he whacked his huge shining razor against a worn, black strop.

Slish-slap! Slish-slap! Slish-slap!

On the other side of the smirchily-lighted cabin, Slinnit grinned and rubbed at his stump of right ear. Presently he twisted his small head around toward MacGregor, who sat quietly at his side.

"The big feller's in love, ain't he?"

MacGregor digested the remark for a thoughtful moment. Then he smiled Scotchily through his bushy white mustache.

"We-ll," he said, "if I was young like Big Un here, and if I'd meet a girl with blue eyes like Kitty Elmore's, I'll be switched if I wouldn't be a mite in love myself."

"What's that?" Slinnit's foot slipped from the base of the pot-bellied stove.

MacGregor repeated.

"Humph!" scoffed Slinnit. "A man's a darned fool to be in love . . . Hi, Elephant," he shrilled suddenly. "Mac tells me you're in love."

Big Un turned and grinned good-naturedly through a white bank of lather. "Reckon maybe I am, Mister."

"An' might I inquire who the fortunate young lady is?"

"Name's Elmore."

"I see. An' where might she live?"

"Spargo."

"I reckon you'll be gettin' married soon."

"I hope so."

"Uh-huh. You hope so. Ain't the young lady, Elkins or whatever her name is, agreed to take you yet?"

Big Un paused in his lathering for ample speech. In the midst of the lather hovered a crumpling smile of placid satisfaction.

"Well," he said, "not exactly. But I reckon that when I go down to Spargo tomorrow mornin' and lay seven hundred dollars in her hand, she'll name the day."

"Well, well! An' what's the seven hundred bucks got to do with it?"

"We don't believe in startin' out on nothing."

"Now ain't that sense fer you, Mac?—dollars an' cents." Slinnit cackled at his joke. "But say, Elephant, what are you goin' to do with your bride? Goin' to bring her up here to the cabin an' keep on choppin' cedar for Mac?"

"Nope," answered Big Un patiently. "We're figurin' on takin' a claim up in Utah—San Juan County."

"A claim, eh?" And Slinnit suffered silence while he fashioned a neat cigarette with stained, skillful fingers.

Big Un adjusted the lamp reflector so that it glittered on his mirror, a jagged bit of unframed glass tacked into position on the wall, and began to shave, accompanying his shaving with soaring outbursts of,

"Her eyes are like the violets blue-ue-ue."

"Ow-oo!" Slinnit scrambled down to a squatting posture on the floor and elevated his nose into the air. "Ow-oo! Ow-oo! Ow-oo!" he howled. Then, with pseudo distress, as Big Un turned a puzzled face, "Fer Gawd's sakes, Elephant, stop that noise! It hurts my ears. It's awful. Ain't it, Mac?" He slapped MacGregor familiarly on the shoulder. The latter grunted.

Big Un turned slowly back to the jagged mirror. He poised his huge razor and with a precise stroke drew a swath of clean tan through the froth and whiskers on his broad face.

Slinnit kept on. "Ain't he homely, Mac? That girl of his'n, must be blind as an ossified bat to pick out a mug like his. An' he's clumsy as an elephant. Elephant!—ain't I named him right, now? Watch him cut hisself. Elephant!"

MacGregor spat on the stove. "Listen here, my man," he reproved, his tone mild, yet with a muscle in every word. "Ye're acting mighty fresh to be knowing me and Big Un only a couple of hours. I've give ye a job because I need a wood-chopper. But I hired ye to chop wood, not to run off at the mouth. So ye'll just let Big Un alone, afore he forgets he's easy-going and busts ye one like ye deserve."

"Him bust me one? Like to see him try it!" Slinnit snorted an ugly laugh. "He ain't objectin' none to me havin' a little fun, is he? Are you, Elephant?"

Big Un shaved away stolidly without answering.

Slinnit leered at MacGregor triumphantly. "See, there, Mac? Elephant ain't a-carin' any. You horned in a bit too previous, I'm thinkin'. You hired me to chop wood—that's right. Now you wait till Monday; an' if I don't chop as much wood as either you or Elephant, I'll let you kick me down the mountain. That's fair, ain't it? An' when I know I'm earnin' my money I'll talk as much as I please. My Gawd! do you fellers stay cooped up here without ever havin' any fun occasionally? Life ain't no funeral."

"I'll see what kind of a workman ye are," was all old MacGregor said.

Slinnit's green eyes, centering a ball of muddy yellow—like a floating aquamarine in a cup of cream-clouded coffee—switched to Big Un, who was sedulously cleaning his razor. "Say, Elephant's goin' to look purty sweet when he goes down to Spargo to see his lady-love tomorrow—ain't he? I'd like to meet this Miss—uh—Elder. Mebbe I could cut him out. Ha! She wouldn't take a slocum like Elephant here when she could get a lively guy like me. Just the other day a friend o' mine was tellin' me 'bout the girls down at Spargo (I ain't never been there myself). He said—" Slinnit leaned over and whispered a reference to MacGregor.

Whack! The latter's hand crushed the ear-stump and then the defiling mouth. Slinnit was dashed against the rough wall.

"Take it back!" whispered MacGregor, his face twitching and hot.

"Hit me again, you old devil!" screeched Slinnit, twisting his wiry body into a tense crouch. "Come on! Hit me again! You're bigger'n me. Hit me again! But by —, I'll kill you if you do!"

MacGregor choked him savagely. "Back!" he growled.

"Yeh-yeh-joke I tell-you! But

don't—you hit me—again—you big devil!"

MacGregor withdrew his clutching hand and turned to face Big Un, who was standing puzzled at his side.

"What's the matter, Mac?" asked Big Un anxiously. "What'd he do?"

"Nothing," said MacGregor sourly. "Nothing." And he pulled off his heavy leather boots and went to bed.

The next day was Sunday, and Big Un Boyne awoke with the dawn after a solid, satisfying sleep. For a brief moment he eyed his snoring companions. Then he crawled eagerly from his cot, with tingling thoughts of a hasty breakfast, a walk to Carleton, and a 10 o'clock train that would whisk him into Spargo, forty miles away, where he would spend a precious day with Kitty Elmore.

His massive, hairy-backed hand crept underneath his pillow and felt about. Suddenly he flipped the pillow aside, and his broad jaw dropped clumsily.

"Mac!" he cried hoarsely. "Mac! My money's gone!"

MacGregor stirred sleepily, then sprang up. "What—what's the matter, boy? Did you call me?"

"My money—it's gone! I put the roll of bills under my pillow last night. It's gone!"

MacGregor strove to be calm, but his tone betrayed rising excitement. "Look again, boy. Maybe it slipped under the covers or on the floor."

Big Un dropped to his knees and searched frantically on the floor, while MacGregor clawed among the covers.

"What's the matter with you guys?" snarled Slinnit, slouching up on his cot. "Can't you let a feller sleep?"

Big Un glanced up helplessly.

"Big Un's been robbed," answered MacGregor.

"Robbed?" Slinnit bounced up. "What? His seven hundred bucks?"

He lent an industrious hand to the search. They shook the covers, turned the mattress, shoved the cot aside, examined the rough floor microscopically, to no avail.

"What's this?" Slinnit reached down and picked up a raveled bit of yellow corn-stalk, perhaps six inches long.

"Looks like a piece of fodder," grunted MacGregor. "Get up, Big Un. There isn't any use of looking farther." He stepped stiffly to the door and tried the knob. Turning, he fastened grim eyes on Slinnit. "I locked this door last night and put the key in my pocket. The key's still in my pocket, and the door's still locked. Nobody else was in here last night."

"Well, what of it?" snapped Slinnit. His green eyes flared angrily. "See here, if you're goin' to accuse me o' takin' Elephant's roll, I'll say that you're a dirty liar!" And he cursed viciously.

"Shut up!" MacGregor cut in sharply.

A thick flush crept up Big Un's broad neck. He advanced heavily toward Slinnit. "See here, Slinnit, did you steal my money? If you did——"

"Prove it!" Slinnit snatched his trousers and coat from a chair and flung them at Big Un. "Here, search me! Look in my clothes—look in my bed—look in everything I got! Go on! Look! Look!"

They searched the clothing, looked in and under his cot, but found nothing.

"Now, if you wise guys are done," said Slinnit sarcastically, "mebbe I can show you where the seven hundred went." He prowled around the corners of the room for a moment, then cackled triumphantly. "I thought so! Look here, you wise guys—see that?" He pointed dramatically at a hole gnawed in the edge of the floor.

"Well, that's where Elephant's roll went!"

"You put it there, eh?" grunted MacGregor.

"Naw, I didn't put it there! A rat put it there—the same rat that sneaked it out from under Big Un's piller last night."

MacGregor was plainly incredulous; Big Un was silent.

"It'd take a pretty wise rat to do that," said MacGregor slowly at last.

"Wise? I'll say so! These pack rats has got brains in their feet!"

"Pack rats?" exclaimed MacGregor with a quick glance.

"Yeh; wood rats, some calls 'em. You've seen 'em, ain't you? Right here in this cabin, I betcha!"

MacGregor nodded grudgingly.

"Well, since you guys have had guts enough to accuse me of bein' a thief, I'm goin' to clear myself clean. Get me? All right. Here's your proof that a dirty pack rat done the robbin', jist like I said." He kicked the raveled bit of cornstalk toward Big Un.

"You mean——" began MacGregor.

"I mean that a pack rat left this corn stalk in place o' Elephant's roll. If you know anything about pack rats, you'll know that they never take anything without leavin' something. They pack in some old leaves or wood or something of the kind, an' then they pack off something they take a notion to. Ain't I right? This here rat seemed to take a notion to Elephant's roll, an' left this cornstalk in place of it."

Big Un's troubled eyes sought MacGregor. "What d'you think about it, Mac?"

MacGregor scratched his chin. "Maybe it was a rat," he admitted. "These pack rats are just like Slinnit says. I've seen them steal corn and leave sticks of

wood and the like in place of it. Maybe it was a rat."

Slinnit grinned. "Ain't I right? Now, lemme tell you something: Next time you guys get so previous 'bout callin' me a thief, I may get kind o' nasty. See?"

Big Un sank to his cot and ran blunt fingers through his thick heavy tumbles of dark hair. "My God, Mac," he said dully, "I can't go to see Kitty now."

"Sure ye can, boy. It wouldn't be treating her right to stay away. She's expecting you."

Big Un shook his head doggedly. "I can't face her now, Mac. I can't do it. Not today. I've got to look for that money."

"I'll tell ye what," said old MacGregor, wisely refraining from further persuasion, "I'll walk down to Locke's and get Kitty on the telephone and tell her that ye can't come today. Meantime you write her a letter and have it ready to go out in the morning. How's that?"

"I wish you would, Mac."

"It's tough luck, old Elephant," comforted Slinnit; "losin' your money like that. You'll have to get a trap an' ketch that measly rat. But you ought to've knowed better than to leave your roll under the piller that way."

Big Un laced up his big boots and gave no answer.

"Poor old Elephant! Lost his roll, an' now I reckon he'll lose his girl, too. I don't s'pose there'll be any claim up in Utah with a little house built for two now. That's the way with these women. When you lose your money they ain't got no more use for you. One served me that way once. Didn't I tell you a man was a fool to——"

"You talk too much!" broke in MacGregor bluntly.

After breakfast MacGregor started out for Locke's ranch, accompanied by Slinnit, who remarked baldly that he wasn't very particular about spending the morning in Big Un's mournful presence.

Left alone, Big Un grimly set about seeking the missing money, which, to his simple heart, meant untold happiness. First, he took a shining ax from the wall and pried up a wide, rough plank of flooring near the rat hole. He stooped and peered, but could see nothing except unsatisfying blackness. He pried up another plank, and yet another. The light from a dripping candle revealed a treacherous undermining of rat holes in the brown sand below. Eagerly he stumbled outside and secured MacGregor's shovel. Standing awkwardly between the floor-stripped joists he set to work at a furious rate, yet with intent care, probing, digging, examining, hopeful that the next shovelful would bring to light his treasure. But he found nothing except a few molded corncocks, a piece of old glove, bits of tattered paper.

A terrified squeal from another corner led him on. He pried up more flooring, dug up more and more, straining, sweating, despairing. At last he flung the shovel out the door and replaced the planks. His search had occupied almost the entire morning, and while he was pounding the last nail, MacGregor and Slinnit returned.

"What luck, lad?" asked MacGregor anxiously.

Big Un shook his head. "It's gone for good, Mac. It's gone." Then hopefully: "What did Kitty say?"

"She——" began Slinnit, grinning.

"I'll do the talking!" broke in MacGregor hotly. "Of course, Kitty was mighty disappointed that you couldn't come," he told Big Un frankly. "But

you just write her a letter, and this thing will turn out all right yet."

After dinner Big Un got out his square bottle of black ink and a scratchy pen. Then with his arms sprawled on the unplanned top of the heavy table he began his letter to Kitty Elmore. He found the writing tortuous—what to say, how to explain things so that she would understand. And as he labored there through the long afternoon, Slinnit's raw voice, boastful of sprees and fights and lewdness, came from the sunny outside, with an occasional grunt from MacGregor, to distract him.

It was evening when he sealed the letter as his best effort and walked slowly down the trail to the mail box, a half-mile away.

MacGregor's alarm clock rattled and clanged early, the next morning; so early that Slinnit spat petulant curses at it.

Big Un was first dressed, and looked up to find MacGregor, in gray undershirt and drawers, pawing around among the bed covers, a blue sock dangling in one hand.

"What you lookin' for, Mac?"

"Sock." And MacGregor squatted down to search the floor.

Suddenly he snatched up something and examined it closely. "By Gunneys!" he ejaculated. "That dommed rat! Come here, Big Un."

"What you got?"

"A piece of one of your ten-dollar bills, or I'm a liar! That dommed rat's brought it back and left it, and——"

"Stole your sock, I'll bet a horse!" broke in Slinnit, scrambling forward and taking the smeary piece of bill from MacGregor.

"Hold on!" Big Un's hairy hand took possession of the bill and shoved it down

into his pocket. "That's mine. And I'll be keepin' it."

"That dommed rat!" MacGregor murmured as he limped to his tool box for another sock.

"Oh, you wise guys!" sneered Slinnit. "Mebbe you want to accuse me o' takin' the sock. How about it? . . . Oh, you wise guys! You wise guys!" And to the deep discomfiture of the others he continued his taunts throughout the morning.

After breakfast they shouldered their axes and crossed the clearing to begin work.

MacGregor's cabin, a rough, grayish-yellow structure of up-and-down siding, squatted froglike in the center of the sandy clearing. Ringed about was a density of redolent cedars, scrub for the most part, yet some with enough height and maturity to dwarf the few stunted pinions which strove for the clear, sunny air. Here MacGregor and Big Un had worked throughout the summer, as numerous, intermittent piles of naked logs testified.

At MacGregor's directions Big Un took the saw and set to work felling a forty-foot cedar, while the Scotchman swung his ax on a scrub pinion.

Big Un worked moodily, Slinnit wirily. And at the end of the day, when Slinnit demanded a judgment, MacGregor admitted that his work was satisfactory.

"But, see here, my man. I'll have ye understand that I'm boss. Ye'll kindly keep suggestions to yourself. And another thing: I'm going to Carleton tomorrow to hire some haulers, and I may be gone a day or two. While I'm gone, Big Un's boss here. Ye'll do exactly what he tells ye to do, or ye can get out."

"Elephant? Him boss?" guffawed Slinnit. "You're kidding me, Mac! Why, Elephant couldn't boss a baby!" But

when he saw the grimness of MacGregor's eyes and heard an uneasy stirring back in the shadows, he quieted hastily.

After MacGregor's departure the next morning, Slinnit's industriousness waned sadly; not so his volubility.

"Don't look like your girl's goin' to stick to you, does it?" he would say with a nasty laugh, while he leaned on his ax and watched Big Un working busily. "They tell me that them claims up in Utah is purty nice, too. . . . But I told you, Elephant, that women couldn't be depended on. No, siree! One flimmed me once. . . . But mebbe it's just as well that you lost your money, after all. She'd 'a' got tired o' you, you bein' so homely, an' awkward, an' ignorant an' all. . . . Yep, you're jist as well off."

And when he would see the hot gleam shoot to Big Un's eyes he would desist from his taunts for a moment. Then he would begin again.

"What's the use o' workin' our heads off? Hey? Let's take a rest while the old man's gone. That sun's too hot for any human bein' to work in. Say, let's make a day of it, wha'd'yuh say?"

"Get to work." Big Un would answer shortly.

"Get to work? Ain't I workin'? Come on, Big Fellow! Let's call it a day. Let's go fishin'. What say? I saw some good-looking holes in the river when I was comin' up from Carleton. Let's call it a day."

"You'll get paid for the work you do."

"Well, ain't I doin' my share? Sure I am. But let's go fishin'. . . . Well, after we get done workin', then. Have some fish fer supper. Do you good to go fishin' an' quit mopin' 'round like you are. Wha'd'yuh say?"

"Mebbe."

But Slinnit wheedled him into acquiescence. And after 5 o'clock they quit

work, hastily rigged out some poles, and set out for the river, two miles away.

"Looks like a good place fer quicksand," remarked Slinnit as he scooted to a sitting posture on a brown-sanded bank and cast his line into the wide, green river.

"Don't know." Big Un threw out his line.

He fished absently, and caught nothing. Unmolested, a game fly sparred at his nose.

Slinnit was likewise unsuccessful. And after a half hour of rebaiting, shifts, vicious jerks and torrential cursing, he left his pole and came up behind Big Un.

"Watch your line!" he yelled suddenly. "Hey, Elephant! Can't you see you got a bite! Watch your line! There's a big old catfish right on top o' your bait. Watch him, now!"

Big Un watched. Thud! Something solid struck him in the back, knocked him forward, forward. He struggled for balance. The sandy bank buckled, crumbled, and the two men splashed headlong into the roily water.

Coming up with a bob, Big Un quickly regained his wits, and with powerful strokes soon reached shore. On the bank, after rubbing the smarting water from his eyes, he saw Slinnit swimming feebly toward him.

The man's face colored to deep red, which drained swiftly to ashen white. He ran back to the water's edge and seized Slinnit as the latter clambered up the loose bank.

"You dog!" he muttered furiously, his viselike hand forcing a protruding tongue from the other's terrified lips. "You dirty dog!" And snatching up the smaller man much as a giant would lift a sack of meal, he buried him far out into the river.

Slinnit came up strangling. The broad

sun flamingly accentuated the entreaty of his greenish-yellow eyes.

"Help!" he choked weakly. "Help!" My——"

Big Un passed a trembling hand across his hot brow. Then he plunged in and brought out Slinnit as the latter was sinking for the third time.

"Y-y-you big devil!" snarled Slinnit a half-hour later, shivering nervously beside the fire in the cabin, to which Big Un had half carried him. "I tell you I didn't push you in! The bank gave way an' knocked me ag'in you—s'elp me God, it did! . . . Put some more wood on the fire! Can't you see I'm-freezin'?"

Big Un chucked another stick of cedar into the pot-bellied stove and continued to strip off his wet clothes.

"I'm sick—I'm freezin'!" groaned Slinnit, his teeth rattling like castanets. "You tried to drown me! But I'll get you! I'll . . . I'm freezin', I tell you!"

He stumbled to a corner of the cabin, out of the range of smeary light, and fumbled about in a crevice of the wall. When he came careening back to the stove he had a pint whisky bottle clatched in his hand.

He pressed the bottle to his shaking lips and took a heavy draught. Then he shrilled again: "You tried to drown me! But I'll get you yet! If I ketch pneumonia——"

"You'd better take your clothes off and get to bed," interrupted Big Un bluntly.

The latter had changed his soaked clothes for dry ones. He shoved another stick of wood into the hot stove, glanced narrowly at Slinnit, and strode down the sinuous trail through the settling dusk to the mail box, where he found a letter from Kitty Elmore. Seated on the mel-low sand he read the letter, burning his

tense fingers with the matches that lighted his reading.

An hour later he returned to the cabin and found Slinnit sprawled on a cot with his clinging clothes unremoved, snoring raucously.

It was 10 o'clock when Slinnit awoke from his drunken sleep the next morning. Near the open door, in a stream of sunlight, sat Big Un, complacently smoking a grimy corncob pipe.

"Oh, I'm sick!" groaned Slinnit, pressing a quivering hand to his hot head. "My head—it's killin' me! . . . An' it's all your fault, you big devil!" he burst out furiously. "You tried to drown me. . . . Oh, my head!"

He staggered past the Big Un to a shadowed corner, turned his back, and with a furtive glance behind he hastily shoved a hand into the faded yellow shirt.

"I've been robbed!" he yelled. "I've been robbed!"

Big Un blew out a cool ring of white smoke. "Well, well," he said at last. "How much?"

"Seven — no — eight hundred dollars! Listen here, did——"

"Where'd you have it?"

"Inside my undershirt!" Slinnit spat the words. Then he crouched wirily and advanced on Big Un, his teeth and eyes glistening in the sunlight. "You stole my money! Come across, now, or I'll kill you, you——"

Big Un got up. "Maybe the rat done it," he suggested mildly. "No? Well, I thought maybe one had crawled inside your undershirt and run away with your—eight hundred, did you say?"

"Cut the stallin'!" grunted Slinnit. "An' gimme back my money!"

"Don't you think the rat done it? You told me yourself that them pack rats were pretty wise. I believe a rat done it. . . .

Say, what's that there on the floor? Something the rat left, I bet you."

Slinnit snatched up a folded bit of paper from the floor near the end of the cot, smoothed it out and with quick snatches from his yellowish-green eyes began to read. Meantime Big Un crossed to the other side of the room and took his huge-bladed razor from its box.

Suddenly Slinnit wadded up the paper and flung it to the floor. "It's a lie! I don't know her! I never was in Spargo. It's a lie, I tell you! * * * Gimme my money!"

Big Un was busily stropping his razor. Slish-slap! Slish-slap! Slish-slap! Slish-slap!

"Gimme my money."

Slish-slap! Slish-slap! Slish-slap!

"I've discovered where the rat is that stole my money," said Big Un. (Slish-slap! Slish-slap!) "I've got him spotted. I'm goin' to catch him pretty soon." Slish-slap! Slish-slap!"

Slinnit was staring at the shining razor. He crept forward a step, and his right arm stole into his shirt and toward his left armpit.

"I'm goin' to catch him," repeated Big Un. (Slish-slap! Slap! Slap!) "And then——" he whacked the strap furiously and his words came in a roaring rush—"and then I'm goin' to cut his other ear off!"

He whirled with the razor poised—but Slinnit was gone.

Big Un sighed deeply. Then he placed the razor in its box and laid it on the shelf.

A step outside caused him to whirl again. Old MacGregor stood in the doorway, a pack of provisions slung over his broad shoulder.

"Hello, boy," he cried cheerily. Then in a puzzled tone: "Say, what's the matter with this man Slinnit? I met him

tearing down the trail just now. He yelled something about ye robbing him. And he had a mad look in his eyes."

Big Un stooped slightly and picked up the wadded paper Slinnit had flung to the floor. He smoothed it out tenderly and handed it to MacGregor.

The latter read:

My Dear Big Man: I was so disappointed when Mr. MacGregor called me up yesterday and said you couldn't come. And when I got your letter this evening, telling me about the rat stealing your money, I was just heartsick. We had counted so on the money, and it meant so much to us. . . . Really, dear, if you were here tonight I believe I would tell you that we have waited long enough, and that, money or no money, it isn't right to waste any more years of happiness. I have saved a little from my work—enough for us to get a little start on our claim. And I just know that we can get along all right. So, if you want me, come.

You spoke in your letter about a man named Slinnit, who is now working with you. Is he a little man with only one ear? If he is, you must watch him. He ran away from Spargo last week owing Mrs. Harkness a month's board bill. And (perhaps I shouldn't tell you this, but I will) he tried to persuade me to run

away with him. When I refused he threatened me, and— Oh, I am so afraid of him. You must watch him—please! With love,

KITTY.

"The dommed rat!" exploded MacGregor, waving the letter excitedly. "So that's the reason he was always picking onto you!"

Big Un nodded. "He stole my money the first night he was here, and pinned it to the inside of his undershirt with safety pins. It was him that put that piece of fodder by my bed. The next night he stole your sock and left that piece of bill, so's to throw us off the track. And yesterday he tried to catch me in the quicksand down at the river."

"And ye let him get away without a thrashing?" exclaimed MacGregor incredulously.

Quick terror shot to Big Un's eyes. His hairy hands twitched and creaked monstrously.

"My God, Mac!" he said slowly, staring at the great hands. "If I'd got hold o' him . . ."

Then a contented smile cleared his face. He grabbed up a bucket and strode down to the spring for water.

Presently MacGregor heard a deep, whole-hearted outpouring of song. It was Big Un singing:

"Her eyes are like the violets blue-ue-ue."

THE MOSAIC LAW

By H. F. Jamison

Lady (trying to be a little smart): "Son, have you ever been scrutinized?"

Small Street Urchin: "Not that I knows of, ma'am, but I'm a Jew."



Beneath the Surface

by Carroll John Daly

DONALD leaned on the railing of the pier and gazed into the water. For many nights, during the summer, it had been his habit to tip the watchman and gain the seclusion of this lonely spot long after the gates were locked.

To-night the gateman did not notice him in his round—but no matter he would pay for his solitude when he sought exit in the early morning hours.

He was startled from his reverie by a woman's voice.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "I thought I was alone. The watchman has deceived me."

"Do not blame the watchman," Donald replied. "I was overlooked when the pier closed. You have paid for seclusion while I am a trespasser; permit me to retire." He turned and would have passed her but she restrained him with a gesture.

"No," she shook her head. "The tranquillity of the night is due the possessor. I refuse to claim the courtesy offered my sex. I, too, have a sanctuary where I look at the ocean and dream. I would not relinquish it to the first violator. No: the pier is yours." But she made no movement to retire.

"I did not know that you spent the evenings gazing at the sea." There was a

bitterness in his voice; he felt no harmony in meeting a kindred spirit.

"How could you?" she laughed ironically.

Donald bit his lip and looked again over the moonlit water.

It was some time before the woman broke the silence.

"Come," she said, "we are two ions of life who have been thrown together upon this pier. We gaze into the water and dream. I shall strike a bargain with you. Tell me what you read beneath the surface and I—I shall read my picture for you."

A gruff reply hovered on his lips but he checked it. Why not?

"Very well," he raised his eyes to meet the woman's. "I am willing to exchange pictures," he said.

She nodded but did not speak.

Donald placed his elbows on the broad flat support and intently regarded the rolling billows. When he spoke his voice was so low that the woman drew closer to catch the words.

"I see a man, a young man and a young girl," he began. "The man is myself and lives in a stately house surrounded by every luxury; the girl is poor and works hard all day in the city but—yes, they love

each other." He snapped his jaws in determination and continued. "The boy's father is against the marriage and as the boy has no prospect, no hope, beyond his father's wealth he gives up his love and marries the woman of his family's choice." He remained silent so long that the woman thought he had forgotten her presence. When he again began he spoke rapidly.

"The woman he marries is beautiful, wealthy and accomplished, but above all else, she has pride; a pride bordering on conceit; a pride which the boy can not understand and appreciate; and he, borrowing from the works of romantic fiction confesses his first love—what he calls his true love. His wife's pride, not permitting her to forgive nor to condemn, turns to scorn. So they live together for ten years—but not as man and wife. The wife, too ——" He paused, rubbed his hand across his eyes as though he had been dreaming and remained silent, searching the sea.

"This wife—?" the woman encouraged.

"That is all I see of the past," he answered huskily.

"My picture is similar to yours," the woman began without encouragement." I, too, see a young girl surrounded by wealth and that young girl is myself. She loves a clerk but her people have other views—and she marries, what they call, a social equal. She is proud—proud like the girl you see—and her pride forbids confession. Although her husband hears of her former love he does not speak and she reading the truth in his eyes remains silent. So she is married for many years—but has no husband." She followed the direction of the man's gaze as it rested on the breakers. "Our stories are alike and we learn little from each other," she finished sadly.

When the man again raised his head he was alone.

For sometime he remained unconscious

of the passing of time. When he was again aroused it was by the woman's voice.

"I was very rude to run away but more so, I fear, to have returned," she was saying. "But your picture has interested me. I wonder if that was all you saw beneath the surface."

"No, I have seen more; a great deal more. Even the illusions of the past denied me. I have seen the young girl I loved—or thought I loved. She is married—and dowdy and loud and vulgar." The words seemed to force themselves from his lips and his face was so haggard and pale that the woman involuntarily drew back.

"Take comfort." She recovered from her sudden surprise and spoke softly. "I have known for years that my first love was a thief."

"You—you have known that; how you must have suffered." Donald seemed to have awakened from his stupor; there was a wealth of feeling in his voice.

"No, it wasn't that which made me suffer. My husband knew it directly after our marriage and kept it from me. You see he was good and noble and kind—but he did not love me."

"Did not love you? Did not love." His eyes were bright and burning. "You must have thought him mad."

But the woman had turned and was halfway to the exit.

She was at the gate when the man caught up to her. The gateman watched, with surprise, the two pass through and looking down at his palm was a little hurt.

When they reached the walk the man attempted to speak but she stopped him.

"You needn't say anything," she spoke with difficulty; her breath coming in short

quick sobs. "I read it all in your eyes and I promise you that wife's door will not be closed to you to-night." She touched his hand gently with hers—they were both burning. "Go back and pay the watchman—and hurry," she whispered.

"This is a fifty-dollar bill you've given me by mistake, sir," said the honest gate-man.

"I know, I know," replied an eager boyish voice, "but I haven't time to look for change; my wife is waiting for me."

A CHRISTENING IN SOCIETY

Scene: The Crawford's drawing-room. White flowers everywhere, in honor of the Baby's christening. An improvised altar, banked with lilies. On the altar, an enormous cut glass bowl—(a punch bowl!)—full of holy water.

Dramatis Personae.

Harold Crawford: Medium height; dark; clean-shaven.

Mrs. Crawford: Small; dark; in a beautiful pale rose tea gown; a cluster of orchids and lilies of the valley on her breast.

Corinne: A French nurse; tall; of generous proportions; in a plain black silk dress, a big white apron, and a cap that proclaims her from Normandy; she holds in her arms

Harold Crawford, Jr.: Two months old; very pink; a faint gilding of hair on his little round head; he wears a daintily embroidered frock, and lies on a lace-trimmed pillow.

A Bishop: In his robes of office.

Captain Fairfax Chichester: Tall; fair; blue eyes; a long blond moustache waxed and twirled into formidable points.

Twenty or more guests; smartly dressed.

(The christening is just over! Captain Chichester crosses the rooms, opens a box that is on a table, takes out a gold cup, recrosses room.)

Chaptain Chichester (handing cup to Corinne): To my God-son, with my best wishes!

Corinne (waving cup before the baby's blue eyes): Ah, que c'est beau! Mais what do you say, my little wolf? You say "Thank you!" do you not, my cabbage! My little one!

Mrs. Crawford (to Captain Chichester): It is beautiful, Captain Chichester! (They shake hands, and for an instant gaze profoundly into each other's eyes.) The guests crowd around, congratulating Mr. and Mrs. Crawford, going into ecstasies over the baby, etc.

A woman (to Mrs. Crawford): Oh what a darling he is, Stella! And such a great big boy! And the image of his father! Anyone would know whose child he was, just to look at him!

Mrs. Crawford (in a low, startled voice, to Captain Chichester): Oh, I hope not!—*Elizabeth Harmon.*

He spoke again softly.



Her Last Fling

by Elizabeth Palmer Milbank

MRS. ELEANOR GRANT, proprietress of a highly respectable boarding-house, sat at the head of the longest dining table, to all appearances calm and placidly attentive to the gustatory interests of her guests. One more damning evidence of the deceitfulness of appearances, for under the exterior calm seethed a whirlpool of discontent. Eleanor Grant's soul was having its periodical revolt against her surroundings and circumstances.

She was hating the hideous dining-room with its wooden mantel, worn Brussels carpet, cheap curtains and array of tables; mentally exterminating the flotsam of humanity around her. Viciously she wished that Grandma Stone would choke on the coffee she was audibly gulping; that Mr. Brooks would fall into his soup and drown before he could growl at diminutive dusky Docie for sticking her thumb in it; that Mrs. Noall's tongue would petrify before she could retail another choice piece of gossip; that the dry goods clerk and the telephone girl would marry and have a life job of listening to each other. Not that she was naturally vicious; far from it. But that day had marked her thirty-eighth birthday without remembrance, her twentieth wedding anniversary without celebration. Memory was rampant, nerves were raw.

The cream curdled in the coffee; a lone unswatted fly buzzed around the glass of chili sauce; the electric fan stirred into waves the heated air surcharged with vegetable soup. Oh, she was sick and tired of it all, of boarding-house and boarders.

The doorbell jangled. Docie came in with:

"A telegram for you, Mrs. Grant."

Her spirits rose. Someone had remembered. Perhaps Aunt Kate—. There was an instant lull, and under fire of thirty-six inquisitive eyes she read:

New York, N. Y., June 20, 1920.
To Mrs. Eleanor Grant, Brookville, Mo.: Your aunt, Mrs. Katharine Ashby, died June 17. Bequeathed you fifteen hundred dollars. Am sending you draft for same.

A. L. MORGAN, Solicitor.

The yellow slip fluttered from trembling fingers, landed perilously near Mrs. Livingston's soup, and that lady was not slow to grasp the opportunity and the paper.

"Guess there's nothing very private about a telegram," she laughed.

"Not in this house," growled Mr. Brooks.

"And we're all one big family here," with which explanation Mrs. Noall looked over Mrs. Livingston's shoulder.

To escape inevitable questions, Mrs. Grant left the room. Mentally fortified, she appeared later in the parlor, and bridge, ragtime at the piano, chatter and knitting all ceased, ready for the inquisition.

"You never spoke of your Aunt Katharine," began Mrs. Noall, "we were just wondering——" Mrs. Grant broke in harshly.

"I've no doubt. My Aunt Kate lives in New York—lived in New York," with a little break in her voice. "I lived with her until I married. I have not seen her since. She was a very rich woman. She has left me fifteen hundred dollars. I do not know yet what I shall do with such a munificent sum. Is there anything else you were wondering?"

Her tormenters maintained an offended silence for three minutes, then Mrs. Livingston spoke deprecatingly:

"We were speaking before you came in of how fortunate it is that your inheritance would entirely cover the mortgage on your home." Mr. Brooks held the mortgage and boarded out the interest, and the fact was public property.

"Yes," with rising inflection.

"It will be a great relief to you when it is paid, won't it?" continued the catechiser.

"When it is paid, yes," was the non-committal reply.

"Debt is a great burden," whined Grandma Stone. "It never seemed to me real honest to be in debt when you had the money to pay."

"No, not even for board," Mrs. Grant was goaded into saying, and more than one had the grace to blush. "Good night, all."

In the hall she, almost collided with little Mr. Brooks.

"Ah, Mrs. Grant, if you wish now to pay off your mortgage——"

"I have made no plans, Mr. Brooks, regarding my inheritance. It is too weighty a matter to be settled hastily." A hysterical laugh floated back to him from the second floor and he shook his head gravely. Women were queer.

Mrs. Grant wearily dragged one foot after the other up the second flight of stairs. She closed the door of the back hall-room she reserved for herself. It shut out what breeze there was, but it also shut out the cackle from below and the tin-panny tum-tum of the piano. Undressing in the dark, she threw herself on the bed, free at last to think of her "inheritance." Again she laughed hysterically. An inheritance of fifteen hundred dollars out of her aunt's many thousands.

She had schooled herself to forget the past, but now memory roamed at will, took her back to her aunt's luxurious home. The aunt who had taken her when a baby and petted and spoiled her until it was no wonder their wills clashed when, from among many suitors, she had chosen the one whom her aunt declared "was the most worthless in the bunch": chosen and married him despite her aunt's vow, faithfully kept, that she would never see her or speak to her again.

She and her husband had moved to a small town in Missouri and handsome Ben Grant had lived just long enough to prove the soundness of her aunt's judgment. On the advice of friends, Eleanor spent Ben's small life insurance for this house in a "respectable neighborhood" and "took boarders." She might as well, she reflected bitterly, have put on a harness and entered a treadmill, for the story wound up like a horrid fairy tale, "and she kept boarders ever after." Long, dreary years of keeping boarders, years differing one from another only as the price of food and coal went up or down, mostly up; or as one was thrust into

prominence by being the year that the furnace gave out or the year that the pipes froze and burst. She and the house had gone down together until both were shabby genteel.

The repression of years broke restraint, the tears that trickled slowly down her cheeks gathered force until she was shaken with fierce, choking sobs. Grief possessed her—grief for the aunt who had loved her and whom she had loved; grief for the husband, who, with all his shortcomings, had been good to her; grief for the baby who had opened his big blue eyes on the world, given one little moan, and closed them forever; grief for herself, alone, old at 38, a boarding-house keeper forever and ever.

Aunt Kate was dead. To the end of time she would "never see her or speak to her again." But she had left her fifteen hundred dollars. Just what she had paid for the furs she had given her the last Christmas they were together; just what she gave her the summer before that, when she went with the girls to Colorado, her last vacation.

Now, fifteen hundred dollars would just cover the mortgage. Of course, she would pay the mortgage. What else could she do? What else? Suddenly she sat up in bed and began to laugh. Softly at first, then shrilly and loud, till, unmindful of the heat, she gathered a pillow to her face that the drummer the other side of the wall might not hear.

As suddenly quiet, she got up and lit the gas jet, the flickering gas jet that was cheaper than electricity. Leaning close to the mirror she took a merciless survey of the reflected face, noted the graying hair, the roughness of the once velvety skin, the little fine wrinkles which mapped the years of dull routine. Impersonally she took stock of the assets—good features, teeth still perfect, dark eyes

which time had not robbed of their magnetism.

She went back to bed, pondered and planned until dawn peeped in her one east window and jeered: "Good morning; a fine warm day, isn't it?" Irrelevantly she responded, speaking aloud, as though that would clinch the matter: "I'll do it! I'll do it if it takes every last cent of my inheritance and the mortgage is foreclosed."

A week later she calmly announced: "I am leaving town this afternoon for a month. Mary—the cook—and Docie will take charge of things. I trust everything will be satisfactory," but her tone intimated: "If it isn't, run and jump into the creek."

The concensus of opinion was that she had gone to New York to try and break her aunt's will. None dare to ask, even Mrs. Noall ventured only: "Where shall we send your mail?"

"You need not send it. Bills and advertisements will keep," was the reply.

In the Union station at Kansas City she looked around her helplessly, bewildered. Things could not have seemed more strange to Rip Van Winkle. Jostled by the hurrying crowd, uncertain which way to turn, for a moment she contemplated taking the next train home, a desolate place, but a refuge. Even as she stood irresolute, a Red Cap swept her and her shabby suitcase into a taxi and the driver was asking: "Where to, ma'am?"

"The best hotel." The die was cast.

As she entered the lobby of the Barre-more, turned her grip over to the waiting bellboy and was shown to the desk, time turned backward. It was with the old royal air of command that she took the best room and ordered her dinner sent there.

It took Spartan courage to wear her

turned suit and "last year's birdnest," as she designated her hat, on a shopping tour next morning, and it was with some timidity she asked at the first counter: "Where is the suit department?" To use the young lady's own expression, she "gave her the once over" and directed: "Basement. Elevator to the right," and continued her conversation with the glove clerk, only to be interrupted in a few moments.

"Will you tell me where your suit department is? I am not looking for a rummage sale." Something in Eleanor Grant's mien brought her to "attention!" Respectfully she made reply:

"Third floor front. Elevator to the left."

"Something about nineteen-fifty or twenty-five dollars?" queried the saleswoman.

"Show me your best suits." Then in a burst of confidence inspired by the kindly face of the woman: "Listen a moment. I am going to Colorado for a month's outing. I have money to buy what I want, but the truth of the matter is I do not know what to buy. I have been out of the social world so long that I am way behind the times. Will you help me?"

She had made the right appeal. The saleswoman became delightfully human and there followed an orgy of buying. She was passed from one department to another and a personal interest taken by each one from milliner to shoe man. The intoxication of again buying beautiful things made the days one prolonged spree.

Advised by her new friend, the suit lady, she went to a beauty doctor, who diagnosed, and gave the brief verdict:

"Twenty years neglect. I must have a week."

It was a week of long hours devoted to bleaching and "touching up," but view-

ing the finished product, Eleanor Grant forgot mortgage and the years to come and smiled brightly at the picture in the full-length mirror.

"Now, girlie, look like that and you'll catch a millionaire."

With burning cheeks she turned quickly from the glass. An unrecognized, subconscious thought had been dragged forth in all its offensive nakedness. The tactful masseur hastily retracted:

"Don't you mind my jokes, girlie, I was only fooling. But you sure do look grand."

An unusually pretty, well-dressed woman in a Pullman; a strong-faced, well-groomed man opposite; both tickets reading Colorado Springs; an exchange of courtesies; an everyday meeting of a man and woman both past heyday of youth—but romance is not a matter of age, but of propinquity.

And thus began the romance of John Hayden and Eleanor Grant. They took the same taxi at the Colorado Springs station, and as she knew not the name of a single hotel, Mrs. Grant nodded when the driver interrogated: "Moreland?"

Placed at the same table in the dining-room, sight-seeing in the same "rubber-neck wagon," strangers to all others, acquaintance ripened quickly into friendship, and from the general excursion parties they soon branched off into twosing. Together they took "the high drive" out from Manitou; together they climbed the hills, saw the sunrise from one peak, the sunset from another.

Their evenings were spent in the Palm Garden of the Moreland; sometimes in the silence of understanding, sometimes in conversation which touched all other subjects but seldom strayed into personalities. No confidence was asked or offered. Both seemed content to live in the

present, the past was a sealed book, the leaves of the future were turned over only from day to day. To Eleanor each day was a golden dream, carefree, sunny hours to be made the most of. Resolutely she refused to think of the stagnation from which she had temporarily emerged, or of the long, weary years which might be ahead of her.

Might be—— Time and again there came to her the words of the masseur in Kansas City: "Look like that, girlie, and you will catch a millionaire," and though she despised herself for it, each recurrence was received more tolerantly. And she not only "looked like that," but better. Stimulated by almost forgotten luxury, by rest and mountain air, she was the charming, magnetic woman her girlhood promised, and unstinted admiration shone in the deep-set gray eyes of this man who was her constant companion, and who, if not a millionaire, was unmistakably a person of wealth.

She didn't love John Hayden. She had outlived romance; sentiment could not survive twenty years of keeping boarders; but as his wife—— The chain of thought was broken by a schoolgirl blush, and she ended, "Shame on you, Eleanor Grant! Would you sell soul and body for ease and comfort? Have you come to that?"

Such was the indefinite status of her mind when one morning at breakfast, instead of planning a day together, Mr. Hayden announced his intention of joining an auto party of men going to Denver.

A morning of long dragging hours startled her with its revelation of her dependence on a comparative stranger for pleasure. After a lonely lunch she joined the knitting contingency in the sun parlor. Sitting there idly discussing suf-

frage, a commotion in the office attracted her attention and a woman came hurrying out to them.

"Oh, there's been a dreadful accident. The men who went to Denver in the car." A gasp from Eleanor. "The car skidded and went over Rock Cliff. It was caught by a huge old pine part of the way down, but one man was killed and all were hurt."

"Who—who was killed?" Eleanor managed to ask. The women turned at the agony in her voice and looked curiously at the white face, but she didn't care. She must know.

"The message didn't give any names," answered their informant, "but they are bringing them home on the 6:45 train."

Tortuous hours in her room followed before the bellboy, bribed to bring the news, reported:

"Mr. Hayden's all right, ma'am, 'ceptin' a sprained wrist." She had not mentioned Mr. Hayden's name, but she could have kissed the bellboy's freckled, grinning face. Closing the door she laughed and cried and prayed and loved. Yes, loved John Hayden. He was all the world to her. Beyond that — coherent thought failed.

Later John Hayden found her in the garden, a mist of white among the palms,

"A penny for your thoughts, Goddess," he challenged.

There was no gay retort, no answering smile. Silently she made room for him on the bench beside her. What would he say if he knew the thought for which he was offering a penny, if he knew that in less than a week she would have spent the last dollar she had and would be going back to drudgery and debt; knew that the money she had spent so freely should have gone to pay the mortgage on the place she called home. What would he say if he knew she had intended—— No,

no, money could not buy her thoughts nor wild horses drag them from her. She would go away in a few days and his memory of her should be untarnished.

He spoke again softly.

"I've been looking for you everywhere, dear."

An orchestral concert was in progress on the plaza and but for them the palm garden was deserted. Gently he covered with his the hand that lay on the back of the seat.

"There is something I want to tell you, tho perhaps I have no right to. I have a confession to make." The hand in his warm clasp trembled. "Why, you are cold, dear?"

She grasped at this excuse. She wasn't ready to hear what he had to tell her, she must think, must decide. Out here under the stars, the breath of the pines on the night air, with the music throbbing in soft cadences, with her hand in his, she could neither deny her love for this man or tell him the truth. All she wanted was the shelter of his arms, to have him hold her close forever and a day. In the morning she would be braver, in the sunshine the future would not look so drearily bleak.

"I am cold; these Colorado nights are so chilly. I must go in."

"Let me get you a wrap. Stay just a moment," he pleaded in vain. Eleanor's only wish was to escape. Not until they reached a side entrance to the hotel did she trust herself to speak of the accident.

"I'm so thankful you were spared," her voice barely audible.

"Did you care? Did you really care, dear?" he whispered eagerly. Unable to answer she held out her hand which he took in both his. "Tomorrow then, you will listen tomorrow?" he insisted and nodding assent, she fled.

Thru the night the woman writhed in bitterness of spirit. Ideals, dormant thru years of monotony, rose in new strength, condemned as prostitution her willingness to give herself because she was tired—tired of everything and wanted to throw the burden on broader shoulders. The love that had filled her starved heart with an unknown joy, reproached her with the lie she had meant to live. Degraded and unworthy she must refuse the happiness that would be proffered her tomorrow. For she rejected the suggestion of ignominious flight. She had given her promise to listen "tomorrow."

The morrow found her looking her 38 years, but only the waiter was at the breakfast table to observe it. She lingered as long as the self-respect left her permitted, then went out to the garden. After an hour's solitude she went to her room and called the bellboy.

"Have you seen Mr. Hayden this morning?"

"Yes'm, he went away on the early morning train."

"Went away." Her voice had a hollow tone.

"Yes'm and—" the boy was looking at the toe of his shoe which was circling around a figure in the rug.

"And what?" sharply asked Eleanor. "Can't you talk?"

"A lady went with him."

"Who was the lady?" All pride was gone now.

"His wife, I guess. She came on the midnight flyer and registered Mrs. J. L. Hayden."

"All right—that's all."

So this was the end of her vacation. She laughed harshly as she remembered her high resolves, her sleepless night. She had thought herself unworthy of this man who, married, had made her an

entertaining factor of his own vacation. Truly, he had had "a confession to make." He had cared nothing for her, had left without a word of explanation or farewell, had gone with his wife back to his world of wealth and luxury, and she would go back to the humdrum of her highly respectable boarding-house.

Yet, after all, she was not sorry she had come; tho she went back and scraped and saved and paid interest on the mortgage to the end of her days, she would never worry. She had again been a part of life, and tho she would never see John Hayden again, she would take back memories that would brighten even a boarding-house.

She ordered a taxi for the 6 o'clock train for Kansas City, then, sobbing softly, she packed dresses and memories, hats and day dreams in one confused jumble.

Two days later she gave her last dollar to the taxi driver and entered her highly respectable boarding-house. Two hours after that she sat at the head of the longest dining-table. Gossip was being retailed; the same fly or his progeny buzzed hungrily around the glass of chili sauce; they were serving vegetable soup for dinner. She might have thought she had dreamed that Aunt Kate was dead, that she had squandered her last dollar on one final holiday but for that queer mixture of exaltation, anger and longing that possessed her.

As the days passed the exaltation lost its glow, the anger burned itself out, and the longing became a heartache hidden under the old calm, placid, exterior. Her small tragedy was as a stone thrown in deep waters, with not even a ripple on the surface to show that the depths had been plumbed.

Late one gray November afternoon

Mrs. Eleanor Grant sat alone in the parlor vainly trying to make bills and bank book balance. She was interrupted by the opening of the door and Docie's announcement:

"Gen'man to see you, Mrs. Grant."

The "gen'man" advanced. "Does Mr. Ben Underwood live— Does—Mr.— Does——" His voice faltered, he repeated his words thickly as in his sleep. Then came an exultant cry: "Mrs. Grant! Eleanor!"

Her brave attempt to say: "I think you must be mistaken," was a failure. She cowered in her chair, her face in her hands. He did not come near, but stood looking at her, a great joy shining in his eyes, repeating:

"Oh, Eleanor, I am so glad I have found you. I am so glad I have found you." She did not reflect his happiness.

"Go away, please; please go away and let me alone," she begged.

"Indeed, I will not go away after the hunt I have had for you. I love you, Eleanor."

"You've no right to say that," she blazed. "You went off with your wife. You went off without even telling me good-by." Evidently the crimes were of equal magnitude.

"With my wife! For Heaven's sake, what do you mean? Oh," as enlightenment dawned on him, "I went off with Mrs. James Hayden, my cousin's wife; one errand in Denver was to meet her on business, the other errand I have here in my vest pocket. Hearing of the accident, Mrs. Hayden was anxious about me and came to the Springs that night. I went back with her the next morning. Being a romantic old fool, instead of leaving a note for you at the office, I slipped it under your door and it slipped under the rug as well. Now, won't you tell me that you love me?"

For answer she sprang up and let the window shade snap to the top. The sun, escaping for a moment from scudding snow clouds, shone with a merciless glare into the dingy parlor, touched the gray in the brown hair of the woman who stood bravely in its path, brought out each wrinkle around the dark eyes filled with tears, and kissed a mouth still red and tremulously sweet. John Hayden started toward her with the same intention, but she motioned him back.

"Look at me," she commanded. "Look at my home and you will know that I was a living lie. I——," her heroics failed her and she ended brokenly, "Oh, please go way. I don't want to marry you. I don't want to marry a rich man. I do not deserve your love."

"A rich man!" he exclaimed bewildered, "who is talking about a rich man? I do not want you to marry a rich man. I want you to marry me, more than I ever wanted anything in all my forty-five years. Eleanor, tell me that you love me," he pleaded.

"But you were staying at the Moreland—you did have money." She ignored all but his first statement.

"So were you. So did you," he retorted. "I was staying there because I sold more insurance last year than any other man in the Acme Company and was given a two weeks' vacation, all expenses paid. The president insisted on my going to the finest place I could

find and living like a lord. As to why you were there throwing money to the birds and the bellboys, I care not a rap.

"Now that the insurmountable obstacle of wealth is removed," and he laughed boyishly, "couldn't you care for me a little?" Then holding out his arms and speaking with infinite tenderness:

"Love me, dear; marry me. I ask nothing else."

Even as he spoke he bent to where she again huddled in her chair and drew her up to him.

"But," she sobbed against his breast. "I am old and gray and when you saw me I was a fraud," and in spite of his protests, she poured out her pitiful little story. He only held her closer.

"It wasn't the color of your hair I loved, dear heart, but the sweet womanly self that no masseur was clever enough to hide. The really-truly you of today is more alluring than the grand lady of whom I stood just a little bit in awe. Now, won't you promise me to take just one steady boarder for the rest of your life? We can go back to the Moreland for our honeymoon if you wish."

"No, no," she protested vigorously. "I never want to see the Moreland again. I only want a real home and peace and—and"—very softly, "and you. I have had my last fling," and it was rather a quivery, rainbow sort of smile that he kissed away.

THE WEEK AT GLENWOOD

Carlton was arguing with his fiancee.

"I still assert that all men are not narrow, and believers in a double standard of morality," he insisted.

Long and searchingly she gazed into his eyes, brown eyes that away in their depths seemed to laugh and make fun of her ideas.

The amusement in them seemed to irritate the girl.

"No—?" she said slowly. "No—? Why, even the news in the papers every day shows I am right. The woman who has gone wrong

—even if only once—is the woman who is cast aside. It seems to have been that way—always. Man, in his bigotry, in his compliance, the self-apotheosis of his sex, can do no wrong—in his own mind. But in that same mind what a status has the woman who—?”

“Norma, my dear, you are wrong, very wrong!” he interrupted. “Right there is where the modern man, the broad-minded man, takes a different viewpoint than the man of the past. If he has fallen from the strictest paths himself, he is big enough to recognize that the woman has the same right—and not to look at her askance, if she should have exercised that right.”

“And you are going to marry me—” she murmured reflectively. “Would you—if you knew—everything?”

“But I know you—I am certain that you have never done wrong!”

“There you are!” she triumphantly declared. “Believing in that certainty you wish to marry me, but if—”

“But—but—but—” he floundered weakly.

“I knew it!” she exclaimed. “And just to prove my argument irrefutably I am going to tell you something in my life about which you have never dreamed.

“Do you remember last summer before I became engaged to you? I was supposed to be at the beach for a week with Mrs. Gladding. Well, I wasn't. We left on the same train, but Mrs. Gladding went south to meet her husband. I got off the train at Glenwood, and met—a man. Yes, it was all pre-arranged. He was a married man, and I thought myself madly in love with him—infatuated! We lived together at the Glenwood Inn for a week. At the time I thought it a week of bliss, but now—. Knowing this, do you still wish to make me your wife?”

“Norma you are lying to me. You are just trying to test me!”

“I am not! Do you think I would lie like that—lay bare my very soul—if it were not true?”

There was an enigmatical look in his eyes as he gazed into hers. Her eyes were blue, limpid, non-committal, and still assertive in spite of that.

“My, but blue eyes can tell things—or not tell them, just as the owner chooses,” was his irrelevant comment.

“Do you still wish to marry me?” her tone was cold.

There was a smile on his face as he took her into his arms. “My dear,” he said, “I would marry you even though you had spent a year at Glenwood—with your married man.”

Her face grew radiant.

“Oh, Carlton,” she sighed happily. “I am wrong. There is one big man who is big, and just, and generous, and who understands.”

“Yes,” he replied, “I do understand!”

* * * * *

Carlton was on his way home a little later.

“The little devil!” he exclaimed, grinning to himself. “The little devil! Trying to put one over on me. Gee, I wonder what she'll do if she ever finds out that I was at Glenwood Inn the whole last week in June—and that the little grass-widow she detests so cordially was there with me, too.”—*Frederick J. Jackson.*

IN THE INTEREST of SCIENCE



BY HALWARD HAWKINS

HARGRAVE had called me up, I suppose, because he knew that I was in the theatrical booking business. But it was with a good deal of reluctance that I acceded to the rather peculiar request he made over the telephone. As an original investigator in psychology, Hargrave had made a record since I knew him in college; but there had been rumors—disquieting rumors of weird experiments upon human subjects carried on behind the locked doors of his sanitarium—and they bothered me.

His request was this: That I should send him the most prepossessing young woman I could locate—one who, in addition to having more than her share of good looks, was a “girl of experience, who had been around a bit and knew a thing or two about men.”

So far, so good. Maymie Delancey, late of the “Nine Naughty Nudes” chorus, expressed a willingness to take a chance and I engaged her on the spot. But the more I thought about those disquieting rumors, the more I regretted having assumed the responsibility. The upshot was that I eased my conscience by deciding to be at the sanitarium in person, on the possibility that she might require a protector.

A Japanese student admitted me to Hargrave’s presence. The doctor rose eagerly to greet me—a man of striking figure, with bushy hair and dark beard.

But his face fell when he saw that I was alone.

“Glad to see you, Clarke. Where’s the young lady?”

“She promised to be here at three.” I answered. “Hope you don’t mind my butting in.”

“Not at all!” He motioned me to a chair and sat down, but almost immediately bobbed up, evidently laboring under such excitement that he could hardly contain himself. “Clarke,” he went on hoarsely, “I’m going to let you witness the climax of my latest and most striking experiment. You’ll be the first outsider to know anything about it. The whole thing—” he glanced furtively toward the door—“is the outcome of the most providential circumstances. Perhaps you recall the subway fire of three months ago?”

I did. One or two lives had been lost and it had created quite a stir. “Wasn’t Bishop Cosgrove’s son one of the victims who was overcome by gas fumes?” I ventured.

“Earl Cosgrove—and one other,” assented Hargrave, “both of whom were brought here for treatment. I don’t suppose you ever heard of Mugsy Mulvaney?”

“No,” I acknowledged.

“Partly by accident, I obtained his full record. Moral degenerate, white slaver, parasite—the police of a half dozen cities have catalogued him. Note these photo-

graphs of the two men. Observe the ascetic, almost saintly cast of young Cosgrove's countenance. He is soon to be ordained a minister. Observe also the equally clear marks that betoken depravity, on the face of Mugsy Mulvaney."

I studied the contrasting faces with interest.

"Fortunately," went on Hargrave, "neither young man was greatly injured by the experience. I telegraphed Earl's father, then in Florida, that the boy was under my care and I deemed it essential for him to have three months of rest and absolute seclusion. I also induced Mugsy to remain my guest for the same period, on threat of turning him over to the police. I thus had both men—"

"Entirely in your power!" I gasped involuntarily.

"Absolutely."

"And what did you propose to do with them?"

Briefly, Hargrave's explanation was this: He intended to use the two young men to prove a favorite theory of his, to the effect that if any person was subject persistently to any particular class of suggestions—contrary influences being eliminated—in time he would inevitably act in accordance with the suggestions. For example, if they had to do with stealing, in the long run the subject of the experiment would be unable to resist the impulse to steal.

For the past three months Mugsy Mulvaney had been confined, with no distractions other than the daily visits of the Japanese attendant, in a room containing carefully chosen pictures of saints and other religious subjects, bookshelves filled with books of devotion, lives of the saints, hymnals, prayer books, books on the higher life, and the like.

Young Cosgrove's room was, on the contrary, filled with suggestions of the

most licentious character. Typical volumes in his library were the Dacameron of Boccaccio and the raciest of French novels. Voluptuous and suggestive pictures graced the walls.

"If my expectations are realized," concluded Hargrave, "the result of the con-



stant unhampered stream of suggestions upon each subject will prove to be a complete revolution in their characters." He gazed at me expectantly, as if anticipating praise of his diabolical ingenuity."

"Horrible!" I gasped. "And what has the girl to do with this?" I spoke hastily, as the doorbell rang.

"In order to bring about a conclusive proof of my theory," explained Hargrave,



"I shall leave her alone for a few moments with each of the young men in turn. Three months ago she would have been as safe with Earl Cosgrove as with a baby, while with Mugsy—"

"That's enough," I interrupted with heat. "You need say no more. Here and now I call the arrangement off."

"Call what off?" inquired Maymie from the doorway.

Hargrave sprang to his feet and stared with all his eyes. No wonder, for Maymie was a ravishing beauty and had dressed for a killing. "Splendid!" he exclaimed under his breath. "I knew I could depend on you, old chap."

"Nothing doing," I answered. "I positively refuse—"

"Say," cut in Maymie, "I guess I've got something to say about this. What's the job and how much is there in it?"

Hargrave explained, rather incoherently, assuring her that we would remain near at hand in case she needed any assistance.

Maymie appeared satisfied. "And all I have to do is tell you what each guy says to me? All right, that's easy. What do I get for it?"

"Anything in reason," assured Hargrave.

"Well—" she studied him speculatively—"I'd say that fifty bucks—" he did not seem startled and her eyes narrowed—"fifty bucks down and another fifty when I get through, would be about right."

Hargrave produced a roll from his safe, counted out a hundred dollars, shoved the bills into her hand and hustled her into the adjoining room. Then he called his Japanese servant and instructed him to bring the young maa from number eight and show him into the room with Maymie.

Without seeming to notice my attitude of disapproval, he explained: "I have called the minister's son first." Then he began pacing the floor and presently we heard the hall door opening into the adjoining room, followed by voices. Har-

grave pressed his ear to the door. After a moment's listening, he turned irritably.

"The fool has brought the wrong man," he announced. "I intended that Mugsy should come last. However, it doesn't matter. Clarke, this is the proudest moment of my life. I feel absolutely confident of success."

"Just the same," I commented dryly, "I'll wait until I hear Miss Delancey's report, before I class Mugsy among the saints."

Presently the door opened and a young man emerged from the inner room. Yes, it was Mugsy Mulvaney—but—as I live, his face was transfigured. Not a sign remained of the sensual, crafty expression that had leered from the protograph. Over his shoulder I caught a glimpse of Maymie Delancey dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief.

Mugsy walked directly up to Hargrave.

"Bo," he said, "I'm leavin' this here joint to start over again on the square. I've learned my lesson, an' I'm through with the old life fer good. But I wanna say, before I go, that you're the dirtiest, low-lived, rottenest gink this side o' the Hudson. I hope you got somebody as remembers you in their prayers, bo, fer you sure need it."

With quiet dignity he turned, took the cap which the Japanese extended to him, and strode from the room.

My astonishment was simply unbounded. "What did he say to you—what did he say?" demanded Hargrave, bubbling with excitement.

"Say, mister—" with a final dab of her handkerchief—"why didn't you tell me I was going up against a imitashun of Billy Sunday? I handn't no sooner looked at him than he asked me didn't I never consider settin' my mind on the higher things of life. He told me how he'd been a regular tough guy—till he had a terrible

object lesson in evil that cured him. As soon as he can, he's goin' to be a missionary. He got to talkin' to me 'bout my mother—and all that—'till honest, I felt like I ought to go off and join a convent. I never did get so worked up before," she sniffed.

At her recital, my respect for the power of suggestion amounted to awe. Mugsy Mulvaney turned evangelist!

"You have performed an inestimable service for science," assured Hargrave. "Now, just step back into the room, while I send for the other man."

While we were waiting, Hargrave suggested that I might like to see the room that had converted Mugsy Mulvaney. I assented with interest. The hall was dark, but one of its many doors stood ajar, and we entered it, just as the Japanese emerged from a room opposite with the divinity student.

"This is the room—" began Hargrave—then he paused and started. Suddenly he rushed across the hall, only to dash back immediately. I could not account for his agitation, though I noticed that all of the pictures were either turned to the wall or covered.

"Something wrong—" murmured Hargrave to himself—"something wrong." He seized a blanket which covered one of the large pictures and drew it aside exposing—I shall not attempt to describe it. Accustomed as I am to all sorts of sights, I turned from that picture with a blush of shame mantling my cheek. Frantically Hargrave seized another picture and turned it from the wall, exposing a figure almost equally voluptuous. Then he caught two great handfuls of hair and emitted a bellow of rage.

"Fool! Freak! Imbecile!" he shrieked.

Sudden comprehension swept over me. "You mean," I gasped, "that your Jap

kept the men confined to the wrong rooms?"

Despite Hargrave's wild expression, the funny side of it struck me. I sank into a chair, chortling with glee. So this was the room that converted Mugsy Mulvaney! No wonder he had gotten enough of it.

Hargrave tottered from the room. I followed slowly, but suddenly quickened my steps as a series of terrified screams came from the end of the hallway.

I was slightly in the lead as we rushed into the room where Maymie was entertaining the bishop's son. The scene was one of disorder. The center table had been overturned and Maymie, her Parisian hat awry, her hair and dress disarranged, was standing in a corner, holding off a frenzied young man by means of a chair.

As we burst in, he drew back and started at us dazedly.

"He insulted me!" the girl cried hysterically. "He tried to force me—"

"What does this mean!" I demanded sternly of young Cosgrove.

The youth hung his head, clinching his fists convulsively. Suddenly he darted a look of venomous hatred at Hargrave.

"Damn him—he—it's all his fault!" he blurted. "He locked me up with nothing but a lot of saints and psalm books. I got so beastly tired of them I could—I could—When I get out of here I'm going to make up for it, you'll see! I'm going to have a real time—a hell of a time! I don't care what becomes of me—you—"

His face twitched convulsively; for a moment he seemed about to collapse. Then he stumbled from the room.

For a moment none of us moved. Then I took Maymie by the arm. "Come," I said, "Let's be going." But at the door I could not resist turning toward Hargrave.

"I hope you are satisfied with the re-

sults," I said bitterly. "Even if they don't prove your contemptible theory, I hope they—"

"Shut up!" roared Hargrave, seizing his head in his hands. "Shut up! And get out of here!"

REJECTED POLITENESS

Many months ago
 At a tiresome evening affair
 I, in a fit of absent-mindedness,
 Preceded Mabel through a doorway
 And forever after
 She did remind me
 Of the slogan
 "Ladies first,"
 Until I became very, very sore
 At so often hearing it.
 Yesterday we wandered out into the country,
 And by a winding roadside
 We spied a great tree full of scarlet cherries.
 "I will gather some for you!"
 I cried to Mabel,
 But she called back, gayly
 "I will climb the tree, also.
 I can, I bet, as well as you!"
 "Very well," I replied, "Ladies first,"
 And wiped my glasses, reflectively,
 For they had become dusty from travel.
 But Mabel only blushed rosily
 Whacking me the while.
 With a sturdy stick she carried,
 Until I did climb upward into the leafy branches.
 And thus did I cure her forever
 Of her teasing reminder!



Prince Solitaire's Revenge

by Ray St. Vrain

I AM a bull dog; I won't name the exact species, for that would be telling too much to the dog haters, of whom there seem to be growing more and more in this man's world. I'll simply say I'm white and big, all white, with sullen eyes that glower at you, enormous jaws that were made to bite, and teeth that were made to chew, crush and crunch.

I was a trick dog in an animal show. I hated to jump around at the crack of the whip. I can tell you. I chewed one trainer's hand into hamburger and made a noble try at the jugular vein of another. But they dared not kill me; I was too valuable. They wouldn't shoot a \$10,000 bull for little things like that, no.

A great society lady, Mrs. Van Altenburgh Pruyn, saw me perform at the show one night and she bought me on the spot for fifteen thousand dollars. She would have paid twenty if they had asked it, the fools.

There were no tears shed by my masters when they told me goodbye. They hated me cordially; I had always known it. I tried to bite them both as a souvenir, but only succeeded in taking a chunk of flesh off the leg of one of them. He was furious and kicked me.

Mrs. Van Altenburgh Pruyn became

white with rage; if I had been her child she couldn't have been more wrathful. She signed to her big Swedish chauffeur to jump on my former master and give him a beating. The Swede did, all right. He mopped up the floor with the trainer, broke his jaw, blackened his eyes, mauled him generally. I would have enjoyed the slaughter a lot more if my new mistress hadn't been hugging and kissing me all the time.

"He shall never kick you again, my beauty," she kept whispering in my ear. "You shall know only love hereafter."

She pressed her cheek against mine and began talking baby talk to me. I was disgusted and wanted to have a better chance to see my old trainer get that good beating. I growled once or twice, but this just made her pet me the more. She squeezed me and poured so much of that baby talk into my ears that my brain almost quit working. "Nice lil' baby," she murmured, "no, they sha'n't hurt him, they sha'n't; his mama will kill 'em, yes!" I growled fiercely. But that just made her more foolish. Why do so many grand ladies love a bull dog's growl? I give it up.

She took me in her limousine to her magnificent home in Fifth Avenue and

showed me to her husband, a tall, dark man who scowled at sight of me.

"He's an ugly brute," he said. "I never could understand what you women see in them."

I eyed him calmly as if to say: "I'm just as good as you even if your particular species did happen to learn the trick of walking on two feet instead of four in the dim and distant past. You hate me, Derrick Van Altenburgh Pruyn, and I hate you. Now we'll see what comes of it."

"Isn't he a darling boy?" cooed my silly mistress, kissing me.

"For heaven's sake, don't!" roared her lord and master. "Kissing a dog! How disgusting! If I see you doing that again—"

"Well, what will you do?" she asked coldly.

They had some words. He paced up and down, she cried like a baby. "This dog is the only pet I've ever had—the only one I've ever wanted!" she spluttered. "And now you act this way—"

There was a lot more of this, then they kissed and made up.

"Now, Derrick," she begged, "pat Prince Solitaire, won't you?"

"Prince who?" snarled Derrick.

"Prince Solitaire. The show people called him Danger. But I changed his name to Prince Solitaire, because he's the king diamond of the canine world. Don't you think the idea a clever one?"

Her husband gave me a reluctant pat on the head. I looked up at him malevolently and growled.

"Oh, you ugly brute!" he muttered.

My mistress affected not to hear him.

"I want you to see him do some of his lovely tricks, Derrick," she said.

She fell on her knees beside me and whispered: "Lil' baby do tricks for

mama, so mama can show papa what smart doggie Prince Solitaire is!"

I sat on my haunches in majestic immobility. I did not even give her the satisfaction of growling. All the while I stared up hatefully, maliciously at "papa" without blinking an eye.

His face flushed slowly. I laughed down in my dog soul, that soul that animal lovers rave about. (They insist we're immortal, you know.) His face kept on flushing.

"Say, Azalia," he said, "that ugly brute of yours fairly hates me, I believe he'd jump at my throat this minute if he had the nerve."

She hugged me. "Oh, Derrick, what nonsense. Prince Solitaire is a nice boy. He just doesn't know you yet, that's all. Won't you pat him, dear? You're not afraid, are you?"

Azalia knew how to work her Derrick, all right. Every man in the world shrinks from being thought afraid of a dog. My new papa hesitated.

"Why, Derrick, you're not really afraid of Prince Solitaire, are you—a great big fellow like you?" persisted my mistress sweetly, insinuatingly.

"Afraid of a dog!" he exclaimed boastfully. "Well, hardly." And he put out his hand and patted me on the head.

Down in my dog soul—oh, yes, I have one—ask the people who write poems to us and call us man's best friend—down in my dog soul I wanted to growl, snarl, chew that weak, clawless hand off; but I wagged my tail slowly.

"Why, Derrick, Prince Solitaire is wagging his tail for you. Just look! Isn't that lovely of him? He's so glad he's found such a nice papa!" And she hugged me until I almost choked.

Papa gazed at me silently. I don't pretend to be a mind reader, but I know he was meditating my murder.

II

People who love us dogs, who have us with them in homes of luxury, bury us in Christian graves, and write books to prove they'll meet us in heaven—these curious specimens of humanity are forever dilating on the dog's love of his master, his loyalty, trustfulness, and so on.

Now I don't speak as a cur but as a bull dog; and let me say that bull dogs don't love their masters or anybody else. Far from it. The annals of dogdom are full of instances of bull dogs attacking their owners without provocation. Despicable curs will bite your legs, hands. We go straight for your throats. We hate you and are forever wanting to kill you. The reason we don't do it oftener is because you give us a good home and good red meat. We are lazy, we certainly don't want to work for a living—and we know a fool when we find one.

My mistress, Mrs. Van Altenburgh Pruyn, almost loved me to death. She had me in her luxurious boudoir often; I had my seat at the table when her husband was away, though I did not eat; she took me motoring and led me, leashed, on stately promenades in the park; she introduced me to all her friends, forced them to pet me, insisted that my growling was sweet music to her ears, and might have made a hopeless fool of me generally had I not been proof against such silliness.

Derrick Van Altenburgh Pruyn and I remained deadly enemies. He made a pretense of never noticing me; but I was always staring malevolently at him. His wife had long since ceased trying to bring us together. It amused me to make him angry. I could almost drive him to desperation by rubbing my face against Azalia, licking her hands, or putting my paws in her lap. I used to do this oc-

asionally just for the pleasure of seeing him suffer. He and his wife had many a bitter argument over me. He wanted to get rid of me and only refrained from having the servants carry me off for fear of the serious effect it undoubtedly would have had on her.

I was becoming rather interested in this intensive warfare. Dogs that live in luxurious New York homes suffer frightfully from ennui; and this play of mutual hatred kept me from getting too bored. At last I entered into it with a real zest. Just for the fun of the thing I wanted to bring about an open rupture between husband and wife. The opportunity presently offered itself. One night in the dimly lighted hall I bit Derrick's leg. He gave me a hard kick—harder than I had expected, his shoe landing with great force on my eye and causing considerable pain. I set up a tremendous howling and yelping, making a fine martyr of myself, which dogs know so well how to do. My mistress came running to my aid, and there was a terrible scene between husband and wife. He showed her his bitten leg, but it made no impression on her. All her sympathy was for me. A veterinary doctor was summoned to attend me, my eye was treated and bandaged, I was put to bed and wept over—and Mrs. Van Altenburgh Pruyn did not speak to Mr. Van Altenburgh Pruyn for three weeks. Thus my object was accomplished with something to spare.

III

In these three weeks my mistress made the acquaintance of a Mr. Persifer Cooke at some social function or other. I heard her telling her maid about him. She described him as a veritable Apollo and seemed greatly struck with him. In due time she had him to dinner and of course I was introduced to him. The minute I saw him I knew that he and my mistress

were madly in love. He was a handsome fellow indeed. I realized with a somewhat premature chuckle of my dog soul that I was the indirect cause of this sprouting case of affinities. Azalia had never forgiven her husband for kicking me so brutally, and now she was preparing to run a sentimental gamut with another.

From the talk at the table—oh, yes, I had my chair as usual, poor Derrick not being present—I gathered that Mr. Persifer Cooke was an actor. From the soup to the first *entree* my stupid mistress refused to talk about anything but me.

"Don't you think Prince Solitaire is perfectly lovely, Persifer, dear?" she asked gushingly.

Persifer seemed to have had experience with dog-loving ladies. "Perfectly lovely indeed," he answered promptly.

"He has such a pedigree—such a marvelous strain!"

"He looks it."

"Don't you think he looks almost human?"

"Really more than human—in comparison with some people I've met."

She was delighted. "Persifer, you're a darling dear. I'm sure Prince Solitaire will love you. He detests Mr. Pruyn—and quite justifiably." She turned to me. "Prince Solitaire, would it be asking too much of you to bow to Mr. Cooke?"

I bowed with grave ceremony, eyeing Mr. Cooke steadfastly. He clapped his white hands and shouted bravo. I bowed again.

My mistress fairly beamed. "Isn't he the very darlingest?" she cried.

"He is indeed," said Persifer.

But he didn't mean it. Behind his smile and the friendly light in his eyes I could see hatred for the whole race of dogs, a hatred that made Derrick Van Alten-

burgh Pruyn's hate seem as love. There are people in this world who would exterminate every dog in existence from the fluffy little Poms to the bulls and great Danes—put them to death by one grand fiat, if they could, and count it the most satisfying act of their lives. Persifer Cooke was one of these natural-born dog-haters.

We dogs hate this breed of humanity quite as cordially as they hate us. Already my hatred for Pruyn seemed a tame thing in comparison with my detestation for this good-looking actor. In anticipation I could already feel the life-and-death battle we should wage.

It began sooner than I had thought. In a few days my mistress, who, as I have said, was madly in love with Cooke, began to pet me much less than formerly. I was glad enough to be spared her kisses and silly baby talk, but the fact that I was losing my hold on her infuriated me. However, I gave no indication that I had noticed any change in her attitude toward me.

One evening I wandered into the dining room where my mistress and Cooke were at dinner alone. I no longer was given a chair at the table. This was but one of the many courtesies that had been withdrawn from me—and all by Cooke's desire, I was quite sure.

He saw me enter the room.

"Here's that cur again!" he cried, scowling.

Azalia just gazed on at his handsome face adoringly. If her husband had applied that hated epithet of cur to me she would have wanted to murder him.

I went up to Cooke and sniffed about his ankles impertinently. Out came his foot suddenly and kicked me full in the mouth. It did not hurt particularly, but I yelped and howled as if I had received my death blow. With great difficulty I

refrained from leaping at his throat. How I hated him! How I wished I could kill him then and there!

"Shut up, you lazy, parasitical cur," he shouted, "or I'll give you another!"

My mistress rose, went to him, and put her arm around his neck.

"Don't be so cross, dearie," she said. "Prince Solitaire is only a poor dog!"

And thus she defended me! What a difference from the way she had stormed at her husband when he kicked me!

"Look here, Azalia," said Cooke aggressively. "I hate all dogs, and this brute I hate particularly. And I tell you this—it's mighty hard for me to love any woman who insists on having a dog hanging round."

She burst into tears. "Oh, Persifer, you're going to ask me to send him away!"

He shrugged. "If you prefer that beast to me, all right. You'll have to choose between us. I'll never come here again unless he goes." He scowled at me. "Take your eyes off of me, you brute!" he cried. "I'd like to fill you full of lead right now."

"Oh! Oh!" wailed Azalia. "Poor Prince Solitaire!"

"Well, what's your decision?" he demanded.

"I'll—I'll send him away—tomorrow," she moaned. "Oh, you must love me a great deal now, Persifer, for this is a tremendous sacrifice you're asking of me."

IV

Only one night more! The next day I was to be sent away. I must work fast.

Now if fate would only help me! For once fate did.

Suddenly Derrick Van Altenburgh Pruyne slipped into the dining-room in his dusty motor clothes and found his wife kissing Cooke. There was a terrific

scene. Pruyne said many bitter things to Azalia. She fainted and had to be carried up to her room. Then Pruyne turned upon Cooke and thrashed him unmercifully, breaking his nose, cutting him up, and leaving him unconscious on the floor. He then staggered to the sideboard, drank half a bottle of Scotch whisky and threw himself upon a chair, shouting to the frightened servants who were peering in at the doorways to go back to the kitchen.

Now was my chance. I had it all worked out in my mind—in my dog soul that maybe you still insist is immortal. I slipped out of the dining-room, trotted out to the kitchen, luckily found the door leading to the basement open, hurried down the steps, nosed around in the tool chest, at last found what I was searching—a sharp-pointed awl—then, taking it in my mouth, trotted upstairs and back into the dining-room, nobody noticing me. The servants were a huddled, terrified group in the kitchen. On the dining-room floor Cooke still lay unconscious. Pruyne, stretched on his chair, had imbibed the rest of the Scotch and soon would be dead drunk.

I deposited the awl under the table.

I waited a few moments—long enough to see Cooke stirring preparatory to his return to consciousness—then I sprang at the drunken Pruyne, who was still stretched on his chair, made straight for his throat and planted my eager teeth in his jugular vein, severing it. Bull dogs have a God-given instinct for jugular veins. . . .

I really loved Derrick Van Altenburgh Pruyne in comparison with my hate of hell for Cooke; but with unblinking eyes I watched him struggle futilely and begin bleeding to death. It was necessary for me to kill him to revenge myself on Cooke.

He bled on; and, stupified by the

whisky, only moaned softly, not loudly enough for the servants to hear.

Meanwhile Cooke was regaining consciousness.

I took the awl from under the table, smeared it with Pruy'n's blood, and dropped it near Cooke. Of course my idea was to have him accused of the murder, and the awl was to be pounced upon by the fool police as the instrument of death. A curious instrument, to be sure—but people are killed by the most fantastic methods these criminal days, are they not? The awl would have made holes in Pruy'n's jugular vein precisely as my teeth had done—and that was enough for me.

Cooke suddenly sat up, his eyes wide open and staring terrified at the horribly bloody figure on the chair.

He sprang to his feet.

Then it was that I got in my clever work.

I ran to the door and began barking at him furiously, frenziedly as though trying to prevent his escaping from the room.

The servants rushed in and found their master dead; overpowered the murderer (!) and telephoned for the police.

"But I didn't do it," protested Cooke.

"As God is my witness I am innocent!"

But there was the bloody awl, which they held up before him triumphantly!

Poor Cooke, he was too agitated to think of me—and my teeth.

My mistress regained consciousness, came downstairs, found her husband foully murdered—and the reaction set in. She turned against Cooke. The servants told her how heroically I had stood my ground to keep the murderer from escaping.

She hugged and kissed me. "And to think," she cried contritely, "I thought of sending you away! Oh, Prince Solitaire, can you ever forgive me?"

The newspapers printed sensational full-page stories of my devotion to my dead master, my unexampled intelligence and heroism; and the dog lovers all over the country had one great, grand inning. "Man's best friend," they chorused on the ancient key, "is the poor downtrodden dog!"

Persifer Cooke is now awaiting execution at Sing Sing.

And I am bored to death again by the love and caresses of my mistress. How it sickens a decent, respectable bull dog to be petted by a woman.

Ugh!

Irate Ncgress (to husband who is chastising the family mule):
"Rastus, you better quit dat hittin' dat mule in de haid wit' dat barrel stave?"

Rastus: "Shet yo' mouf woman else I gives you a little of dis barrel stave."

I. N.: "You ain't never done it yet."

Rastus: "Naw, an' you ain't never jumped out from under me like dis mule done."



Be Sure He Is Green

By William Byron Mowrey

WHEN Carl Lytle stepped up to "Black Tim" and sent him crashing through a show-case with a straight right to the chin after a brief but heated altercation in which "Black Tim" addressed some unwholesome epithets toward his co-yegg, Carl realized even as he landed the blow that he had made an enemy who would have no scruples in avenging the ignominy.

"Black Tim" was thoroughly respected by all the underworld of the East Side. And those who had watched the argument, and seen the swift climax in the dingy shop of a fence, O'Shean, were amazed that the comparative newcomer should quarrel with and flatten out one of the most respected members of their community.

Carl Lytle, in spite of his having blown into the town only a few months before, was also thoroughly alive to the danger he had incurred; and henceforth walked through the paths of his underworld life as warily as a deer walks through a forest where mountain lions may be hiding in the dim branches of the trees.

He knew, and his associates knew, that "Black Tim" was not the man to let former friendship stand in the way of avenging an insult. There were dark

strains on Tim's record—sins against his associates, so that more than once there had been whispers about doing him quietly, among the friends of his former victims.

But "Black Tim" was not without powerful friends out in the Light; and a word from him accompanied by a modest sum had often rescued those in a fair way of being sent across for a long stretch. Besides, he was the acknowledged authority on difficult, unique safes, and a bold strategist in planning the big daylight scoops that usually pay so well. In a word, he was more valuable to the underworld community than were those whom he had disposed of, and he was permitted to remain. The only question in the minds of those who saw the fight was—What form will his vengeance take?

Carl had been unusually successful in the few months he had been in the Big City. In the first place, he had remarkable energy which his companions, who had spent their lives in smoke-shops and dingy streets, lacked. He could do three jobs while others were content to do one; and was, in the general opinion, exceedingly alert and clever in covering up. Therefore, he was confident that if Black Tim should try to frame anything up on

him, he could smell the danger and veer off. But he did not dismiss lightly the furtive warning of those friends who did not want to see him become a victim of Tim's anger.

Tim had nursed his mauled jaw a week before venturing into the underworld public again. Carl met him twice, each time in a crowded room, and returned Tim's cool nod with a "Howdy." A casual observer might have seen nothing amiss between the two; but the underworld is never a casual observer, and it knew that the nod and the greeting were no sign of renewed friendliness. It knew that the straight right to the chin would be repaid a hundredfold some way or other.

Still, the weeks slipped by, a season came and went; and the underworld, busied more than usual in its activities of the mellow autumn, seemed to have forgotten the incident completely. By no outward token did the principals of the quarrel give evidence of the lurking flame. Carl became more and more convinced that Tim would offer him no personal violence; but would try, rather, to frame up a deal that would send him across for a long spell.

Twice since the fight with Tim, Carl had been successful on big scoops—jobs that wise old leaders had declared impossible or too dangerous. His daring gunplay, which smacked of the West in its lightning quickness and terrible exactitude, had brought him through each time with more dough than the average resident of the underworld made on small jobs in ten years. His sole companion was a pale, slender lad to whom no one would ever think of entrusting some critical job connected with big, dangerous work. But Carl had always found him to be an excellent smeller of rich possibilities, and a steady helper in planning and executing. The underworld first

scoffed at, then watched attentively, and at last applauded Carl's choice of the Kid as a companion.

II

The Kid, nosing about for a piece of work large enough to interest Carl, had made an interesting find. Townsend Boother, lately retired from a small town chain-garage business, had come to the Big City to spend his declining years and part of his lop-sided fortune. With the foolish abandon of those who have spent most of their lives lassoing shekels that they do not have enough time left to spend, he had taken to jewelry as a fad and sunk several tidy fortunes in diamonds and other stones. Most of these he kept in a small safe in his library office.

All this the Kid found out by assiduously courting the pretty maid of the household, and by amazing the butler, fresh from Stringtown, with the wonders of the Big Town. The Kid had thoroughly surveyed the entire household, had learned the family habits, and one evening when the old folks were gone, had even spent an entire hour in the library smoking with the butler and scrutinizing the safe to his heart's content.

Carl listened attentively to the Kid as he related the story of his find; and after ascertaining casually from jewelers that Townsend Boother had purchased the stones the Kid described, he resolved to attempt the job. Together, they began planning, mapping out to the minutest detail every phase of their work.

This was one of the factors accounting for Carl's phenomenal success. He combined a reckless, inspirational bravery with the most painstaking labor over trifling details. He was known one time to have spent hours in a crowded building furtively applying a colorless solution to a window ledge that he would have to

clasp that night, that there might be no tell-tale fingerprints left behind. With a patience fostered only by lonely hours under wide eastern skies, he planned with exactitude, preparing for the hour when he should strike, clean up his mark, and vanish without leaving a clew.

Hitherto he had worked in such strict secrecy that the underworld itself had not had a hint of his intentions until he had made his scoop and was back among them. But now it was fairly well distributed that Carl and the Kid were planning to relieve the old garage millionaire of his superfluous diamonds.

If the underworld was even more amazed at learning the very night and the hour when the job was to be done, it said nothing about its amazement. It is etiquette in the white light community to glance casually at a neighbor's business, but say nothing. Words have a habit of repeating themselves—of creeping even under the door of the Bull Captain's inner sanctum and bringing a squad of blue-coats to the scene of the intended scoop. There was nothing said, therefore, when Carl publicly accused the Kid of giving the deal away, of talking too much; and threatened to ditch him unless he learned to keep his face shut.

Four days before the zero night, the details were all arranged. It was to be on Wednesday night, which the maid had off to spend with her folks out on the Island. The Kid was to get the butler uproariously drunk earlier in the evening. On one of his previous visits the Kid had made a wax impression of the basement key and the rear door key, either entrance securing easy ingress into the house.

Everything pointed to a successful evening; so that it was exceedingly unfortunate that three days before the evening set, the Kid should fall down a dark stairway and break his arm. In his condition

it was out of the question for him to be on the job that evening. Carl even refused his pleading that he at least be allowed to get the butler drunk as planned.

When the news of the Kid's mishap became known, several offered to take his place and carry out the haul for a very small portion of the proceeds. To these offers Carl turned a deaf ear. The job was not so difficult but that he could handle it alone; and he wanted no new man on the job to mess things or leave tracks.

III

The evening came. The Kid, chagrined to tears that he could not have a hand in the work, cleared out for a gambling joint over on the Island, to drown his griefs in the cup or with the whirring fascination of the wheel.

Near midnight, Carl parked his car two blocks away from the Boother home, walked for half an hour rapidly up and down the nearby streets to locate the regular-beat cops; and then slipping over an iron fence at the rear of the house, crept softly down a dark grape arbor to the basement door. He smiled as he turned the knob and **entered without unlocking the door**. A moment later he stood in the dark basement, looking ahead of him at a dull red glow which indicated a furnace banked for the night.

From the Kid's description of the house and his diagram, he knew just where he should find the butler sleeping noisily, and in what room the old folks would be. In absolute silence he went upstairs, strode across to a door, and listened. He could hear the butler snoring. When he emerged from the room three minutes later, the terrified butler was lying on his bed bound and gagged.

At the door of the old folk's room, Carl listened long and patiently. They were sleeping quietly. Their room was at the

opposite side of the house from the library. After a moment's hesitation and reflection, he left them alone, crept down the hall, and across to the library.

A small flashlight revealed the safe in an alcove, as the Kid had said. Across the room was a large divan with a space between it and the walls. A small shaded lamp sat on the library table. Carl lit the lamp, walked up to the safe, swung open its doors without working the combination, smiled to himself again, turned to the library table . . . and waited.

It was not over a quarter of an hour that he sat thus motionless, listening intently. A car or two raced by . . . suburbanites returning home from a late show. An "L" scowled as it turned a sharp corner a few blocks away. A parrot somewhere in the house pecked at the bars of its cage.

Out in the hall a cautious footstep was faintly audible. Only the best of ears could have picked up the slender sound; but Carl heard it. He got up, crossed to the safe, and began examining the contents, just as "Black Tim" stepped into the room and leveled a revolver at him.

"Sit down, Lytle," he snapped. "Sit down while I remind you of a little affair down in O'Shean's last spring."

"Aw, come out of it, Tim. I was only fooling. What's wrong with you to come here and try to queer my deal?" He sat down in the chair Tim indicated.

"I advise you to sit quiet or this gun might get reckless." Tim rested the gun on the arm of his chair. "You're a greenhorn at this business, pard, a tenderfoot like I'd be out where you came from. And when you get sassy, and poke a guy like me in the jaw, you can expect just what tenderfeet get out there."

Black Tim took out his watch and laid it on the table. "It's one, now," he went on. "At one forty-five the Steadwell sta-

tion will get a phone about this affair. They'll be here at two to give you a free ride down town. And after that they'll see to it that you have three square ones a day for a little twenty years or so. That phone will tell them who it was pulled that Minyon Bank deal last spring."

Tim lit a cigarette. Leaning back in his chair he took a few puffs and went on. "You poor bump, you sure was easy meat—giving yourself and your deal away like that. Any darned fool would have known the Kid would talk. He told Bowder every last detail about this job. Any bloke would have knowed better than to walk into this trap when you knowed that I was after you."

"Well, what are you going to do with me?"

"Do with you? Listen, greenie, and I'll tell you. You've got a lot of boodle snugged away from your fool's lucky scoops. Pretty close to fifty thousand, ain't it?"

"About that," Carl drawled.

"Well, it's worth just about that much for me to let you walk out of here before the cops come; and then you clear out for the sagebrush, pronto. Or else—"

"Oh, yes, or else. . ."

"Or else when the cops get here they'll find you roped up; and over you go for a nice little stretch."

"Then I understand it's a case of me going up the river or giving you fifty thousand for that right to the chin. Why, Tim, that's more than a champion gets, and you ain't no champion to speak of."

"Don't get funny, greenie."

"Then it's one of the two for me?"

"Just about, I reckon."

"That's it . . . just about, but not quite." Carl rose up, and Tim watching him intently did likewise. He respected the westerner's lightning gunplay and whipped up his arm to cover Carl, who

stood smiling at him. A movement over by the divan attracted his attention. The Kid stood there, pale and steady as usual, squinting over the sights at Black Tim.

Carl stepped up to Tim. "I'll relieve you of that gun," he said blandly. "You city guys handle it so awkward it gives a fellow a pain to watch you."

Carl twirled the captured gun gracefully on his finger as the Kid stepped over the divan and came up close. Tim looked at him wonderingly.

"Where's that broken arm?"

Both the Kid and Carl laughed softly. "Talking about greenhorns, you can try out for the grand prize in that line yourself. The idea of the Kid falling down a dark cellar and breaking his arm—after all the dark stairs he gone up and down in a hurry! And talking too much and me bawling him out! Didn't you smell something queer? And me tackling this job alone, when I knowed you was trying to frame up something so I would be sent over for a stretch! You poor simp!

"I knowed I'd have to let you knife yourself sometime, so we just naturally picked this little, quiet place to do it in. It's so nice. I knowed you was too big a coward to get back at me in the open. How you did bite!"

Tim bristled defiantly as he realized he was caught. "That's all dandy talk, but that phone will give you away."

"Oh, yes, the Kid heard Bowder hinting about his part to a bunch down at Greeg's. We knowed all about it. Glad you tipped off the station to these little tricks I pulled. They won't get some other fellow for them now. The Kid and I are pulling out of here and going to the open country. Ranch, farm, and

everything for us. This hiding game gets monotonous. We're off it for keeps after tonight."

"You've a fat chance to clear out of this section with all that boodle on you," Tim rejoined.

"Uh hum, we thought about that-too. Did you notice I took a little vacation a couple of weeks ago? I took the boodle out there where we are going to locate. What time is it, Kid," he broke off.

"One thirty-five."

"Time we're leaving then. Have you got the stuff?"

The Kid rubbed his inner coat pocket and grinned. "Got here at eleven and had it fifteen minutes later. Soft."

The two backed to the door. At the threshold, Carl turned to the astonished Tim who could scarcely understand the situation.

"In five minutes from now, we'll be gone. In exactly five minutes from now, you come down. That will give you time to get away before your cops get here. I suppose I ought to rope you up for them as you was going to do me, but you're too easy.

"Now just a word of friendly confidential. . . clear out of here. The cops are looking for you. Don't go to Greeg's tonight; they're watching it. When I knowed what Bowder was to tell on me, I took the same liberty with your personal history. You've got to clear out; and when you come up for air, you'd better go clean. They'll be looking for you for the next three years.

"And just another word of advice. The next time you want to put something over on a greenhorn, be sure he is green."



The Handmirror Something to Read at Your Leisure

THE FATHER AND THE GOOD FOR NOTHIN'

Henry W. Mahan, Jr.

THE morning was cold. The ground was bitten hard with frost. An electric car stood still in a gray mist alongside the fog-blanketed hill. Fifty feet behind the car was the grade crossing, and ten feet ahead in the road a Locomobile limousine was turned turtle and demolished. A man, a woman, and a child lay unconscious, apparently bleeding and rent with untold agony.

A Roamer sedan was flying up to the crossing and made as if to stop beside the wreck.

Grafton Enderly, broker and club man, stuck his head out of a back window, surveyed the situation rapidly, and ordered his chauffeur:

"Shoot on, Brooke—want no sensational stuff in ours."

The broker was warm—the seat was soft—the car was riding easily—all was well and the wallet full. God save the King of Brokers!

On sped the four-wheeled luxury across the bridge and through the tunnel, snorting a bunch of old men and office boys into the gutter, and smashed its way down Broadway and up to the Guarantee Building.

The porter opened the car door. Old man Enderly and his dissipated body lunged forth from the car, growled a disdainful "H'lo" at the faithful servant, and shuffled his rheumatic legs to the elevator.

In four minutes he was in his velour-carpeted office, sitting in a leather-padded chair, smoking a Cremo cigar, and scanning the headlines of the morning paper.

He threw his head back to let off an abundance of smoke, and as he did so his eyes lit on his son's picture. It had been standing there on his desk for many moons, and the sight of it always occasioned a burst of unnecessary wrath—especially when the office was filled with attentive customers. The old man stood up, bit his tobacco-stained lips, clenched his fists, and gasped:

"You good for nuthin'—why the devil don't you wake up and be like your father?"

As he uttered the last words he heard the door open and suddenly shut. He turned, but saw no one.

He sat down, none the better for the physiological demonstration. The phone was ringing.

"Yes,—it's Enderly, all right—Grafton Enderly—what's that you say? My partner injured, dying—where—Receiving Hosp—" and he

dropped the receiver and stood erect, straightaway making for the office door, grabbing the hat from the rack.

He turned and reached for the button to tell the porter to call his car. He was just wealthy enough to exist by those small maneuvers dropped the receiver and stood erect, straightaway making for the window and looked into the street, shot his eye up and down quickly, and it lighted on the Receiving Hospital entrance. A stretcher was in the process of being taken from the ambulance outside. He resolved to hurry—he would walk—but he hesitated and waited for the car to arrive, for walking would save gas—he must ride. He slumped out to the elevator with the assistance of a mahogany cane that had a head like a brass cuspidor, and he managed to inform the operator of his rush, unsuited to rheumatic conditions.

He was now in the sedan. He was shouting fakingly loud:

"Shoot—Receiving Hospital—Brooke—my partner's dying."

"Aw' right, sir! Bad news, sir!"

"Bad nuthin'—damn good—if I can get these releases signed before he passes out." And the old man wiggled a bunch of suspicious documents which he clutched like a poppy bouquet.

The car slid up to the curb alongside the ambulance. The stretcher was in the attendants' hands and on its way to the entrance.

Enderly pushed his way through the bystanders and edged up to the line of march anyway but decently. He gasped for breath down his Cremono throat, and a gulp of wheezy explanation issued forth:

"Wait," and he flashed up the ugly papers as though they might have been some invisible life-saver. "Wait—now stop," and he snarled at the attendants.

The cover on the body flew up—his son looked at him—smiled and howled with amusement.

"What the——"

"That'll be all now," shouted the camera man, and as the crowd broke he stepped up to old man Enderly—"Well done, old boy, here's your dollar—come again."

The old man was ready to swear his loudest, but the lack of wind and excess of stimulants took command.

"All over, father; you can leave now. I just saw you hurry over the crossing as we took the first reel. I dropped up to the office to ask why you couldn't help a dying man, and got there in time for the discourse about my waking up. Gee whiz! I'm wide awake now!"

The broker pocketed his proceeds, shoved his hands deep in his pockets and snorted:

"You damn fool!"

Up the street the poor broker puffed in his Roamer and down street shot the rich actor in his torpedo flivver.

A DIFFERENT SORT OF "TRIANGLE"

TO BEGIN with, Jess and I were not married. Neither of us had ever considered such a course necessary.

I had left home, when a mere boy, and had led a wandering life for nearly eighteen years, finally landing in a small western gold camp, where I was so fortunate as to clean up a few thousand dollars during the next two years.

Then came word of my parents' death—they had died within a week of each other. The letter stated that the home and furnishings, all that my parents had possessed, had been left, share and share alike, to Jess and myself.

"And who is Jess?" I muttered, to myself. "Is it possible that I have a sister that I never before heard of?" I had not heard from my parents during all the long years of my absence, so it was quite possible that I had one living relative, after all.

But upon my arrival at the old home, I soon found that I had no sister. Still, after I had seen Jess, I was not disappointed—rather, I was elated.

Scarcely eighteen years of age, Jess was as likely an appearing specimen of the human race as I had met with on all my travels.

I learned that Jess had been the mainstay and the idol of my father and mother in their old age, so, it was no more than reasonable and just that the property should have been divided between us. Only eighteen, slim and graceful, rather pale and frail looking, perhaps, but undoubtedly handsome—not *lovely*—handsome is the word, far more handsome than most of the female species I had flirted with in my time—yes, everything being considered, I was rather glad that Jess Willis was not my sister.

The inevitable happened. In that neighborhood, no one paid any attention to another's business or love affairs. Besides, the neighbors, of course, supposed that I was Jess' brother. It was no more than natural that we should live there together, though they may have wondered why we discharged the young woman who had acted as housekeeper for the last year.

Jess and I were happy—there's no disputing that fact. We took long trips into the surrounding country, hunted, fished, and managed to enjoy life immensely. The subject of marriage was spoken of many times, but as Jess seemed not to have the least idea of ever wanting to marry, and as I had no desire to do so, we continued to live as we were—in peace and happiness.

Then came my first indiscretion. Miss Short, a young friend of Jess', had been in the habit of calling upon us occasionally, and exchanging books and magazines. I had met the girl frequently, down town, but no private word had ever passed between us. She appeared to be a nice girl—but far from handsome.

One evening, Jess had gone to spend the night with a sick friend, and I had been alone less than ten minutes when Miss Short called, to return a book and—was greatly surprised and disappointed to learn that Jess was not at home.

A storm had been brewing for some time * * * broke suddenly * * * the streets were flooded * * * no human being could have withstood that downpour. * * *

The storm died away near daylight. I had just stepped to the door of the sitting room, where I had spent the night on the lounge, when Jess arrived, bright and early next morning. But mad—my little companion in joys and sorrows was furious. I had never seen the usually quiet, good-natured little Jess in such a beastly temper, before.

At first, I was astounded. Could Jess, by any possible means, have discovered aught of the night's happening at our home? But I soon discarded this thought as altogether improbable.

"What on earth is the matter with you, this morning?" I asked, as I laid my arm around Jess' shoulder in the old familiar way.

Then came the story. It seems that the "sick friend" had not been sick at all—in fact had not been at home—had left word for Jess that she had been suddenly called away. Jess had arrived just as the storm broke in all its fury; and had been unable to get away—had been forced to stay alone all night.

"By the way, Jess," I asked, merely to break the ensuing silence, "who was the friend that was supposed to have been ill?"

Jess hesitated a moment, looked at me rather sheepishly, and snapped: "Nina Shorl."

"What—" I gasped, then stopped in sudden confusion.

"What's the matter with you?" Jess demanded, rather doubtfully.

"Oh—er—that is—nothing. I was just thinking what a shabby trick it was, to do you that way."

Jess said no more of the matter, but started toward our bedroom, with the avowed intention of sleeping a while, as the long night of the storm had been spent in lonesome wakefulness.

Then, a belated thought came to my muddled brain, and I followed. But too late—

Jess stood beside the bed, holding some small object aloft.

"What is this doing here?" Came from between sneering lips.

I said nothing. There was nothing to say. The small object told the story—apparently—without words. It was a handkerchief—a small lace affair—and embroidered on it, in purple silk, in what appeared to my distorted vision, to be letters larger than the handkerchief itself, was the name "Nina."

Was there a scene? Did poor Jess break down and sob, or, after giving me a tongue lashing, begin to "throw things" at me? Did we part "there and then and forever?"

No. None of these things happened. Jess, it is true, was sorely vexed at me for a time, but soon got over it, and today Jess and I are still living happily together. But Miss Shorl did not pay us any more visits. She and Jess never speak to each other, although I still meet her occasionally. But Jess does not seem to mind.

Jess and I never expect to part, unless—one or the other should marry. For, you see, *Jess is my brother.*

—J. R. Henderson.

THE PERFECT MURDER

FOR three years the plan had lain maturing behind the broad forehead and big blue eyes of John Clark. At last he was sure that every detail was perfect. He had only to wait for a rainy night.

Even before that day when Palmer had shamed and taunted him in front of the crowd at the crossroads blacksmith shop, John Clark had read eagerly and brooded with fascination over every murder story which he read in the weekly paper. When the story told how the killer was caught he would shake his head and laugh to himself at the luckless fool.

“Just one little thing he overlooked,” he would say, “it takes brains—brains.”

In nearly every case where a murder mystery was solved Clark noticed that there was some little thing, which foresight might have avoided, that led to the final detection. Always some little clue was left: a foot-print, a blood-stain, or a discharged weapon. It was only necessary, he assured himself, to put one's self in the place of those who would try to find the slayer, and be sure that not even the tiniest clue was left. If a man was smart enough to do this, he would be safe. And was not he, John Clark, a smart man?

Again and again he went over the plan, and was satisfied that it was perfect. In the first place there would be no reason to suspect him—no apparent motive. His quarrel with Frank Palmer was three years old and all but forgotten. His own brother was one of the man's best friends. And the cruel wit that dripped from beneath Palmer's sandy, dirty mustache had made him many enemies who would be suspected before big John Clark.

Then there was the weapon. He pondered that for a long time. Finally, one day as he was walking through the alley back of the blacksmith shop, he came upon a very heavy, rusty wrench. No one saw him pick it up. The idea came to him with the force of inspiration. He would hide the wrench and no one would know that it was in his possession. Then he would leave it, when the time came, where it fell. There would be nothing to show where it came from, and even if it could be traced through the hardware store it could not be traced to him. No clue there.

Next he studied Palmer's habits. The man lived alone. That simplified matters considerably. Then he noticed that the rural mail-carrier did not reach Palmer's place until late, especially in muddy weather. Nearly every evening, after the chores were done, it was Palmer's custom to walk across the field to the mail box on the high-road and get his mail. In the summer time, when work was pressing, it was often nine o'clock or later before supper and the evening work was over and Palmer went to the mail box. He invariably followed a well-worn path across the field, and about two hundred yards from

his house the path passed under a big cottonwood tree. That, John Clark decided, was the place.

Then there was the matter of foot-prints, or a trail that bloodhounds could follow. That was easy. He had only to wait for a rainy night. Any foot-prints which he left in the meadow would be washed out, and the rain would kill the scent so that no dog could follow. On returning home he would wash his boots thoroughly at the pump, as was his custom on muddy nights, so that not even a speck of mud that might be identified as having come from Palmer's field could remain.

Next, there was to be considered a valid excuse for being out in the rain when the night came. With this in mind he sold his two cows, giving as an explanation that the rheumatism in his hands made milking painful, and every evening walked half a mile to a neighbor's house for milk. He established the habit of going for the milk late—about the time Palmer went after his mail. He made a practice of feeding and bedding down his horses and doing other odd jobs about the barn after supper, and going from the barn for the milk. Thus, when the night came, even his wife would not know when he started. He would hurry through his work, start early, and if luck was with him he could do the job and get home as soon as usual.

Again and again he went over every possible contingency. Everything was foreseen. The plan was perfect.

At last there came a dull, sultry afternoon when the clouds settled down lower and lower and a wet drizzle fell, slowly growing into rain. It was pitch dark by half past six. The rain increased. John Clark knew that the time had come.

After supper he went out to the barn, got the wrench, and secured it under his coat. Quickly he attended to the horses, then walked through the rain to a high, roadside bank where he could watch the lights at Palmer's place. Soon Palmer's lantern flashed through the wet darkness, going from the barn to the house. In a few minutes more, John Clark knew, Palmer would come tramping through the mud along the path to the mail box.

He trotted swiftly along the side of the road, through a meadow, and reached the big cottonwood tree. He crouched behind the tree, the wrench in his hand.

He heard the slosh-slosh of boots as someone came along the path. It was so dark that he could barely make out the dim form as it came under the tree. Without moving from his tracks or making a sound John Clark struck, quick and hard.

From the man there came a short, choked sound, between a grunt and a groan. It could not have been heard fifty feet away above the rain pattering on the cottonwood leaves. A minute more and the job was done. Without looking at the face John Clark beat in the skull of the fallen man.

He stood up and threw the old wrench against the limp body. Then he walked across the grass till he came to the road again, and

went on after the milk. His mind was clear, his hand steady. He knew that he would be equal to stopping for a short chat with the neighbor who supplied the milk. The plan had been perfect, and it had worked. Not a single clue was left.

For an hour that night John Clark lay awake, smiling to himself. The rain increased, and when he was satisfied that every trace of his foot-prints would have been washed away he quietly went to sleep.

He slept only a few minutes. All at once he was aware that men were in the door-yard, talking. Someone battered at his door. He trembled for a moment, then mastered himself, went to the window and leaned out.

"What's up?"

A lantern was raised. Beside it John Clark saw the face of Palmer, white above the sandy mustache.

"Murder," said Palmer. "Your brother was over at my place tonight, and some tramp killed him in the meadow on his way home!"

—*Horace C. Towner.*

AT FIVE IN THE MORNING

I GO to the electric chair tomorrow at five. As I look at the little green death door down the corridor I feel no shiver creep up my spine, nor fear clutch at my heart. My fellow prisoners—murderers all—are now bidding me good-bye. Wishing me luck on the morrow. Wishing me luck when the gripping current freezes the life in me and sends my soul out into the great mysterious dark beyond.

And yet I feel no fear because I die tomorrow. For I, of all men, am innocent, and I know that I will do more good dead than alive. Why? Listen, and I shall tell you.

"A tall, sturdy, bronzed-looking man stepped up to a girl on the curb. The girl was pretty, small, and her delicate skin bloodless. She was long-lashed, with big blue eyes and a well-shaped head poised on a graceful throat. I was the man. The girl was Margot.

"'Once more I ask you, Margot,' I said, 'marry me.'

"'No, Jimmy,' she said, laying a soft hand on my arm, 'I cannot. I do not love you.'

"'But you can learn to love me, I know,' I pleaded. 'I can't do without you. What do you say?'

"'No, again, Jimmy dear,' she laughed, half-thoughtfully, 'I could not. But you shall always be a dear friend and a true pal to me.'

"'But I want to be more than that!' I cried. 'Can't you see?'

"'There,' she said, 'come to my apartment tonight at eight and we can talk things over.'

"'Very well,' I answered, and half-credulously turned away to wait for eight o'clock to come around, with a half-hope that I would get an answer not in the negative.

"Another man arrived but a scant half-hour before eight. He

this wretch was observed by a Vice-President of the S. P. P. P. A. (Society for the Protection and Promulgation of Prudism in America) and the very next day the sale of Near Near Beer in the United States was formally prohibited. Coffee and tea vanished in 1926. It is true that as late as 1927 some low coffee dives still existed in New Orleans and San Francisco, but these were zealously ferreted out and were soon, like pepper speak-easies, only a matter of tradition.

1927 was, indeed, the year terrible in American history. It was then that private osculation was made a capital crime, and a strict ban was placed upon jewelry and canary birds. (The keeping of tame goldfish was winked at until 1928.)

To all these indignities and others of lesser moment, the sons of Liberty had tamely submitted, not, however, without some slight dissension. The Gold Fish Rising of 1928 went down in the chronicles of that time as a veritable reign of terror. But it was, in reality, of little significance—a spasmodic outbreak of purely localized riots, similar in nature to the Ear-Ring Brawls of 1923. The American people, for the most part, endured their ill-conditioned lot stoically. To be sure, those who had the means eagerly escaped to Cuba or France, but the less fortunate remainder suffered in stony silence.

The Prudists smugly preened their wings. The many-headed were cowed. The S. P. P. P. A. could work its virtuous will.

Then, like a thunderbolt, came the crash.

Flushed with their victories over the subservient scions of Democracy, the Puritan administration went a step too far. On the fourth day of July, 1930, the Patriarchate at Washington issued a national manifesto (Manifest No. 289,432 of the 3rd vol. of "1930 By-Laws Relative to Wanton Decoration and Ornamentation") peremptorily forbidding the use of rouge, talcum powder and perfume. In less than a month the whole country was in a tumult. Men stared at their womankind with a wild surmise. The poor dears looked so funny—smelled so queer! It was more than flesh and blood could stand. Privations they had borne, unthinkable hardships they had endured, but this, THIS was the last straw—a deliberate affront to the aestheticism of Man.

Suddenly, as at the preconcerted signal, over the entire country HELL broke loose. Fired with the ardor of a holy cause and flaming with the courage of desperation, ten million American husbands sprang to arms. The Great Rouge Rebellion had begun.—R. Jeoe Black, Jr.

PUNISHED

Mr. and Mrs. De Vincent Puyster
To pay for their many sins,
Have met with a deadful accident;
The Society Page says "twins."

and waited for them to come, my eyes glued to the dead thing there on the floor.

"They came." A policeman, a sergeant, and a plainclothes man.

"How did this happen?" asked the sergeant.

"I just killed him," I explained. "Margot here loved him. I love her. I saw red."

"They turned him over to examine him. I sickened. The steel blade had gone clean through the body and was protruding from the chest in a most gruesome manner. A kind of daze came over me which did not leave me until I came here.

"Margot was not at the trial. She had not regained her senses and lay half-conscious in a hospital. Chiefly because I refused either consul or witness. The court, the judge, the jury, the on-lookers; all seemed hazy before me. I loathed the formalities and sat-uncaring throughout the whole proceedings. In fact I did not speak until the judge asked me:

"Has the defense any evidence to present?"

"Then all I said was, 'I killed Kirkman.' Five minutes later the jury brought in a verdict of guilty and I was sentenced to be electrocuted at five in the morning.

Oh, I know I was a fool to do this for a girl who was guilty and who does not love me. But she is so pretty, so effeminate and so weak—what would you do?

So I care nothing about the death that is to come to me in a few short hours. The future life holds no terrors for me; I have played straight with my God, and what more can any man do? I know that soon the keeper will be come down the corridor with my last meal, that at least a feast, given to every lad before he goes. I know that nothing will save me, that *I will die* at five in the morning.

What's that, keeper? You would mock me. I am pardoned! . . . the real murderer has been found? She poisoned herself! God! Margot!

—Theodore Pratt.

THE GREAT ROUGE REBELLION OF 1930

(Being a chapter from the "Annals of the Old United States," author unknown, recently unearthed by R. Plodding Diggs, D. F., Q. E. D., B. V. D, and given to the public for the first time, in this the year of Our Lord 2038.)

It was in 1930 Eleven years before, in 1919, to be exact, the Emfranchised Freeman had tamely submitted to the murder of benevolent old John Barleycorn. In 1922, after a gallant fight, his first cousin, the cigarette, had given its final puff. Near Beer was prohibited in 1924. The sale of Near Near Beer, however, was permitted as late as December, 1925 and, notwithstanding thunderous denunciations from the pulpit, might have been continued indefinitely but for an unlucky mischance.

On Christmas Eve of that year, a working man emerged from a Near Near Beer saloon whistling boisterously. The coarse action of

this wretch was observed by a Vice-President of the S. P. P. P. A. (Society for the Protection and Promulgation of Prudism in America) and the very next day the sale of Near Near Beer in the United States was formally prohibited. Coffee and tea vanished in 1926. It is true that as late as 1927 some low coffee dives still existed in New Orleans and San Francisco, but these were zealously ferreted out and were soon, like pepper speak-easies, only a matter of tradition.

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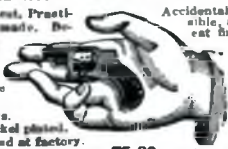
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