

ALL-STAR CHRISTMAS ISSUE

Hearst's International *combined with* Cosmopolitan



January



Beginning

P.G. Wodehouse's
New Novel

THANK YOU, JEEVES!

TEMPLE BAILEY WARWICK DEEPING

GRAND DUCHESS MARIE PEARL BUCK

FAITH BALDWIN RUPERT HUGHES

A complete Short Novel
by REX BEACH

25
CENTS

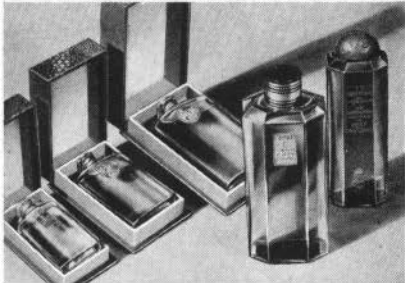
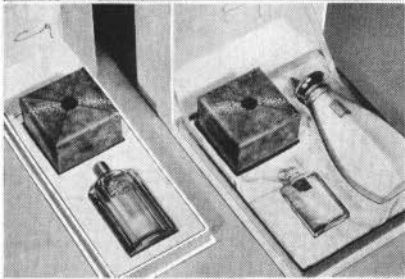
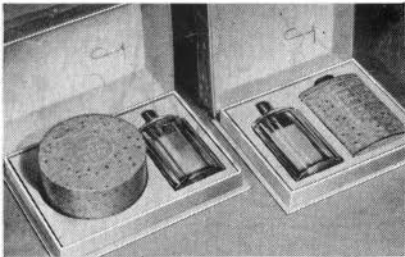
Canadian Price 30 cents
including tax

A Sparkling CHOICE FOR Scintillant FOLK



For those smart bath-rooms—Coty creates new Bath Ensembles in lovely water-lily boxes. Dusting Powder with Toilet Water—\$2.75; Toilet Water with Talc (in dainty metal container)—\$2.25. Cool blue tones, with leaf traceries. (Below)

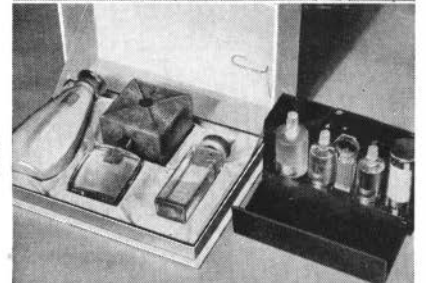
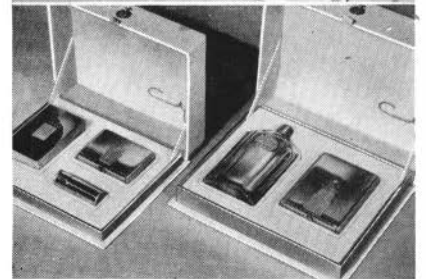
Just created—gold-toned Compacts, handsome new designs, inlaid and flanged with "turquoise" or "vermilion". Double Compact with new half-ounce Perfume—choice of odeurs—\$4.25. Coty Toilet Water, with Single Compact—\$2.



BRIGHT people recognize brightness in their friends. And they send the sort of gifts that they'd be glad themselves to receive—exquisite Perfumes, Compacts, Purse Ensembles, Soaps, Manicure Sets, Toilet Water—signed with the name that means quality. Nothing more lovely has ever been created than Coty's gold-and-ivory-toned gift boxes. In selecting them you honor yourself and friends!

Coty

In her hand, Coty's "Diadème"—5 odeurs—\$10



Perfumes make perfect gifts—especially Coty Perfumes, where even the small sizes look luxurious. One ounce, \$4.15; half-ounce, \$2.20; quarter-ounce, \$1.10. Fernery at Twilight—Coty's newest odeur, \$10; L'Aimant—alamous, sunny, \$14.30. (Above)

New! Fragrant Ensembles—center panel. De luxe box of Coty Face Powder, vermilion-footed; generous new bottle of Toilet Water—\$2.50. The next Set unites de luxe Face Powder with Coty Talc, in frosted glass, and the new half-ounce of Perfume—\$4.85.

Gold-toned Purse Ensemble—new (at center)—Purse Perfume Holder, Single Compact, and Round Lipstick. Amazing value—three piece set—\$3.75. Also, new gold-toned Double Compact with special Toilet Water, capped in color—the set—\$3.

Fragrance carries through the Coty Gift Box above, with frosted bottle of Talc, de luxe box of Face Powder, flacon of Toilet Water and gilt-capped, crystal bottle of Perfume—\$10. Travel Manicure Kit, \$3.50. Other complete Manicure Sets, \$3, \$4, \$5.

What a FOOL She is!



Her FUR COAT COST HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS . . . BUT HER TEETH

LOOK DINGY, HER GUMS ARE TENDER . . . AND SHE HAS "Pink Tooth Brush"!

Do you suppose that this young woman, so smart in her fur coat and debonair hat, would go to a luncheon in dirty old gloves ripped at the seams? Or in shabby shoes a bit down-at-the-heels?

Yet her dingy teeth are just as conspicuous—and just as disappointing!—as dog-eared gloves or shabby shoes could ever be!

She brushes her teeth just as faithfully as you do. But she has yet to learn that if your gums are soft, with a tendency to

bleed, you could brush your teeth seven times a day without restoring their rightful heritage of *sparkle*.

YOUR GUMS, AS WELL AS YOUR TEETH, NEED IPANA

Today's soft, creamy foods, failing to exercise the gums, fail also to keep the gums hard. And flabby gums soon show signs of tenderness. You find "pink" upon your tooth brush.

It's serious—"pink tooth brush." Not only may it dull your teeth, but it may

be the first step toward gingivitis, Vincent's disease, or pyorrhea. The soundest among your teeth may be endangered!

Follow the advice of dental authorities: *massage your gums*. Do this by putting a little extra Ipana on your brush after you have cleaned your teeth, and rubbing it into those inert gums.

Brighter—your teeth? You'll see! Soon you'll be pleasantly surprised in the improvement in your gums, too. They'll be harder, healthier. And you can begin to feel safe from "pink tooth brush."

THE "IPANA TROUBADOURS" ARE BACK! EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING, 9.00, E. S. T. WEAF AND ASSOCIATED N. B. C. STATIONS

IPANA

TOOTH PASTE



BRISTOL-MYERS CO., Dept. H-14
73 West Street, New York, N. Y.

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

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Street.....
City..... State.....

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Rose Marie
**the new sterling
 pattern
 by
 Gorham**



How enthusiastic will be the response to this exquisite new Gorham pattern . . . Rose Marie! For one thing that finds instant joyous acceptance by women is . . . Gorham Sterling.

In the gracefulness of form . . . the chasteness of design . . . this new modern American pattern has the loveliness of a rose . . . with its delicate contour and slender symmetry.

Gorham Sterling is a delight to see, to handle, to possess. You may choose from 27 Gorham Sterling patterns . . . the greatest selection in the world. Yet Gorham costs no more than ordinary sterling.

There are hundreds of articles in Gorham Sterling . . . at prices ranging from \$5 to \$2500. And what a sensible gift . . . for beauty, for service, for satisfaction through the years! Ask your jeweler to show you Gorham Sterling.

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STERLING

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 Providence, Rhode Island - SINCE 1831

AMERICA'S LEADING SILVERSMITHS. MAKERS OF EVERYTHING IN STERLING SILVER, BRONZE & GOLD. SPECIAL COMMISSIONS SOLICITED.

VOL. XCVI NO. 1

Hearst's International
 combined with
Cosmopolitan

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H. P. BURTON, Editor

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8 RULES to avoid COLDS

- No. 1 Avoid close contact with others suffering with colds.
- No. 2 Don't use towels, drinking glasses, or dishes used by cold sufferers.
- No. 3 Avoid long exposure to wet or cold, sudden changes of temperature, and keep out of draughts; all lower resistance.
- No. 4 If feet or clothing get wet, change to dry shoes and stockings and garments as soon as possible.
- No. 5 Exercise regularly, bathe frequently, and sleep 8 hours a night.
- No. 6 Dress adequately—that is, suit your clothing to the weather.
- No. 7 Have infected teeth, tonsils and adenoids removed.
- No. 8 Keep the mouth clean with the twice-a-day gargle with LISTERINE.

—and
after
exposure



GARGLE LISTERINE

Why do so many women catch cold after a shopping tour? . . . Why do children usually develop colds at school? . . . Why do men come from the office with sniffles?

Either they catch cold from others suffering from colds, or subject themselves to exposures which make it easy for colds to develop.

Damp, cold, or wet feet, bad air, going from warm rooms to the cold of the outdoors, standing or sitting in draughts—all are important predisposing causes of colds. All weaken body resistance. Consequently germs in the mouth and throat get the upper hand.

Then of all times, the gargle with Listerine is needed. Sweeping over the surfaces of the teeth, gums, mouth and throat, it kills germs associated with cold and sore throat—keeps them under control.

Time and time again the prompt use of Listerine has warded off trouble.

The moment Listerine enters the mouth its work of cleansing and germ-killing begins.

Millions of bacteria are killed instantly. Within 5 minutes, reductions of as high as 99% have been observed.

And even at the end of 4 hours, reductions in the number of germs of as high as 64% have been noted by oral authorities.

Such lasting effect explains the international preference for Listerine by doctors, nurses, and the public. Don't expect such results from ordinary mouth washes, sold as so-called bargains. Use Listerine only. Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, Mo.



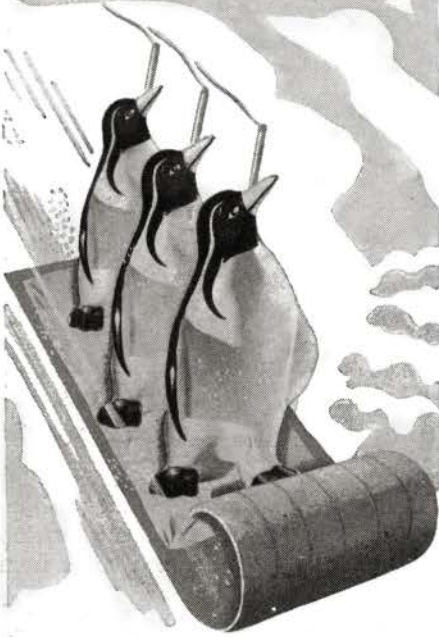
now at new
LOW PRICES!

*The SAFE antiseptic
with the LASTING effect*



KOOL

MILDLY MENTHOLATED
CIGARETTES—CORK-TIPPED



BRIDGE CARDS... FREE

Three good reasons KOOLS will become your favorite cigarette: They're mildly mentholated—your throat *stays* cool no matter how often you light up. They're cork-tipped; won't stick to lips. And each package carries a **FREE** coupon—85 bring a bridge set (2 decks) of initialed Congress Quality U. S. Playing Cards.... other premiums. (Offer good in U.S.A. only).

CELLOPHANE WRAPPED



Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., Louisville, Ky.

OVER THE EDITOR'S SHOULDER

These Authors and
Illustrators Wish
You a
HAPPY 1934

*They'll provide
it Too—in*

COSMOPOLITAN!

AUTHORS

W. Somerset Maugham
Edna Ferber
The Grand Duchess Marie
Franklin P. Adams
Louis Bromfield
Temple Bailey
Joseph Hergesheimer
Kathleen Norris
P. G. Wodehouse
Pearl S. Buck
Fannie Hurst
Rupert Hughes
Warwick Deeping
Faith Baldwin
Rex Beach
Peter B. Kyne
Sophie Kerr
Floyd Gibbons
Clements Ripley
Achmed Abdullah
F. Yeats-Brown
Thyra Samter Winslow
Alexander Woollcott
Damon Runyon
Courtney Ryley Cooper
Zona Gale
Richard Halliburton
Adela Rogers St. Johns
Nicholas Murray Butler
Harry Emerson Fosdick
William Lyon Phelps
O. O. McIntyre
and others as brilliant

ILLUSTRATORS

Dean Cornwell
Charles E. Chambers
James Montgomery Flagg
McClelland Barclay
John La Gatta
W. Emerton Heitland
Herbert Roesé
Mario Cooper
E. M. Jackson
R. F. Schabelitz
Peter Arno
H. R. Ballinger
Marshall Frantz
Mead Schaeffer
Clayton Knight
Harold von Schmidt
Henry Raleigh
W. Smithson Broadhead
and other artists of distinction.

NEXT MONTH

FAITH BALDWIN

Brings you the turbulent excitement of the New Year's Eve celebration in a vivid short novel entitled

Happy New Year!

NEW YEAR'S EVE—a pageant of youth and beauty... girls smiling into unknown eyes... whistles blowing... confetti streaming... S.R.O. signs in theater lobbies... orchestras playing... hotels crowded... champagne cooling in buckets... bars crowded... A Big Night!

Jessica Frost, with nothing to get along on in New York but "her face and her virtue," meets Frank Frazer, a lonely young man, in the New Year crowd. In these few delirious hours they develop a romance that chimes like a bell through the riot of the saturnalia.

Faith Baldwin's novel strikes the note of hope with which you will want to begin the New Year. Don't miss it in February Cosmopolitan.

What YOUTH Thinks

HOW do the young people of the world intend to mend our civilization? In the New Year's Cosmopolitan they give us their views and plans. Beverley Nichols will speak for the youth of England; Louis Bromfield for that of France; Eugene Lyons for Russia; Upton Close for the Orient, and Cornelius Vanderbilt for the United States.

EDITH WHARTON

Among the brilliant short-story contributors to February Cosmopolitan will be the distinguished novelist, Edith Wharton—who tells of the unexpected events that followed the marriage of a New York business man to a refugee of the Russian nobility.

EDDIE GUEST

noted Detroitier, tells why his home town is his favorite city.

February Cosmopolitan
On Sale January 10



Whitman's
CHOCOLATES
for a Merrier Christmas



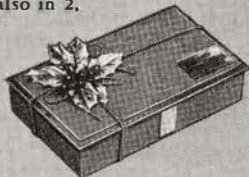
SAMPLER

America's best-known, best-liked box of candy, 17 oz. Sampler \$1.50 . . . also in 2, 3 and 5 lb. sizes.



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Visit your nearby Whitman dealer today. See his splendid showing of handsomely decorated Christmas packages of Whitman's Chocolates, ready to be delivered when and where you wish . . . fresh . . . delicious . . . most pleasing of all gifts.

The thing to do . . . give

Whitman's
CHOCOLATES

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Let the Whitman dealer parcel post your distant sendings



THE MOST thrilling, the most satisfying, the most lasting and worthwhile gift for normal boys and girls, whether they are five or fifteen—registration in a *good* camp for next summer. And for the older boys and girls there are travel camps and cruises.

Making this a Christmas gift adds months of joyful anticipation to the fun, the adventure and the real education the camp experience will give.

Here we list, with the winter addresses of the directors, a few of the camps which have ready a special gift announcement card to send to the boy or girl to whom you make this gift.

If your child was in a good camp last year, write at once to the camp director and ask for the gift card that will promise the child a return to camp next summer. But, if the boy or girl has never been in camp, do not hesitate to write now to the camp directors listed and ask about the very nominal registration fee. Camp tuitions are payable next summer, unless you prefer to make payment now.

A camp registration is a gift that will last a lifetime. And do you know who will appreciate it most? We can promise you it's the little boy (or girl) who has never been in camp, and who thinks now that he'd rather not go next summer. Our files hold hundreds of letters from parents and children which will prove this assertion.

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May G. Linehan, *Director*

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WYANOKE Mr. Walter H. Bentley
14 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts

Girls

OGONTZ Miss Abby A. Sutherland
Ogontz School P. O., Pennsylvania

SARGENT Mr. Ernst Hermann
Miss E. F. Sanborn
56 Everett Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts

WINNEMONT Miss Rae Frances Baldwin
389 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts

VERMONT CAMPS

Girls

TEELA-WOOKET Mr. & Mrs. C. A. Roys
18 Ordway Road, Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts

MAINE CAMPS

Girls

LIN-E-KIN BAY Mrs. G. R. Branch
102 Merrick Street, Worcester, Massachusetts

SEBOWISHA Miss Ethel E. Hobbs
The Tennis Place Apartments, Forest Hills, New York

Boys

WILDMERE Mr. Irving Woodman
80 Federal Street, Room 722, Boston, Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS CAMPS

Boys

BOB-WHITE Mrs. Sara B. Hayes
Ashland, Massachusetts

MON-O-MOY Mr. Harriman C. Dodd
Dutchland Farms, West Auburn, Massachusetts

WAMPANOAG Mrs. Bertrand E. Taylor
238 Grant Avenue, Newton Centre, Massachusetts

Girls

COTUIT The Misses Schumacher
170 Elm Street, New Rochelle, New York

COWASSET Miss Beatrice A. Hunt
189 N. Franklin Street, Holbrook, Massachusetts

CONNECTICUT CAMPS

Boys

CADAHO Mr. Milo Light
Teachers College, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Girls

JUANITA Mr. Milo Light
Teachers College, West Chester, Pennsylvania

NEW YORK CAMPS

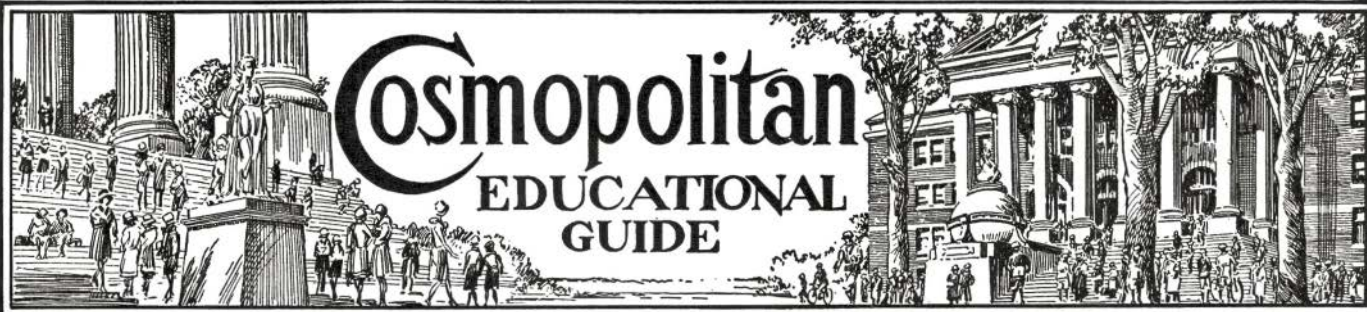
Boys

ACADIA The Rt. Rev. Joseph H. McMahon
468 West 143rd Street, New York City

ADIRONDACK WOODCRAFT

Mr. William H. Abbott
Box 63, University Station, Syracuse, New York

GERARD Miss Elizabeth Cain
857 Tenth Avenue, New York City
(Continued on Page 7)



SUMMER CAMPS

SARGENT CAMPS SCHOOL •
PETERBORO, N. H.



RECREATIONAL CAMP FOR GIRLS. Under Boston University. 500 acres surrounding Half Moon Lake. Senior Camp 13-19. Separate Junior Camp 6-12. Land and water sports. Riding included in fee. *Catalog.*
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New York Camps—Cont'd from Page 6

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420 Lexington Avenue, New York City

PINECREST DUNES Mr. W. Tom Ward
65 Rockaway Parkway, Valley Stream, L. I., New York

POK-O-MOONSHINE Dr. Charles A. Robinson
Peekskill Military Academy, Peekskill, New York

REDONDO Mrs. Cornelia V. Ehr Gott
14 Madison Avenue, Saratoga Springs, New York

SENECA Mr. Robert Howard
29 Bentley Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey

Girls

OUR LADY OF LOURDES
The Rt. Rev. Joseph H. McMahon
468 West 143rd Street, New York City

GERARD Miss Elizabeth Cain
857 Tenth Avenue, New York City

PALOS VERDES Mrs. Cornelia V. Ehr Gott
14 Madison Avenue, Saratoga Springs, New York

NEW JERSEY CAMPS

Girls

ROSE HAVEN Miss Mary C. Birchard
Rockleigh, Northvale P. O., New Jersey

PENNSYLVANIA CAMPS

Boys

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Carson Long Institute, New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania

SUSQUEHANNA Mr. Robert T. Smith
Malba, Whitestone P. O., Long Island, New York

WYOMISSING Mr. William T. Transue
Minisink Hills, Pennsylvania

VIRGINIA CAMPS

Girls

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Sullins College, Bristol, Virginia

NORTH CAROLINA CAMPS

Girls

JUNALUSKA Miss Ethel J. McCoy
Virginia Intermont College, Bristol, Virginia

SOUTH CAROLINA CAMPS

Girls

JOCASSEE Miss Sarah Godbold
2805 Wilmot Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina

INDIANA CAMPS

Boys

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Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana

MICHIGAN CAMPS

Boys

TOSEBO Dr. Roger Hill
Todd School, Woodstock, Illinois

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FOR YOUNG WOMEN

TEN miles from Boston. Two-year courses for high-school graduates. Academic. Home Economics. Secretarial. Art. Expression courses. Music. College Preparatory. Sports. 30 acres. Delightful home life. Separate Junior School. Catalogs.
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Liberal Arts. Secretarial. Art. Music. Pre-Journalism. Family Relationships. and Medical Technician Courses for Young Women. Senior Preparatory Department. Brick Colonial Residences. All Outdoor Sports Including Horseback Riding. Resident Rate \$800. For Catalog Address:
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Of Boston University. 62nd yr. 4 years high school required. 4-year degree course. Unusual camp instruction. *Catalog.* Prof. E. Hermann, Dir., 36 Everett St., Cambridge, Mass.

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Graduates in 34 colleges. Attractive cottage system fosters ideal co-operation between teachers and boys. Small classes. Unusual advantages from affiliation with Rutgers Univ. Supervised sports. New low rates. Write for catalog. William P. Kelly, Headmaster, Box C, New Brunswick, N. J.

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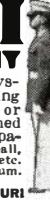
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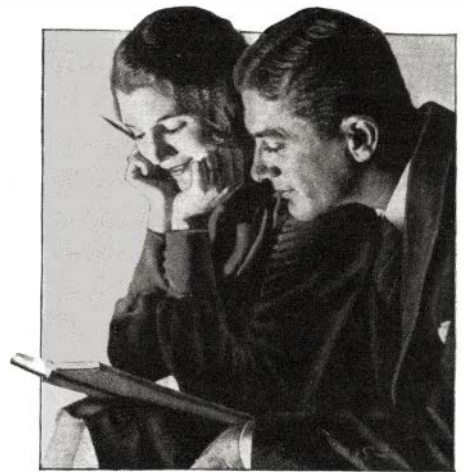
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Beauty Contest!

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Try Camay yourself! Use it faithfully for one month! It's changing the soap habits of the nation! Every

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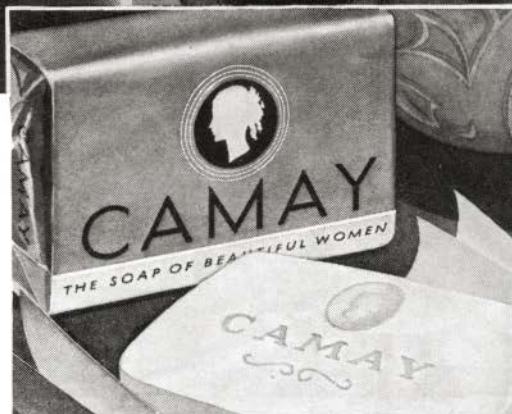
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CAMAY the Soap of Beautiful Women . . .

Cosmopolitan Almanack

Presents

January

High Spots

by Franklin P. Adams (F.P.A.)

Visualized by John Held, Jr.



Anno Domini 1934

January has 31 Days



Three home-town boys who got up in the world.

Jan. 1—On New Year's Day, 1914, your ALMANACKER, after more than ten years of columning elsewhere, joined the staff of the New York Tribune. Last November, he had completed thirty years of uninterrupted columning, worrying every second of the time. If all the columns written by him in that time were placed one on top of the other, what a bonfire they'd make!

Jan. 5—Simeon Stylites wanted to keep his soul alert, so he decided to live on top of a 9-foot pillar. Every few years he had it heightened; the last one, on which he died in 459, at the age of 70—he began his columnar life at the age of 32, a record I hope to beat—was 60 feet high. It was 3 feet in diameter. How he had his meals sent up I don't know; how he slept I don't know. I have trouble enough with my own provender and slumber.

Jan. 9, 1929—James W. Beasley, a flagpole sitter, heard the national anthem, and stopped sitting.

MODERN AGRICULTURE

*The farmer in the dell,
The time he has is swell;
He listens to the radio play
"The Farmer in the Dell."*



Jan. 11, 1807—Ezra Cornell born. He was in the lumbering and

farming business. When 35, he got interested, accidentally, in the project of building a telegraph line from Baltimore to Washington. He invented a machine for laying wires underground, but the thing had to be given up because of poor insulation, so at his suggestion the wires were strung on poles. He was instrumental in forming the Western Union Telegraph Company in 1853. He became rich, moved to Ithaca, N. Y., and in 1866, The Cornell University, so named, was formally opened. Little did he think that the ALMANACKER's Alma Mater, the University of Michigan, would beat Cornell 40-0 in 1933.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO A LAZY FELLOW

*Mr. Held, I'd like to be a
Boy who never labored hard,
Getting every good idea
From an almanacking bard.*

*John, I'm weary of supplying
You with pictures every month.
How about a turn at trying
To do my thtuff jutht for onth?*



Jan., 4004, B. C.—Adam refuses to touch apple unless wrapped in cellophane.

Jan. 24—In 1848, gold was discovered in California. Where we would be without gold it is difficult to say, but that's where we are, anyway.

Jan. 25—If you want to know the year, look up Cosmopolitan ALMANACK for 1933. This is Neysa McMein's

birthday. She was born in Quincy, Ill., and the family Bible says that her name was Marjorie Moran McMein. About twenty years ago, Mrs. Cothren, a numerologist, told her that she would have better luck if she changed her name to Neysa. Either on that account or in spite of it, she has had dandy luck. In private life, of which she has virtually none, she is Mrs. John Baragwanath.

FACTS; AND A WISH

1933 has fled;
1933 is dead.
1934 is here.
Let's all have a happy year!
And, if I am still alive,
Happy 1935!



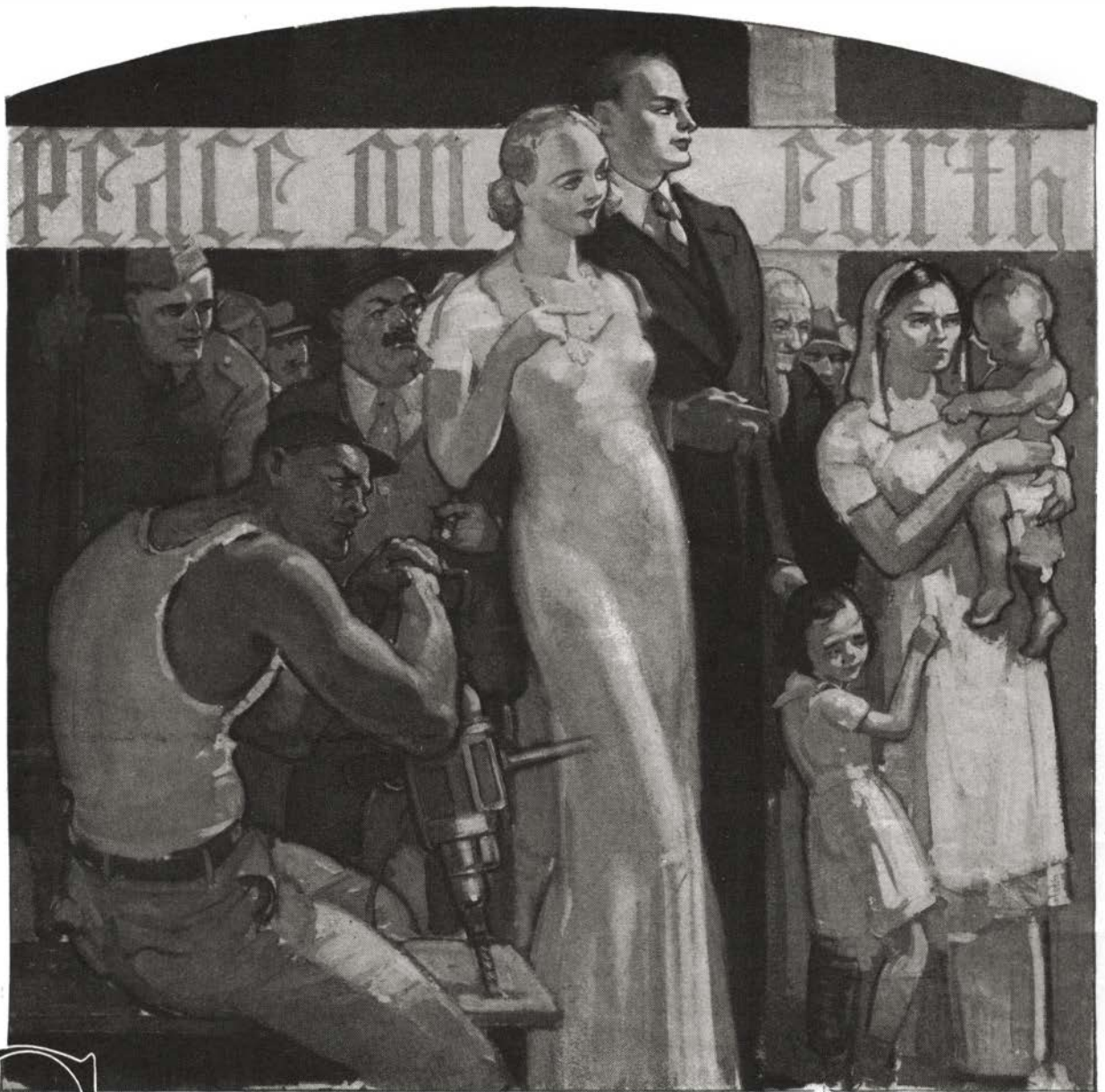
Jan. 25—Robert Burns was a blithesome bard who liked his liquor, and liked it hard. He liked to love, and he loved a lot. Nevertheless, he was a Giant Shot. The girls never get an hour from me, for I'm as monogamous as can be. I spend no days in drinking wine, yet Burns' stuff is as good as mine.

Jan. 27—It took Webster three days to reply to Hayne, and for a nickel I'd be glad to print in this space his exact words.



TO THE NEW YEAR CHIMES

Ring out, wild bells! and ring again!
And if that is the way you feel,
Ring out again, re-ring, and then Repeat!



Christmas, 1933

“Into a disenchanted era, much like our own of today, Jesus was born nearly 2000 years ago . . . and he would no more be disillusioned now than he then was in his own difficult and despairing time, because he would interpret a troubled era as a call for help. Such eras say two things: first, this is a disappointing age; and second, you are needed!” . . . This era we are in does need you. And we ought to find it one of the most stimulating in all history, declares Dr. Fosdick. We have so far muffed the ball, he says, but we shall yet find the way to handle it, if we do not remain—as we are—cynical, disillusioned, and dismayed.

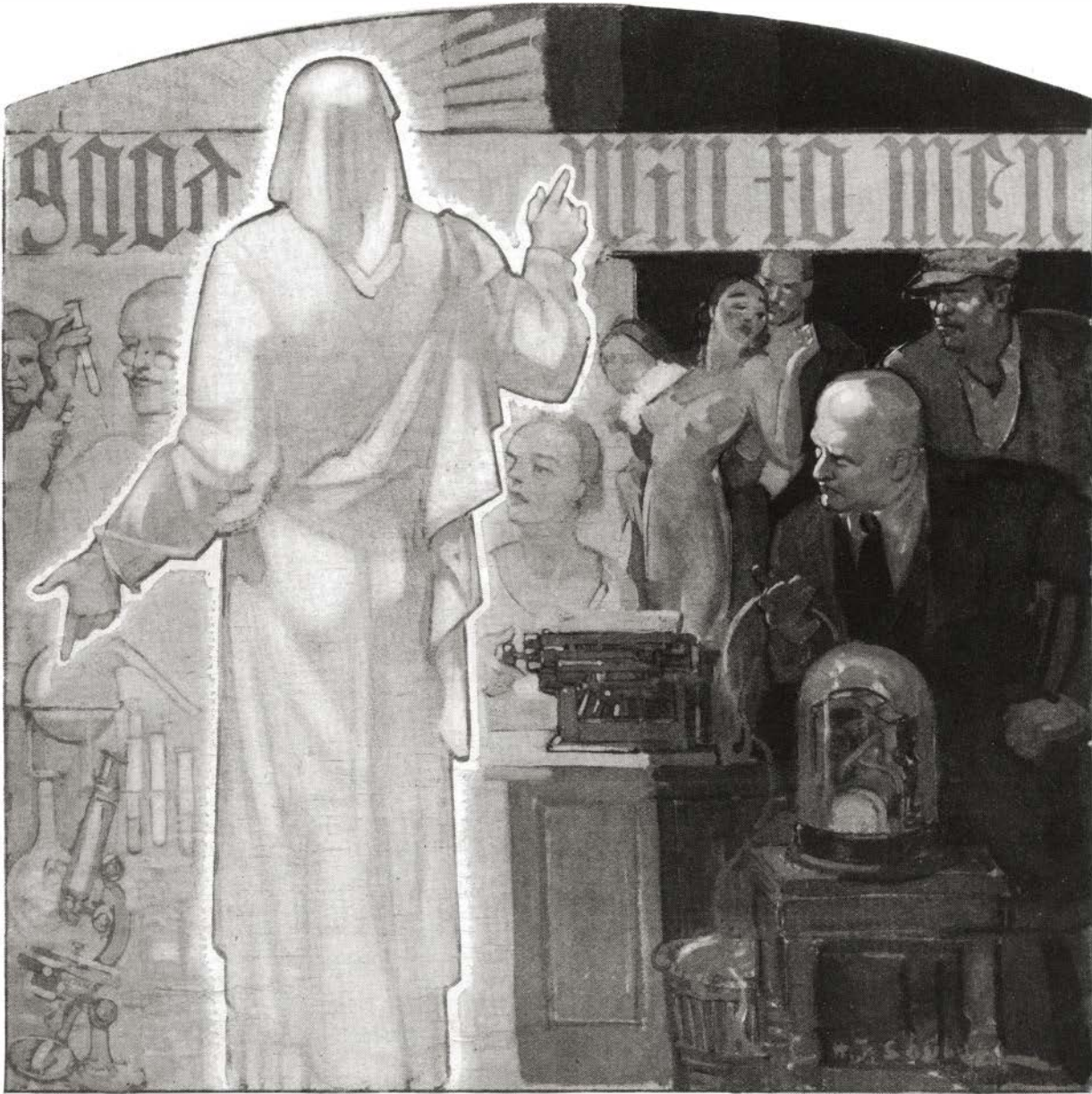
by HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

Author of “As I See Religion”



*Illustration by
H. J. Soulen*

THE FIRST Christmas morning, long ago, dawned on a disillusioned world. “When we ask,” writes an eminent scholar, “what idea of the world-process was held by the thinkers and teachers of Greco-Roman society, we find that they all thought of it as, in one way or another, a vain eternal recurrence, leading nowhere.” Into that disenchanted era, much like our own of today, Jesus was born, and if we may believe the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, in the second century,



Dawns on Our World *at the Crossroads*

Jesus "changed sunset into sunrise." That this year's Christmas Day will dawn on multitudes of disillusioned people must be obvious to anyone. Tired liberals quit the service of great causes, like internationalism, because they have surrendered to disillusionment. Pessimistic philosophies, saying that man has no more significance than an insect that crawls from one annihilation to another, are popular because they formulate prevalent disillusionment. Suicides are frequent, so that one father, a leading intellectual whose brilliant son has killed himself in college, cries out for some way of recovering faith in life, and every man knows from his own moods that he is living in an era in which all of us, one way or another, are tempted to be cynical.

Moreover, it is not difficult to see one major reason why this is so. No generation in history ever dreamed greater social achievements or made heavier sacrifices

to win them than the western world has in the past twenty years. The young people, who were not old enough to catch the feeling of the Great War when it was here, will not understand this as we elders do.

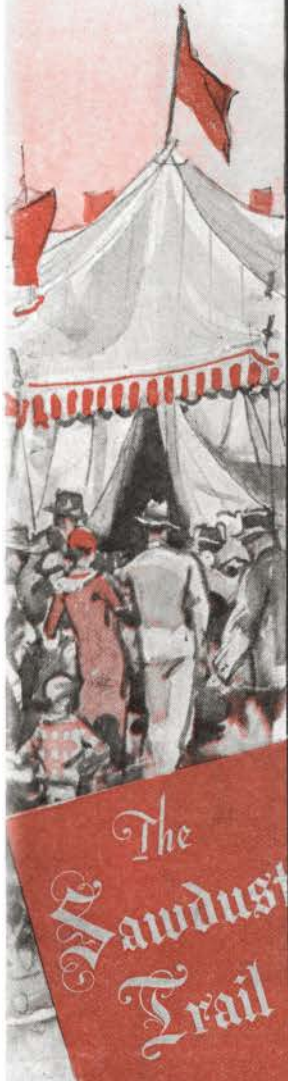
The war, dreadful as it was, saw an outpouring of sacrificial devotion such as seldom in all history has lifted multitudes of ordinary men and women to heroic heights of self-forgetfulness. That spirit we elders well recall, the altitudes to which it rose, the incredible possibilities of devotion it revealed, and we remember also how much of the sacrifice was idealized as service for mankind—war to end war and to make the world safe for democracy.

Youth now looks back with horror, as we do, on the world-wide carnage, its heroisms but glancing sunlight on a sea of blood and tears. But we remember also how high rose the hope of a (Continued on page 109)

The Sawdust Trail

by REX BEACH

Illustrations by E. M. Jackson



A SHORT NOVEL
COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

“WELL, HAVE I discharged my ‘debt to society?’” Thirteena Pierce inquired with an unpleasant curl of her lips.

The sheriff nodded. “You have. Next time you go to court, keep a civil tongue in your head.”

Mrs. Pierce had a stormy face and the eyes of a fanatic. They blazed now, as she said, “I couldn’t bear to leave without telling you what I think of this flea bag.”

“Don’t spit your venom at me!” Sheriff Houck protested. “I didn’t put you here, and if I ran this jail any better I’d never get shed of my prisoners. Come back, sometime; I’ll try and have an inner-spring mattress and a radio in every cell.”

“If I ever see this town again I’ll deserve a rap. I’m not sore at you: it’s that blasted judge. And will I tell him, in so many words!”

“Don’t do it, Teena. In the eyes of the law you can commit an assault without striking a blow. I reckon it’s arson to burn up a judge, the same as it is to set fire to a cornerib. If you open up on him like that you’ll be back here before your cot cools off. After all,

you’re lucky; if Nick Veeder had taken the stand you’d have got thirteen years instead of thirteen months.”

“The devil I would! He had it coming and—” Mrs. Pierce bit down on a passionate tirade when the sheriff’s door opened and a stranger appeared. “Good-by, sheriff. Spring is calling. And thanks for the use of the hall.”

“By, Teena! Remember, the latchstring is always out.”

“Who is that?” the newcomer inquired. “The mayor’s wife?”

“Up until today she was my star boarder.”

“What? A prisoner?”

Houck nodded. “She drew a year and took an extra month. Her name is Thirteena Pierce. Widow woman. Got a daughter.

The tremendous story of a hard-boiled woman who thought she could callously traffic in religion and the souls of men for gain . . . How she found at last that she had hold of something bigger than herself and what overtook her make this one of the most inspiring and regenerating stories you'll ever read



There was a peculiar warmth in the woman herself and a galvanic quality to her touch. She resembled a stately sorceress at her rites.

Her kid fell for one of our local boys and Teena shot him."

"Lord! A year for shooting a man? What kind of a town is this?"

Houck's swivel chair creaked as he leaned back in it. "It's a pretty good town except it's plastered with preachers and they kind of stunt its growth. Teena blew in a while back and leased the old Mansion House. You can tell the kind of a hotel it is by the name. It took a roughrider to run it but she did all right. Of course she sold a little beer on the *q.t.* but the first real complaint I heard was that she kept a voodoo parlor—told fortunes and sold love charms and put spells on people. She also cured warts, corns and blemishes of the skin. Anyhow, I dropped in to warn her she'd better fold up before the reverends put the law on her.

IT BURNED her up. She can swear like a mule-skinner—in fact, that's one thing the deacons had against her. They called her a reproach to civic virtue. Well, when I gave her the nudge she declared those so-and-so's were the fakers, not her; claimed she was a genuine psychic, a thirteenth child, born on the thirteenth of the month, and could do healings."

"Bosh!"

"Sure! And a couple of raspberries. According to her, she was born with a double veil. She actually showed it——" Houck paused at the expression on his listener's face. "Hooey, of course! But did you ever know a doctor to destroy one of those cauls? I never did."

"You surely don't put any faith in that superstition?"

"Say, I don't believe tomorrow is Thursday, and I told her so. Just to show me, she took me into her gypsy deadfall and told my fortune."

"Well?"

"I came out of that witchery walking on my heels and—she could have nicked me for heavy hush money. So much for that. Take it or leave it. I never had any proof of her healing power until she came here. But first let me tell you about the trial. Veeder refused to appear against her, so the judge gave her a year on general principles, whereupon she said she'd prefer thirteen months if it was all the same to him—that being her natal number.

"It was no pose on her part. If she owes twelve dollars she'll pay thirteen. If she sells you a dozen eggs she'll put in an extra one. It was perfectly agreeable to the judge. Furthermore, he ordered her to leave town when her stretch was up."

"What about this healing?"

"Oh! They brought a crazy Jane in here one night and she kept the jail awake until Teena sent for the guard and begged him to let her put the woman to sleep. She did it. And she didn't use a blackjack, either. Three days later, the doctors pronounced her sane—the woman."

"Sane all the time, of course. Doctors make mistakes."

"Sure. That's how come cemeteries. But laugh this off: the cook cut himself, and Teena worked some hocus-pocus, whereupon he stopped bleeding and the pain disappeared . . . I didn't believe it, either, but it's a fact. Later, she 'hexed' one of the guards who spoke cross to her. Ask *him* if she's a fake! Ask the cook.

"She ran this jail to suit herself after that, and I don't mind saying we're all glad to see the last of her. I'd have turned her loose long ago if I'd dared. As it is, my lumbago has come back and I've had a lot of bad luck. Imaginary, of course! Sure, she's a fake: she can't do a thing. Only, *you* tell her."

Thirteena Pierce was indeed a stormy petrel, a trouble-maker, an undesirable. She had never known anything but strife and dissension. Today, as she hurried away from the county jail, her mind was less occupied with thoughts of her new freedom than of her "persecution," as she called it. Inwardly she was afire. That was typical of her, for she was irascible, intolerant, vengeful; she could nourish a grudge.

A violent temper, which she seldom bothered to control, had left its marks upon her face—a striking face, by the way, and one which most people found

attractive. She was a lusty, long-limbed, deep-bosomed creature, and she carried herself with an air. Except for a certain flamboyance in dress and an overbold demeanor, she would have passed for a person of consequence if not actual distinction.

She was a charlatan, but that righteous limb of the law who had so scathingly denounced her at the time he passed sentence would have credited her with some sincerity of feeling had he witnessed the meeting between her and Alice.

Following her mother's trial and conviction, Alice had found shelter with a neighbor, and now, when Teena entered the yard, she came flying. For a while the two stood locked in each other's arms. Alice shook with sobs; Teena's eyes were wet, and she could only murmur, "There, there! It's all over. Everything is all right now."

Everything was not all right, however. Until a late hour that night the two sat in Alice's borrowed room making plans, discussing ways and means.

During the time Teena had been "away," her lease on the Mansion House had expired. Furthermore, the landlord had sold her furniture. There were a few dollars left, however, and some scanty personal belongings. Moreover, the girl had managed to rescue and hide out their flivver. It was old and battered; nevertheless, it afforded a means with which to obey the court's edict.

"He had his nerve!" Teena grumbled. "The idea of running me out of town! And a lot of help these pulpit-pounders gave you! For all they cared you could have walked the streets. Sure! What's one more of that kind to them?"

"I managed to find some work."

"Dishwasher! Crockery-diver in a quick and dirty! . . . Well, that's religion for you! I didn't mind that stretch—for myself. I could do thirteen months standing on my head in a tomato can. I was thinking of you. We're through with this lousy town." That "we" was characteristic of Teena Pierce, who always did her daughter's thinking.

For once, however, the girl did not seem to be quite so passive as usual, and her mother inquired:

"You surely haven't any regrets at leaving? You're not still thinking about that—skunk?"

"Oh, Mother!" Alice protested. "He isn't——" The words choked in her throat.

"Do you still imagine you're in love with him?" Teena was incredulous. "Why, *darling!* Didn't I tell you he's no good?"

"Yes. But how do *you* know?"

"I can tell."

Experience had taught Alice never to argue with her mother. To cross her, even in trivial things, usually provoked an outburst from which the sensitive girl recoiled. Now, however, she summoned the courage to say:

"You hate every boy who looks at me. You pretend to read all sorts of things from the cards."

THE CARDS didn't tell me anything. It's something inside of me. I *know* such things. Every time I close my eyes I see a little man and he steers me right. A little man with a pointed hat! If Nick wanted to marry you, why hasn't he said so?"

"He can't. He's lost his job," Alice said miserably.

"Didn't I tell you he's no good?"

"You don't understand. He's—paralyzed."

"I hope he stays drunk the rest of his life."

"Mother!" There was a pause during which the girl fought with her emotions. "That side where you shot him—he can't use his arm. It's terrible!"

"Maybe he won't be so fresh with the next nice girl he meets."

Alice was a frail, flowerlike creature; she locked her bloodless fingers together now and tried her best not to scream or pound her fists.

"He refused to testify against you because you're my mother, and even though it put him—and me, too—in a bad light. I—begged him to marry me but he wouldn't do it. He can't marry me. He's a—cripple. You've ruined my life!"

"Your life!" Teena scoffed. "At seventeen! It hasn't started, dearie. I know what's best for you. The



The break which Madam Thirteen hoped for came in a town where an itinerant evangelist had established himself. Homer Dann, she was informed, gave a hot show. He was cleaning up. His text was, "Repent and ye shall be saved."

little man is never wrong. You'll get over this and thank me for what I did. Don't worry." Teena drew her daughter close and stroked her hair.

Early the next morning they drove away.

Their traveling expenses were light, for in Teena's equipment was a khaki tent which, when not in use as a fortune-telling booth, served admirably as a shelter. More often than not, they put up at tourist camps, which were cheap and plentiful. A small oil stove, a box of dishes and some staple groceries rendered the

pair independent. Gasoline cost something, to be sure, but fruits and vegetables were to be had almost for the asking, and occasionally they ran over a chicken. This gave them meat.

Mrs. Pierce believed in advertising. Upon the walls of her tent were painted astronomical symbols, mystical signs and tables. On the body of the automobile were drawn a large-sized human hand with the lines appropriately labeled and a hairless human head with the skull sutures heavily outlined. On the back of the



Alice lived in fear of her mother and completely under her domination.

the tonneau were the words: "Madam Thirteen. Occulist. Mystic. Seer. Man, Know Thyself."

Teena dressed like a gypsy in bright calicoes and a kerchief; she wore huge earrings, beads, bangles and ten-cent jewelry. For business reasons she forced Alice to dress likewise.

This nearly killed the girl, for they excited ridicule wherever they went. At such times she cringed. Her mother, however, bore herself with a somber dignity and really considered herself another Cassandra, upon whom Apollo had bestowed the spirit of prophecy. Only when skepticism took the form of insult did she

resent it. Then she flew into an insane passion, met gibe with gibe and cursed like a fishwife. She was strong and active; she could throw bricks and pop bottles like a baseball fan and her wrath was terrible. One experience with it was enough for the average hoodlum.

Nor was she always on the defensive. That savage temper got her into frequent trouble, and before she had been a week on the road she was arrested and fined for disturbing the peace. Once she narrowly escaped punishment for practicing medicine without a license.

Naturally, the police were suspicious of her, for occultism, fortune telling, faith healing were taboo, and the time came when the mere sight of a uniform brought a scowl to her face and caused Alice to tremble like a frightened doe. The latter began to regard herself as an "untouchable" and to wonder if ever she would find a place of refuge. This profession of her mother's was a cheap swindle; and it was fully as discreditable, if not quite so hazardous as beer-running; moreover, it grew constantly more precarious and the returns dwindled steadily.

"THERE MUST be a way to beat the game," Teena said doggedly, "if I was smart enough to figure it out."

Alice made bold to say, "Please, Mother, let's settle down and live quietly, decently."

"Why, darling, that's what I'm trying to do. But the preachers and cops won't let us."

"I mean, let's give up this game and go to work."

"Only suckers work!" Teena declared sententiously. "I'm too smart."

"Suckers have houses to live in, and they ride in nice cars. Is it smart to live like we do and squash an occasional hen so we can have meat on Sunday? Look at these clothes! Our car! Those horrible signs and pictures! I—I'd rather sit on a flagpole! It isn't honest, either. I—I shrivel up—"

"You'd shrivel more if I didn't hit a chicken every so often . . . Don't I work hard? Doesn't it take me an hour to chisel a dollar off one of these boobs? Isn't it worth a dollar to cure warts? What would a doctor charge? I tell you, dearie, I've got more than any six of 'em, but—I can't get a break. If I ever do, you'll have a home. You'll have swell clothes and diamonds and everything you want."

"There's only one thing I want," Alice confessed wretchedly, "and every day I leave him further behind."

Harshly her mother cried, "I told you never to

mention that rat to me!" A moment, then she said tenderly, "He's no good, honey. Mother knows." She gathered the girl into her arms and kissed her.

That break which Madam Thirteen hoped for was a long time coming, and matters went from bad to worse until one afternoon she and Alice drove into a town where an itinerant evangelist had established himself. On a vacant lot was a tent large enough to house a one-ringed circus, and over the entrance hung a banner which read:

"Homer Dann's Gospel Show. Admission Free."

ANYTHING WITH the faintest odor of sanctity about it offended Teena sorely. Ever since her jail sentence, ministers of every sort were anathema to her, so at the tourist camp near by she loudly proclaimed her opinion of clown revivalists.

Homer Dann, she was informed, gave a good show.

He had once been a second-rate prize fighter but the spirit of the Lord had entered into him, and since then he had been battling nightly with sin. The town and the roads leading to it had been placarded with Scriptural objurgations and promises of damnation carefully calculated to chill the blood. Plainly Mr. Dann's religion was one of Fear; his god was a god of Wrath. Teena snorted as she read his signs.

"Ain't that a man-size job," she scoffed, "scaring drunks and little children? Why, I'll bet he can't even tell a decent fortune."

The revivalist, she was informed, did not go in for fortune telling, although he was strong on prophecy and knew his brimstone backwards.

"Bunk! Boloney!"

It might be hooley, nevertheless Dann was "cleaning up," she was told.

Teena was interested in this. She asked questions, and that evening she attended the meeting. What she saw intrigued her greatly, for Homer Dann not only preached down to the level of his audience, he descended even lower. He was rough and tough; he actually staged what he announced as a "three-round bout with the devil." He came out in bath robe and trunks and "fought Satan" all over the place. He took a good beating from his unseen antagonist before he landed the final knock-out—fainted and ducked and countered, blocked and socked, did layouts and took the count of nine, then lurched to his feet and carried on the battle.



"Gee, it's lucky I met you,"

Rex Beach

Between rounds his handlers flapped towels over him and squirted water into his face. The "devil's" seconds did the same for their imaginary principal. Meanwhile, a claue of ringside boosters groaned and shouted. It was indeed a "show."

At breakfast the next morning Teena described the revival to her daughter and said enviously, "There's a racket that makes ours look sick, dearie. That guy called for nothing but paper money, and he got it. I'll bet his take was five hundred dollars."

"Did he preach well?"

"I guess so. But I could top him if I knew the patter. He's got the right angle, though: scare people into fits, then pray them out. I tell them all that's best in them, he spills the dirt. I tell their fortunes, promising they have creative ability and will take journeys over water; he brands them as bums and says they're bound for hell on the four-forty. Then he practically picks the crowd's pockets. While I cure their aches and pains and—a cop

runs me out of town! And yet some of the churches are actually underwriting him. Oh, I learned all about it. Gosh! I'd like to be on his gate for one season. Would I get a bag of wool! . . . Say, dearie, I've been thinking."

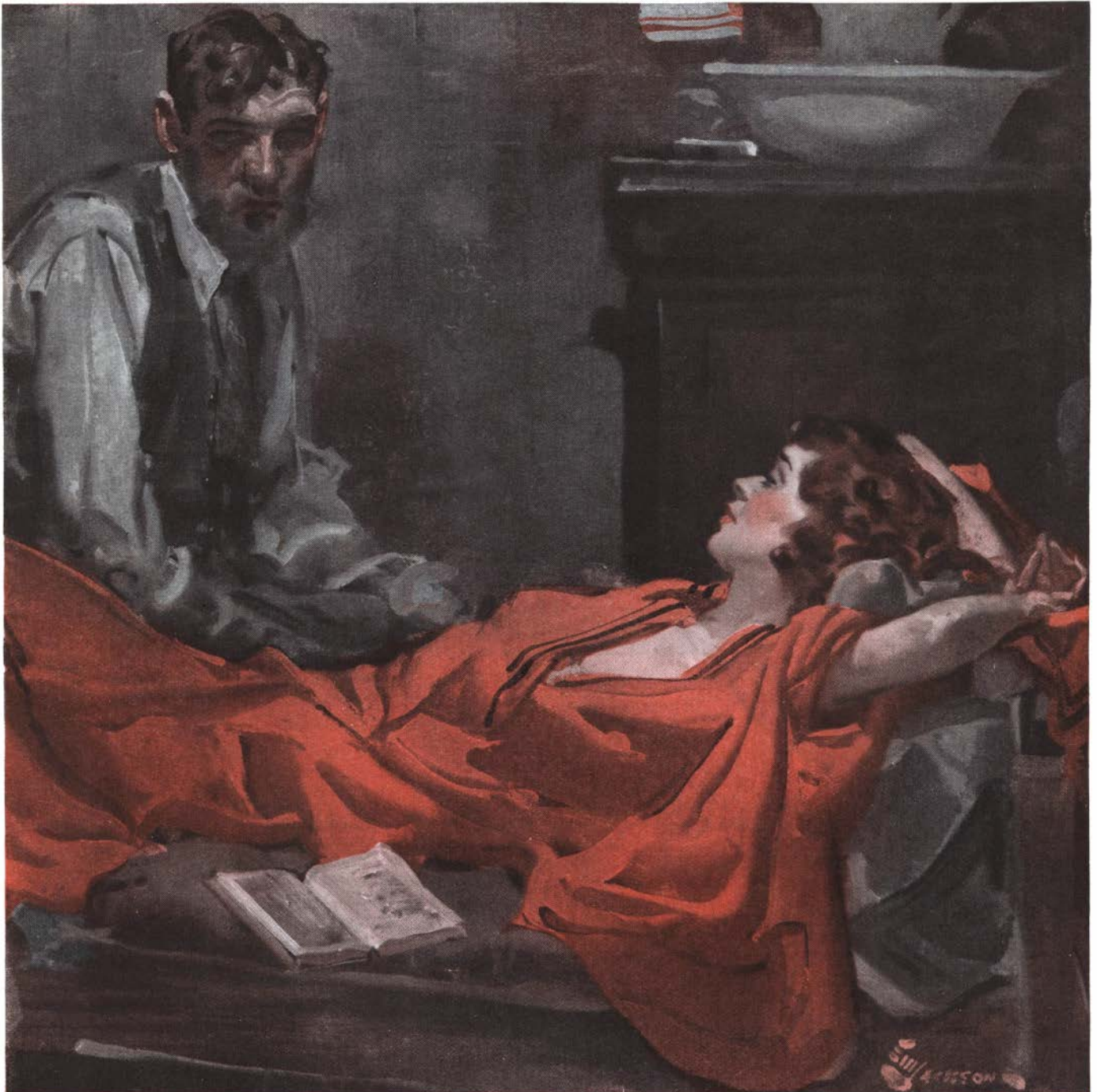
"Yes, Mother."

"This fellow hasn't got a thing but a good vaudeville act. I could put on a better one."

"How?"

"His text is, 'Repent and ye shall be saved.' Well . . . doesn't the Bible also say something about getting healed?" Madam Thirteen frowned in thought for a moment before announcing, "I'm going to drop in at the hotel and pick up a Bible. I'd like to read that book."

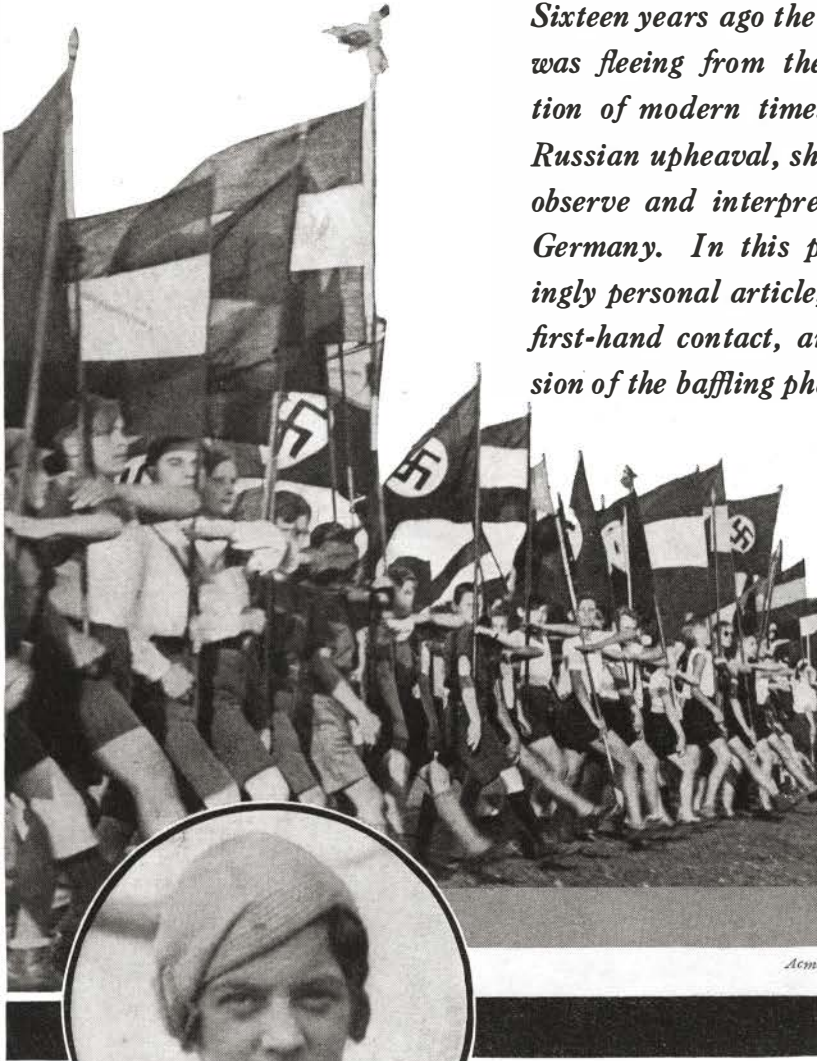
A week went by. Thirteena Pierce had meanwhile repainted her car. Gone were the hand and the hairless cranium which had so distressed her daughter; the mystic signs and tables on (*Continued on page 92*)



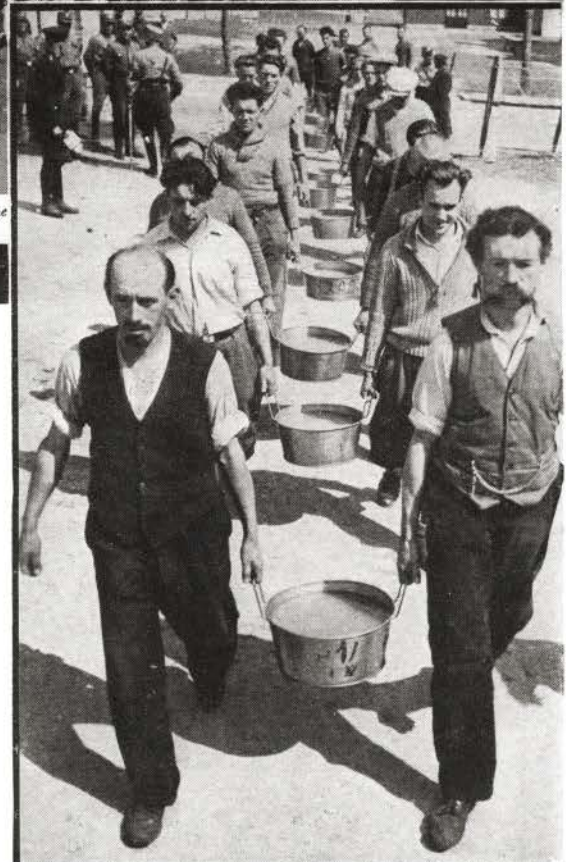
Jim," said Mary dreamily. "Nothing was right. Now I'm happy. A good man and a good racket . . ."

Behind *the* Scenes

Sixteen years ago the Grand Duchess Marie was fleeing from the most violent revolution of modern times. As a victim of the Russian upheaval, she is peculiarly fitted to observe and interpret the present crisis in Germany. In this penetrating yet charmingly personal article, she gives, from recent first-hand contact, an illuminating impression of the baffling phenomenon of Hitlerism



(Above) German schoolboys on parade in Berlin. (Circle) The Grand Duchess Marie.



Some of the 4,000 prisoners at a German concentration camp for suspected enemies of the Nazi state.

BERLIN had blossomed out! A year ago, when I had been there last, life in the capital seemed hiding behind corners. Now people tired of concealment, tired of a drab existence, hungered for expression and for excitement.

On the day after my arrival, I saw a parade of school children which lasted until evening. There were thousands of them, of all ages. Along Unter den Linden and under the Brandenburg Gate they marched, keeping in step with an easy swing, and while walking they sang sentimental songs about butterflies and spring breezes. They were of a more athletic type than formerly.

In an endless ribbon they passed under the central arch of the Brandenburg Gate, the arch under which in olden days only the Kings and Emperors had the right to pass. As the children approached the gate, they drew themselves up and lifted their chins; it evidently meant something very special to them to be allowed to pass under that central arch.

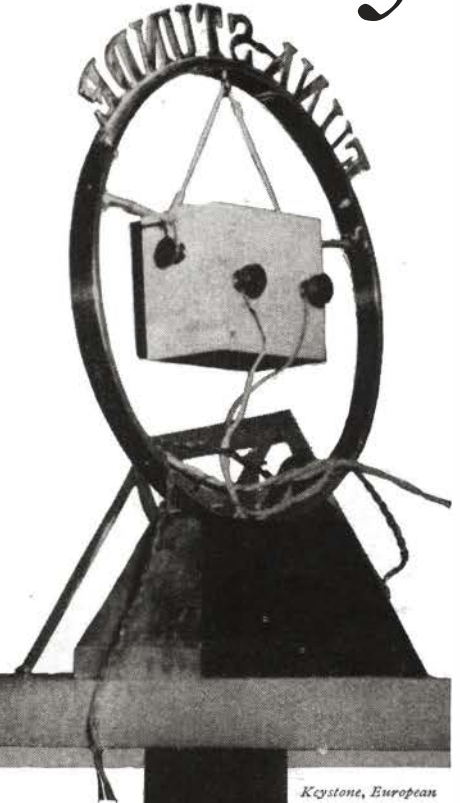
I sat on a bench in Unter den Linden and watched this undefeated generation of Germans file past me, and luckily for me, they were too busy to notice that I did not rise to salute the

in Germany

Today



Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of Germany.



Keystone, European

by the **GRAND DUCHESS MARIE** of Russia
Author of "A Princess in Exile" and "The Education of a Princess"

swastika. The sound of young voices hung over Berlin till dark. Germany belonged to youth, to youth intoxicated by its new opportunities.

A few people I had known before heard that I was in Berlin and came to call on me. I tried to find out from them what they thought about the situation. They were optimistic, even those who until quite lately had not been in favor of the Hitler movement. I asked whether they realized how severely their new régime was being censured by the world. Their answer was invariably the same. It was a revolution which had taken place in Germany, and which still was in progress.

The ladies told me about the old aristocratic Germany which was about to die out, a whole generation of men and women who through

the war and inflation had lost all they had. They were people who formerly had possessed everything—money, houses, estates, jewels. General conditions and age

made it impossible for them to earn a living; nothing was left to them but to pray that death might relieve them from a miserable existence.

Soup kitchens had been organized for them by some kindly foreigner, the kitchens functioning in their own aristocratic houses, which now stood empty and abandoned, as no one could afford to keep them up. Only one meal a day was served, but it was served on crested china. The ladies wore pre-war finery: a bit of priceless lace around the collar of a dress worn to rags, or a silver fox of which nothing but the skin remained.

At every step I was reminded that what Germany was going through was a revolution, and I often compared this revolution with the social upheavals I had experienced. If the pre-war generation of nobility was disappearing, it was being forced out of existence by circumstances. Nobody was persecuting it. Life and property, if any, were safe. The younger members of aristocratic families had already adjusted themselves to the new conditions and (Continued on page 135)

Low Lies

A story for people, young and old, who believe they are—or ever can be—alone in the world, by the author of “Miss Bishop” and “A Lantern in Her Hand”

Old Mrs. Sargent gave the pitch, and the others joined in, their voices not quite in key: “Angels adore Him in slumber reclining . . .”



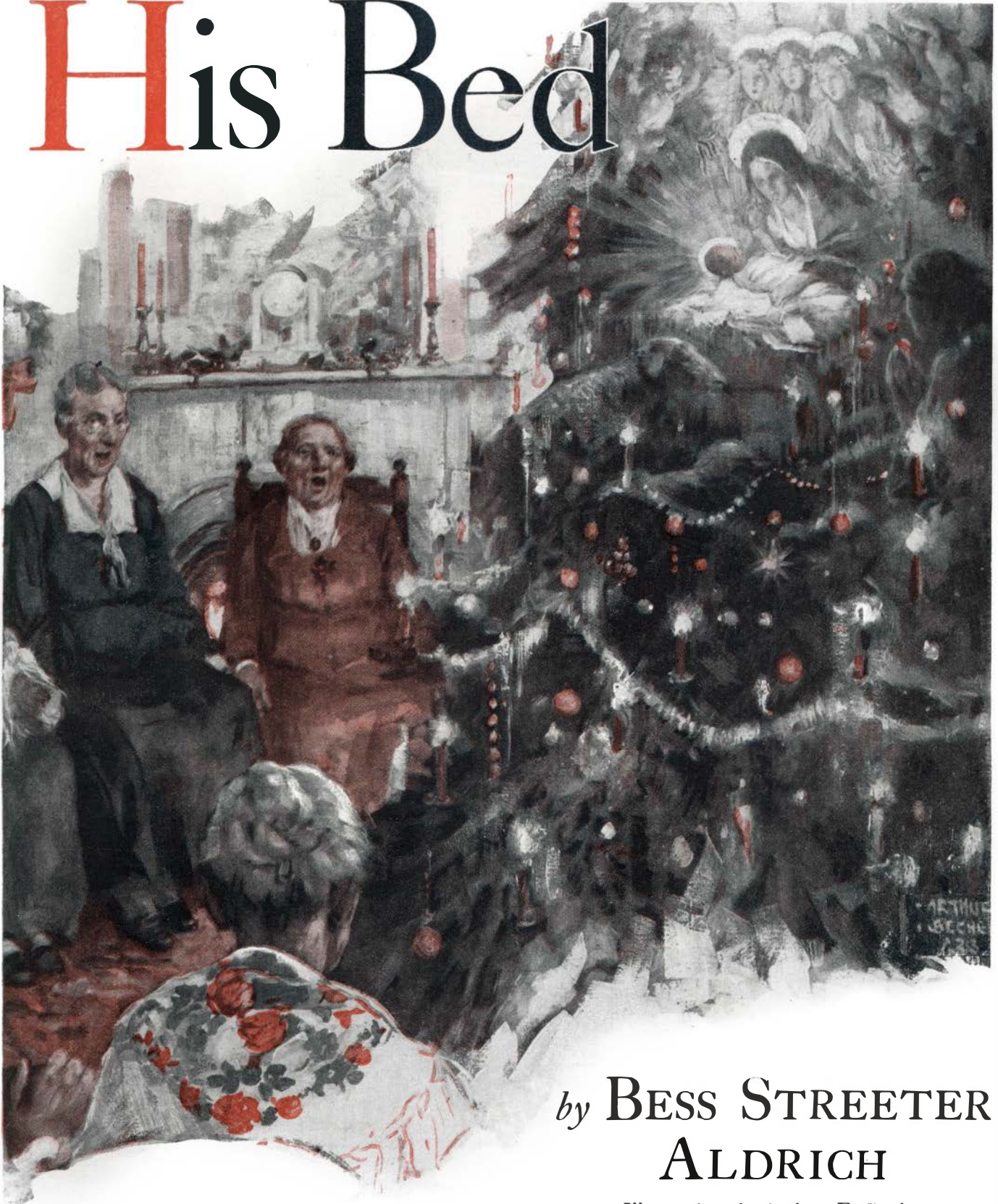
THE WEST-BOUND FLYER was pulling into Parker City three days before—

Still, if one had been there it would not have been necessary to specify the time of year. Too many conspicuous characteristics of the period would have been about one; too many pointed allusions to it made by the passengers. Bunches of holly on the furs of four gay college girls, their eyes as bright and shining as the berries. The occasional swift rush of hard snowflakes against the car's double windows. All the racks overhead containing packages of grotesque shapes. The high strident voice of a child in the rear of the Pullman:

“But Mother, he couldn't get down *Elsie's* chimbley, *could* he, Mother?” The traveling man across the way: “Christmas trade picked up any, Bill?”

To old Mrs. David Daniel Parker, sitting stiffly on the plush seat, the sounds and sights of the holiday time came indistinctly, like little waves washing against a stone statue at the water's edge. Indifferent alike to the exuberant laughter of the young girls and the child's excited questioning and the results of anyone's selling ability, she stared straight ahead, her eyes fixed rigidly on the blue velvet toque of the woman ahead of her, using the shininess of its cut-steel buckle as a sort

His Bed



by **BESS STREETER
ALDRICH**

Illustrations by Arthur E. Becher

of tangible object to which she might tie her rousing emotions.

They had been subdued of late years—those culprit feelings; had become far more obedient to her than the limbs of her frail old body. Joy. Sorrow. Love. Fear. Regret. She had known them intimately in her long years of life and been violently swayed by them all. But they had been held in check so long by an inflexible will that they were subdued now; in the last years had become but memories.

And now that they were awakening and creeping stealthily through the chambers of her heart, she tried

to tie them to the glimmer of a steel buckle in the seat ahead. A poor hitching post for winged Memory!

Old Mrs. Parker was thin, slender of shoulder, her faded old eyes palely brown behind her gold glasses. The snow-whiteness of her hair under her soft black hat made a scarcely perceptible line against the waxen hue of her face. Her coat was of finest seal and only a close observer would have noticed that the sleeves were short from having been turned in and the elbows showed long elliptical patches of skin.

She sat firmly erect, her black-gloved hands folded on an ebony cane. At her side were two worn bags

embossed in scarred gold with D. D. P., their once-expensive leather covered with a dozen faded foreign labels. Another bag hanging limply from one of the crossed wrists was lettered in matching gold. Mrs. Parker knew that in the bag were a change of glasses, two neatly folded handkerchiefs, a purse containing four dollars and a rather important paper.

Although it was thirty-five years since she had been here, she knew by the swaying of the coach that they were passing around the bend now. That would be by the old picnic grounds, she thought, but she did not look out to verify her intuition—merely gazed stonily ahead, centering her attention on the shining buckle, as though she watched defiantly to see that Memory did not escape to annoy her.

THEN SUDDENLY, the train was stopping, and the buckle was leaving, and she became panicky, looking about her rather wildly. The porter came immediately, assisting her to her feet and taking the bags—the two worn bags of fine leather. But old Mrs. Parker kept the other in her hand—the one with the glasses and the handkerchiefs and the last four dollars of a half-million—and the rather important paper which was to admit her to the Old Ladies' Home.

It took her some time to get down the steps, the black gold-handled cane making the descent with tapping assistance. A man and a woman came to her through the crowd with beaming fat faces.

"I'm Mrs. McIntosh," the stout woman said—"the matron, you know. My husband—*Mr. McIntosh*, Mrs. Parker. And we're so glad to have you—and just at Christmas, too."

The stout man repeated the idea, echo-like, "Yes. Yes. And we're glad, indeed, to have you come at Christmas time."

Old Mrs. Parker had a brief moment in which she thought how very much alike the two looked. Their round fat faces slightly red-veined, their double chins, their prominent blue eyes were similar, as though they might have changed clothes and no one been the wiser.

They took her arms, one on each side like symmetrical pillars of support, and began to assist her to a waiting car.

"I can walk alone, thank you," said old Mrs. Parker, tall and slim and erect. And tapped out her own support across the station platform.

In the car they heaped attentions upon her, raised a shade, tucked the robe about her, pressed a cushion upon her, with their warm hospitable parrot-like ways.

"You'll want the shade raised, won't you?"

"Yes, raise the shade for her."

It took both of them to complete every move and statement.

"Let's put the cushion at your back."

"Yes, the cushion!"

It irritated old Mrs. Parker, tall and slim and erect.

They drove through the business streets bustling with pre-Christmas activity, gay with their greens and their fat little trees, across a park and a residence district. The matron called her attention to the new courthouse



and the new post office and a widened boulevard. "And here's our lovely Home." The woman pointed ahead.

"Yes, that's the Home." The man nodded.

In one fleeting glance Mrs. Parker saw the long two-storied building back of clumps of big trees, bare now in the pale wintry weather—and shivered slightly. Immediately she was calm, telling herself not to let it happen again.

They were almost into the driveway when the matron exclaimed, "Oh, Edward, how careless! Whatever was the matter with us? Why didn't we think to drive up Jefferson Avenue past Mrs. Parker's own old home where she used to live so long ago?"

"Well, I declare! That *was* careless—the big old house where she used to live." He brought the car to a standstill on the curve of the drive.

"No. Go on. We'll go another day. Mrs. Parker will want to have tea now and rest."

"Yes, tea and rest."

They were out now and in the warm lobby. Christmas was in here, too—long drapings of evergreen from wall brackets and bright red wreaths in the doorways



Standing there outside her old home, Mrs. Parker seemed to merge into the family group in the high-ceilinged room. Suddenly the ice that had long covered her heart swept out on a wave of memory.

and poinsettia plants on stands. Across the far end of the hall sauntered an old lady with flashing knitting needles and gay-colored wools tucked under her arm. Two others peeped surreptitiously from a nearby doorway. Old Mrs. Parker winced and closed her eyes briefly.

Then the matron had taken her up to the second floor in a smoothly running elevator, had escorted her to Room Twenty, had shown her the bath and the ample closet, asked if she could help about the settling, explained the dinner hour—was gone.

Old Mrs. David Daniel Parker stood leaning on her cane, unmoving, in the center of the room. And so life had come to this. She was an old woman, worn out physically, burned out emotionally.

The door to the hall was still open, and through it came the sounds of soft footfalls, low voices, a bit of music. She did not want to see any of the other—other old ladies! She did not want to see anyone. Now or ever. If she could just stay here alone in this room—until the end . . .

She walked over to the door to close it, noticing for the first time the printed slip fastened on its polished surface. With peering eyes she stepped closer to read it: "This room has been furnished through the courtesy of the Parker City Thursday Club."

Her own old club, the one she had helped organize, whose social meetings had usually been held in the ample rooms of her lovely home, in the city that had been named for her husband's people.

For a time she stood, unseeing, then closed the door, tapped back to the soft depths of a large chair and sat down heavily. She could faintly hear music again in the building, the muffled sound of the elevator stopping, old laughter down the hall. Hard snowflakes tapped sharply against the pane like so many grains of white sand. The branches of an elm outside the window rubbed together in crisp rhythm. The shadows of the December afternoon lengthened, while old Mrs. David Daniel Parker with staring eyes sat stoically in the big chair donated through the courtesy of the Parker City Thursday Club.

An insistent rapping on the door roused her, brought her back from that long bitter trip into the realm of Memory. With labored movement she pulled herself to her feet and went again to the door.

A short old woman stood in the hallway, smiling up at her with toothless greeting. "Welcome home, Mis' Parker."

"Thank you," said old Mrs. Parker stiffly.

"I guess you don't know me." The old woman's short fat body shook with silent merriment as she wagged her head in mirthful glee. Her face was as seamed as a relief map with its rivers. Her coarse gray hair was screwed into a doorknob twist and across her ample bosom a safety pin was nobly endeavoring to assist a row of buttons in their effort to hold the two sides of her blue print dress together.

"No, I do not know you." Old Mrs. Parker stood, tall and aloof and unsmiling.

"I'M ANNA. Anna Kleinschmidt who used to wash for you." And she held out the hard old hand that had rubbed ten thousand shirts. "I thought I'd come and welcome you."

The soft blue-veined hand of Mrs. Parker took the red one. "Oh! I remember. How are you, Anna?" It was not unkind in tone, nor kind. Just a statement without emotion. A question with no interest.

"I'm goot, I t'ank you. So goot that I ain't got a vorry in the world. And who could be better dan dat?" She smiled her cavernous smile.

"You work here?"

"Oh, no!" Old Anna Kleinschmidt bridled a little. "I live here—all de time. Room Fourteen, and my own bat'tub." It was not necessary for Mrs. Parker to know that, largely, she kept her overshoes and umbrella in that useful adjunct.

"Oh, yes. I see." For her part, old Mrs. Parker was through with the interview. She did not feel arrogant toward old Anna, was in no way too haughty to hold conversation with her. But she did not want to talk to anyone, queen or washwoman. She wanted only to be left alone. Peace—it was all she asked.

But old Anna did not consider that the volunteer welcoming committee of one had ceased to function. "I earn all my money by myself to come here. All but one hundred dollars. And den (Continued on page 88)

*There's only one P. G. WODEHOUSE,
novel he ever wrote, we miss our guess
and you'll forget all your troubles;*

Thank you,

Here was an anxious father who combined with a strong distaste for Bertram Wooster the notion that his daughter was madly in love with him. I confess I found myself a prey to a certain embarrassment.



I WAS a shade perturbed. Nothing to signify, really, but still just a spot concerned. As I sat in the old flat, idly touching the strings of my banjolele, an instrument to which I had become greatly addicted of late, you couldn't have said the brow was actually furrowed, and yet, on the other hand, you couldn't have stated absolutely that it wasn't. Perhaps the word "pensive" about covers it. It seemed to me that a situation fraught with embarrassing potentialities had arisen.

"Jeeves," I said, "do you know what?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know who I saw last night?"

"No, sir."

"J. Washburn Stoker and his daughter, Pauline."

"Indeed, sir?"

"They must be over here."

"It would seem so, sir."

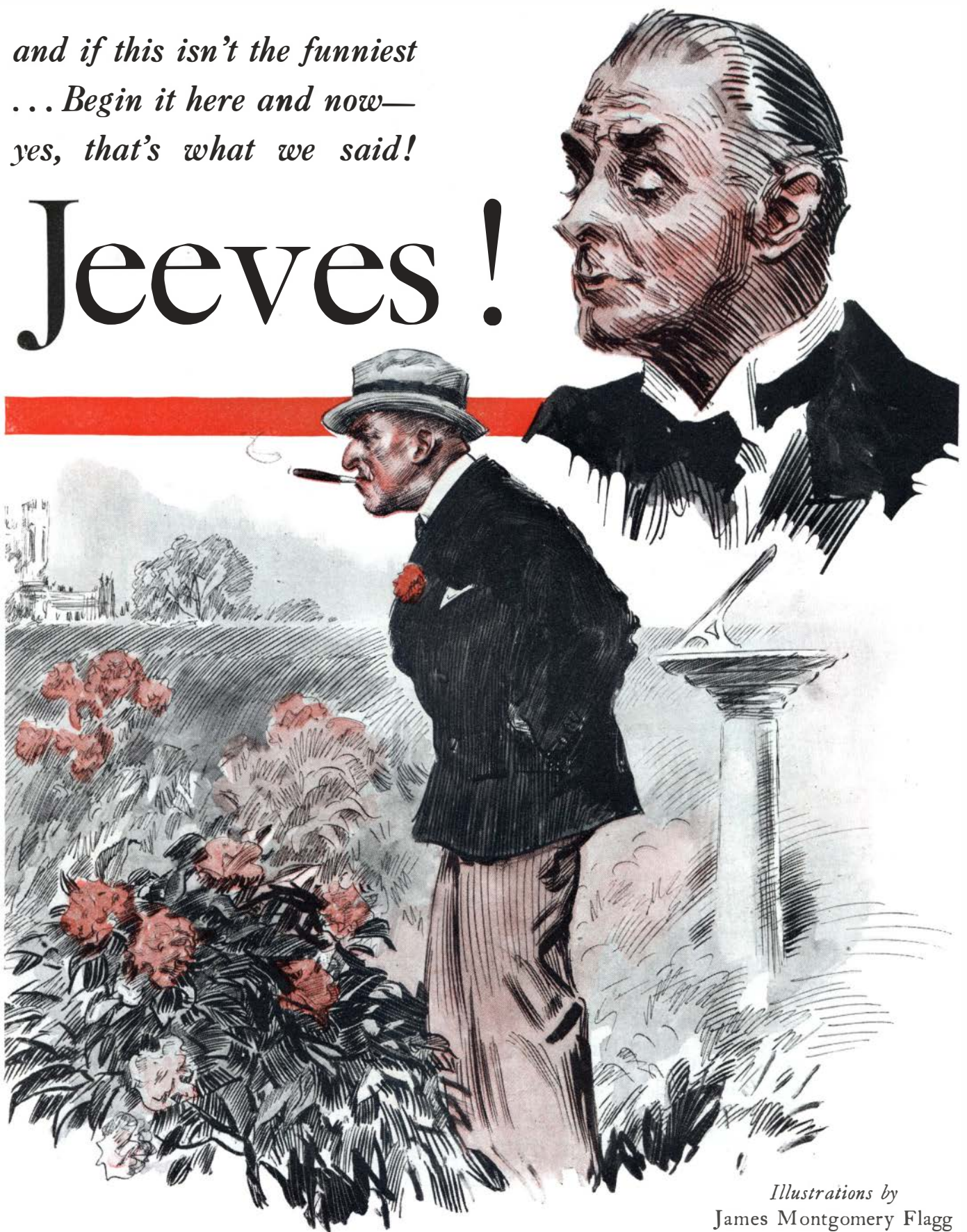
"Awkward, what?"

"I can conceive that after what occurred in New York it might be distressing for you to encounter Miss Stoker, sir. But I fancy the contingency need scarcely arise."

I weighed this. "When you start talking about contingencies arising, Jeeves, the brain seems to flicker and

*and if this isn't the funniest
... Begin it here and now—
yes, that's what we said!*

Jeeves!



Illustrations by
James Montgomery Flagg

I rather miss the gist. Do you mean that I ought to be able to keep out of her way?"

"Yes, sir."

"Avoid her?"

"Yes, sir."

I played five bars of "Ol' Man River" with something of abandon. His pronouncement had eased my mind. I followed his reasoning. After all, London's a large place. Quite simple not to run into people, if you don't want to.

"It gave me rather a shock, though. Accentuated by

the fact that they were accompanied by Sir Roderick Glossop."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes. It was at the Savoy Grill. They were putting on the nose bag together at a table by the window. And here's rather a rummy thing, Jeeves. The fourth member of the party was Lord Chuffnell's aunt Myrtle. What would she be doing in that gang?"

"Possibly her ladyship is an acquaintance either of Mr. Stoker, Miss Stoker, or Sir Roderick, sir."



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

"Yes, that may be so. Yes, that might account for it. But it surprised me, I confess."

"Did you enter into conversation with them, sir?"

"Who, me? No, Jeeves. I was out of the room like a streak. Apart from wishing to dodge the Stokers, can you see me wantonly and deliberately going and chatting with old Glossop?"

"Certainly he has never proved a very congenial companion in the past, sir."

"If there is one man in the world I hope never to exchange speech with again, it is that old crumb."

"I forgot to mention, sir, that Sir Roderick called to see you this morning."

"What!"

"Yes, sir."

"He called to see me?"

"Yes, sir."

"After what has passed between us?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm dashed!"

"Yes, sir. I informed him that you had not yet risen, and he said that he would return later."

"He did, did he?" I laughed. One of those sardonic ones. "Well, when he does, set the dog on him."

"We have no dog, sir."

"Then step down to the flat below and borrow Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke's Pomeranian. Paying social calls after the way he behaved in New York! I never heard of such a thing. Did you ever hear of such a thing, Jeeves?"

"I confess that in the circumstances his advent occasioned me surprise, sir."

"I should think it did. Good Lord! Good heavens! Good gosh! The man must have the crust of a rhinoceros."

And when I have given you the inside story, I think you will agree with me that my heat was justified. Let me marshal my facts and go to it . . .

About three months before, noting a certain liveliness in my aunt Agatha, I had deemed it prudent to pop across to New York for a space to give her time to blow over. And about halfway through my first week there, in the course of a beano at the Sherry-Netherland, I made the acquaintance of Pauline Stoker.

SHE GOT right in amongst me. Her beauty maddened me like wine. "Jeeves," I recollect saying on returning to the apartment, "who was the fellow who on looking at something felt like somebody looking at something? I learned the passage at school, but it has escaped me."

"I fancy the individual you have in mind, sir, is the poet Keats, who compared his emotions on first reading Chapman's Homer to those of stout Cortez when with eagle eyes he stared at the Pacific."

"The Pacific, eh?"

"Yes, sir. And all his men looked at each other with a wild surmise, silent, upon a peak in Darien."

"Of course. It all comes back to me. Well, that's how I felt this afternoon on being introduced to Miss Pauline Stoker. Press the trousers with especial care tonight, Jeeves. I am dining with her."



"Jeeves, what was it Shakespeare said the man who hadn't music in his soul was fit for?" "Treasons, stratagems, and spoils, sir." "Thank you, Jeeves. Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." Sir Roderick danced a step or two.

In New York, I have always found, one gets off the mark quickly in matters of the heart. This, I believe, is due to something in the air. Two weeks later, I proposed to Pauline. She accepted me. So far, so good. But mark the sequel. Scarcely forty-eight hours after that a monkey wrench was bunged into the machinery and the whole thing was off.

The hand that flung that monkey wrench was the hand of Sir Roderick Glossop.

In these memoirs of mine, as you may recall, I have had occasion to make somewhat frequent mention of this old pot of poison. A bald-domed, bushy-browed blighter, ostensibly a nerve specialist but in reality, as everybody knows, nothing more nor less than a high-priced loony-doctor, he has been cropping up in my path for years, always with the most momentous results. And it so happened that he was in New York when the announcement of my engagement appeared in the papers.

What brought him there was one of his periodical visits to J. Washburn Stoker's second cousin, George. This George was a man who, after a lifetime of doing down the widow and orphan, had begun to feel the strain a bit. His conversation was odd, and he had a tendency to walk on his hands. He had been a patient of Sir Roderick's for some years, and it was the latter's practice to dash over to New York every once in a while to take a look at him.

He arrived on the present occasion just in time to read over the morning coffee and egg the news that Bertram Wooster and Pauline Stoker were planning to

do the Wedding Glide. And as far as I can ascertain, he was at the telephone, ringing up the father of the bride-to-be, without so much as stopping to wipe his mouth.

Well, what he told J. Washburn about me I cannot, of course, say; but, at a venture, I imagine he informed him that I had once been engaged to his daughter, Honoria, and that he had broken off the match because he had decided that I was barmy to the core. He would have touched, no doubt, on the incident of the cats and the fish in my bedroom; possibly, also, on the episode of the stolen hat and my habit of climbing down water-spouts; winding up, it may be, with a description of the unfortunate affair of the punctured hot-water bottle at Lady Wickham's.

A CLOSE FRIEND OF J. Washburn's and a man on whose judgment J. W. relied, I take it that he had little difficulty in persuading the latter that I was not the ideal son-in-law. At any rate, as I say, within a mere forty-eight hours of the holy moment I was notified that it would be unnecessary for me to order the new sponge-bag trousers and gardenia, because my nomination had been canceled.

And it was this man who was having the cool what's-the-word to come calling at the Wooster home. I mean, I ask you!

I resolved to be pretty terse with him.

I was still playing the banjolele when he arrived. Those who know Bertram Wooster best are aware that he is a man of sudden, strong enthusiasms and that, when in the grip of one of these, he becomes a remorseless machine—tense, absorbed, single-minded. It was so in the matter of this banjolele-playing of mine. Since the night at the Alhambra when the supreme virtuosity of Ben Bloom and his Sixteen Baltimore Buddies had fired me to take up the study of the instrument, not a day had passed without its couple of hours' assiduous practice. And I was twanging the strings like one inspired when the door opened and Jeeves shoveled in the foul strait-waistcoat specialist to whom I have just been alluding.

In the interval which had elapsed since I had first been apprised of the man's desire to have speech with me, I had been thinking things over; and the only conclusion to which I could come was that he must have had a change of heart of some nature and decided that an apology was due me for the way he had behaved. It was, therefore, a somewhat softened Bertram Wooster who now rose to do the honors.

"Ah, Sir Roderick," I said. "Good morning."

Nothing could have exceeded the courtesy with which I had spoken. Conceive of my astonishment, therefore, when his only reply was a grunt, and an indubitably unpleasant grunt, at that. I felt that my diagnosis of the situation had been wrong. Right off the bull's-eye I had been. Here was no square-shooting apologist. He couldn't have been glaring at me with more obvious distaste if I had been the germ of dementia praecox.

Well, if that was the attitude he was proposing to adopt—well, I mean to say. My geniality waned. I drew myself up coldly, at the same time raising a stiff eyebrow. And I was about to work off the old To-what-am-I-indebted-for-this-visit gag, when he chipped in ahead of me.

"You ought to be certified!"

"I beg your pardon?"

"You're a public menace. For weeks, it appears, you have been making life a hell for all your neighbors with some hideous musical instrument. I see you have it now. How dare you play that thing in a respectable block of flats? Infernal din!"

I remained cool. "Did you say 'infernal din'?"

"I did."

"Oh? Well, let me tell you that the man who has not music in his soul . . ." I stepped to the door. "Jeeves," I called down the passage, "what was it Shakespeare said the man who hadn't music in his soul was fit for?"

"Treasons, stratagems, and spoils, sir."

"Thank you, Jeeves. Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils," I said, returning.

He danced a step or two. "Are you aware that the occupant of the flat below, Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke, is one of my patients, a woman in a highly nervous condition? I have had to give her a sedative."

I raised a hand. "Spare me the gossip from the loony-bin," I said. "Might I inquire, on my side, if you are aware that Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke owns a Pomeranian?"

"Don't drivle."

"I am not driveling. This animal yaps all day and not infrequently far into the night. So Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke has had the nerve to complain of my banjolele, has she? Ha! Let her first pluck out the Pom which is in her own eye," I said, becoming a bit Scriptural.

He chafed visibly. "I am not here to talk about dogs. I wish for your assurance that you will immediately cease annoying this unfortunate woman."

I shook the head. "I am sorry she is a cold audience, but my Art must come first."

"That is your final word, is it?"

"It is."

"Very good. You will hear more of this."

"And Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke will hear more of this,"

I replied, brandishing the banjolele.

I touched the buzzer.

"Jeeves," I said, "show Sir R. Glossop out!"

I confess that I was well pleased with the manner in which I had comforted myself during this clash of wills. There was a time, you must remember, when the sudden appearance of old Glossop in my sitting room would have been enough to send me bolting for cover like a rabbit. But since then I had passed through the furnace, and the sight of him no longer filled me with a nameless dread.

With a good deal of quiet self-satisfaction I proceeded to play "The Wedding of the Painted Doll," "Singin' in the Rain," "Three Little Words," "Good Night, Sweetheart," "My Love Parade," "Spring Is Here," "Whose Baby Are You?" and part of "I Want an Automobile with a Horn That Goes Toot-Toot," in the order named. And it was as I was approaching the end of this last number that the telephone rang.

I went to the instrument and stood listening. And as I listened, the face grew hard and set.

"Very good, Mr. Manglehoffer," I said coldly. "You may inform Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke and her associates that I choose the latter alternative."

I touched the bell.

"Jeeves," I said, "there has been a spot of trouble."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Unpleasantness is rearing its ugly head in Berkeley Mansions, W. I note also a lack of give-and-take and an absence of the neighborly

spirit. I have just been talking to the manager of this building on the telephone, and he has delivered an ultimatum. He says I must either chuck playing the banjolele or clear out."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Complaints, it would seem, have been lodged by the Honorable Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke, of C-6; by Lieutenant-Colonel J. J. Bustard, D.S.O., of B-5; and by Sir Everard and Lady Blennerhasset, of B-7. All right. So be it. We shall be well rid of these Tinkler-Moulkes, these

WODEHOUSE

My favorite living author

by ARTHUR BRISBANE

Cosmopolitan Magazine, with this issue, begins the publication of P. G. Wodehouse's serial, "Thank You, Jeeves!" and the Editor of Cosmopolitan writes:

"Please send a few words about your favorite living author, Wodehouse, and what you think of him."

The tablet commemorating Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul's Cathedral, which he built, tells you that to

know what sort of architect Wren was, you need only look about you.

Since Wodehouse's "Thank You, Jeeves!" starts in this number of Cosmopolitan, it is hardly necessary to say more about Wodehouse than: "Read his story, and you will know that Wodehouse is a genius, with an extraordinary knowledge of human nature, humor, subtle and delightful, and amazing power in the analysis of character."

Wodehouse's study of the British "aristocrat" depending on his servant for mental inspiration, and physical care, appealing to the valet with his eternal: "Rally round, Jeeves," is as well done and ten times as interesting as any naturalist's study of the parasite ant and workers that care for it.

When Dickens' "Pickwick Papers" was published in installments, many English men and women would walk two or three miles along the road to meet the postman, and get their next installment half an hour earlier.

When Eugène Sue's "Mysteries of Paris" was appearing in serial form, farmers waited around the post office at Batavia, New York, for distribution of the next chapter.

Whoever reads an installment of a story by Wodehouse will wait as eagerly, and with as good reason, for the next.

The Editor of Cosmopolitan and his readers are to be congratulated on securing "Thank You, Jeeves!"



P. G. Wodehouse



Arthur Brisbane



"If it is really your intention to continue playing that instrument," said Jeeves, "I have no option but to leave." The Wooster blood boiled over. "Then leave, dash it!"

Bustards, and these Blennerhassetts. I leave them without a pang."

"You are proposing to move, sir?"

I raised the eyebrows. "Surely, Jeeves, you cannot imagine that I ever considered any other course?"

"But I fear you will encounter a similar hostility elsewhere, sir."

"Not where I am going. It is my intention to retire to

the depths of the country. In some old-world, sequestered nook I shall find a cottage, and there resume my studies."

"A cottage, sir?"

"A cottage, Jeeves. If possible, honeysuckle-covered."

The next moment, you could have knocked me down with a toothpick. There was a brief pause, and then Jeeves, whom I've nurtured (*Continued on page 126*)

The Greater



Brown Bros.

Madame Schumann Heink, world-famous singer and devoted mother.



by

**ERNESTINE
SCHUMANN-
HEINK**

Illustrations by R. J. Cavaliere

Her glorious voice made her the grandest Erda and Valtraute of Wagnerian opera.

HOW MANY mothers I have known—rich and poor, Queens and Empresses, opera singers, peasants, dancers—all the varied throng through which my life has passed! And in all my life, in many lands, I have never known a bad mother. All mothers are good mothers. Some are better than others, of course—sweeter, better educated, more charming, more domestic. But every woman I have ever known gives to her children the best she has in her. As a mother, every woman is at her best.

Let no one tell you that the rich, or the high of birth, neglect their children. I know better. I shall never forget my first meeting face to face with the Kaiserin—the real Kaiserin, not the Kaiser's second wife. My fine dear friend Baronin von Gersdorff was first lady in waiting at the Palace, and often I was asked to see her at tea time. One cold rainy day, as we sat together talking, a message came down to us. The Kaiserin had heard that I was in the house and would like me to come up and talk and sing to her.

I was terrified for the moment. But I forgot my fears as soon as I saw who was waiting to take us up in the elevator. It was none other than Joachim, that lovely young boy who later died such a tragic death by his own hand. In those days, he was just a dear sweet child, exultant at running the elevator, as any other small boy would have been.

The Kaiserin was kindness itself. She made me sit on the sofa at her side. She told me all her pleasure in hearing me sing the week before, at the big charity concert for the benefit of the Messina earthquake sufferers. And then she took my hand in hers and said, "But your children—what becomes of your children when you are going about the country singing?"

Gifts



"This Christmas spirit that rules the rest of the world for only one day in the year is in the hearts of mothers all year round, for after all, motherhood means giving." So writes the beloved Schumann-Heink, as she unfolds here some untold stories of great mothers she has known

She nearly broke my heart, though she did not know it. That was the question I asked myself every day and every night. And yet, if I had stayed home with my children, we should all have starved together. I tried to control myself, and I said to her as gently as I could:

"Why I must leave my children is a long story, Your Majesty, but believe me, I have not done it without realizing fully the sacrifice. I assure Your Majesty, it is a sacrifice no woman would make unless necessity absolutely demanded it."

She patted my hand and looked at me—she could see the tears in my eyes and feel the grief in my voice—and said, "Oh, you poor mother!"

She knew a mother's heart, the Kaiserin did. Her children were all the world to her, and I know no peasant mother in her little hut cared more deeply and more intimately for her children than did the Kaiserin herself. When the Princes and the little Princess were sick with childish ailments, the Kaiserin never left their

side. She was always there to amuse a fretful child, or smooth an aching head, or offer a cool drink.

The Czarina of Russia was another devoted mother. How terrible it was that all her care could not prevent the lives of her whole family (Continued on page 86)

T. P. Carver 33



There was a Certain

Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, Jesus said unto him. And when he heard, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich . . .

But old Mirabel was a woman, and had a readier sympathy and in the end she found that the Master, after all, was right.

In old Mirabel's mail came pitiful appeals for assistance. She wrote checks and checks and checks.



THROUGHOUT the long years that prosperity had reigned in the land, old Mirabel Marston had lived in complete content. She had a fat, wide house, rosy fat maids, a portly butler, a buxom housekeeper, and a plethoric bank account which met all the demands of her luxurious existence.

Old Mirabel gave liberally to civic and church charities, and was on various boards and committees. She entertained delightfully, with old-fashioned lavishness as to food and drink. She enjoyed life in a nice, middle-aged fashion, having progressed expertly from whist to auction and from auction to contract.

Since her husband's death she had never danced—a

matter not so much of constancy as of common sense. The years had added pounds to her girlish slimness, and old Mirabel was too astute to attempt to challenge the charms of youth. She had, indeed, charms of her own. The pink-and-whiteness of her complexion was set off by the silver of her lovely hair; and her straight shoulders and high bust gave full effect to the rich gowns in which she arrayed herself.

Most of her friends were, like herself, affluent. There were a few, of course, with whom life had dealt hardly, but these seemed merely to emphasize the good fortune of the others, and they were, none of them, in distress so acute as to darken old Mirabel's days.

Rich Woman....

by TEMPLE
BAILEY

Illustrations by
R. F. Schabelitz



Then suddenly the world changed. The smooth waters which had borne old Mirabel gently down the stream of life were troubled. People about her began to practice economy—fewer furs and diamonds, fewer facials, fewer trips abroad, limited budgets for household expenses. Banks were closed. Businesses crashed. Everywhere was storm and stress. Dividends were cut. Nobody entertained. Bread lines formed in certain parts of towns. Taxes went up. Incomes went down. One heard a lot about the unemployed. Starving babies . . .

Old Mirabel talked to her lawyer: "I seem to have as much as ever."

"Your husband made excellent investments, and you

have been wise to hold the securities he left you. Unless some unforeseen catastrophe occurs, you need have no fears for your future."

"Well," old Mirabel told him, "it seems selfish to me—to have so much when everybody has so little."

The lawyer smiled indulgently. "On the contrary," he said, "you'd better thank the gods you've got it."

Old Mirabel went home and thought it over. To be sure, she could afford all the new clothes she wanted—but if nobody else had new clothes, why flaunt her finery? And if she entertained in the old extravagant fashion, it might embarrass her friends. One of them had told her so flatly. "Gracious goodness, Bella, don't



Damaris had fallen in love, and she didn't know what to do about

think of giving a party on your birthday. None of us has anything to wear, and nobody has any money for presents."

"I don't want presents." There was a flush on old Mirabel's cheeks.

"No, of course not, and I hope I haven't hurt your feelings, but you'd better spend what you have on the poor."

"I *am* giving to the poor."

"I know—but there are a lot of unemployed. And keeping up this expensive house . . . Nobody has butlers any more."

"But if I let Simmons go, who will take him on? I thought of doing without some of the maids, but where would they go?"

"Well," said her critic vaguely, "it seems as if you might do *something*."

That was the way with everybody. They all seemed to think that because old Mirabel had money, she ought to be shown the way to spend it. None of them had anything else to give, so they were more than generous with advice. They poured it out on old Mirabel like cream on cereal or like maple sirup on hot cakes.

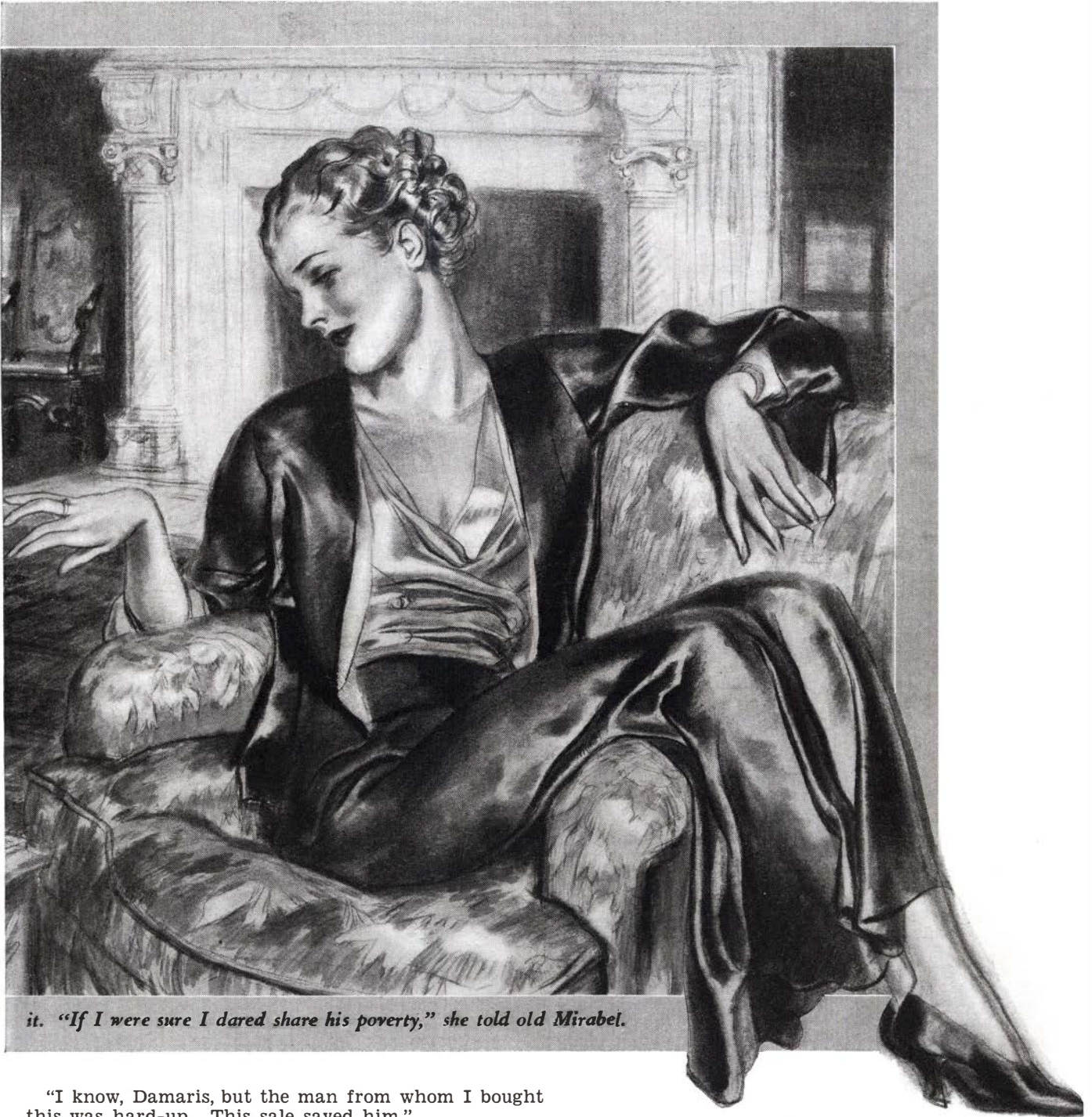
Even her niece, Damaris, who was young and infallible and much occupied at the moment with a sweatshop strike, and who leaned heavily towards Russia, told her Aunt Bella what she thought about it. Normally, the niece would have made her *début* this winter and been active as a Junior Leaguer. But her father had lost his money, and she had given him to understand it was the fault of the older generation that everything had happened, and that only a Youth Movement would save the world. Old Mirabel was much on her mind, and she found opportunity for admonition, when her aunt presented her, one morning, with a zircon ring.

Damaris adored zircons, but she felt this was not the moment to acquire rings and things, and she said so. She had been spending the week-end with old Mirabel, after several days of marching with the strikers, and she felt as comfortable as a kitten in a basket. But she was not sure she ought to be comfortable.

She slipped the ring on her little finger and stuck it out to get the effect. "Oh, darling, you shouldn't."

"Why not?" old Mirabel demanded.

"I could have used the money for my girls. They are so hard-up and unhappy."



it. "If I were sure I dared share his poverty," she told old Mirabel.

"I know, Damaris, but the man from whom I bought this was hard-up. This sale saved him."

"Of course, he'd tell you that."

Old Mirabel opened her mouth to argue, but shut it again. No matter what she said, Damaris would have an answer ready. And her cocksureness had a devastating effect on old Mirabel, who was never cocksure about anything. In her years of living she had learned that there's more than one side to every story. But Damaris saw only one side, and at the moment, she was concerned for her sweatshop strikers.

"Can you give me a check for them, Aunt Mirabel? I hope you don't think I'm milking you too hard, but if you could see the homes they live in . . ."

Old Mirabel had seen many homes. She spoke now of a young couple. "I've just given them five hundred dollars. I tell you this, Damaris, so that if I don't make your checks so large, you'll understand."

"Oh, Aunt Mirabel, it's like pouring water into a sieve."

Again old Mirabel did not argue. There was a chance that Damaris was right, for the young couple were expecting a baby, and they weren't very practical. They thought the five hundred dollars would last forever.

Old Mirabel knew it wouldn't, but she was prepared to lend more. They were so happy about the baby, even if the young husband was out of work and the young wife knew nothing of cooking.

Damaris said, "They've got a radio and a car."

"I know."

"But with a baby coming! Can't they sell the radio, or the car? You're just encouraging their foolishness."

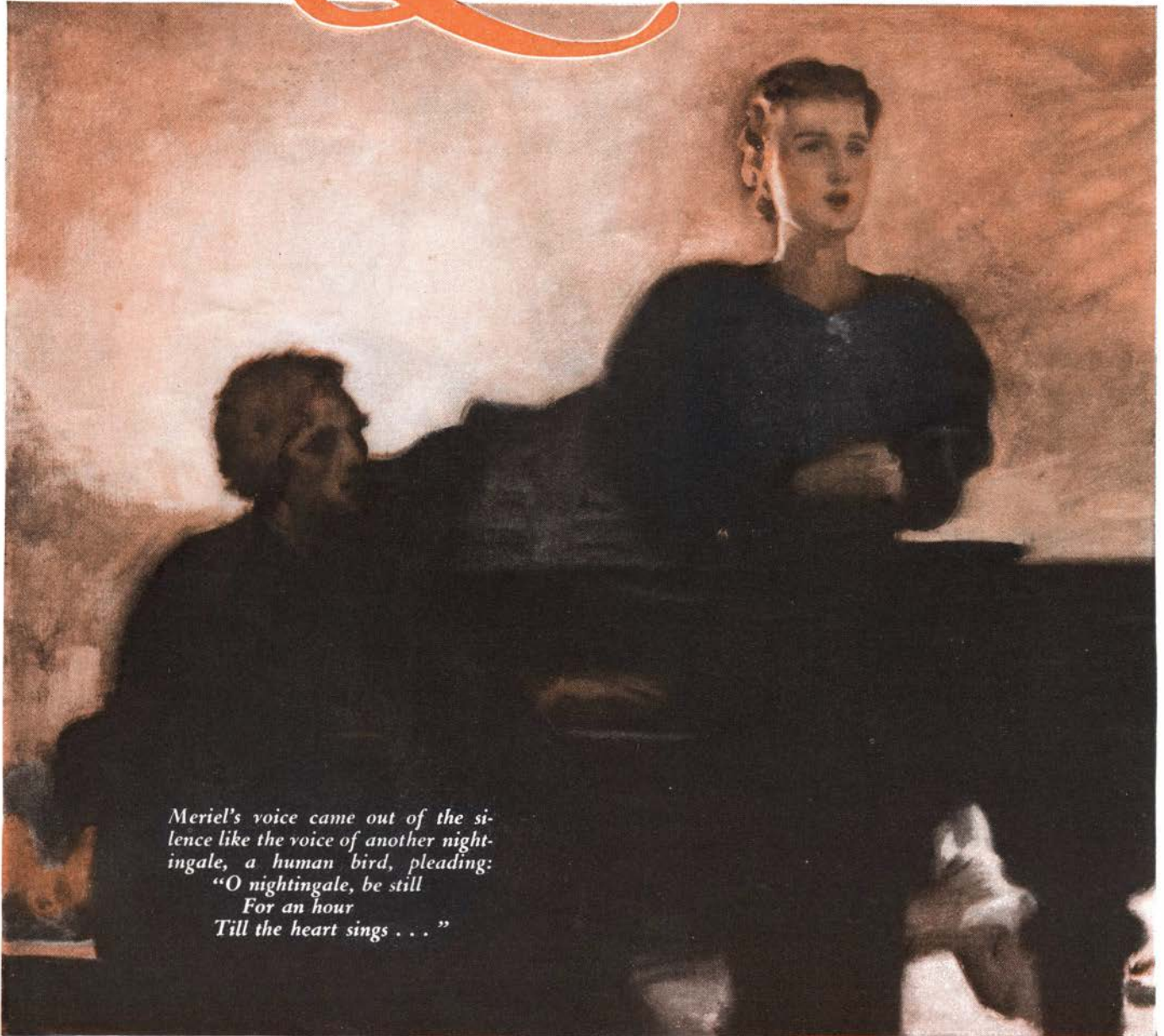
Old Mirabel wasn't quite sure what Damaris meant—whether it was the radio or the car or the baby she was encouraging. She grew to dread Damaris' coming because of her probing questions. But Damaris loved her week-ends at old Mirabel's. "It's heavenly to have hot baths and my breakfast in bed. If I give four days a week to the strikers, I deserve something for myself."

"If you were in Russia," old Mirabel said, "there wouldn't be hot baths, nor anybody to serve breakfast."

"Don't try to be logical," Damaris said. "There's no logic in things like that—and (Continued on page 111)

A great and revealing novel of the stage door of

LOVE



*Meriel's voice came out of the silence like the voice of another nightingale, a human bird, pleading:
"O nightingale, be still
For an hour
Till the heart sings . . ."*

In the First Installment:

MERIEL LAWTON and her brother Roy and her giddy younger sister Amabel all arrived home on the same day—to upset the house and their parents, as they had since their childhood. Meriel had been studying singing in Chicago, but her voice had become strained and Pribula, her teacher, had sent her home; Roy, hurt on the football field, arrived on crutches; Amabel had flunked most of her examinations at boarding school.

The senior Lawtons, though accustomed to the scrapes of their irrepressible offspring, were horrified at the news about Meriel's voice—for in Meriel they saw a world-famous singer, as her mother's dead sister Meriel had been in her day.

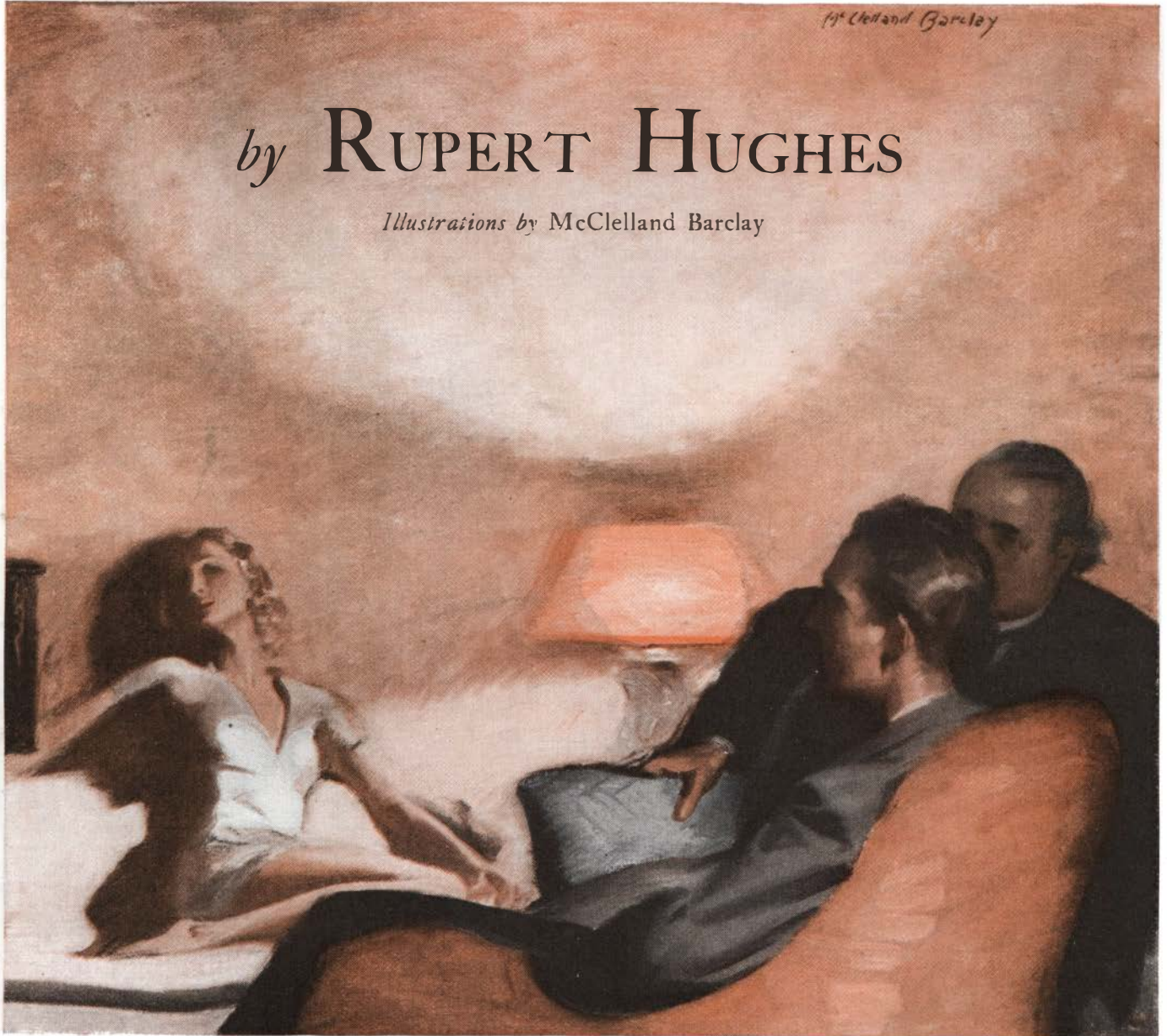
The next morning after the tempestuous arrival of the three young Lawtons, the youngest came home from school, with a note from his principal reporting that his eyes needed attention. And on that same morning Boyd Tallon arrived from Chicago to beg

grand opera—and what goes on behind the scenes

SONG

by RUPERT HUGHES

Illustrations by McClelland Barclay



Meriel to marry him and give up all thoughts of a career. But that night Georges de Cavenac, a well-known conductor, asked Meriel to sing in a cantata which he was putting on in Carthage, and later, he urged her to go to New York to study with his friend Scordek.

Meriel asked Boyd to decide whether she should marry him or continue studying, promising to do as he said. He, of course, demanded that she marry him. And having agreed, Meriel told Cavenac that she could not sing in his cantata, could not study with Scordek.

Beside himself with disappointment, the Frenchman insisted. They quarreled, and Meriel slapped his face. Whereupon, he slapped hers.

IN THE DREADFUL hush that followed the sudden storm everybody felt ashamed of something and wondered what the consequences might be. Meriel was aghast at herself for having slapped Cavenac whose offense, after all, was only that he had believed her too

great and tried too earnestly to drag her up to the heights that belonged to her and beckoned to her.

She hated him for being more ambitious for her than she was for herself. Her cheek still burned from the slap he had given her in return for her own, and she hated him for that—or did she? When he left he would take with him her high hopes of a glorious future. Her wrath was mournful.

Cavenac's self-control had been shattered by the sting of Meriel's blow, and still more by the instantaneous ferocity of its return. He was not proud of having struck a woman, and blamed himself for provoking her to strike him. As usual, he collected his scattered faculties as a man collects a runaway horse and reins it in with a cruel curb.

He managed to bow to Meriel as he took from her the cantata he had begged her to sing for her sake and his own. There was still a little irony and fury in his bow, but for her mother he had nothing but respect. She was still clinging to Boyd Tallon to keep him from avenging Cavenac's attack on Meriel with a knock-out blow. And she hung to Boyd's eager shivering arm as Cavenac bowed and said:

"Madame, I cannot ask you to pardon my so unpardonable *grossièreté*. We others, we musicians, are all a little mad. You know that. It is misfortune enough that you are both the sister of a great *artiste* who is dead and the mother of a great *artiste* who refuse to be born. It is not your fault that she is also a little—*indolente*. Be merciful to her—and to me."

HE BOWED to Walter: "Monsieur!" To Amabel, who was agog with the melodrama in her own home: "Mademoiselle." To Roy: "Monsieur!" He looked at Boyd, who was trembling with rage as Ada took a new grip on him, expecting Cavenac to say something that would be unbearable and would force Boyd to an explosion of righteous fury. Instead, Cavenac said:

"Monsieur, my very humble apologies to you—and to myself. I am sober again. But I always grow a little drunk when I hear music that is too fine. It is you that have my most sincere sympathy. You love a beautiful lady. She loves you. But she also loves song—*hélas* for her; *hélas* for you. You are a strong man; be merciful to her. She cannot be merciful to you."

Boyd had not the faintest idea what to make of all this or do about it. One thing was certain, he could hardly answer such fantastic sincerity with his fists. He stood paralyzed with bewilderment. So did Meriel as Cavenac paused before her and rubbed his cheek, making a curious little grimace.

"Perhaps it is you who will do the fighting, and your fiancé who will sing. Good-by!"

Something in this seemed to tickle him utterly. Yet he seemed to be amused less at her than at himself and his ideals. He walked widely round Meriel with exaggerated terror, and there was something uncanny, introspective in his laughter as it came faintly from the hall and was cut off short by the door when he closed it, separating himself from the confusion he left behind.

Cavenac did not see Meriel again, nor she him, until he walked into Scordek's New York studio weeks later and found her standing by a piano shouting, "Bay-you-oo! Bay-yee-ee!"

At the sight of him she fell back against the piano and braced herself for a blast of ice or fire, but he gave her only a careless glance, not recognizing her in the late afternoon gloom and in her smart new hat. When he knew her for who she exactly was, he cried:

"Meriel? Not my Meriel!" He rushed at her, seized both her hands in his and kissed, not them, but both her cheeks as he roared: "But this is—*incroyable!* This is— How are you here? How long you have been here? Why you don't let me know?"

"I was afraid to, after we had that fight."

"Afraid that I should slap you again? Well, I might. I may. Time will tell. What of it?" Linking his arm in hers and patting her cheek as he purred, he turned to Scordek. "She slapped me first."

Meriel was not compelled to remain long in the cowboy barytone's arm. She was seized and spun into the presence of E. J. Mapes, the successful novelist. "Keep your hands off my gigolo, wench," said Miss Mapes.



The burly Scordek shook the room with his silent laughter. "All ladies slap Cavenac. And he slaps them back."

"Why not? It is the greatest compliment I can pay." He turned to Meriel. "But how do you happen to encounter this fat Scordek and fall into his trap?"

Scordek explained. "One day my telephone rang. A beautiful lady's voice—a lady's beautiful voice says: 'Could I see you about some singing lessons?' I say, 'Sure, why not?' Well, after the telephone, she comes to my door and she says, 'I am Miss Lawton. Mr. de Cavenac advised me to study with you.' 'Ah,' I say, 'so you are a friend of de Cavenac?' and she says, 'Oh, no; quite the contrary. But he told me that you were one of the few teachers who is not a fool.' I said to her, 'He may say that sort of thing behind my back, but to my face he says that I am an idiot.'"

"And so you are, if you do not confess that this girl



here has the most divine voice you ever heard. She has the most hellish personality I ever met, but her voice——”

“I’ve heard it! I’m not deaf. You haven’t got the only pair of ears in town, though perhaps the longest. As soon as she sang for me, I told her she sang like an angel. She has a tendency to flinch at her high notes, but she told me about that swine-snout of a Pribula.”

“I saved her from him. I explain to her—out in that Carthage—that singing is only calling to somebody.”

“You would tell her that! But singing is a hell of a lot more than calling somebody. Singing is——”

“Oh, for God’s sake, don’t give me a lesson! Save that for your poor pupils. I came to take you out to dinner. Let us celebrate the arrival of my prodigal, this Meriel here.” He turned to her. “If you have an engagement, break it, for I must hear all about your dear mother, and your father, so fine a man—and your

little sister, so *exquisite*, and your big broken brother, and your little brother who reads ‘Paradeese Loosed’ and—*grand Dieu*, what a family!—have I perhaps omitted several? Oh, yes, the large black lady who says, ‘Will you kindly rest you hat?’

“But most of all, I want to hear about the gentleman who was going to slog me and your mother saved me—and him. And did you marry him? and are you divorced already?—but first, where shall we eat? We will eat at—where? I have it! We will eat at an Italian speak, *hein?* Come along, Scor-die. Must we wait forever for you always?”

There was chatter in the narrow elevator. There was a debate at the curb over taking a taxicab or walking through the mud of a recent rain and a late hovering mist. The men hesitated to walk because of Meriel’s little feet. She cried:

“I’d love it; I love New York, muddy and foggy and dark and noisy. It’s more New Yorky.”

There seemed indeed to be a sort of black poetry in its uglier hours. She adored the sophisticated wrangles of these two great men who jostled her about, crushed her between them when they spoke across her, yet wanted to fight any passer-by who jostled them. They pushed through the fog of people, incessantly a-babble of music.

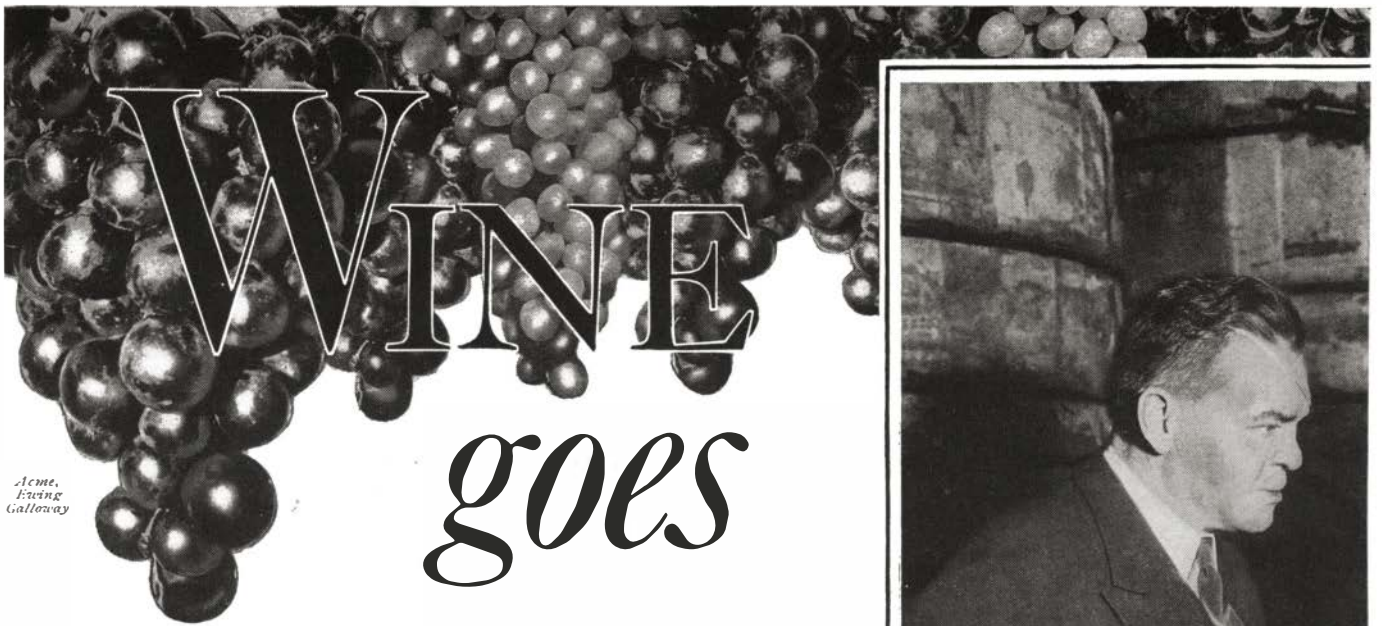
They crossed Sixth Avenue at its shabbiest, under the roaring, creaking, leaking trestles of the elevated. They dipped into a side street, the wrong one—turned back to Sixth Avenue,

swept along it, taking the throngs three abreast or sidelong, worming through any which way, always hanging on to Meriel till they threatened to pull her apart.

She squealed gayly: “You’re going to pull me apart.” “Why not?” said Scordek. “Isn’t that what we do with a wishbone?”

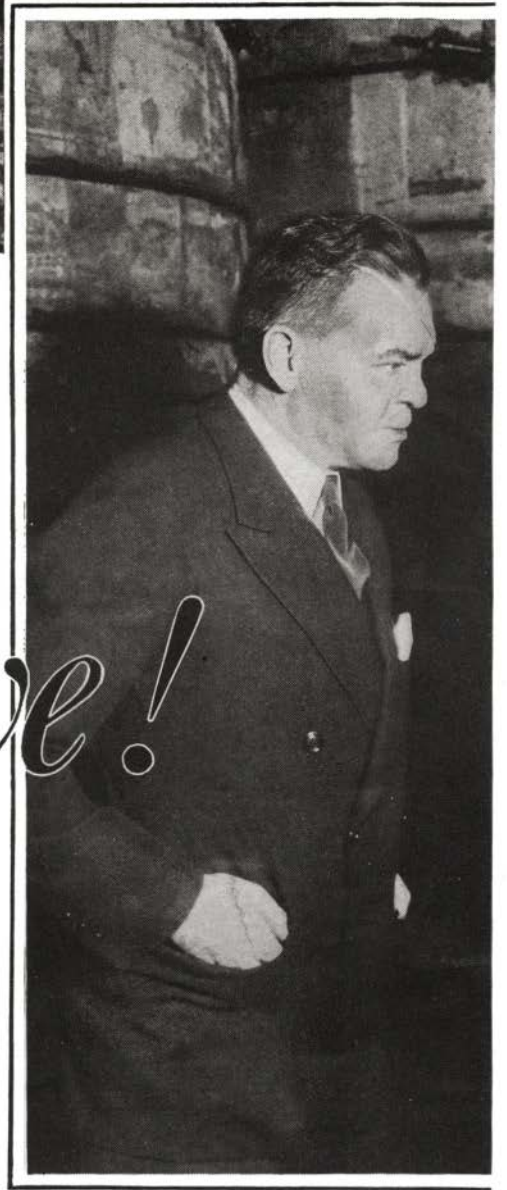
WHEN THEY reached the right street, Meriel was amazed to find, after all their fervid advertisement, that their goal was the side door of a shoddy three-story building. An Italian opened a peephole, then swung the door back with a low bow. Cavenac and Scordek called him “Toni.” Meriel had decided that all speak-easies—and there were thousands of them then—were run by men named Toni.

Cavenac lingered to introduce this Toni to “Signorina Meriel Lawtone,” and (Continued on page 145)



Acme,
Ewing
Galloway

goes Native!



Drawing off a sample of real American wine. Floyd Gibbons an interested spectator.

DO YOU KNOW:

That the United States has over 600,000 acres producing 2,000,000 tons of wine grapes a year?

That there are jobs for 400,000 workers in these vineyards?

That American wine will yield from \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000 a year in Federal revenue alone, and put half a billion dollars a year into circulation?

Moreover, American wines are as good as skill can produce, says Floyd Gibbons, whom Cosmopolitan sent to find out what this great industry is going to do for prosperity and how it will affect the habits of our people.

HELLO, EVERYBODY! Remember, back in 1919, how the neighbors started complaining about Uncle Sam's three noisy brats, Johnnie Barleycorn, Lotta Suds and little La Vina? There wasn't anything to do but to lock them right out in a January blizzard.

Did they freeze to death? Not much. Lotta Suds came back last April, looking just the same as she looked thirteen years ago when she went away. John Barleycorn is ready to tear into the fatted calf, and he looks just the same.

But little La Vina—there's the surprise. She was a skinny little thing when she was tossed out into the storm. One might think she would have starved to death in those thirteen dry, lean years. But she didn't, and here she is now, a full-blown, dazzling débutante.

We've been looking forward to repeal as bringing back a couple of thriving institutions—the brewery and the distillery. We've been talking about wines in only a casual sort of way. When the brewing of beer came back, it was an old familiar industry, as was distilling.

But wine, in these thirteen years behind the Prohibition curtain, has secretly become a big, independent industry that we've never known before in America!

From the standpoint of revenues, of a source of employment, of effect on the drinking habits of Americans and of a surprise to the wine producers of Europe who have been laying for our bank roll—weil, Cosmopolitan assigned me to give our now grown-up little La Vina the once-over. And boys and girls, here's what she has in her beaded hand bag:

Six hundred thousand acres of vineyards, with a Prohibition-time value of \$300,000,000, back on a paying basis.

Annual production of 2,000,000 tons of grapes—and going up.

Jobs for 400,000 workers.

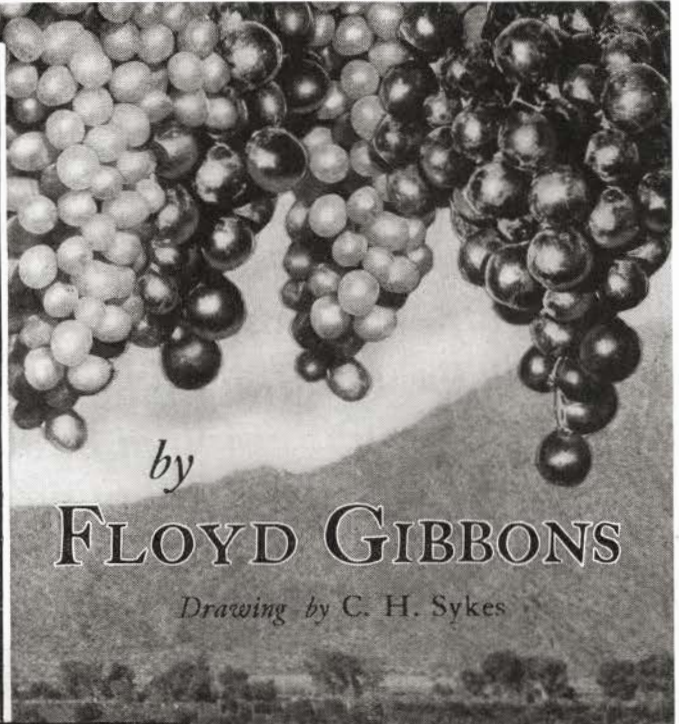
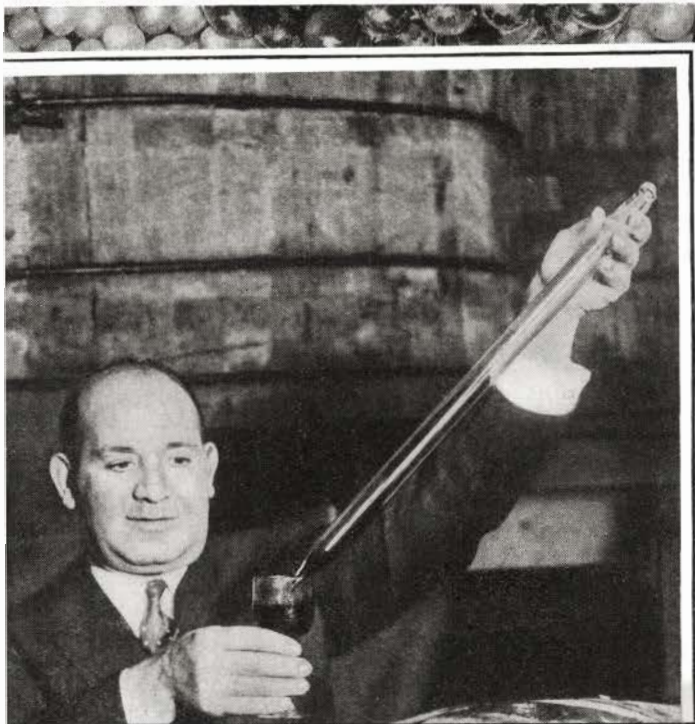
Four hundred wineries recommissioned at once and working full blast to increase the present capacity of 72,000,000 gallons a year.

Release from storage of 36,482,000 gallons of wine.

Coast-to-coast railway haulage; new casks, bottles, labels; advertising; glassware; restaurant and hotel preparations, and other factors in distribution.

Federal revenue, \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000. Tax revenues—who knows?

Right there the curtain goes up on a full-grown industry that puts more than \$500,000,000 a year in circulation!



by
FLOYD GIBBONS

Drawing by C. H. Sykes



Keystone.



Erving Gallowsay

Little La, Vina was a skinny thing when she was tossed out into the storm thirteen years ago. And here she is—a dazzling débutante! (Right) An American grape harvest in the Southwest.

And it is only a beginning. Americans—especially the Californians who own eighty-five percent of the grape industry—believe they have captured the American wine market which was dominated by Europe for two centuries.

The news reels have been full of pictures lately of European wine-growing communities (*Cont. on page 125*)

Auto-by-dography

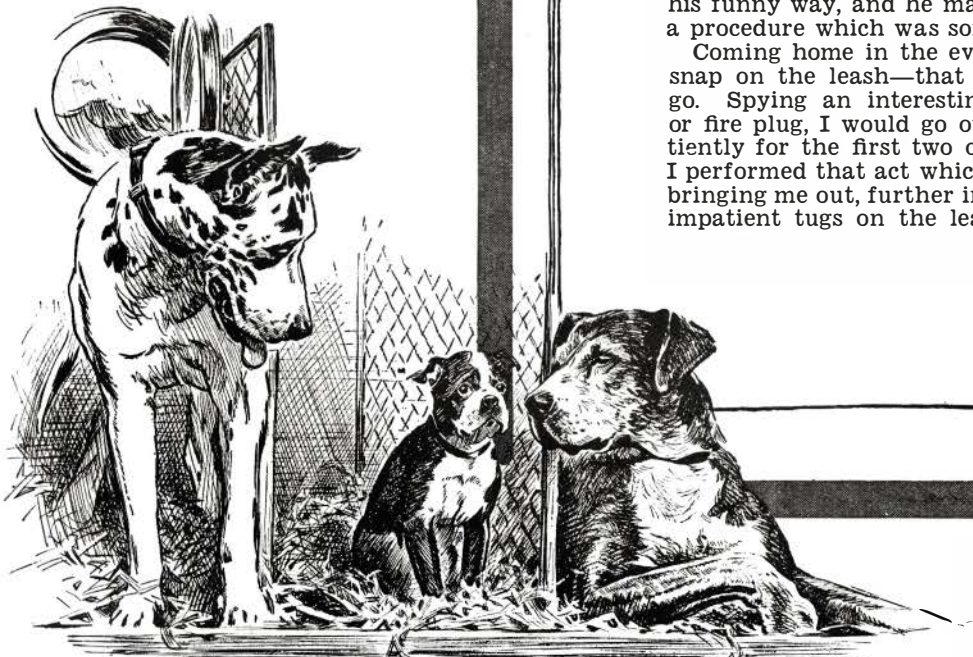
As barked to

MORGAN DENNIS

Illustrations by The Author



I can't help but laugh in my whiskers sometimes when I hear some woman feel sorry for a stray dog who hasn't any home!



I AM TWELVE years old. My eyes are growing dim, my teeth dull. It won't be long now to Christmas, when I shall get a new rubber bone with a ribbon on it, and a stocking all full of exciting new toys. For I'm a rather gay old dog, and still relish the squeaking rubber cats and other amusements of my salad days.

But before I go on to the land of eternal trees, everlasting bones and slow-footed cats, and at this season of the year when the most tight-hearted Scrooge feels something of the spirit of "Peace on earth, good will to men," I want to set down a few of my observations on *man*. As "man's best friend," I am going to ask him to extend to us some of the season's good will and carry it on through the rest of the year. I am going to tell man that his love of us is often selfish; that his "kindness" to us is often cruelty. Tell him that we have complexes just like he has. Tell him that we are sometimes neurotic, sometimes emotionally unbalanced through too much kindness.

I hope that the following notes, which have been gathered from my own experiences and those of my friends, may revise popular opinions about our tastes and needs.

Now there's the city dog. He spends most of his time in an apartment not much larger than his country cousin's kennel. His master "airs" him in the morning before he goes to work, and in the evening when he comes home. You have all seen the technique of this "airing" process, and probably never realized how cruel it is to the dog.

Let me illustrate from my experiences in the two years I lived in an apartment. My master was devoted to me in his funny way, and he made a great point of "airing" me, a procedure which was something as follows:

Coming home in the evening, he would call me to him, snap on the leash—that inevitable leash!—and out we'd go. Spying an interesting-looking tree, or a lamp-post or fire plug, I would go over to sniff. He would wait patiently for the first two or three investigations, but once I performed that act which had been his prime reason for bringing me out, further investigations were terminated by impatient tugs on the leash. If I stopped to pick up a

The great Danes lost no opportunity to make slighting remarks about Beans' size! By the time he left the boat he suffered from an inferiority complex.

of a SCOTTIE

When a dog writes about a man, THAT'S NEWS!



He'd be given all the candy he could hold. It made him pretty sick but somehow he was always happier afterwards.

bit of gossip at this or that tree, I was whisked by it, even though I braced myself against that infernal leash.

I mentioned picking up a bit of gossip. Right here I want to correct an apparently universal theory that humans cherish about us. They seem to think that we sniff at a tree or a post for only one purpose—to select a suitable spot for our “business,” as my master called it.

Nothing could be more erroneous. Such a reason is of secondary importance to us. We investigate trees and other interesting spots to “read” the news of the day. It's our newspaper, our gossip sheet. Thus we learn what other dogs have passed that way, and whether there are any newcomers in the neighborhood. And there's always the possible thrill of picking up the trail of a cat.

Such investigations are one of our greatest pleasures, and to be denied full enjoyment of them after spending the whole day cooped up in an apartment is pretty terrible, I can tell you. Fortunately for me, I moved to the country before this business of tearing my “newspaper” from me had broken my spirit and ruined my disposition.

Many of my friends were not so fortunate, however. I remember a charming fellow, a wire-haired named Rusty. He fought for his right to sniff as long as he could, tugging at his leash with all his might. But once his “business” had been concluded, he was skidded by tree after tree. It finally broke his spirit. He gave up trying to sniff. And his master couldn't understand why he no longer displayed his former pep and interest in life. If only someone could have understood and told my friend's master *why* his pet had become a dull dog, he wouldn't be the neurotic, inhibited Rusty he is today.

I suppose a lot of readers will laugh when I describe a dog as neurotic. Why shouldn't a dog become neurotic? He has nerves. He can be “repressed,” become inhibited, just as easily as his master.

One of the unhappiest cases of a city dog I know was a friend of mine named Roger, a fine bulldog with an engaging personality and a good (Continued on page 141)



Seven Men

by WARWICK
DEEPING

The Story So Far:

ARMISTICE NIGHT in France! Seven Englishmen celebrating together . . . "Gentlemen," said Captain Sherring, "the We Are Seven Club! Every year on the night of November eleventh we meet and dine."

"We may expect to see some interesting changes in the future," observed Second Lieutenant Bastable, a forceful young man but no war hero. And changes there had been, none more striking than the change in the relative positions of Sherring, a failure in the post-war world, and Bastable, a financial success. Of the others, Loviebond had become a broker, Pitt a fashionable physician, Steel a bank clerk; Kettle, once a burglar, had turned grocer, and Crabtree had gone back to the land.

Sherring had spent a week-end with Crabtree after the first reunion dinner and met the latter's sister Una, an interesting if plain young woman who had quite lost her heart to him. Meanwhile, however, he had fallen in love with Mira Manetti, a dancing instructress in London. An excellent dancer himself, he became Mira's partner and thence drifted into marriage, taking rooms above her friend Mrs. Flanders' hat shop in Quorn Street, and soon afterwards the generosity of an elderly client, Mr. Wilson, enabled the Sherrings to start a dancing school of their own.

If the rôle of assistant dancing instructor to his wife was not exactly congenial to the sensitive ex-officer, still there was happiness in seeing Mira happy as the Manetti School flourished. But one night they were giving an exhibitor at the Green Cat Club, when Bastable strutted in. Sherring went rigid with embarrassment, then recovered. Probably Bastable would joke about his "profession" at the next armistice dinner. Well, let him!



Came Back



Passionately sulky over the failure of her "show," Mira—her cloak open to the raw night air—refused a taxi and walked off without waiting for her husband.

IN THE SAME room at the Hallam Hotel Loviebond was standing in front of the fire reading a letter that had been addressed to him there. It was an incoherent letter from Steel explaining that he would not be able to attend the dinner. His wife was having a baby, or was about to have a baby, or had had a baby. It really did not matter, and Loviebond was concerned solely with Steel's absence. Loviebond felt no regret. Steel was a cub, and the evening would be more decorous without him.

Loviebond was growing very decorous. He had a platform air. He was not popular. His associates were beginning to avoid him. Sententious, oratorical prig!

"Oh, waiter."

"Sir?" The waiter was the same, crumpled as to shirt. "We shall be only six tonight. Remove one cover."

In this story of seven lives to be fitted into the jigsaw puzzle of a post-war world, Warwick Deeping has achieved his greatest novel

Illustrations by Dean Cornwell

Doctor Pitt was the first to arrive. Pitt was always punctual, perhaps because some of his patients were so variable. He made it his business to protest against any intermittent rhythm in habits or in hearts. He scolded his lady patients, and they liked it! For the last month Doctor Pitt had taken to horn-rimmed spectacles. They made him appear even more round and wise and solid.

"Hello, doctor."

Loviebond stared at Pitt. He stared at Pitt's spectacles. He was developing an unpleasant habit of staring at anything that was both obvious and new. He remarked upon what was obvious as though he—Mr. Loviebond—had discovered something remarkable.

"Hello, spectacles, doctor."

Pitt gave the stockbroker a diagnostic glance. The birth of a bore! He joined Loviebond on the hearthrug. "The spectacled pantaloons! Everybody coming?"

"No; Steel's cried off."

"I'm sorry. Any reason?"

"His wife's having a baby—or something.

Probably she won't let him come. Steel's the sort of noisy ass who ends by being bossed by his wife, doctor."

Pitt looked amused. He wanted to pull Loviebond's leg. "I believe I have to congratulate you. I heard your wife presented you with twins."

Twins! How vulgar; how proletarian! Loviebond adjusted his waistcoat. Solemnly he corrected the canard. "Nothing of the kind. How do these preposterous rumors get about?"

"Fluctuations in the House, Lovie. Markets heavy; men mischievous."

But Loviebond could not see the point of a needle. Crabtree stalked in, shirt bulging slightly and much cuff making his sleeves look short. Pitt went to meet him, but Loviebond remained on the hearthrug. "Evening, Crabtree." He was shocked by Crabtree's shirt.

Crabtree and the doctor were shaking hands when Kettle appeared, a self-conscious and socially significant Kettle, dinner-jacketed, black-tied. Kettle had become a borough councilor, and Mrs. K. was taking their new social position very seriously. She was of the opinion that Kettle should renounce his Saturday shrimps.

"Evenin', gents."

"Hello, Kettle. This is——"

Kettle grinned. "Bit of all-right, Mr. Crabtree. Only got this rig out yesterday. Feels a bit tight in the back."

He revolved, and Pitt ran a hand down Kettle's spine.

"Excellent fit."

"Not so bad for a reach-me-down, doctor."

Loviebond was still looking shocked. Kettle in a dinner jacket! Well, really! The world was becoming hopelessly and dangerously mixed.

Kettle turned to him. "Of course Mr. Loviebond always was our prize knut. Where do you get yours, sir? Faith's?"

He uttered the name of a firm of out-fitters who symbolized for Mr. Loviebond all that was cheap and impossible.

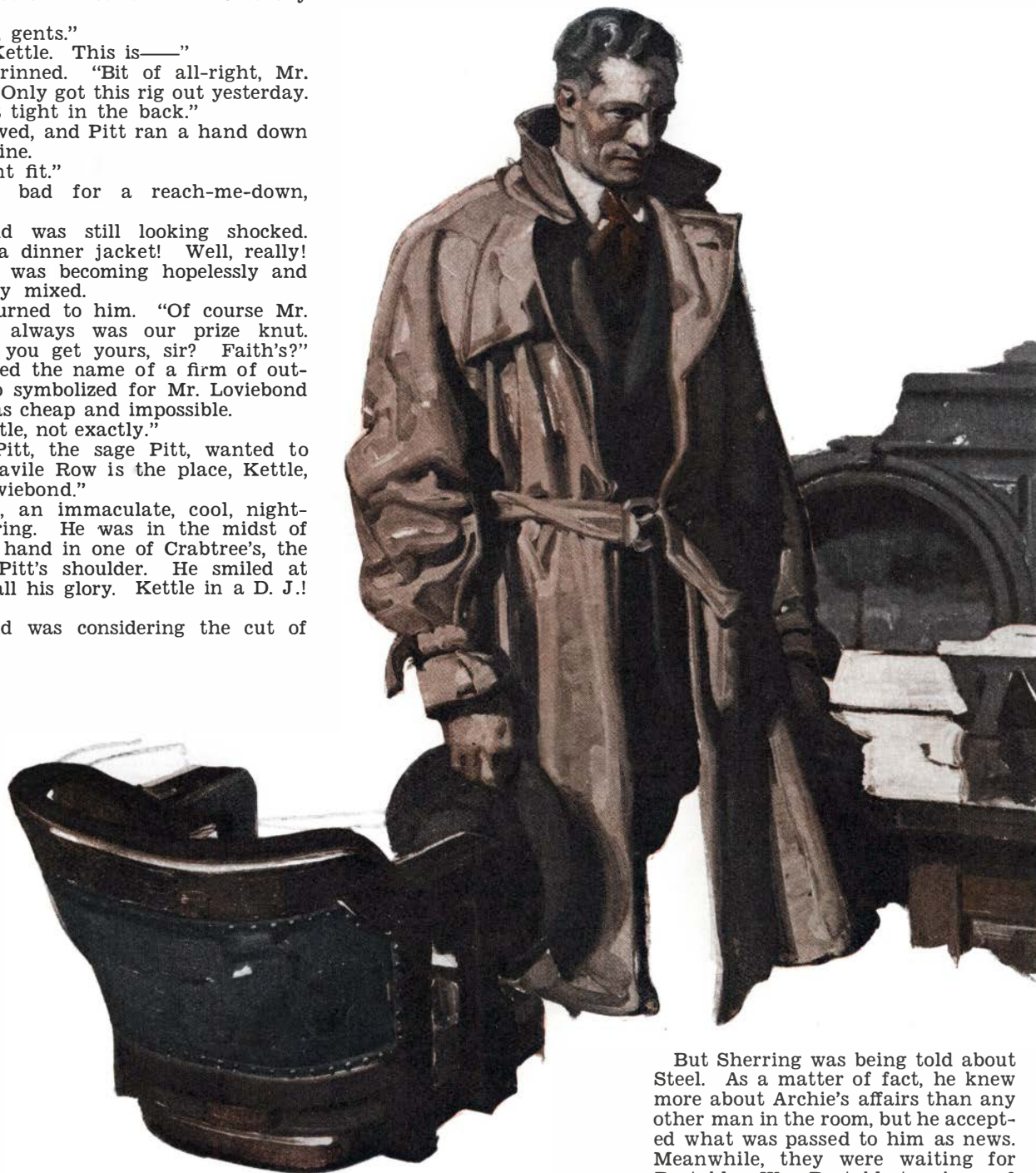
"No, Kettle, not exactly."

Doctor Pitt, the sage Pitt, wanted to giggle. "Savile Row is the place, Kettle, for Mr. Loviebond."

Sherring, an immaculate, cool, night-club Sherring. He was in the midst of them, one hand in one of Crabtree's, the other on Pitt's shoulder. He smiled at Kettle in all his glory. Kettle in a D. J.! Splendid!

Loviebond was considering the cut of

Sherring tried to procure employment through an association for assisting ex-officers. "What do you do, Captain Sherring?" "I teach dancing, sir."



Sherring's coat and the lines of his trousers. Yes, just a bit outie, the cabaret touch, for Loviebond had heard of Captain Sherring's profession from Mr. Bernard Bastable: "Captain Sherring, M.C.—Master of Ceremonies, my dear chap. Hires himself out to the ladies."

Loviebond had expressed himself as feeling shocked. A gentleman like Sherring letting himself down to the level of the seedy and the parasitic! It was remarkable how frequently the decorous Loviebond was receiving social shocks, for he could not be described as a sensitive fellow. His correct, cold egoism was perpetually raising its eyebrows. He was shocked by taxation, by Labor unrest, by the crashing of currencies, by his greengrocer owning a car. Assuredly, the world was going to the dogs. And here was Sherring——!

But Sherring was being told about Steel. As a matter of fact, he knew more about Archie's affairs than any other man in the room, but he accepted what was passed to him as news. Meanwhile, they were waiting for Bastable. Was Bastable turning up?

Loviebond could answer that question. "Certainly." Pitt smiled. "A most unpunctual person, Bastable. I think he has kept us waiting on every possible occasion." Loviebond corrected the doctor. "Once only. Besides, I can tell you Bernard is a man of many affairs." Sherring laughed, and the meticulous Loviebond looked at him reproachfully. Why did Sherring laugh? Surely, there was nothing in Bastable's considerable reputation to provoke humor?

"Of course, if the members who are present wish to begin, Bernard would be the last man to take exception." Sherring and Pitt exchanged smiles.

"I think we might begin."

"Lovie, the drinks are mine tonight."

"Thank you, Sherring. Ah, there is Bernard. Waiter!"



Bastable was wearing a white carnation. Loviebond had moved aside and surrendered to Bastable his place on the hearthrug. Bastable did not shake hands. He gave everybody a sallow smile. He noticed the absence of Steel, and the new splendor of Kettle.

"You run this show so early, Loviebond. As a rule I can't dine before eight-thirty. What has happened to the gentleman who hands out specie?"

Loviebond laughed, and his laughter had become like himself, stilted and formal; but when a fellow like Bastable was witty, you laughed because laughter was good business. "Steel is becoming a father, Bernard." "Legitimately so, I hope. What a pregnant night for a baby!"

Loviebond produced more cachinnation. Really, Bernard was damned witty! But the other men did not appear to appreciate Bastable upon Steel. Crabtree in particular looked glum and displeased.

"Absent members, Loviebond."

Sherring had been watching Bastable as a man in the arena watches some beast that is dangerous. "Well, what about sitting down? Our friend from the City

is, I know, a man of many affairs."

Bastable glanced sharply at Sherring. Sherring's eyes were half shut. Almost he was the ironic, watchful swordsman ready to thrust. Hitherto, he had maintained towards Bastable a quiet tolerance, but that phase had passed.

They sat down to caviar, Pitt on Sherring's right, Crabtree on his left. Kettle and Bastable faced each other, and Kettle, with the astuteness of the cockney, the city child, was alive to the temper of the occasion. He had seen Mr. Sherring look at Mr. Bastable. He knew his Sherring as a man of Kettle's elemental cleverness can come to know another. A brittle, glimmering politeness, a quiet voice, something said that went Zip! like a bullet. Captain Sherring was—after Mr. Bastable. Good business! Kettle was a wiry partisan.

Caviar! Kettle watched Mr. Bastable using his fork. Mr. Bastable was smiling obliquely at Sherring.

"You might suggest to the Green Cat people, Sherring, that a little more originality in their menus would be welcome."

"Isn't that the patron's privilege, Bastable?"

"Haven't you a share in the show?"

"No, I help to provide social caviar for people who pay."

The table was puzzled. It listened. Were Sherring and Bastable exchanging compliments, or those poisoned speeches that are wrapped in silver paper?

Bastable accepted sherry. "Just half a glass, waiter. So—Mephistopheles is part of the stunt. Symbolism, what?"

"Possibly. Caviar on toast, and cayenne for people who think that sort of thing *chic* and sinful. Have you ever seen a green cat?"

"No. But I suppose if one dug up a dead cat, it might be that color."

"Septic?"

"Exactly."

"So I presume you'd appreciate dead cat curried? You see, we try to cater to the tastes of our patrons."

That was one to Sherring. Bastable grinned faintly like a man

who has been hit but does not mean to betray it. The waiters were serving soup, and Pitt attempted a diversion.

"You two seem to have some jest of your own. Being something of an expert on diet—"

Sherring sat with spoon poised two inches above his plate. "May I explain? Bastable is preparing to tell the table that I make my living by giving dancing lessons. I may as well forestall him. Incidentally, I dress up in fancy clothes and exhibit myself at night clubs. Isn't that so, Bastable?"

The eyes of the table were on Bastable. Kettle's were burred with points of light. Bastable appeared busy with his soup. His silence was deliberate.

"Someone asked you a question, Mr. Bastable."

This was from Kettle, whose spoon was very much in the air, and Bastable's eyes fixed themselves on Kettle's tie. It was a ready-to-wear tie, obviously so, and it provided a provocation.

"Did Mrs. Kettle tie that for you, Kettle?"

Kettle's lower lip stuck out still more aggressively. If Mr. Steel was (Continued on page 116)



"Talk, an' talk fast," warned the man with the gun.

Bank Holdup

by CLEMENTS RIPLEY

Illustrations by Forrest C. Crooks

DELIBERATELY, as he did everything, Old Man Ninch read the letter through. Deliberately, while Creevy waited expectant, he swung around to consider the vault door from under judicial brows. "She ain't so much to look at," he admitted.

"She sure is not!" Creevy was emphatic. "Why, Mr. Ninch, a modern bank robber would take that thing apart like a can of sardines."

"Sho'! Think so?" The old man glanced up, a trifle startled. "I dunno—she's mighty solid. Bill Magoon built that vault back in eight'n eighty-four—built her an' gar'nteed her. An' I never heard tell where Bill's gar'ntee failed yet."

You had to humor Old Man Ninch; Creevy had learned that in the year he had spent trying to inject a little modern system and efficiency into the Bank of Mizpah. He said, "Well, of course, Mr. Ninch, but a modern vault creates confidence. And here's a chance to pick one up at twenty cents on the dollar. It's the very latest thing—you know how the Craver National was on equipment."

"Humph! Didn't keep the Craver National from goin' bust, though." The old man picked up the letter again. "Mm—'chilled steel, marble-lined, newest type of time lock—an' nothin' to put in it!" He chuckled.

Creevy met the chuckle with a dutiful grin. He liked the boss, but somebody had to keep even a two-man country bank like this one up with the times.

Tactfully, he abandoned that line. "Well, you see, sir, we're keeping a pretty heavy stock of cash on hand during the cotton-picking season. And with all these robberies—you remember what happened at Dakers."

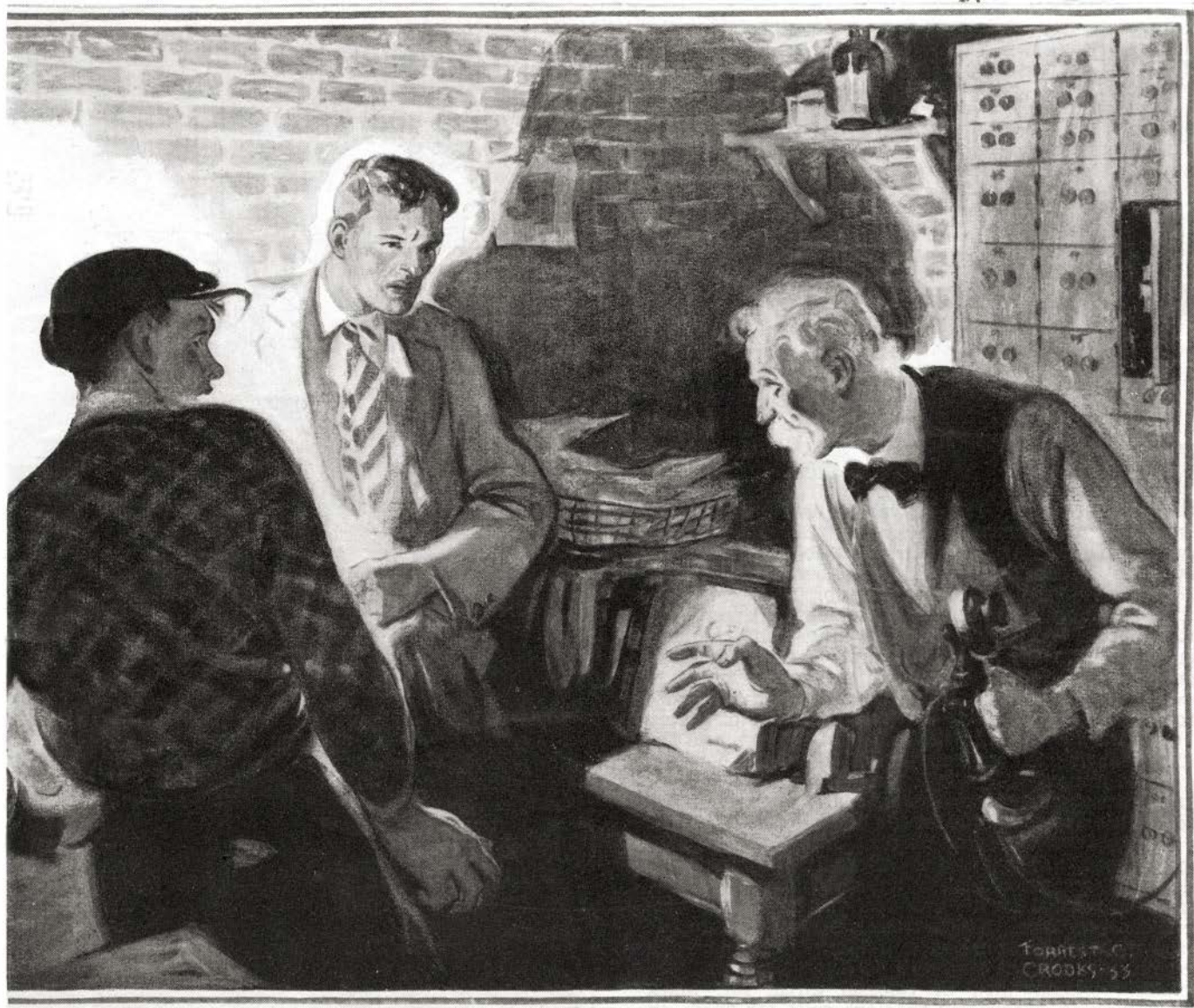
"Well, I reckon the ole hog-leg's as good as ever it was." The banker hitched aside his generous waistcoat to show the bone handle of an old-time Frontier Model Colt 44. His eyes lighted reminiscently. "The' was a passel o' smart Alecks undertook to stand this bank up back in nineteen an' two, I recollect." He spat accurately at the sawdust box. "The's a couple of 'em buried out back o' the jail," he added grimly.

"Well, of course, Mr. Ninch!" Creevy passed that over hastily. He had heard the saga of that one-man battle before. "But honestly, sir, we're 'way behind the times."

"We are," agreed the other imperturbably. "'Bout fifteen years behind 'em. We're solvent."

Friday nights were busy nights in cotton-picking time. It was after eleven when the last pay roll had been made up and the last of the cash checked and placed in the vault. Old Man Ninch turned the dial of the ancient combination lock and tried the door.

Most banks—and bankers!—are a pretty solid sort, down in the Southwest . . . as you'll see from this story of Old Man Ninch, who risked his life to protect the Mizpah National



Old Man Ninch glanced proudly about the vault. "She's mighty solid. Bill Magoon built her in eight'n eighty-four—built her an' gar'nteed her."

"You run along, son," he told Creevy. "One or two little things I want to finish up, an' Bud Dillon'll be in later with his pay-roll state-ments."

Creevy frowned. "I should think he could manage to get them in during banking hours. There isn't another bank in the state that does business at midnight."

"Well, Bud's a mighty good farmer," the old man excused him mildly. "He ain't got half the day to waste comin' into town durin' bankin' hours. I'd liefer set up nights waitin' for his state-ments than worryin' about his loans, like I do some." And, as Creevy hesitated: "Likely him an' me'll set in the cool a little an' talk over ole times. You run along, son, an' get your sleep."

Somehow, the old man looked more enfeebled and ineffectual than usual as he pattered about in the glare of the unshaded bulbs. Still, when you were as old as that, talking about old times was probably about all the fun left you. Creevy said good night and went along.

For a time after his footsteps died away there was no

sound except the ceaseless flick and flutter of moths against the light overhead, and the laborious scratching of the banker's pen. He might have dozed a little, for he did not hear the car outside until it stopped. Then he started up and closed his ledger. That would be Bud. He stepped to the open door.

But the car that poked its glistening nose into the shaft of light was not Bud's car, and the voice that came from it had an accent that was strange to Mizpah. "Hey!" it said. "Hey, fella! This right for Craver?"

At the hail the old man had instinctively stepped back out of the light. Now, reassured, "Why, no," he answered. "You missed the turn back yonder. Best thing now is to go on to the bridge. Take the first right to Bethel Church. Then sharp left by Big Oak an'——"

"Hey, wait!" A shadowy form detached itself from the car. "Lemme write that down." As he spoke he stepped inside to the light, a young man in a blue suit, his straw hat on the back of (Continued on page 144)

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT *here*



Woollcott in caricature.

unearths some riotous events in the strange career of a delirious zany who never speaks a word on stage or screen—that comic, chronic cut-up, Harpo—positively the maddest of all the mad Marxes

A Strong, Silent

IN THE FALL of 1901—a year of evil omen, for in America a murderous madman slew the President and over in England an old woman died who had been queen as long as anyone living could remember—in November, 1901, a measly little boy named Adolph posed for his photograph on the front steps of a New York tenement at Ninetieth Street and Third Avenue. The resulting snapshot is in my scrapbook now. From it you can gather that he was wearing an overcoat which had seen better days and known other shoulders. He also wore short pants, a derby hat and two pairs of gloves.

One pair was worn in the orthodox fashion, and the other was carried negligently in the right hand in order to impress the neighbors. This final touch of elegance was added in honor of a great occasion. He was on his way to temple for his *bar mitzvah*.

This boy was the second son of Sam Marx, a polite and charming little Alsatian tailor who, to the day of his death, remained slightly detached from, and considerably puzzled by, his astonishing wife and the five sons she bore him. His clientele was drawn from the German butchers who dwelt in the near-by Yorkville section of the great city, and as these were all beer-drinking trenchermen of colossal girth, Mr. Marx found making adequately spacious suits for them an exhausting and profitless occupation. His sons were relieved when he finally abandoned his profession and devoted himself exclusively to pinochle. He lost at that, too, but not so much.

Mrs. Marx was a lace-maker from Germany whose father, for fifty years, had been an itinerant magician. Her childhood memories of jaunts in the magician's cart from one Hanoverian town to another filled her cluttered days in Third Avenue with an aching nostalgia for the gypsy life of the strolling player. She was incurably stage-struck, and over each of her five cradles, she sighed for the open road.

In the new country, her brother had already gone on the stage under the name of Al Shean (surely you remember "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean"), and it was her deep and brooding intention eventually to launch her boys in the same glorious profession. For some years, both the theater and the five sons struggled against her in this matter. But they never had a chance.

In 1901, however, this was all in the future. The mad Marxes lived in the aforesaid tenement, and in those days, it was her more immediate ambition to have the

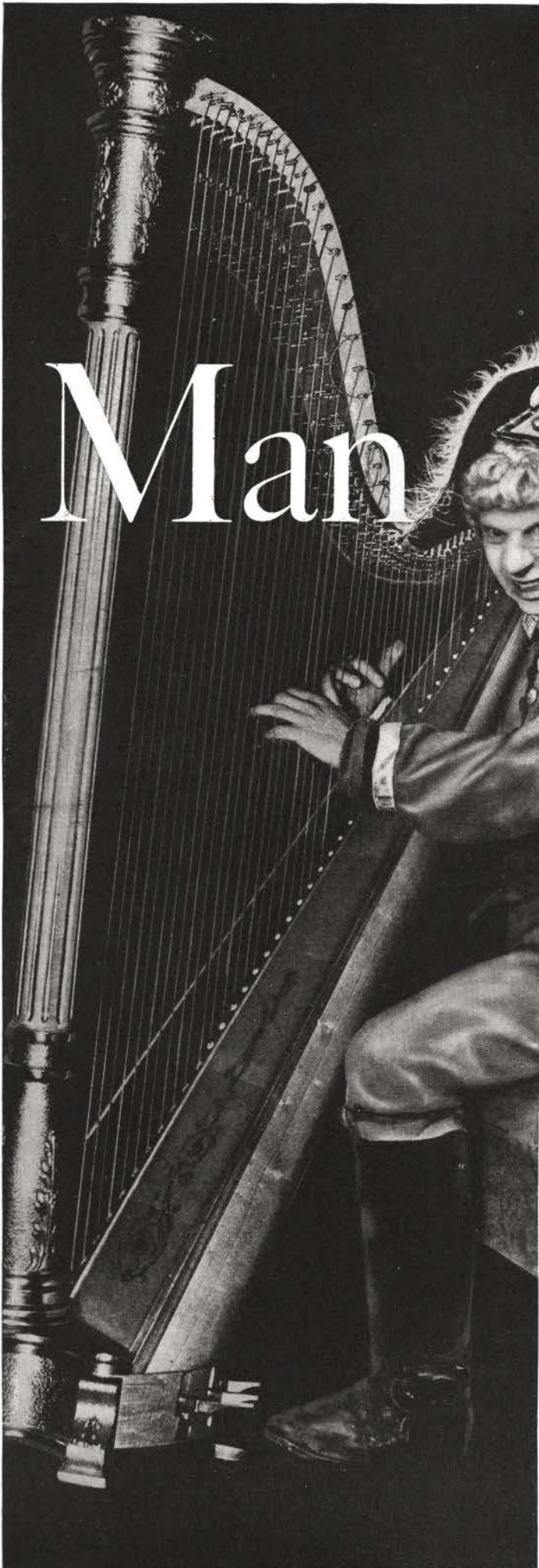


From Alec Woollcott's scrapbook: Harpo at 13. (Note the final touch of elegance—an extra pair of gloves!)

rent money ready—not always, of course, but just once for the thrill of the thing—on the first of the month. Several times, in a tenancy of ten years, she came tantalizingly close to this economic will-o'-the-wisp, but always it eluded her.

This boy with a plethora of gloves—her Ahdie, she called him—was the second of her sons and, at first glance, the least promising. For five years, he had been going to the

Man



Paramount

Harpo Marx, "the only living American who has achieved a world-wide fame by the simple process of keeping his mouth shut." (Above) The rest of the four Marx brothers—Zeppo, Chico and Groucho—in the talkie, "Duck Soup."

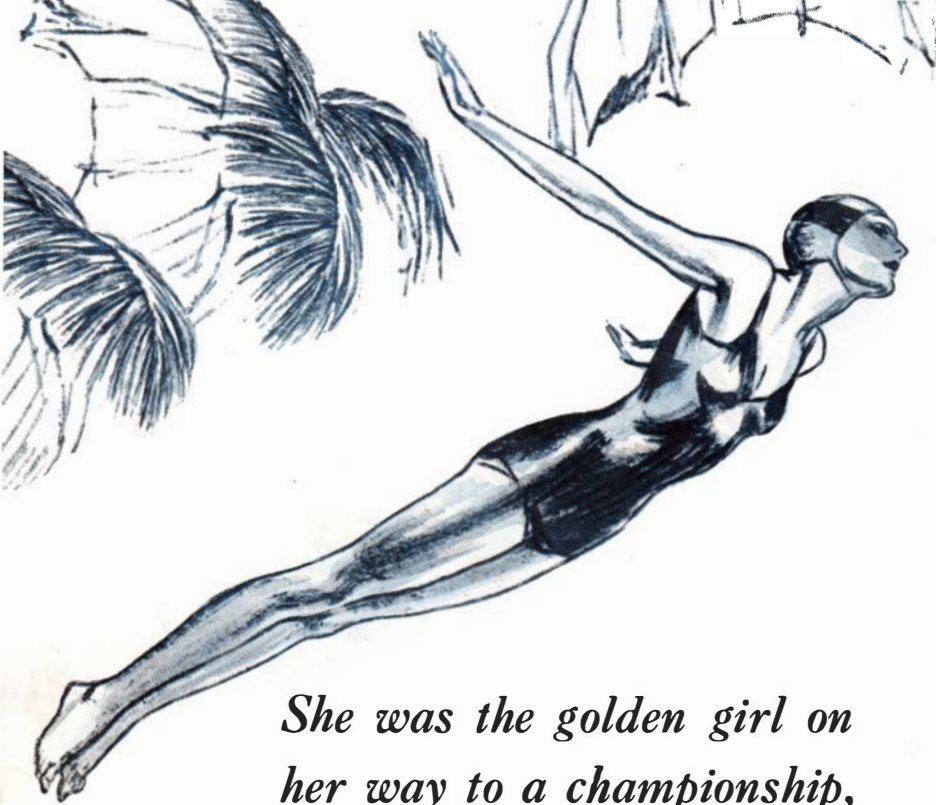
Paramount; photomontage by Lazarnick

public school around the corner, and he was still in the first grade. He himself ascribed this lack of progress to the infatuated teacher's reluctance to part with him. But Mrs. Marx was growing pretty discouraged about his academic career.

There even seemed to be some reason to think he might not be able to remember all of his *bar mitzvah* speech—the one beginning "For thirteen long years, my dear parents, from the moment when first I saw the light of day, you have labored and toiled for my happiness." But her Ahdie got through it somehow. You see, his heart was in it. And there remained.

I thus note the occasion with considerable attention to date and detail because it proved to be a milestone in his road across the world. I do not mean that, from the moment of confirmation, he was given over to a religious life. Indeed, he did not enter a synagogue again for twenty years.

No, this confirmation was chiefly notable because it was not only the first, but the last, occasion when he spoke in public. Except for one New Year's Eve when he took a cocktail before the performance, kept yelling "Cheer up! Cheer up!" (Continued on page 108)



She was the golden girl on her way to a championship, and this is the story of what she lost and what she won

WHEN PAM IVERAGH decided to go to Palm Beach in February, Effie Bernheim sensed trouble in every pore. After twenty years of handling girl swimmers and diving champions, Effie's pores were peculiarly sensitive to trouble. In this instance, her heart was involved as well.

At fourteen, Pam Iveragh, slim, tawny-haired, slightly freckled, right off the streets of Brooklyn, had made up her mind to be the world's diving champion. At eighteen, she had missed it in the Olympic Games by three points because Berna Johnson was hot that day and nobody in the world could have beaten her. Berna was a real champion. But Pam came so close that Berna's smile, that renowned smile which had greeted the public at breakfast from the sport page for five years, vanished for the first time in any competition.

No one had ever suspected Effie of a mother complex, yet from the first day that Pam, lanky, eager and trembling, wearing a bathing suit three sizes too large for her, had arrived at the Association pool for an open meet, Effie began to wonder if she hadn't missed something in her busy, successful life.

Effie, being a born dictator, had grasped the scepter of the women's swimming world just before the war. Everybody knew it was impossible to produce an

Diving



by **ADELA ROGERS**
ST. JOHNS

Illustrations by Henry Raleigh

American swimming team or hold any kind of meet anywhere without Effie. People had been known to remark that Effie could dig diving girls out of the Gobi desert and make champions of them. There was no velvet glove upon the hand of steel which Effie held over the A. A. U., the Olympic Committee and any girl who desired to wear a bathing suit in big-league competition.

The only chink in her armor was Pam Iveragh.

And it wasn't only because Pam, in Effie's opinion, was destined to become the greatest of all diving champions.

Naturally, Effie was fond of champions. Until the day when Dotty Van Wyck broke the world's backstroke record in the four hundred meters, Effie considered her the prize nuisance of the twentieth century. Why heaven should have endowed a girl who loved men and gin better than anything on earth with the power to swim like that was beyond Effie's comprehension. But she had coveted that record, held by Germany, for seven long years. From the moment that Dotty brought it back to the United States, Effie forgave her everything.

Swimming and diving records held by other nations were sheer medieval torture to Effie.

"Effie acts as though they stole 'em with poison gas," said Peggy Hartmann, the day she lost the hundred-yard breast-stroke race to a tall, slim Canadian. "Could I help it?"

"If you'd sloughed off that silly-looking radio singer," said Effie, who never minced words, "I guess you could have picked up a few strokes. I sometimes wish I was managing a girl's track team."

"Muscle molls," said Peggy, who weighed in at one-ten.

"A few more muscles and a lot more sense," said Effie, "would have made you a swimmer."

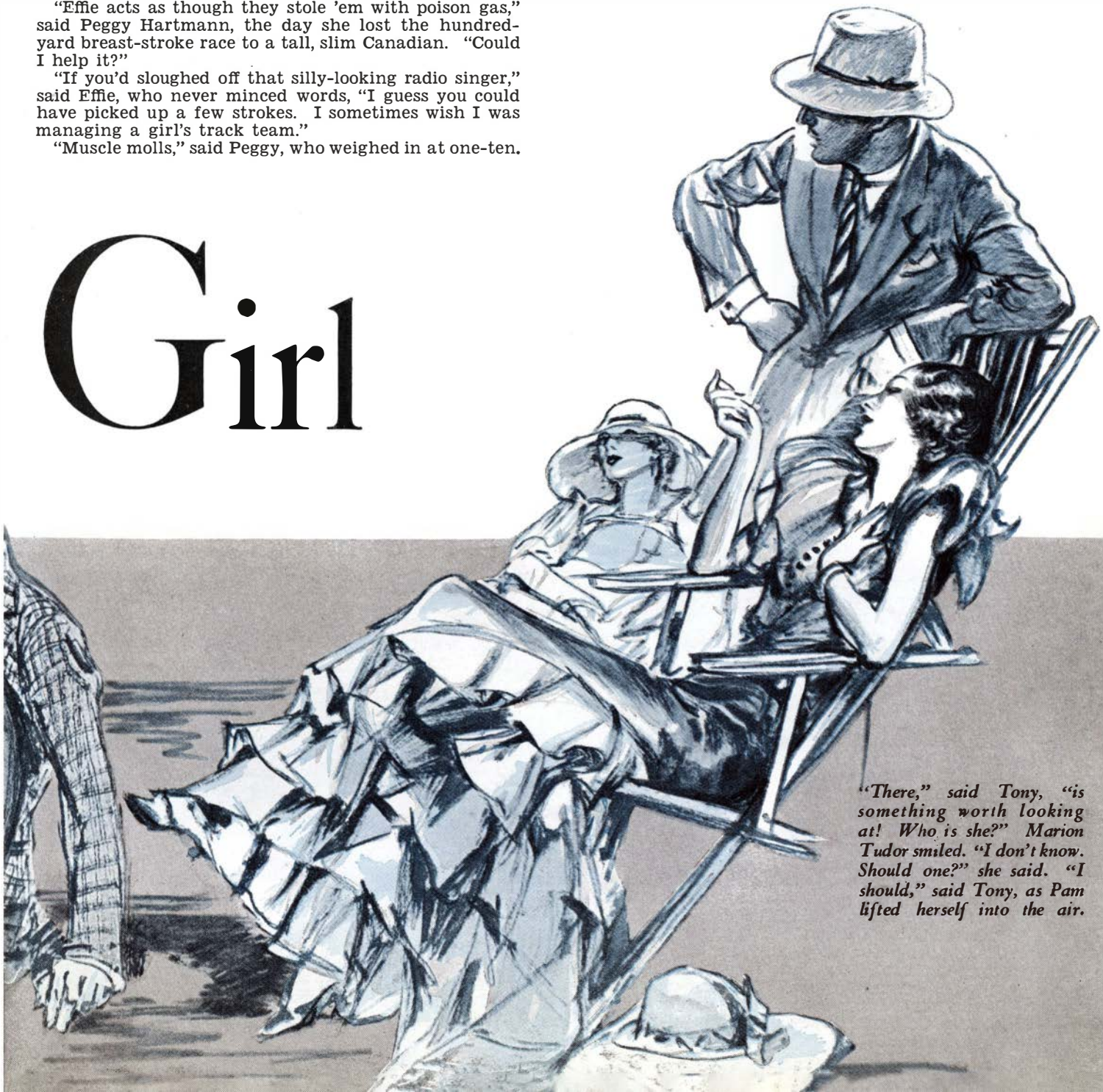
That was Effie. The papers seldom mentioned her name when front pages were covered with pictures of girls in swimming suits, girls diving swan-like through the air, girls in rubber caps reaching wet arms toward the finish line. But Effie was there, chaperon, trainer, commander in chief. When Effie parked her canvas chair at the pool's edge, meets went off like clockwork. When Effie was absent the girls were apt to be anywhere but on the starting line when the gun barked.

It took Pam Iveragh to get under her hide.

"I don't know why Effie thinks Pam's the whole show," said Marjie Westover, just after Pam had won a city meet in which Marjie finished a bad sixth. "Just because the crowds fall for her, I guess."

But Effie knew. From the very beginning there had been something about the set of Pam's square jaw, something just a little wistful in her eyes, something arrogant in the poise of her head, that touched Effie, even while she knew the kid could stand the gaff and she could make a champion out of her. And it was because Pam possessed to the nth degree the two things

Girl



"There," said Tony, "is something worth looking at! Who is she?" Marion Tudor smiled. "I don't know. Should one?" she said. "I should," said Tony, as Pam lifted herself into the air.

that Effie most admired—courage and showmanship.

The Nationals this year would tell the tale. Therefore the great Effie, who was dark and brittle and had a face rather like a hatchet, sat at her desk and regarded Pam with a cold eye.

"Why do you want to go to Palm Beach?" she said.

Pam Iveragh, wrapped in a heavy topcoat, sat on one corner of the desk and grinned impudently. "Why not?" asked Pam. "I'm not stuck on New York in February." She glanced out the window at the gray sky, the gray snow that lined the window ledges, the gusts of tormenting wind that tore between the great buildings. "In fact, you can have it," she said, with a wave of her hand.

Effie squirmed. "At your age, a little cold wouldn't hurt you," she said. "You girls are soft. When I was your age—"

"You walked forty miles through a blizzard to swim in the lake. It's not the weather that's worrying you, lamb. Why don't you want me to go to Palm Beach?"

"The Nationals are in August," said Effie.

"Six months away."

"Six months," said Effie, "is plenty of time for you to ruin yourself. As I may have mentioned before, I want to see you take that championship this year."

Pam's eyes, under straight dark brows, met the cold eyes across the desk. "I've got a few ideas in that direction myself," she said casually. "Use your head. You don't think after I've worked for years I'm going to kick over my chance because there's a moon in Florida."

"Well," said Effie, staring at the pictures of diving girls and famous swimming champions which plastered her walls, "you've been okay so far. But you weren't always so good-looking."

"Darling," said Pam, "am I good-looking? You never told me."

"Men go for bathing suits, if there's anything in 'em," said Effie grudgingly. "You're not bad, if anybody likes the red-headed type."

"My hair," said Pam, "is not red. Paul Gallico called it bronze, in that last article he did about me."

"Sports writers!" said Effie. "Would my life be happier without *them*?"

"Poor souls," said Pam, "the girl swimmers are about the only glamour in their lives, what with golf gals and tennis and women's track meets and prize fights and football."

"There are times," said Effie darkly, "when I don't understand why I didn't take up golf. At least, girls wear clothes when they play the damn game." She looked at Pam. Her dark face grew tense. "Pam, you've got to win this year. It's no set-up, with Berna."

You never did like Berna, Pam thought quietly. She came from Detroit. She's not really very nice, Berna.



She wasn't nice to me at the Olympics. She acted as though it was an accident I got second. I don't like her much myself. I'll show her.

"If you stay here and work," said Effie, "you can do it. If you go traipsing off to Palm Beach and start running around and staying up all night—"

"I won't," said Pam gravely.

"Where you getting the dough?" asked Effie bluntly. She knew all about Pam and the shabby house in

knock-out!" But he had never once suggested that he loved her.



Brooklyn. There was never any money in the Iveragh treasury. If it hadn't been for her diving, Pam probably would never have been out of Brooklyn.

"Oh, I'm chiseling around," said Pam. "The Breakers will fix me up with a room and my meals. They'll get a lot of publicity. I do take nice pictures. The Bath and Tennis Club will give me a free membership and a present if I do diving exhibitions. I'll angle it."

"Watch out for your amateur standing," said Effie.

"I'll guard it with my life," Pam giggled. "What about clothes?" said Effie. "You can't get by in that league without a front."

"I've got plenty of front," said Pam. "Mama does know how to sew. And ever since the papers started calling me the peacock, I get a lot of clothes for posing in 'em."

"When'll you be back?"

"First of April," said Pam. She went around and laid her cheek against Effie's hair. "I'll be good. I've never been to Florida. I'll get lots of sunshine and I'll run on the beach every day."

"I don't like it," said Effie. "The place is full of men with nothing to do. If there were no men in the world, I'd never lose a meet. I don't know why a girl can't dive when she's in love. Look at Roxy—since she got married she dives like a dead duck."

"I've never been in love," said Pam.

Effie grunted. That, in her estimation, made it worse. Pam was not a girl who did things by halves.

The day was blue velvet, spangled with gold. A thousand miles away, New York lay prostrate beneath a blizzard. Cold gray winds and icy sleet swept over Brooklyn. On Palm Beach, the sunlight was golden wine in a blue cup.

It was Pam's last day.

Afterwards, she used to remember that.

She didn't want to go home. In Palm Beach, the everyday world fell away beneath you. The past ceased to be and the future didn't matter. It was a divine interlude, filled with color and a silver-white beach and blue, crested waves and palm trees.

It had been grand fun.

Pam Iveragh, the diving champion, the peacock girl, in her smart white pajamas and her funny little bérêts, was a celebrity. Celebrities were popular in Palm Beach. People within the sacred circle got bored with one another. Pam had actually dined at the Waterburys' with a duchess, and old Mrs. Waterbury had asked her to tea in the big house that was like a fairy palace, all tiled courts and palms. A dozen men had flirted with her, and she had dined and danced and motored and gambled a little. She won. She thought about that afterwards, too. Pam, like all athletes, was superstitious.

It was time for her exhibition at the Bath and Tennis Club. In the dressing (Continued on page 137)

The Cat had



A cosmopolite who began life as an Afghan prince—Achmed Abdullah.

One of Captain Abdullah's "nine lives" has been that of a British secret agent in India—a rôle made famous by Kipling's stories of Strickland Sahib. Here he tells a story about it that out-Kiplings Kipling . . . a believe-it-or-not of the underworld of Calcutta, hotbed of thuggee and of sadistic rites

NOW FOR the miracle! I was given the name of a man: Balendra Kumar. I was given, too, a vague address where he was said to live: in the Colootallah section, beyond the Machua bazaar, street and house unknown.

Like many Bengalis, this Balendra Kumar was a nationalist who chased the will-o'-the-wisp of Indian independence. Only, he was much more dangerous than the average run of Calcutta conspirators.

For the latter talk a lot and complain a lot. They pass redundant, floridly worded resolutions that bristle defiance against the King-Emperor. They appeal to the opinion of the world at large. They send chosen spokesmen—usually young and slim and good-looking and clean-shaven and romantically turbaned and not too brunet—to the United States.

There the apostles of freedom go on lecture tours. They address women's clubs and are indorsed by liberal organizations, whose members weep for—and with—the persecuted Oriental patriots and write handsome checks to "further the good cause." And there the matter rests



I had not met Suzette before she was selected as my bride-to-be.

since, in the majority of cases, the Bengalis are satisfied with the money and the bombastic talky-talk. They do not as a rule change their threats into deeds. They are like a swarm of mosquitoes; annoying to the British overlord, yet not to be taken seriously.

Balendra Kumar, on the other hand, was suspected of being an advocate of direct action; was suspected, furthermore, of having been mixed up in a recent outrage when a bomb had been thrown at a high official.

But nothing had been proved. With elections going

Nine Lives



The priest raised the sword and brought it down on Balendra's neck. And then . . .

by **ACHMED
ABDULLAH**

Illustrations by Charles De Feo

on back home in England and the Liberal and Labor parties in the ascendancy, the government had not dared to jail Balendra Kumar on spec. So I was instructed to find out the low-down about him; and I decided on a direct approach.

I figured out my plan ahead of time.

If the man turned out to be an honest fanatic, I was going to "frame" him—of course without telling the British authorities, who would have disapproved. But if he was just an ambitious Bengali opportunist, with an

idea in his head that in an independent India his own particular slice of bread would be well buttered, I would flash a wad of rupees under his nose and seal the bargain by promising him a small government position.

The police had not been able to locate his exact whereabouts. Well, I had to trust to luck. I would cross that bridge when I got to it, when I reached the Colootallah—and one evening I set out. The third quarter of a coppery-red moon showed its edge in the East. Below it, Calcutta gleamed like a purple pool, while a thick, palpable darkness settled over the native quarter.

Let me say in passing—and this is important in the light of the miracle—that not only was I unknown to the Calcutta nationalists, my work, theretofore, having been military and restricted to the Afghan border, Central Asia, Tibet and Africa, but to make assurance doubly sure, only four people were in the secret: my chief in the Military Intelligence, the chief of the Calcutta Politicals, one of his assistants, and myself.

The bit of paper containing Balendra Kumar's name and approximate address and (*Continued on page 104*)

The Least of

When a colonel salutes a private once, that's news. When he does it 700 times, that's a sensation!

THE COLONEL had spent thirty years in the army, wondering why. Why had he never achieved an independent command; why had he never seen active service; why had he been a desk soldier, a recruiting officer, a purchasing officer, a quartermaster, officer in charge of national cemeteries, officer in charge of anything and everything with the exception of a platoon, a company, a battalion or a regiment of infantry?

At fifty-two, he was still wondering why. Indeed, he would have continued to wonder if his commanding general had not so deftly pricked the ego of the man that the colonel immediately thereafter made application for retirement instead of waiting until he was sixty-four, when retirement is compulsory.

The trouble was that not only had he never been liked, but he had always been disliked. He had been instructed, as a cadet at West Point, that military discipline must be enforced with firmness, kindness and justice, but he really didn't believe that. He was a martinet, which means that he was, not infrequently, a bully. Also he was dull, humorless and self-important.

Nobody cared to encounter him except in the line of duty. In the days when the army was very small and everybody knew everybody else, his unfitness to handle men became quickly known; so commanding generals and chiefs of staff, who always have a tender spot in their old hearts for enlisted men, saw to it that the latter were protected by finding for the pet nuisance an assignment where the area of his unpleasantness was, of necessity, circumscribed.

His undoing came on a torrid late afternoon in Luzon. He had had a hard day in the quartermaster's office and two civilian employees, whom he had "rawhided" (as he thought) regular army fashion, had told him to take a jump in the Pasig River. One of them had bluntly intimated that the colonel was a stuffed shirt.

This experience, added to prickly heat, had put the colonel in a humor in which he yearned to visit his importance on somebody who could not resent it; for obviously he could not have the civilian employees dismissed. He had learned from experience that his complaints were always filed in departmental wastebaskets.

The better to enjoy what little coolness the late afternoon might bring, the colonel, arrayed in duck slacks, slippers and thin sleeveless undershirt, sat on the front veranda of his quarters with a tall cool drink beside him. Presently, God delivered into his hands a person ripe for rawhiding. Down the sidewalk came an enlisted man.

The colonel recognized the fellow and was aware that the fellow knew him. Nevertheless, as the soldier passed and looked up impersonally, he neglected to salute.

"Halt!" roared the colonel. The soldier halted—one, two! "Right face!" The soldier obeyed. Then: "Why the devil didn't you salute me, soldier? You know who I am!"

"The colonel," said the soldier, "is not wearing any of the insignia of an officer. I do not salute individuals. I salute the emblem of the Presidential authority conferred on officers and gentlemen."

"Ha!" barked the colonel. "Guardhouse lawyer, eh? Know your Blue Book, don't you? Well, you recognized



me and you should have saluted me. You didn't because you didn't want to—because you're a contumacious fellow. So, I'm going to teach you a lesson you will never forget. I'm going to teach you respect for an officer. Stand at attention and salute me until I tell you to stop. You will count each salute as you give it."

When he had saluted with his right hand five hundred times the soldier asked if he might shift to the left hand.

"Silence!" the colonel commanded. "I'll be the judge of that. I want to give you a Charley horse in that right arm so you'll remember this occasion."

So the saluting went on. When the soldier had counted aloud up to six hundred and ninety the commanding general, with two of his staff, came strolling by.

"Colonel," he inquired mildly, "what appears to be the trouble with this soldier?"

The colonel explained in heated detail.

"Quite right, quite right, my dear colonel," the old warrior purred. The staff pricked up its collective ears, for the old man's purr was always preliminary to a devastating stroke. "Enlisted men must be taught respect for commissioned officers. If they are recalcitrant and contumacious they must be disciplined."

"However, the army regulations cover officers and enlisted men alike. The salute is not a symbol of cowering obeisance and servility. It is the sign of fealty to the representative of the Commander in Chief—

These

by PETER B. KYNE

Illustration by Ralph Pallen Coleman

"Stand at attention and salute me until I tell you to stop," commanded the colonel.

return. He has his military rights and they must be respected. Not to do so, my dear colonel, would lay you open to a charge of bullying him. Gentlemen never bully their inferiors and I know you would be the last man to care to have that aspersion cast upon you.

"Soldier, at ease. Have a cigaret. Then sit down on the colonel's step and smoke it. He remained seated while you saluted him. And I suggest you rub that soldierly arm of yours with arnica, else you'll not be able to do things with it tomorrow morning."

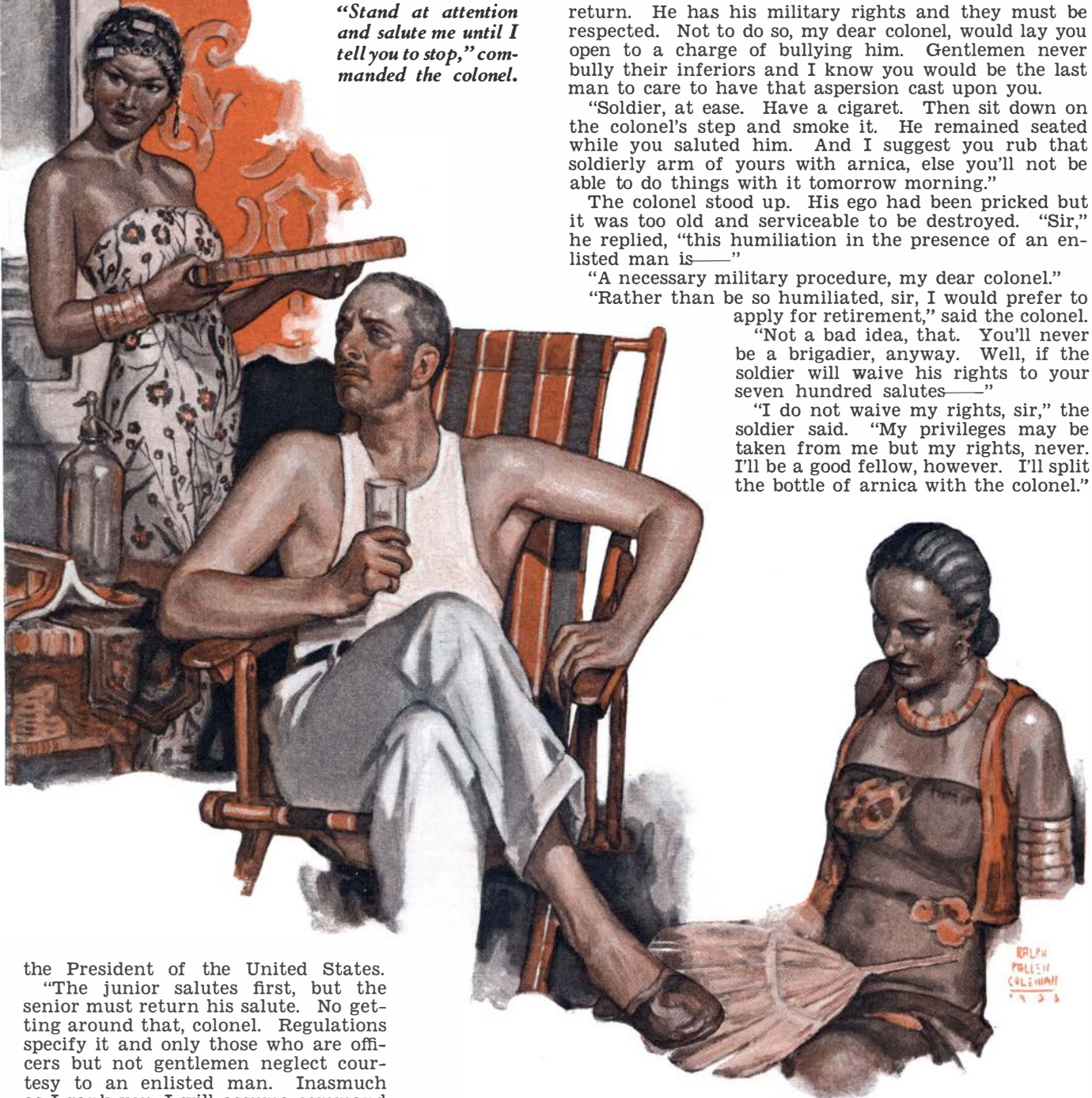
The colonel stood up. His ego had been pricked but it was too old and serviceable to be destroyed. "Sir," he replied, "this humiliation in the presence of an enlisted man is—"

"A necessary military procedure, my dear colonel."

"Rather than be so humiliated, sir, I would prefer to apply for retirement," said the colonel.

"Not a bad idea, that. You'll never be a brigadier, anyway. Well, if the soldier will waive his rights to your seven hundred salutes—"

"I do not waive my rights, sir," the soldier said. "My privileges may be taken from me but my rights, never. I'll be a good fellow, however. I'll split the bottle of arnica with the colonel."



RALPH
PALLEN
COLEMAN
1933

the President of the United States.

"The junior salutes first, but the senior must return his salute. No getting around that, colonel. Regulations specify it and only those who are officers but not gentlemen neglect courtesy to an enlisted man. Inasmuch as I rank you, I will assume command of this situation now. Soldier, you have saluted the colonel seven hundred times. That is sufficient."

"With my right hand, sir," the soldier reminded the old man.

"Quite so. Colonel, your habiliments are such that you are not officially recognizable by this enlisted man. You will, therefore, enter your quarters, array yourself in full uniform, return to your veranda, stand at attention and salute this soldier seven hundred times—with your right hand.

"For every salute he has given you he rates one in

"Obey!" said the commanding general. His voice was like the crack of a rifle. And the colonel obeyed.

As the "old man" continued his stroll he said to his chief of staff:

"Colonel, that soldier is a bully boy with a crockery eye. His insistence on his rights has slain that army nuisance. Remind me, in the morning, to call up his commanding officer and ask him if he can't find a way to tack a chevron on that boy."

"Sir, I forgot to ask the soldier his name."

"Not necessary, colonel. He's my son."

EAGLE WINGS



“Rolling Down to Rio” is the song the great tri-motors sing as Cosmopolitan’s ambassadors are borne along down the coast of South America over the jungles of Brazil

WHILE CHURCH BELLS ring across the roofs of Paramaribo next morning, a Commodore plane comes in from the north, Mr. Sullivan in charge. Before we start Clayton Knight and I decide to stay overnight at Cayenne.

We take off; Paramaribo and the Surinam drop back; and we drone down a monotonous coast of swamp and mud until Devil’s Island comes creeping under our seaward wing. To give the devil his due, it is as pretty an island as we have seen on the whole journey—fringed with coco palms, wooded with lush growth, and apparently uninhabited.

We stare down at it, contrasting its dreamy beauty with its ferocious reputation. It is the farthest out of three islands. The larger of the inner islands is almost covered with brick and stone buildings—penitentiary, hospital and administration building, we learn later. It is the Ile Royale. The other is wooded, the roofs of low buildings showing through its groves. But this is a place of torture, the Ile St.-Joseph, where incorrigibles undergo solitary confinement. Ironically, the little archipelago is named the Iles du Salut—Salvation Islands.

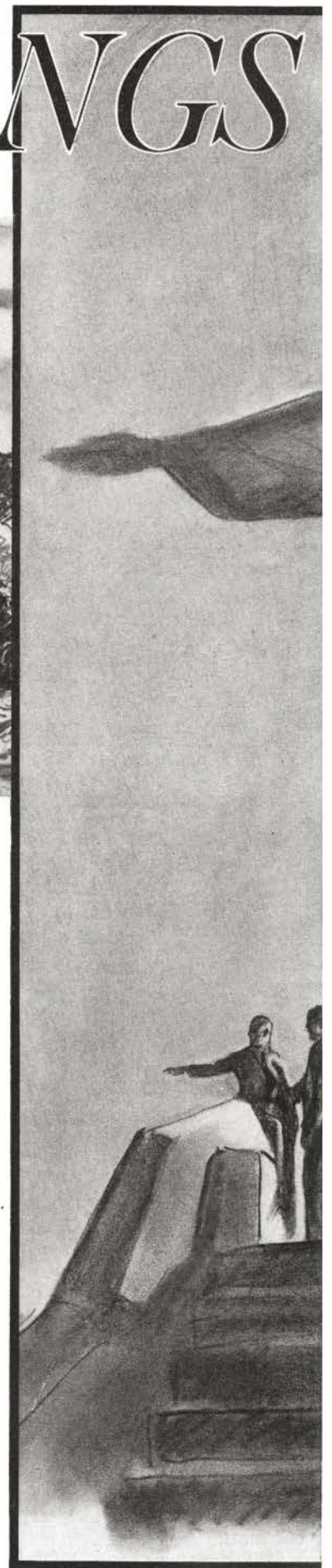
This famous, or notorious, group is but a short distance west of Cayenne. In twenty minutes we have cut in across the deserted land and come down in a wide estuary with a swift tidal current. Cayenne is a white town on a hill at the river’s mouth. Three mechanics, spruce in airway uniforms, receive the ship at the apron. We step down to the barge and straightway

meet the two most dynamic souls we have encountered in the tropics, or are to encounter—Mr. and Mrs. Stanley M. Filipovich, a marital and business partnership, for they are both shore agent and port manager for Pan American Airways in French Guiana.

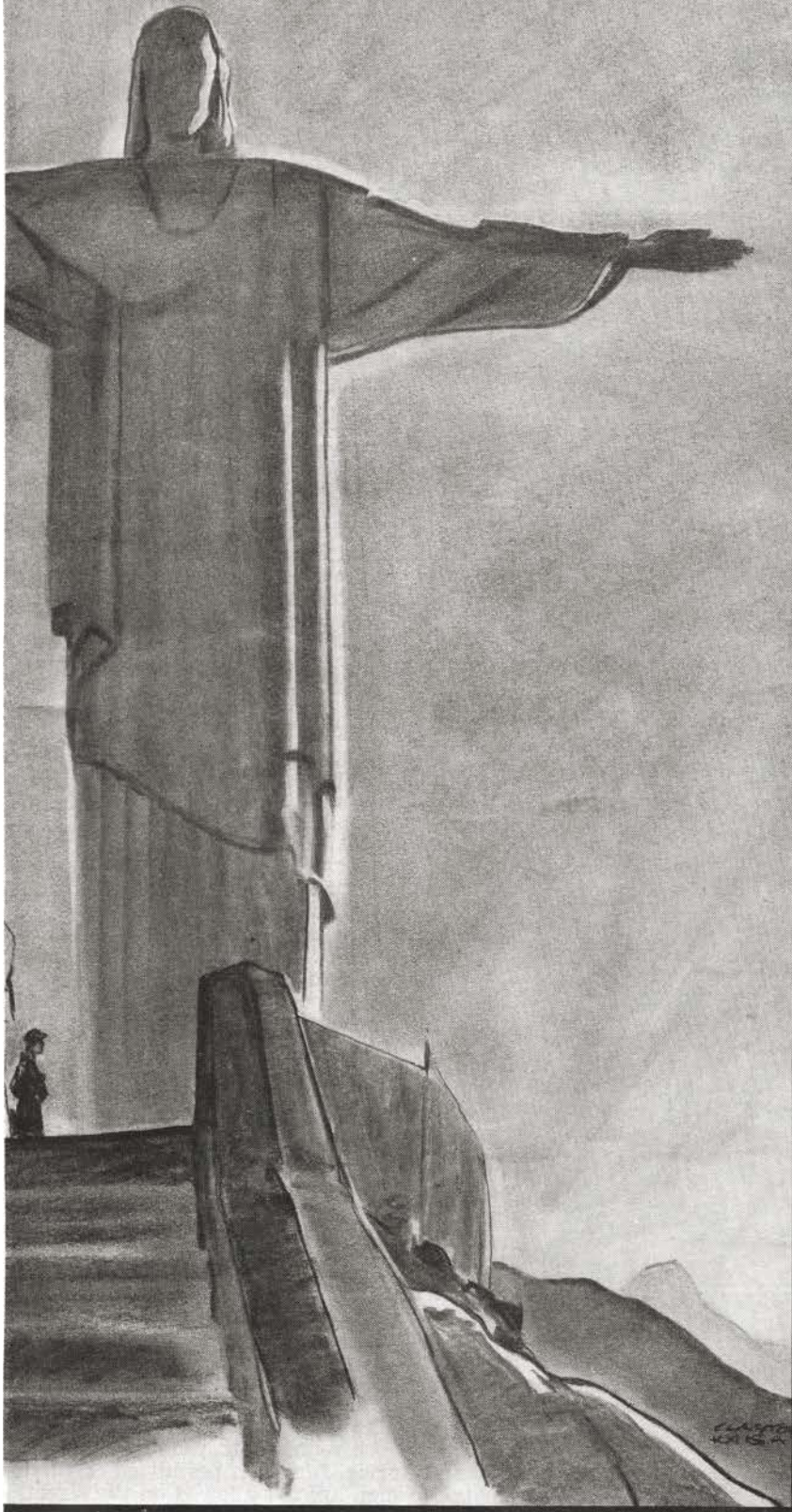
In ten seconds we are drinking hot chocolate and talking with these people as if we had known them for years. Did Mr. Sullivan bring those spark plugs? Mr. Sullivan had not heard about any spark plugs. Well, they were ordered; and Mr. Sullivan had better bring some back with him from Pará.

There is a new governor—the eighty-seventh in eighty years—and the rainy season is already two weeks late.

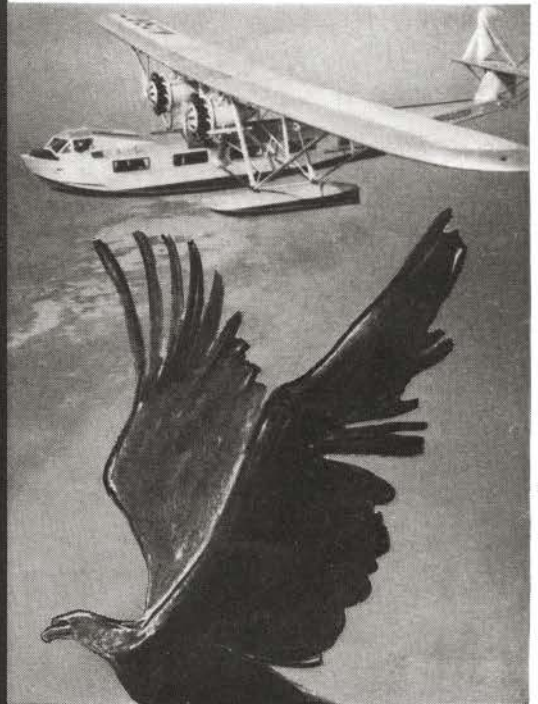
We must meet blind Père Fabre—eighty-two years old. He knew Dreyfus and is the priest who baptized



under the Southern Cross



The colossal statue of Christ overlooking the harbor of Rio de Janeiro now provides an inspiring landmark for the Brazilian Air Express—the branch of Pan American Airways that traverses hundreds of leagues of Amazonian jungle such as Mr. Knight pictures on the opposite page.



by

**FORREST
WILSON**

Drawings by Clayton Knight

Senior Lieutenant Ulmo, the most famous prisoner ever on Devil's Island, next to Dreyfus. He sold the secrets to the Germans. We should meet Ulmo, too—chief clerk now with Panon et Cie.

Meet Ulmo? Then we will see prisoners—maybe talk with them? Mr. and Mrs. Filipovich stare at us. See prisoners? Look at the three mechanics out there pumping gas into the Commodore—murderers every one. The little hard-working fellow with the drooping red mustache—he was a German sergeant in charge of French prisoners during the war. Imagine the life he led in this colony of sentenced French criminals, many of them war veterans! Pan American saved his life by hiring him for this job.

Then we embark with our uniformed felons in a battered launch for a tippy voyage downstream with the ebb tide, bobbing over the remnants of Atlantic rollers at the mouth of the river. We mount to a rotting wharf on which are a score of men in pajama-like uniforms with vertical pink



French convicts embark for Devil's Island. (Drawing) A convict of the "libéré" class.



stripes—all prisoners, *forçats*, as they call themselves, of the class known as *libérés*.

Some of these striped men are fishing, some merely loafing in the sun. A squad under an easy taskmaster is replacing planks in the wharf. Three or four help unload the launch under Filipovich's orders. After we have passed the customs officer one of them loads himself with our baggage and starts off to lead the way to the convent.

He is a lean, stalwart young man, this felon, with a resolute mouth. His disgraced eyes never rise to yours, nor does he speak. He stops at a handsome iron gate with the sign: "Maison Hospitalière St. Paul," and jangles the bell.

A house boy admits us and in the reception room of the hospital we meet Sister Superior Berchmans, who shows us to second-story rooms. Mr. Knight and I stand grinning at each other. In jail at last—the biggest jailhouse in the world—a whole country that is a jail!

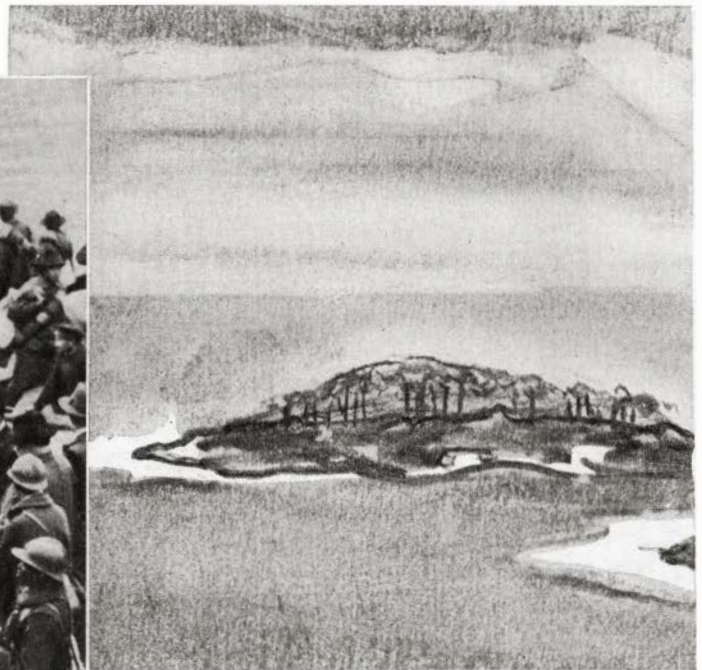
Maurice, our house boy, is such a nice talkative boy; his smile is so disarming. "How old are you, Maurice?" I ask him in the course of our meal.

"Twenty-three, Monsieur."

"And are you, too, of the penal world?"

"*Mais oui, monsieur—évidemment.* Would you like to hear my story?"

The story is commonplace—the *petite femme* in Nantes who demanded money; bad companions; an old woman in the suburbs who hoarded her "economies." Maurice grows dramatic, living over again that night—



France's worst convicts are South America. Few ever

the stealthy wait in the garden, forcible entry, the old woman's scream, the attack by one of the *apaches*, Maurice's intervention which saves her life. She indicates the cupboard drawer, and it is Maurice's hand which abstracts the money envelope; the panicky flight of the trio back to their hotel, and then—

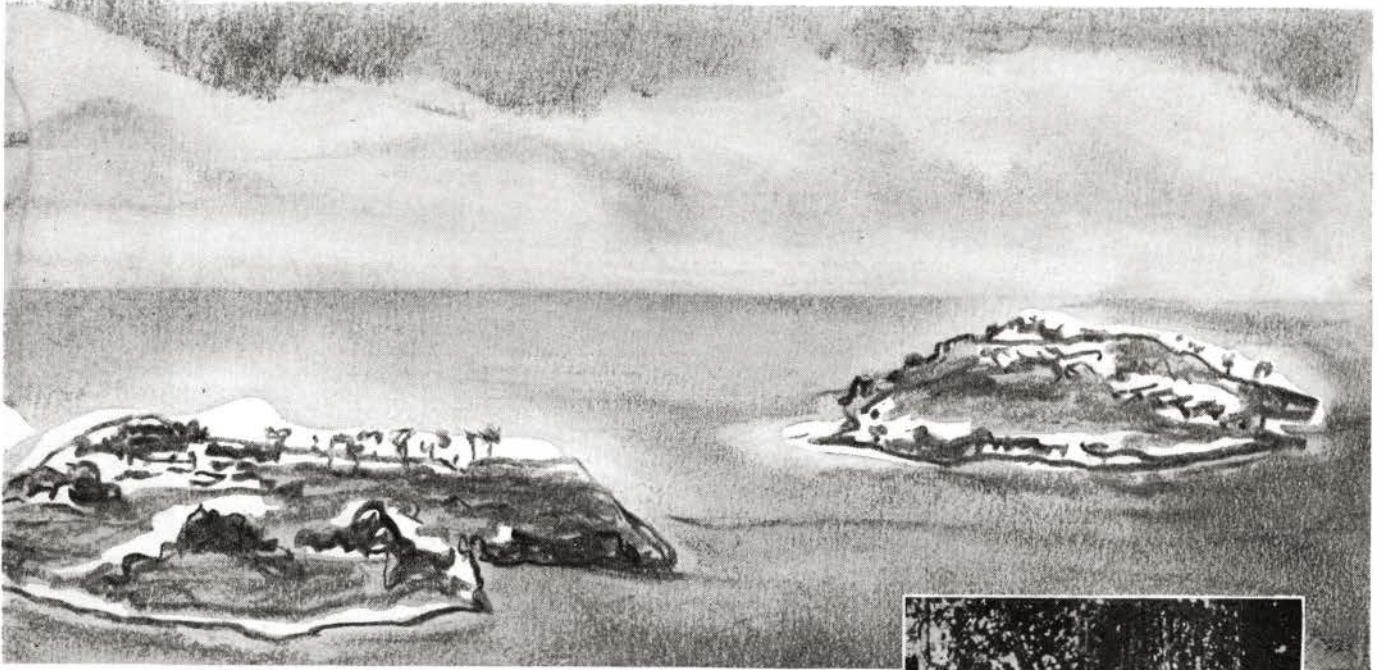
"What a sell, Monsieur! You know those new fifty-franc notes, yellow like the new one thousands? Well, that is what we had—three of them—only fifty francs apiece!"

Maurice was lucky, however. A first offense—and they gave him seven years in the hulks. Had it been eight, it would have meant life for him; for, under the law, *transportés* sentenced to eight years or more must first serve the full time in one of the colony's penitentiaries or labor camps, and then an equal time as *libérés*, free of all duress except the compulsion not to leave Guiana.

By that time a prisoner's friends and relatives are usually dead or have forgotten him; he is a pauper, the government provides no transportation away from the colony and otherwise places obstacles in the way of emigration, and ships touch French Guiana only at long intervals. Few men transported for eight years or more ever return to France. But Maurice, with two years off for good behavior, will be home when he is twenty-five.

For all the heat, we go out to explore the town. The smells, the vultures, the cats, the roses, the striped men, the water buffalo grazing in the park. An ironic name—Rue de la Liberté; a penitential one—the shop called La Conscience. Some of the largest stores in Cayenne are owned by ex-convicts who started in business as *libérés*. The *libérés*, Maurice has told us, are in two classes: those required to wear prison garb and those, like Maurice himself, permitted civilian clothes. The striped men are not allowed on the streets after dark.

We stop in to see Mr. Filipovich, who has obtained an invitation for us to take tea with the governor this very afternoon; and five o'clock finds us in the executive mansion, a beautiful "type" house of French Guiana, with outer shuttered galleries all around.



sent to these "Iles du Salut" off the coast of French Guiana, return! The famous Devil's Island at extreme right.

We join a boisterous family party—Governor Lamy himself, a square, grizzled, good-natured Gaul sadly put upon by his womenfolk; Madame Lamy, buxom, *chic*, gay, a typical Parisian *maman*; their three daughters, stepping down in age from twenty-two through seventeen to thirteen; the eldest daughter's husband and baby girl, and several friends of the family.

Champagne is served with the tea; and, besought by his family, the governor consents to sit for his portrait. As Mr. Knight draws, the others watch his work progress and look through his portfolio of sketches. Everybody is enchanted by everything.

The brawn of felons lugs our bags back to the wharf the next morning, and we are at the airport office. The plane for Pará is almost in—we have barely time to make the barge. In a few moments we are under way in the launch. Mr. Filipovich entertains us with stories of attempted escapes from the penal settlement. For the *libérés* the start of an escape is easy; but its successful accomplishment, with Surinam hostile and British Guiana inhospitable and to the south the awful solitude of Brazil for half a thousand miles, is almost impossible.

As we come pup-pupping up to the barge, we find the three brown-denimed slayers have received the plane safely and are already pumping gas, and on the after deck stands Pilot Sullivan, grinning down at us.

Mr. Sullivan takes off and flies out to sea to give us a squint at a lonely rock a few miles offshore called l'Enfant Perdu, on which is a lighthouse tended by two life prisoners who volunteered for the service. They were three, but the supply boat on its last trip out there found only two remaining. The survivors said that the third had been washed off the rock and drowned. Though there had been no storm, the penal authorities did not pursue the affair further.

Although Cayenne is literally a den of thieves and murderers, robbery and assault, in so far as they affect the civilian population, are practically unknown. Honest citizens often do not bother to lock their doors at night. But among the convicts themselves run steady vendettas, and murders are common. One felon slays another, a friend of the dead man avenges him, and so on until an ultimate assassin is caught red-handed, and the guillotine ends the sequence.

On the horizon ahead is Cap d'Orange, northeastern corner of Brazil. We round it and now, four degrees north (Cont. on page 143)



Ewing Galloway

Tapping a wild rubber tree near the upper waters of the Amazon.



Ewing Galloway

Amazonian rubber on an airplane wheel—a close-up of the under structure of a Curtiss "Condor."



The story of a girl who wanted romance—and found it more potent stuff than she'd bargained for!

Romance

by FAITH
BALDWIN

3.2

IT APPEARS to be the duty of your veracious scribe to relate that Crystal Collins was perfectly beautiful and incurably romantic. However, there's a catch in these statements. Crystal's undeniable loveliness was not that of modern standards, and therefore her romanticism was misplaced.

The explanation is simple if long-winded. Crystal, aged twenty-two, was the only daughter of Hayden Collins, commonly called Tom by his irreverent friends. This made her sole heiress to a fortune variously estimated at anything from five to twenty-five million dollars, and companion, nurse, soother-in-chief, bridge and golf partner, to a wild-eyed, irascible, lovable, incalculable gentleman who had made his money by a series of spectacular promotions, whose temper was uncertain and whose bellowing methods were a confusion to friend and enemy alike.

It also made her an eligible catch in the marriage market. That is to say, for any man who stood over six feet two, who broke eighty at golf, and whose idea of beauty included quantity.

For Crystal was six feet tall, and built in proportion. She had beautiful large hands, and lovely slender large feet. She had a magnificent skin and a profusion of curly red-gold hair. She had enormous blue eyes, flawless teeth and an aristocrat of a nose. Her figure was perfect, but there was a lot of it. She wasn't, you understand, fat. On the contrary, she was slender. But there was so darned *much* of her!

That she was athletic goes without saying. But I am saying it, with details. Not a man of her acquaintance could beat her on the courts or on the links. At school she had played basketball, hockey, baseball, even football, and had bitterly regretted having to play them according to feminine rules. She could swim three miles without turning a red-gold hair. She could ride any horse, including bad medicine. She could drive a car four hundred miles without getting a cramp in her neck. She held a private pilot's license. She could drive a fast motor boat around stupendous curves. She could hike for miles and even days.

In short, she was an all-round something or other and had been reared by her father, her mother having

died when Crystal was four, as a boy might have been. "Fine, upstanding, good-looking gal," said Tom Collins proudly, "and no nonsense about her."

But there was some nonsense about her.

The nonsense had to do with romance. Secretly, Crystal was eaten up with romantic yearnings. She went to all the most romantic and sentiment-dripping motion pictures. She read the most romantic novels. She had stacks and stacks of poetry on her bookshelves. She studied the charm columns in magazines and newspapers and the words of wisdom emitted by those well-paid ladies who tell you how to get your man.

In short, built like, say, a magnificent St. Bernard or great Dane, Crystal Collins yearned to be a Pekingese.

Not that she lacked for masculine attention. But it was so darned hail fellow well met. Crystal turned up regularly at university and fraternity dances. Someone always took her somewhere. But Crystal knew perfectly well that it was because some little snip with melting eyes and fluttering paws and a habit of saying, "Oh, you are so big and strong," had turned her escort down first. Crystal had often pondered trying that "big and strong" line but her sense of humor had always come to her rescue in time. Very few men, you see, were as big and as strong as Crystal.

The men who were her superiors in height and breadth and endurance were, moreover, not in the least interested. Their poison came in small decorative packages. The men who pursued Crystal with honorable intentions were, as a rule, pindling specimens, standing about five-three or -four in their shoes and looking as



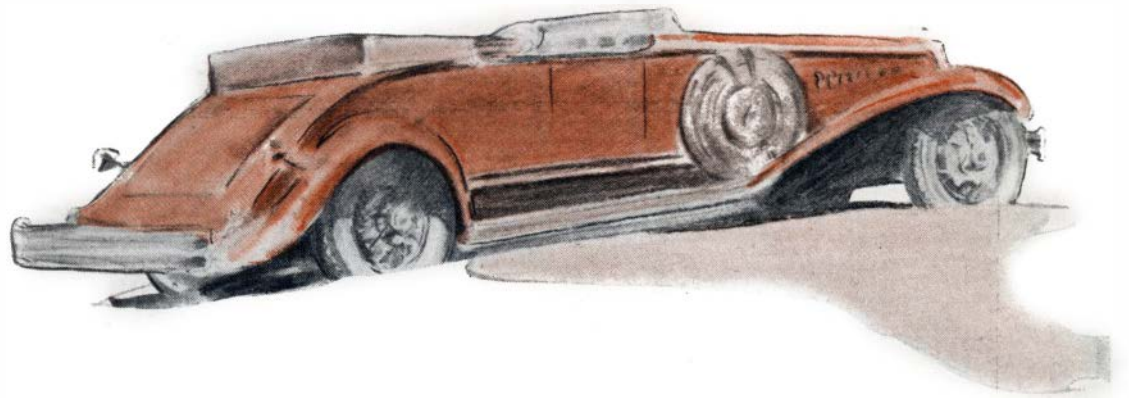


Illustrations
by
W. C. Hoople

Mr. Crawley managed to be wherever Crystal was. He would watch her as she danced with Mr. Carruthers. He was romance personified!

if a breath of fresh air would annihilate them. These gentry were attracted to Miss Collins by the law of opposites, a nice biological trap on the part of Ma Nature, who likes to insure that the race shall not be composed exclusively of pygmies or giants. Some were, of course, attracted by Tom Collins' money.

The kind of men Crystal might have liked, might even have loved, were very fond of her. "Great old gal," said they; "swell pal, Crys," they uttered. They dragged her around, borrowed from her when they were short, behaved to her like a couple of dozen brothers—and married someone else. Someone with not one-tenth of



Crystal's excellent intellect and not a fifth of her authentic good looks. But such was life.

Poor Crystal. She had the mind of an intelligent female, she had the body of a young and glorious goddess but she had the heart of a frail, languishing, round-eyed maiden, five feet tall, timid, trustful, admiring—and romantic.

She went to see "The Warrior's Husband"; she went to see it six times. Somehow, the Amazonian ladies who could, after all, be conquered, cheered her a trifle. But she was forced to admit that Miss Katharine Hepburn, as the chief Amazon, was so created physically that she, Crystal, could have picked her up under one arm and walked away with her.

"Nothing," bellowed Tom Collins to his club cronies—"nothing gaga about my girl! None of your sticky, slinky, feminine wiles, thank God! Straight from the shoulder, Crystal. Good as a man. Better than most."

ON HER twenty-first birthday, having turned the depression to his own account, Mr. Collins presented his only child with a string of matched Oriental pearls. They were not small. They were large. They had, in fact, as an envious woman remarked, that moth-ball look. But had they been small they would not have been noticeable around the pure ivory column of Crystal's throat. Moth balls or not, she wore them carelessly and with an air. And they were insured for half a million dollars.

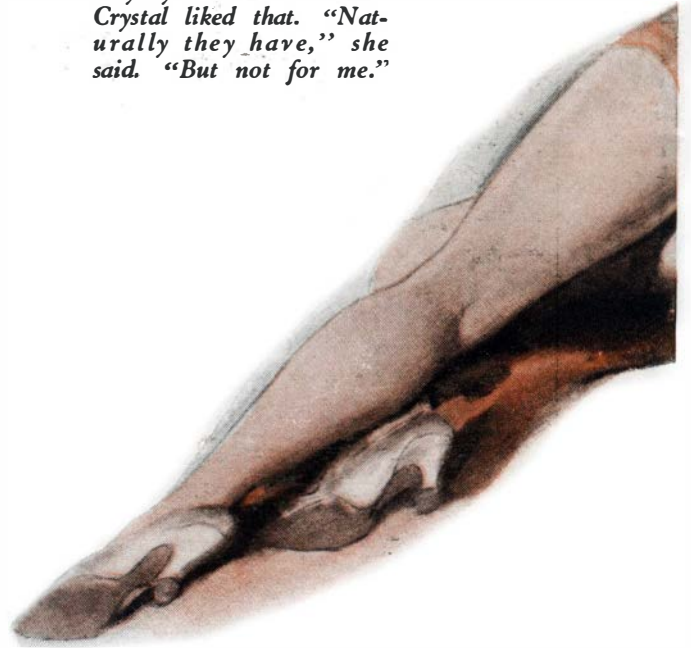
The following winter Crystal and her father went to Palm Beach. They had a villa and they entertained lavishly. And three impecunious young men proposed to Miss Collins during the first week. And Miss Collins, who, if romantic, was also sensible, refused them all. One who was really hard up—he had had to resign from his clubs and break his "engagement" to a chorus girl—almost wept at the refusal. Crystal was so sorry for him that she patted him on the back, a little too carelessly, for he was knocked flat beside her on the Florida sands and sat up slowly, gasping like a fish and deciding that even poverty and the bread line were perhaps preferable to a wife who could dish it out like that. Whereupon Crystal, blushing with real embarrassment, offered to "tide him over." Which she did with a check book, some hours later.

By the third week at the beach she was bored to distraction. She had licked all the available young men at golf and tennis. She had flown a crowd of nearly kindred spirits over to a non-Volstead island. She had motored another gang to Miami, and points west; and she had wiped up everyone except professionals on the courts.

She was not only bored, she was beginning to be frightened. She perceived her life stretching out before her in a long series of dull routines. Park Avenue, Hot Springs, Palm Beach, Park Avenue, Southampton, Hot Springs, and herself growing perhaps a little heavier and much more weather-beaten as time went on. She would end, she mused ruefully, with a country estate, raising dogs, horses, what have you. Everything but Cain or babies . . .

So she got up early one gorgeous blue-and-gold morning and went to an unfashionable section of the beach, driving down in her bathing suit under a raincoat. There she sat down to think things over. Soon a lifeguard came up to her and asked, "Hey, sister, what's the big idea? Thinking of ending it all?"

"You're good-looking," said the lifeguard. "What's the matter with the bozos you travel with? Haven't they eyes in their heads?" Crystal liked that. "Naturally they have," she said. "But not for me."



She had never seen the lifeguard before. He was one you really couldn't miss. He topped her by three inches and a good many pounds. He was burned black-bronze from the Florida sun, and the cold gray of his eyes and the clear white of his teeth came as a distinct shock to the beholder. He had a hand like a well-shaped ham and a pair of shoulders which would give Mr. Dempsey, in his prime, a couple of qualms.

Crystal regarded him slowly. She replied, after a minute, in that deep throaty voice of hers, "No, but it might be a good idea, at that."

"Don't be an Airedale," advised the lifeguard. He sat down beside her and sifted sand idly through his dark strong fingers. He looked her over. He said, with some disgust, "What's the matter with you dames, anyway? Lookit. Some guy stands you up. Punch him in the schnozzle and look for another. You're good-looking," said the lifeguard amiably, "and young. You've got your health. You probably eat three meals a day. What's wrong? Man or job?"

"Neither," Crystal said, and found herself smiling. "That is, I haven't any man and I don't need a job."

He was looking at her again, more closely. He said, "I think I know you. Tom Collins' daughter, aren't you? Of course you don't need a job. As for a man," the lifeguard reminded her with brutality, "you can buy one any day in the week, and if he doesn't suit you, you can throw him away."

She said humbly, "I suppose I can. But I don't want to buy one. See?"

He saw. He said, "What's the matter with the bozos



you travel with? Haven't they eyes in their heads?" She liked that. She said, running her hands through her hair until it stood up all around her head, a wild red-gold aureole, "Naturally they have. But not for me. They like 'em a foot shorter and fifty pounds lighter."

The lifeguard laughed. "So that's the trouble!" He shot her a keen, cool gray look. He said, "Been reading too many books, haven't you? All about young Lochinvars and delicate damsels and all the rest. Forget it. Any man in his senses——" He broke off and grinned. "Let's go for a swim, shall we?" he suggested.

WALKING DOWN to the creaming water, she found herself looking up at him. It was a pleasant sensation. She thought romantically, I wonder if he is——? She asked him, at once. "Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm not," he assured her immediately, "the son of a Philadelphia millionaire amusing himself during the depression. I'm not a college laddie in disguise. Lady, that's pure fiction. I'm a tough son-of-a-gun from Chicago, and I haven't had a job since Hector was a pup. I held one after I got out of high school until last year. Lumber camps; what have you. But lately I'm not in demand. So here I am, lifeguarding. But don't think for a minute that I'm a deposed Georgian prince because I'm not. And if I talk partly like a hard baby from the Loop and partly like a book, it's because I once, when flush, bought myself a five-foot shelf."

There wasn't, she reflected, any real romance in the lifeguard. Yet she had had hopes and he had perceived them. He had put an end to them. She plunged into the water

with a sigh of frustration. It was scant comfort that he could swim rings around her.

Later, they sunned themselves on the wide lovely beach. She put her arms behind her head and talked to him as she had never talked to anyone before. After

all, he was just a peg to hang her thoughts upon. She didn't "know" him; and she never would.

She said, "Look here, I can do anything better than most of the men I meet. They hate that. I can't pull my punches and get away with it. They know when I miss a serve or slice a drive to save their faces. They all like me. 'Good old Crystal.' That's all there is to it. And don't," she added, "advise me to beat the other girls at their own game. I'm not built that way."

He said slowly, "I wouldn't think of advising you to play anything but your own game."

"Well," said Crystal, rising to her full six feet, "unfortunately, I can't find a partner."

She went home, to her villa, her breakfast, her custom-made sports clothes, her half-million dollars' worth of pearls, her father grumbling behind a newspaper, and he thoughts. Her thoughts were pleasant. The lifeguard had said, abruptly, "The name is Smith. Think you can remember it? Perhaps you'll come swimming again, very early some day, and report to me. I—well, no use in my offering my services. For if there's anyone you want killed you can probably do it yourself!"

"Sure," Crystal had agreed, gripping his hand (Cont. on page 133)



Nini Was a Lady.

Christmas dinner at Nini's little four-table restaurant didn't produce even turkey, let alone plum pudding. But it did produce a meal that Odd McIntyre still smacks his lips over. And, besides, Nini's own story...

by O. O. McINTYRE

EVERY CHRISTMAS my wife and I wonder what life has done to Nini. For two or three years we received those extraordinarily gaudy silver-sprinkled post cards of greeting that only France turns out. Then a year or so they skipped. Finally one came that ended "I have been very ill." And none came after.

Nini conducted a tiny *auberge* on a celestial peak of Montmartre. One entered, through a spotless kitchen with a coppery shine, a patch of garden with all Paris twinkling below. There were four small tables with red-checked cloths, and every dish was cooked by Nini herself. Afterward, if she liked you—and Nini was very particular—she might sit awhile to sip a liqueur.

We learned about Nini from that best-known trencherman—at least to Americans—the late Boni de Castellane. According to his version, her intimate little establishment was one of the choice eating places on the Continent. She was herself a retired *cocotte* who had invested her boulevard profits to make a last stand among the pots and kettles her mode of life denied.

Like Rosa Lewis, across the Channel in London, she loved to cook. She came to Paris from the drudgery of a Brittany farm. But kitchens wanted only men—chefs with waxed mustachios and high white caps. Cooking was a career; one of the arts. Nini was only a scullery maid. And ladies must live!

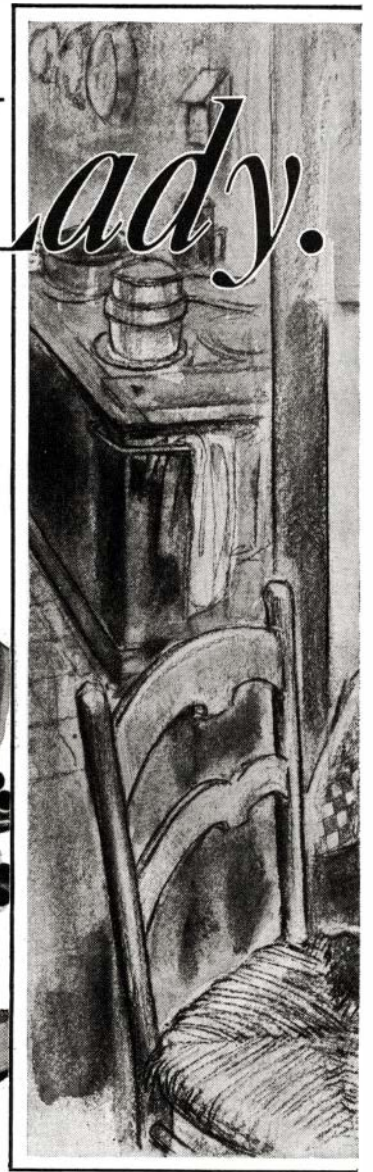
All this we learned from de Castellane over an *apéritif* one bleak Christmas Day in the "sweat room" of the Ritz. We were wintering in Paris, very, very lonely, and wanted some excellent place to celebrate.

Our mouths watered for a plump turkey with sage dressing, cranberry sauce, feather-light mashed potatoes, plum pudding, sweet cider. But why go on?

We thanked de Castellane and hailed a typical pasted-together toy taxi in Rue Cambon. We supposed Nini's was a famous place in Montmartre and neglected to ask the exact address. The driver riffled his thumb-marked red book and shook his head.

So we finally said "Sacré-Cœur!" And with an "Aw-w-w" and a "Oui, oui!" that meant

We climbed the Montmartre summit in a typical Paristaxi. No one there knew Nini's!



"More crazy Americans!" We climbed the Montmartre summit. But no one there knew Nini's.

It was as we were planning to return to some old established restaurant around the Place Vendôme that a chasseur from some neighboring *bistro* came running up. By that amazing jungle-like telepathy that reaches all chasseurs, he had heard of our quest. "Nini's," he said. "I will show you." And he did.

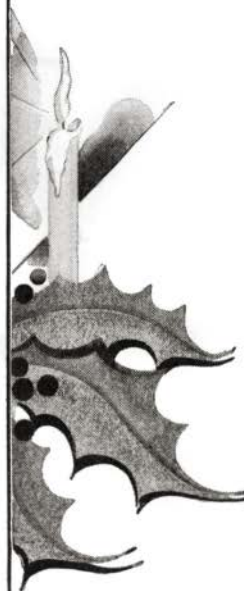
There was disappointment when we stopped. Nini's was like one of those pert shacks perched on a Pyrenean crag. A gust of wind—pouf!

Somewhere a light came on, and Nini herself appeared in the entrance, arms akimbo. Her welcome was far from hospitable—a glance, and a machine-gun rattle of her native tongue at the chasseur.

A chasseur is an old man in worldly wisdom when he goes to join the army at sixteen. He runs errands



Illustrations by
Corinne Boyd
Dillon



It was almost an hour before the first dish came, a steaming potage which Nini ladled with sighs of ecstasy.

around bars, arranges rendezvous for *cocottes*, sells dope and otherwise leads a life of deceit—a human product peculiarly Parisian. Yet he made us *persona grata* at Nini's, and she bowed us in.

It was eight-thirty o'clock, and we were the only customers. Still, Paris rarely dines until nine. So we sat dawdling over drinks we did not want. After a time Nini, freshly aproned, highly rouged and beaming, came to take our order. We explained we were hungry strangers far from home. Her eyes took on a brightness.

She cried "*Voilà!*" and scurried into her kitchen. It was almost an hour before the first dish came, a steaming *potage* which she ladled with sighs of ecstasy.

There was another long wait, and Nini came herself to explain that the dish she was about to serve had been cooking all day because, oddly enough, it was a double fête day for her. A dinner she had intended to eat alone—a dinner, indeed, for an absent one she loved better than anyone else in the world.

She seemed so earnest and yet so hesitant that I think she felt in that intuitive way women of the world have that she had our sympathy. Her story came later.

The marvelous dish she next served was called *poulet Nini*. It was cut-up fried chicken with red and black pepper rubbed in tenderly. This was placed on a bed of small-sized onions and cooked all day slowly. There was a wilted salad, too, and *crème caramel*.

It was after ten-thirty when we finished. We asked Nini if she wouldn't join us in a cordial. She was reluctant but pleased, we could see, and at our insistence came to sip a tiny goblet of *Danziger Goldwasser*.

But before she sat at the table she had completely changed her costume. She wore now one of those heavy, stuffy black velvet gowns, and had bedecked herself

with the paste jewels of her shady-lady days. Nini, with her cosmetic veneer, looked especially hard. Yet there was about her something soft and appealing. One caught it when she gazed out over Paris and murmured so sentimentally, even though her life there had been dangerously lived.

We veered back again conversationally to the exquisite *poulet Nini*. How nice to permit us to share this gastronomic treasure. Perhaps the beauty of the night, our common loneliness—anyway, Nini told us this story.

Christmas Day was also the birthday of a son—a son who did not know his mother. When he was nine he was sent to a Switzerland school. Many times she went to the village near St. Moritz and saw him indulging in sports, but never did she speak; never did he know.

His early life was spent in a foundling asylum. As he grew older, he was told that his parents had left him a trust fund in charge of a banker, a friend of Nini's in Lyon. He went to England and studied. He went to South America with a tutor—and all the time his mother patrolled the boulevards. He entered the Sorbonne. He was now in an American city, attached to a firm of lawyers. All this was fourteen years ago.

Since, I have quietly investigated Nini's story. I have said that he was "attached to a firm of lawyers." That is not strictly true, for I do not want by chance to be the avenue for spreading information that would embarrass. But his calling is equally honorable.

Anyway, this I know. The son Nini claims—and I believe her—is one of whom any mother might be proud. He is happily married. My wife and I like to believe we are the only Americans who know Nini's secret. And wherever we are on Christmas, we think somehow of Nini—wherever she may be.

The Mother

A story as fundamental as womanhood itself—as true in its revelation of age-old human nature as the Old Testament stories—and, as sheer literature, perhaps the finest American work of several years

by

PEARL S. BUCK

Illustrations by C. E. Chambers

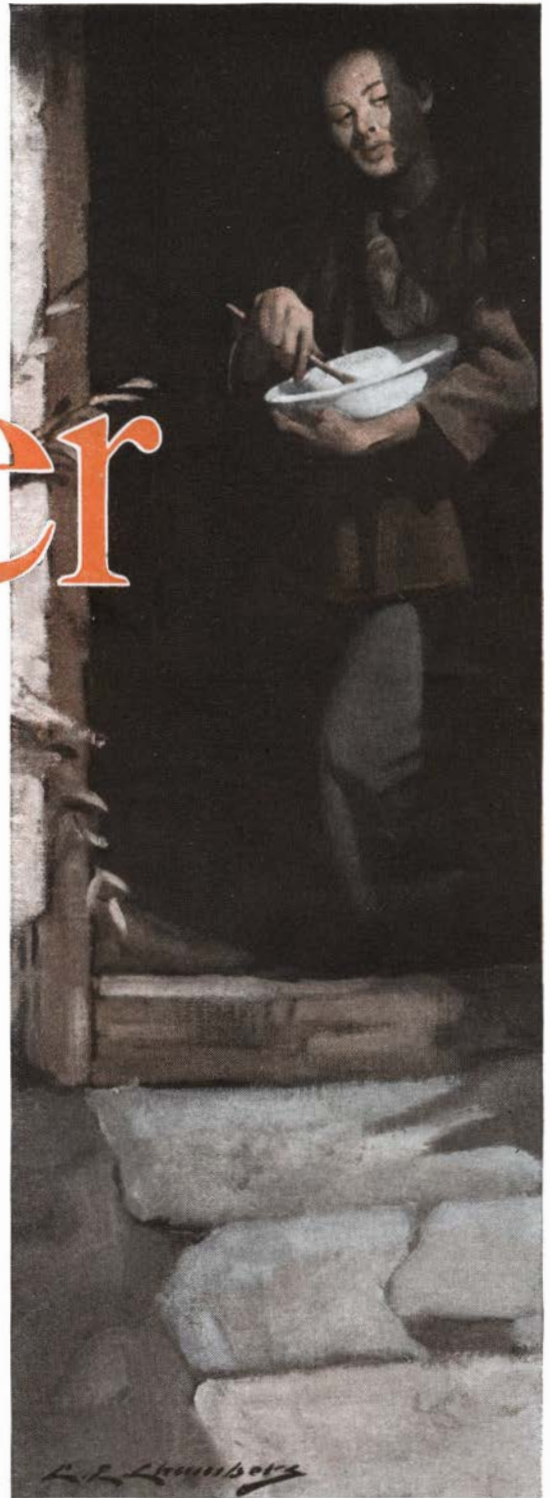
Conclusion—

ONE DAY the younger son did not come home when he said he would. And how did the mother know he would surely come? Because but three days before he had come secretly and by night, and he scratched lightly on her door, so she was half afraid to open it, thinking it might be robbers. Even as she was about to call out she heard his voice low and quick.

She rose, then, as fast as she could, fumbling her clothes and feeling for the candle, and when she opened the door, there he was with two other young men, all dressed in black as he was dressed these days. They had a great bundle of something tied up in paper and rope, and when she opened the door with the light in her hand, her son blew the light out, for there was a faint moon, enough to see by, and he said in a whisper, "Mother, there is something of my own I must put under your bed among the winter garments there. Say nothing of it, for I do not want anyone to know it is there. I will come and fetch it again."

Her heart misgave her somehow when she heard this, and she said soberly, holding her voice low, "Son, it is not an ill thing, I hope. I hope you have not taken something that is not yours."

But he answered hastily, "No, no, Mother; nothing robbed, I swear. It is some sheepskins I had the chance to buy cheap, but my brother will blame me for them, for he blames me for everything, and I have nowhere to put them. I bought them very cheap and you shall



"Have I not been more than punished for

have one next winter, Mother, for a coat. We will all wear good clothes next winter!"

She was mightily pleased, then, and trusted him when he said they were not robbed, and it was a joy to her to share a secret with this son of hers, and she said hastily, "Oh, aye, trust me, son! There be many things in this room that my son and son's wife do not know."

Then the two men brought the bundle in and they pushed it silently under the bed.

But the son would not stay at all, and when the mother saw his haste she wondered, but she said, "Be sure I will keep them safe, my son, but ought they not to be aired and sunned against the moths?"

To this he answered carelessly, "It is but for a day or two, for we are moving to a larger place, and then I shall have a room of my own and plenty."

When she heard this talk of much room, there was that thought in her mind she had always of his marriage, and she drew him aside and looked at him



母親的故事

any little sin I did? Who could have thought the gods would know what I did that day!"

beseechingly. It was the one thing about him that did not please her, that he was not willing for her to wed him.

Now, even in the haste of the moment when he was eager to be gone, even now she whispered coaxingly, "But son, if you have so much room, then why not let me find a maid? I will find the best pretty maid I can—or if you know one, then tell me and let me ask my cousin's wife to be the one to make the match. I would not force you, son, if it be the one you like is one that I would like, too."

But the young man said, half wondering, "Old women like you, Mother, think of nothing but weddings and births of children, and we—we young ones nowadays have cast away all that . . . In three days, Mother!"

He pulled himself away, then, and was gone, walking with the other two across the dimly lighted fields.

But three days passed and he did not come. And three more came and went, and yet three more, and the

mother grew afraid and wondered if some ill had come upon her son. But now in this last year she had not gone easily to the town and so she waited, not daring to tell what her fears were, and not daring, either, to leave her room lest her son's careful wife chance to draw the curtains aside and see the bundle under her bed.

One night as she lay sleepless with her wondering she rose and lighted the candle and stooped and peered under the bed. There the thing was, wrapped in thick paper, shaped large and square and tied fast with rope. She pressed it and

In the dim dawn of the day set for her son's death, the mother gathered some strange strength and said, "I will go into the town and wait to see my little son if he must go out to die."

felt of it and there was something hard within; not sheepskin, surely.

"It should be taken out to sun if it is sheepskin," she muttered, sore at the thought of waste if the moths should creep in and gnaw good skins. But she did not dare to open it, and so she let it be. And still her son did not come.

So passed the days until a month was gone and she was near beside herself and would have been completely so, except that something came to wean her mind somewhat from her fears. It was the last thing she dreamed of nowadays and it was that her son's wife had conceived.

Yes, after all these years the woman came to herself and did her duty. The elder son went to his mother solemnly one day as she sat in the doorway, and he said, his lean face all wrinkled with his smiles, "Mother, you shall have a grandson."

AT FIRST the mother would not believe it. But she looked at this elder son of hers, and she saw by his face that it was true, and she rose and went to the kitchen, where she found her son's wife chopping leeks, and she cried, "How long have you known?"

"Two moons and more," the young wife answered.

Then the old mother fell into a rage to think she was not told, and she cried, "Why have you said no word to me, who have sat all these years panting and pining and thirsting for such news? Two moons—was ever so cold a soul as you, and would not any other woman have told the thing the first day that she knew it!"

Then the young woman stayed her knife, and she said in her careful way, "I did not lest I might be wrong and grieve you worse than if I never gave you hope."

But this the mother would not grant, and she spat and said, "Well, and with all the children I have had could not I have told you whether you were right or wrong? No, you think I am a child and foolish with my age. I know what you think—yes, you show it with every step you make."

But the young woman answered nothing. She pressed her lips together, and poured a bowl of tea from an earthen pot that stood there on the table, and she led the mother to her usual place against the wall.

But the mother could not sit and hold such news as this. No, she must tell her cousin and her cousin's wife and there they sat at home, for nowadays the sons did the work or the three who stayed upon the land, the others having gone elsewhere to earn their food, and the cousin still did what he could and he was always busy at some small task or other. But even he could not work as he once had, and as for his wife, she slept peacefully all day long except when she woke to heed some grandchild's cry.

And now the mother went across the way and shouted at her as she slept, "You shall not be the only grandmother, I swear! A few months and I am to have a grandson, too!"

The cousin's wife came to herself then slowly, and she opened her placid eyes and said, "Is it so, cousin, and is your little son to be wed?"

The mother's heart sank a little, and she said, "No, not that," and then the cousin looked up from where he sat, twisting ropes of straw for silkworm to spin cocoons upon, since it was the season when they spin,



and he said in his dry way, "Your son's wife, then, cousin?"

"Aye," the mother said heartily, her pleasure back again, and she sat down to pour it out, but she would not seem too pleased, either, and she hid her pleasure with complaints and said, "Time, too, and I have waited all these years and if I had been rich I would have fetched another woman for him, but I thought my younger son should have his chance before I gave his brother two. A very slow woman always that son's wife of mine, and full of some temper not like mine—cold as any serpent's temper it is."

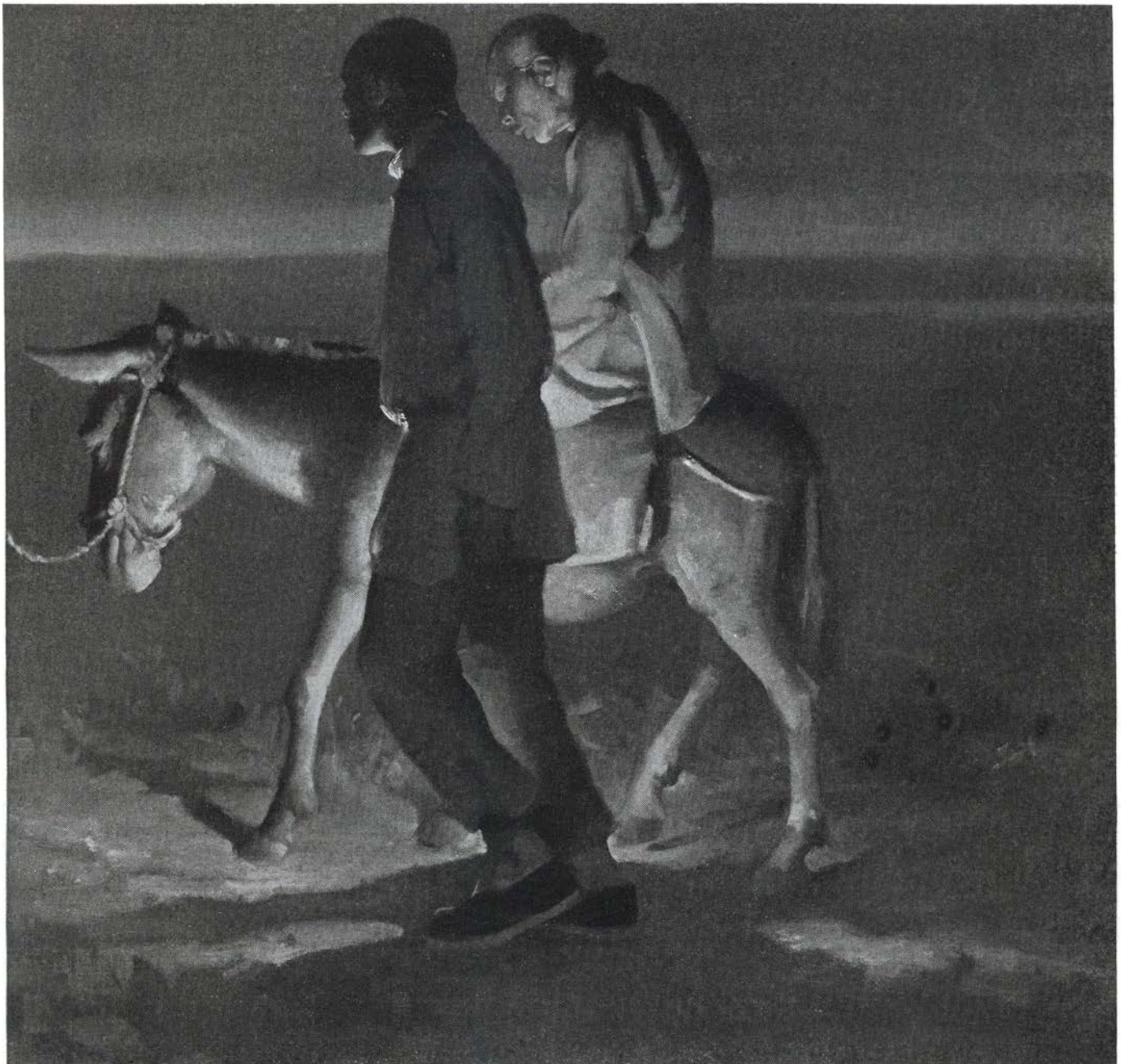
"But not evil, goodwife," said the cousin justly. "She has done well and carefully always. She mated that old buffalo you had and got this young one, and your fowls are twice as many as you had."

"No, not evil," said the mother grudgingly.

Then the cousin's wife smiled and said, "A grandson, did you say? Aye, we have seven now of grandsons alone—and none too many," and slept again peacefully.

So did the great news fill the days that had been empty because the younger son did not come, and this new joy took the edge from the mother's waiting, and she thought he must come sometime or other and let it rest at that.

But it was not all joy, either, and like every joy she ever had, the mother thought, there was always something wrong in it to make it go amiss if so it could.



Here the thing was. She feared lest the child be born a girl, and when she thought of this she muttered, "Yes, and it would be like my ever-evil destiny if it were born a girl."

And in her anxiety she would have liked to go and ask that potent little goddess that she knew and make a bribe to her of a new robe of red or new shoes or some such thing if she would make the child a boy. But she did not dare to go lest she recall to the goddess' mind that old sin of hers, and she feared the goddess lest her old sin was not yet atoned for, even with the sorrow that she had, and that if the goddess saw her and heard her speak of grandsons, she might remember and reach out and smite the little one.

SHE THOUGHT to herself, most miserably, "Better if I do not go and show myself at all. If I stay away and do not tell her that the child is coming, she may forget me, and it will be but the birth of another mortal and not my grandson, and I must chance it is a boy."

And then she grew uneasy and full of gloom, and thought to herself that if the child were joy yet was it a new gate for sorrow to enter by, too, and so is every child, and when she thought of this and how the child might be born dead or shapen wrong or dull or blind or a girl or any of these things, she hated gods and

goddesses who have such powers to mar a mortal with, and she muttered, "Have I not been more than punished for any little sin I did? Who could have thought the gods would know what I did that day! But doubtless that old god in the shrine smelled the sin about him and told the goddess somehow, even though I covered up his eyes."

"Well, I will stay away from gods, so sinful an old soul as I be, for even if I would I do not know how to atone more for what I did than I have atoned. I swear if they measured up the joy and sorrow I have had in my whole life, the sorrow would sink the scales like stone, and the joy be nothing more than thistledown. I did not bear the child and I have seen my blind maid die, still blind. Does not sorrow atone? Aye, I have been very full of sorrows all my life long. But gods know no justice."

So she thought gloomily she had two sorrows to bear now, fear lest her grandson be not whole and sound or else a girl, and waiting for this younger son who would not come. Sometimes she thought her whole life was only made of waiting now. So had she waited for her man to come who never came, and now her son and grandsons. Such was her life and poor stuff it was, she thought.

Yet she must hope, and when anyone went into town she always asked him when he came back again, "Saw you my little son today anywhere?"

All through the hamlet in those days of waiting the men and women grew used to this question and when they heard her quavering voice ask, "Neighbor, saw you my little son today?" they would answer kindly enough, "No, no, good mother, and how could we see him in the common market place where we go and he such as he is, and one you say who lives by books?"

Then she would turn away, dashed of her hope again, and go home to wait and wonder if the moths had eaten up the sheepskins.

But one day after many moons there came news. The mother sat by the door as ever she did now, her long pipe in her fingers, for she had only just eaten her morning meal. She sat and marked how sharply the morning sun rose over the rounded hills and waited for it hoping for its heat, for these autumn mornings were chill. Then came suddenly across the threshold a son of her cousin's, the eldest son, and he went to her own elder son who stood binding the thong of his sandal that had broken, and he said something in a low voice.

She wondered even then, for she had seen this man start for the town at dawn that morning with loads of new-cut grass. Here he was back so soon, and she was about to call out and ask him if he had sold his grass so quickly, when she saw her elder son look up from the thong and cry, aghast, "My brother?"

Yes, the old mother's sharp ears heard it, and she called out quickly, "What of my little son?"

But the two men talked on gravely, and at last the mother could not bear it, and she cried out, "Tell me of my son!"

But the cousin's son went away without a word, and the elder son said, halting, "Mother, there is something wrong. I do not know—but Mother, I must go to town and see and tell you then."

But the mother would not let him go. She laid hold on him and cried out, "You shall not go until you tell me!"

And at the sound of her voice the son's wife came and listened and said, "Tell her, else she will be ill with anger."

So the son said slowly, "My cousin said—he said he saw my brother this morning among many others, and his hands were tied behind him with hempen ropes and his clothes were rags and he was marching past the market place where my cousin had taken the grass to sell, and there was a long line of some twenty or thirty, and when my brother saw him he turned his eyes away—but my cousin asked and the guards who walked along said they were Communists sent to gaol to be killed tomorrow."

THEN DID the three stare at each other, and as they stared the mother's jaw began to tremble, and she said, "I have heard that word, but I do not know what it is."

And the son said slowly, "So I asked my cousin and he asked the guard, and the guard said it was a new sort of robber they had nowadays."

Then the mother thought of that bundle hid so long beneath her bed, and she began to wail aloud and she said, "I might have known that night—oh, that bundle underneath my bed is what he robbed!"

But the son and son's wife laid hold on her at this and hurried her between them to the house and said, "What do you mean, our mother?"

And the son's wife lifted up the curtain and looked at the man, and he came and the old mother pointed to the bundle there and sobbed, "I do not know what is in it—but he brought it here one night and bade me be secret for a day or two. And still he is not come—and never came."

Then the man shut the door and barred it, and the woman hung a garment over the window and they drew that bundle forth and untied the ropes.

"Sheepskins, he said it was," the mother murmured, staring at it.

But the two said nothing and believed nothing that she said. It might be anything, and half they expected it was gold when they felt how heavy it was.

But when they opened it, it was only books. Many, many books were there, all small and blackly printed, and many sheets of paper, some pictured with the strangest sights of blood and death and giants beating little men or hewing them with knives. And when they saw these books, the three gaped at one another at a loss to know what this could mean and why any man should steal and hide mere paper marked with ink.

But however much they stared they could not know the meaning, for none could read a word. Then were the three in terror, the mother for her son and the other two for themselves, lest any should know that these were there. The man said, "Tie them up again and let them be till night, and then we will take them to the kitchen and burn them all."

But the woman was more careful and she said, "No, we cannot burn them all at once or others will see the smoke and wonder what we do. I must burn them bit by bit, as though I burned the grass to cook our food."

BUT THE old mother did not heed this. She only knew now that her son had fallen into evil hands, and she said to her elder son, "Oh, son, what will you do for your little brother? How will you find him?"

"I know where he is," the man said slowly. "My cousin said they took them to a certain gaol near the south gate where the beheading ground is."

And then he cried out at his mother's sudden ghastly look, and he called to his wife and they lifted the old woman and laid her on the bed, and there she lay and gasped, her face the hue of clay with terror for her son, and she whispered, gasping, "Oh, son, will you not go—your brother—"

And the elder son laid aside his fears for himself, and he said, in pity for his mother, "Oh, aye, Mother, I go; I go."

He changed his clothes, then, and put shoes on his feet. When at last he was ready the mother called him to her and whispered in his ear, "Son, do not spare money. If he be truly in the gaol, there must be money spent to get him out. But money can do it, son. Who ever heard of any gaol that would not let a man free for money? Son, I have a little—in a hole here. I only kept it for him. Use it all; use all we have."

The man's face did not change, and he looked at his wife and she looked at him, and he said, "I will spare all I can, my mother, for your sake."

But she cried, "What does it matter for me? I am old and ready to die. It is for his sake."

But the man was gone, and he went to fetch his cousin who had seen the sight, and the two went toward the town.

What could the mother do then except wait again? Yet this was the bitterest waiting of her life. She could not lie upon her bed, and yet she was faint if she rose. At last the son's wife grew frightened and she fetched the old cousin and the cousin's wife, and the pair came over soberly and the three old people sat together.

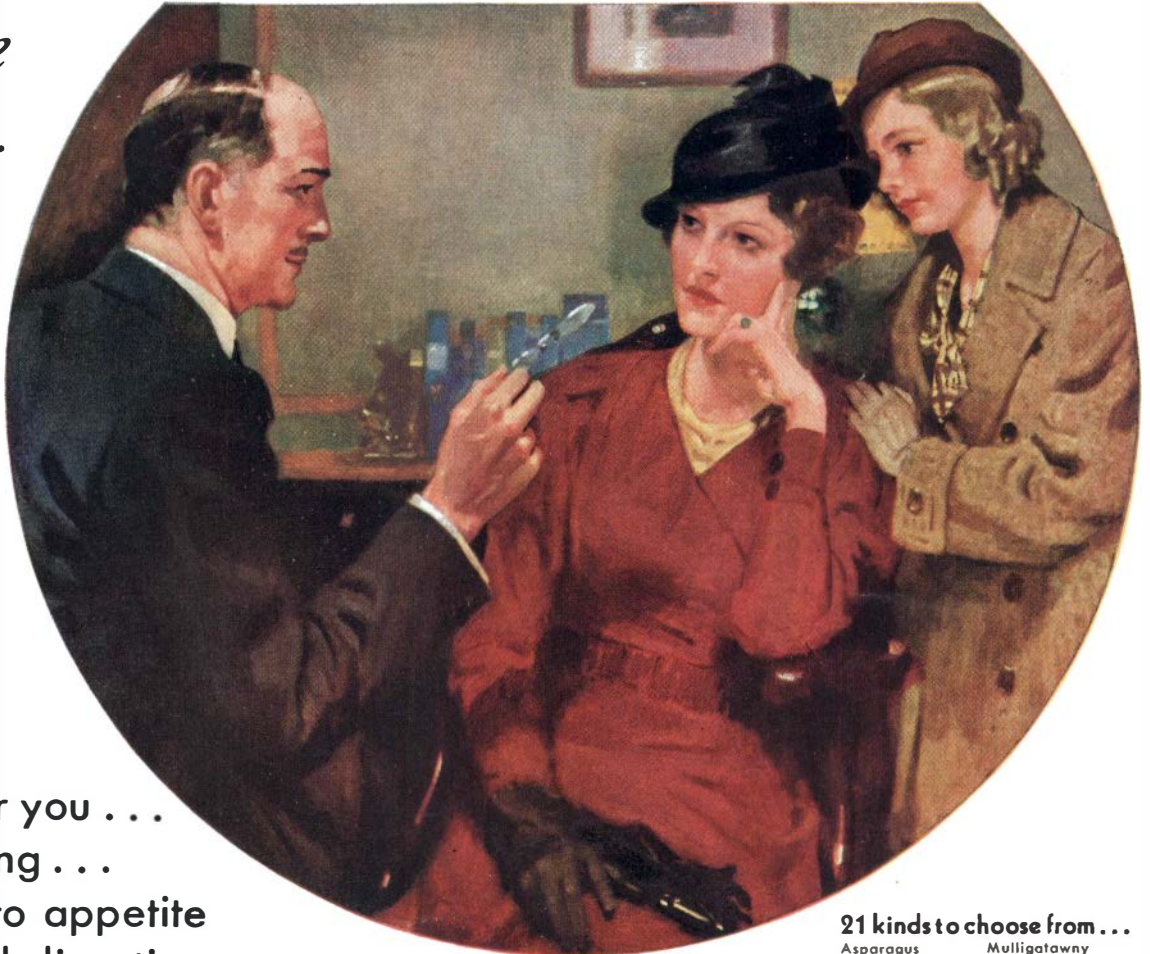
It was true it did comfort the mother somewhat to have the others there, for these were the two she could speak most to, and she wept and said again and again, "If I have sinned, have I not had sorrow enough?" And she said, "If I have sinned, why do I not die myself and let it be an end of it? Why should this one and that be taken from me, and doubtless my grandson, too? No, I shall never see my grandson. I know I never shall, and it will not be I who must die." And then she grew angry at such sorrow and cried out, "But where is any perfect woman who is without any sin, and why should I have all the sorrow?"

Then the cousin's wife said hastily, for she feared that the mother might cry out too much in her pain, "Be sure we all have sins, and if we must be judged by sins, then none of us would have children. Look at my sons and grandsons, and yet I am a wicked old soul, too, and I never go near a temple and I never have."

So she comforted the distraught mother, and the cousin said in his turn, "Wait, good cousin, until we hear what the news is. It may be you need not grieve, after all, for

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costlier tobaccos
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Milder*



he may be set free with the money they have to free him with, or it may be my son saw wrong and it was not your son who went past bound."

But the cousin's wife took this care. She bade the young wife go and see to something or other in her own house, for she would have the son's wife out of earshot, lest the mother tell more than she meant to tell in this hour, after keeping silent so many years.

So they waited for the two men to return, and it was easier waiting three than one.

But night drew on before the mother saw them coming. She had dragged herself from her bed, and as the afternoon wore on she went and sat under the willow tree, her cousin and her cousin's wife beside her, and there the three sat staring down the hamlet street.

AT LAST when the sun was nearly set the mother saw them coming. She rose and shaded her eyes against the golden evening sun, and she cried, "It is they!" and hobbled down the street. So loud had been her cry that everyone came out of his house, for in the hamlet they all knew the tale, but did not dare to come openly to the mother's house, for fear there might be some judgment come on it because of this younger son and they all be caught in it.

All day, then, they had gone about their business, eaten through with curiosity, but fearful too, as country people are when gaols and governors are talked of. Now they came forth and hung about but at a distance. The cousin rose, too, and went behind the mother.

But the mother ran and laid hold on her son's arm and cried out, "What of my little son?"

But even as she asked the question, even as her eyes searched the faces of the two men, she knew that ill was written there. The two men looked at each other, and at last the son said soberly, "He is in gaol, Mother." The two men looked at each other again and the cousin's son scratched his head as though he did not know what to say, and so the son spoke again, "Mother, I doubt he can be saved. He and twenty more are set for death and in the morning."

"Death?" the mother shrieked, and again she shrieked, "Death!"

And she would have fallen if they had not caught her.

Then the two men led her into the nearest house and put a seat beneath her and eased her down and she began to weep and cry, and she beat her dried breasts with her clenched hands and cried out, accusing her son, "Then you did not offer them enough money. I told you I had that little store—not so little, either, forty pieces of silver and the two little pieces he gave me last—and there they are waiting!" And when she saw her son stand with hanging head, she spat at him in her anger and she said, "You shall not have a penny of it, either! If he dies it will not be for you. No, I will go and throw it in the river first."

Then the cousin's son spoke up in defense, and he said, "No, aunt, do not blame him. He offered more than twice your store. He offered a hundred pieces for his brother, and to high and low in that gaol, as high as he could get he offered bribes. To this one and to that he showed silver, but they would not even let him see your little son."

"Then he did not offer enough!" the mother shouted. "Who ever heard of guards in a gaol who are not to be bribed? But I will go and fetch that money this moment. Yes, I will dig it up and take it and find my little son and

bring him home and he shall never leave me more, whatever they may say."

Again the two men looked at each other and the son's face begged his cousin to speak again for him, and so the cousin's son said again, "Good aunt, they will not even let you see him. They would not let us in at all, I say, no, although we showed silver, because they said the governor was hot now against such crime as his. It is some new crime nowadays, and very heinous."

"My son has never done a crime!" the mother cried proudly. "There is an enemy somewhere here who pays more than we have to keep him in the gaol." And she looked around about the crowd that stood there gaping now and drinking down the news they heard, and she cried at them, "Saw any of you any crime my little son ever did?"

This one looked at that and each looked everywhere and said no word, and the mother saw their dubious looks and somehow her heart broke. She fell to weeping again and cried at them, "Oh, you hated him because he was so fair to look upon—better than your black sons, who are only hinds! Aye, you hate anyone who is better than yourselves," and she rose and staggered forth and went home weeping most bitterly.

But when she was come home again and they were alone and none near except the cousin and the cousin's wife and their children, the mother wiped her eyes and said to her elder son more quietly, "But this is letting good time pass. Tell me all, for we may save him yet. We have the night. What was his true crime? We will take all we have and save him yet."

There passed between the son and son's wife a look at this, not evil, but as though forbearance were very near its end in them, and then the son began, "I do not know what the crime is rightly, but they call him what I told you, a Communist. A new word—I have heard it often, and when I asked what it was it seemed to be a sort of robber band. I asked the guard there at the gaol, who stands with a gun across his arm, and he answered, 'What is he? Why, one who would even take your land from you, goodman, for himself, and one who contrives against the state and so must die with all his fellows.' Aye, that is his crime."

THE MOTHER listened hard to this, the candle's light falling on her face that glistened with dried tears, and she said, astounded, her voice trembling while she strove to make it firm, "But I do not think it can be so. I never heard him say a word like this. I never heard of such a crime. To kill a man, to rob a house, to let a parent starve, these be crimes. But how can land be robbed? Can he roll it up like cloth and take it away with him and hide it somewhere?"

"I do not know, Mother," said the son, his head hanging, his hands hanging loose between his knees as he sat upon a little stool. He went on slowly, "I do not know what else was said, a great deal here and there in the town we heard, because so many are to be killed tomorrow and they make a holiday. What else was said, my cousin?"

Then the cousin's son swallowed hard, and he said, "There was a great deal said by those townfolk, but I dared not ask much, for when I asked more closely what the pother was about the guards at the gaol turned on me and said, 'Are you one of them, too? What is it, then, to you if they are killed?' And I dared not say I was the cousin of one to be killed, but we did find a chief gaoler and

we gave him some money and begged for a private place to speak in, and he led us to a corner of the gaol behind his own house and we told him we were honest country folk and had a little poor land and rented more, and that there was one among the doomed who was a distant relative, and if we could save him then we would for honor's sake, since none of our name had died under a headsman's blade before. But only if it did not cost too much, since we were poor.

"The gaoler took the silver, then, and asked how the lad looked and we told him, and he said, 'I think I know the lad you mean, for he has been very ill at ease in gaol, and I think he would say all he knows, except there is a maid beside him bold as any I have ever seen who keeps him brave. Yes, some are hard and bold and do not care how they may die. But that lad is afraid.'

"I doubt he knows what he has done or why he dies, for he looks a simple country lad they have used for their bidding and made great promises to him. I believe his crime is that he was found with certain books upon him that he gave among the people freely, and in the books are evil things said of overturning all the state and sharing all the money and the land alike."

Then the mother looked at her elder son and broke out in fresh weeping, and she moaned, "I knew we ought to let him have some land. We might have rented a little more and given him a share—but no, this elder son of mine and his wife must hold it all and grudge him everything."

Then the elder son opened his mouth to speak, but the old cousin said quietly, "Do not speak, my son. Let your mother blame you and ease herself. We all know what you are and what your brother was, and how ill he hated any labor on the land or any labor anywhere."

So the son held his peace. At last the cousin's son said on, "We asked the gaoler, then, how much silver it would take to set the lad free, and the gaoler shook his head and said that if the lad were high of place and son of some rich and mighty man, then doubtless silver used could set him free. But being a country lad, and poor, no man would put his life in danger for all that we could give, and so doubtless he must die."

At this the mother shrieked, "And shall he die because he is my son and I am poor? We have that land we own and we will sell it to free him. Yes, we will sell it this very night. There are those in this hamlet—"

But the elder son spoke up at this talk of his land, and he said, "And how, then, will we live? We can scarcely live even as it is, and if we rent more at these new and ruinous rates we have now we shall be beggars. All we own is this small parcel of land and I will not sell it, Mother. No, the land is mine. I will not sell it."

And when he said this his wife spoke up, to say the only thing she had said all the time, and she said, "There is the son I have in me to think of now."

And the man said heavily, "Aye, it is he I think of."

Then was the old mother silent. Yes, she was silent and she wept awhile, and thereafter all that night whenever fresh words broke forth there was but this one answer to them all.

When the dim dawn came near, for they had sat the night through, the mother gathered some strange strength and said, "I will go myself. Once more I will go into the town and wait to see my little son if he must go out to die." And they begged her not to go, and the

son said earnestly, "Mother, I will go and fetch him—afterwards—for if you see the sight you yourself will die," but she said, "What if I die?"

She washed her face and combed her gray hair and put on a clean coat, and she said, "Go and fetch my cousin's ass. You will let me have it, cousin?"

"Oh, aye," the cousin said sadly.

So the son and cousin's son fetched the ass and set the old mother on its back and they walked to the town beside it, a lantern in the son's hand, for dawn was still too faint to walk by.

Now was the mother weak and quiet and washed by her tears, and she went almost not knowing what she did, but clinging to the ass' back. Her head hung down and she did not look once to see the dawn. She stared down into the pale dusty road that scarcely showed yet through the darkness. The men were silent, too, at that grave hour, and so they went winding with the road to the south and came to the southern gate that was not opened yet because the day was still so early.

But there were many waiting there, for it had been noised about the countryside that there would be this great beheading, and many came to see it. When the gates were opened they all pressed in, and the mother on her ass and the two men went in and they all turned to that piece of ground near the city wall within a certain open space. There in the early morning light a great crowd stood already, silent with the thought of this vast spectacle of death.

But the mother and the two men did not stay in the crowd. No, the mother whispered, "Let us go to the door of the gaol and stand there," for in her poor heart she still held the hope that somehow when she saw her son some miracle must happen, some way must come whereby she could save him.

So the men turned the ass' head toward the gaol, and there it was, and beside its gate set in the high wall spiked with glass along the top they waited. There a guard stretched himself and beside him a lantern burned low, the candle spilling out a heap of melted tallow red as blood, until a chill wind blew up suddenly with the dawn and blew out the guttering light. There the three waited in the dusty street, and the mother came down from the ass and waited, and soon they heard the sound of many footsteps made on stone and marching, and then there was a shout, "Open the gates!"

THE GUARDS sprang up, then, and stood beside the gates, their weapons stiff and hard across their shoulders, and so the gates swung open.

Then did the mother strain her eyes to see her son. There came forth many persons, youth tied to youth and two by two, their hands bound with hempen thongs, and each two tied to the two ahead. At first they seemed all young men, and yet here and there were maids, but hard to tell as maids, because their long hair was shorn and they wore garments like those of the men, and there was nothing to show what they were until one looked close and saw their little breasts and narrow waists, for their faces were as bold as any young man's.

The mother looked at every face, and suddenly she saw her own lad. Yes, there he walked, his head down, and he was tied to a maid, his hands fast to hers.

Then the mother rushed forward and

fell at his feet and clasped them and gave one loud cry, "My son!"

She looked up into his face, the palest face, his lips white and earthen and the eyes dull. When he saw his mother he turned paler still and would have fallen, had he not been bound to the maid. For this maid pulled at him and would not let him fall, nor would she let him stay, and when she saw the woman at his feet she laughed aloud, and she cried out high and shrill, "Comrade, remember now you have no mother and no father, nor any dear to you except our common cause!" And she pulled him on his way.

Then a guard ran out and picked the mother up and threw her to one side upon the road, and there she lay in the dust. The crowd marched on and out of sight and to that southern gate, and suddenly a wild song burst from them and they went singing to their death.

At last the two men came and would have lifted up the mother, but she would not let them. She lay there in the dust, moaning and listening in a daze to that strange song.

And yet she could not moan long, either, for a guard came from the gaol gate and prodded her rudely with his gun and roared at her, "Off with you, old hag!" and the two men grew afraid and forced the mother to her feet and set her on the ass again and turned homeward slowly. But before they reached the southern gate they paused beside a wall and waited.

They waited until they heard a great roar go up, and then the two men looked at each other and at the old mother. But she made no sign. She sat drooping on the beast, staring into the dust beneath its feet.

Then they went on, having heard the cry, and they met the crowd scattering and shouting this and that. The men said nothing, nor did the old mother seem to hear, but some cried out, "A very merry death they died, too, and full of courage! Did you see that young bold maid and how she was singing to the end?" And some were laughing, their faces red, and some were pale.

But if she saw or heard these things the mother said no word. No, she knew the lad was dead now; dead, and no use silver or anything; no use reproach, even if she could reprove. She longed but for one thing, and it was to get to her home and search out that old grave and weep there.

It came across her heart most bitterly that not even had she any grave of her own dead to weep upon as other women had, and she must go and weep on some old unknown grave to ease her heart. But even this pang passed, and she only longed to weep and ease herself.

When she was before their door again she came down from the ass and she said to her elder son, "Take me out behind the hamlet. I must weep awhile."

The cousin's wife was there and heard her, and she said kindly, wiping her eyes on her sleeves, "Aye, let the poor soul weep awhile. It is the kindest thing."

And so in silence the son led his mother to the grave and made a smooth place in the grass for her to sit upon. She sat down then and leaned her head upon the grave and looked at him haggardly and said, "Go away and let me weep." And when he hesitated, she said again most passionately, "Leave me, for if I do not weep, then I must die!"

So he went away, saying, "I will come soon to fetch you, Mother," for he was loath to leave her there alone.

Then did the mother sit and watch the idle day grow bright. She watched the sun come fresh and golden over all the land as though no one had died that day. The fields were ripe with late harvest and the grain was full and yellow in the leaf and the yellow sun poured over all the fields. And all the time the mother sat and waited for her sorrow to rise to tears in her and ease her broken heart.

She thought of all her life and all her dead and how little there had been of any good to lay hold on in her years, and so her sorrow rose. She let it rise, not angry any more, nor struggling, but letting sorrow come now as it would and she took her measure full of it. She let herself be crushed to the very earth and felt her sorrow fill her, accepting it. And turning her face to the sky, she cried in agony, "Is this atonement now? Am I not punished well?"

And then her tears came gushing and she laid her head upon the grave, and so she wept.

ON AND ON she wept through that bright morning. She remembered every little sorrow and every great one, and how her man had quarreled and gone, and how there was no little maid to come and call her home from weeping now, and how her lad looked tied to that wild maid, and so she wept for all her life that day.

But even as she wept her son came running over the sun-strewn land, and as he ran he shouted something to her but she could not hear it quickly out of all her maze of sorrow. She lifted up her face to hear, and then she heard him cry, "My son is come—your grandson, Mother!"

Yes, she heard that cry of his and her tears ceased without her knowing it. She rose and staggered, and then went to meet him, crying, "When—when?"

"But now," he shouted, laughing. "This very moment born—a son. I never saw a bigger babe and roaring like a lad born a year or two, I swear!"

She laid her hand upon his arm and began to laugh a little, half weeping, too. And leaning on him, she hurried back and forgot herself.

Thus the two went to the house and into that room where the new mother lay upon her bed. The room was full of women from the hamlet who had come to hear the news, and even the gossip, she must come too, and when she saw the mother she cackled out, "A lucky woman you are, goodwife. I thought the end of your luck was come, but here it is born again. Son's son, I swear, and here be I with nothing but my old carcass for my pains."

But the mother said not one word and she saw no one. She went into the room and to the bed and looked down. There the child lay, a boy, and roaring as his father said he did, his mouth wide open, as fair and stout a babe as any she had ever seen. She bent and seized him in her arms and held him and felt him hot and strong against her with new life.

She looked at him from head to foot and laughed and looked again, and at last she searched about the room for the cousin's wife. Then, when she found the face she sought, the mother held the child for the other one to see, and forgetting all the roomful, she cried aloud, "See, cousin! I doubt I was so full of sin as once I thought I was, cousin. You see my grandson!"

THE END

Edith Wharton, famous author of "The Age of Innocence" and other noted novels, has written a striking story which will appear soon in *Cosmopolitan*

Lovely Aristocrats of 9 great Nations prove Woodbury's most effective of all Beauty aids



IN UNITED STATES AND CANADA and 7 countries of Europe, leading skin specialists invited hundreds of women to cleanse the left half of their faces with their accustomed toilet aids for 30 days—the right half with Woodbury's Facial Soap. Woodbury's improved or overcame 79% of faults, made all complexions lovelier.

IN AUSTRIA . . . *Baroness Kathe Heine Geldern*, among others, made the Test under Dr. Theodor Sussman of Vienna. Woodbury's corrected 60% of skin faults. IN GERMANY . . . *The Countess Lenore Stenbock* (above at right) took the Test in Berlin under Dr. Wilhelm Richter. Woodbury's improved 87% of all skin faults.

Photo D'Ora, Paris



IN ITALY . . . *The Contessa Gabrielle di Robilant* (above) and 49 other subjects took the Test. 8 out of every 10 skin faults yielded to Woodbury's.



IN SPAIN . . . *The Marquesa de San Carlos* shared in the Test under Dr. C. Sarrias Suana. Woodbury's overcame 77% of skin faults.

IN ENGLAND . . . *Lady Cecil Douglas* (left) took the London Test under Dr. Thomas F. Roche who said: "... Dry skins became softer . . . blackheads and large pores diminished . . ."



IN HUNGARY . . . *Baroness Ida Legan* took the Test under Dr. Nicholas M. Pogany. IN FRANCE . . . *Princesse Sixtete Bourbon Parme* (left) under Dr. Joseph Pierron.

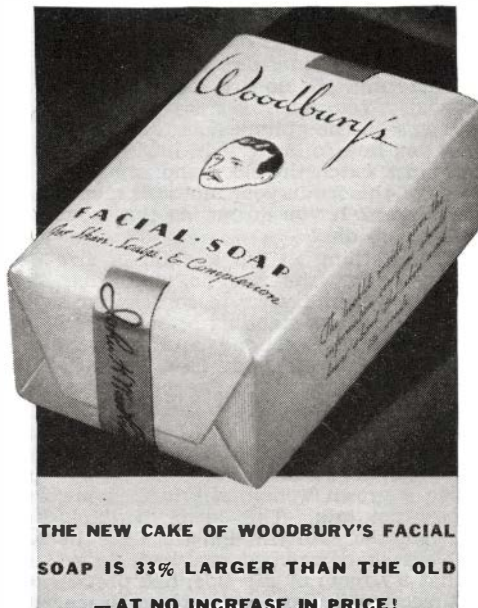
© 1934, John H. Woodbury, Inc.

now a larger cake at the old price

Woodbury's has cut the cost of beauty! Step out and buy new Loveliness! Fresher, clearer, healthier skin—the Loveliness you long for. You'll find it in the new, longer-lasting Woodbury cake, 33% larger than the old—at no increase in price!

Nine great nations bring you the proof of Woodbury's greater effectiveness in the care of the skin. In the International Half-face Beauty Tests, Woodbury's Facial Soap was matched against every well-known beauty aid. In thirty days it proved superior to them all. Corrected all the main complexion faults. Made all complexions lovelier.

Weeks of tonic Woodbury cleansings and facials are packed into this new, larger, longer-lasting cake—the same identical soap that won the famous



THE NEW CAKE OF WOODBURY'S FACIAL SOAP IS 33% LARGER THAN THE OLD — AT NO INCREASE IN PRICE!

Half-face Beauty Tests! An economy not only for face, throat and shoulders but for the all-over beauty bath! Thrilling, economical, lasting beauty—for every woman's skin from brow to toe!

BING CROSBY — on Woodbury's Radio Program every Monday evening—Columbia coast-to-coast and Canadian network—8:30 E. S. T.



AND ANOTHER
New Woodbury's Size
30-DAY TREATMENT CAKE

10¢

It will bring you Woodbury Facials twice a day for a whole month! Will do for you what it did — in 30 days or less — for hundreds of women who took the International Half-face Beauty Tests.

The Greater Gifts (Continued from page 37)

from being snuffed out in one dreadful tragedy!

And Queen Victoria—that great and good woman—dominated the lives of her children and grandchildren to the day of her death.

The Crown Princess Cecilie of Germany showed no fear of anything in the world that might threaten the health and happiness of her babies. After the war, a fierce and unruly mob surrounded the little gatekeeper's lodge where the Crown Princess had taken refuge with her children and beat on the door. Like the Empress she should have been, Princess Cecilie threw open the door, and strode out on the steps to face the mob. Behind her, clinging to her skirts, her six children shrank in terror.

"What are you demanding?" she asked them, not a tremor of fear in her voice or her glance.

"That you leave Germany!" they shouted. "You and your children get out of this country at once."

The Princess stepped forward regally and pointed at the ground before her door. "This," she said, in tones not one of those men ever could forget—"this is my earth. From it my parents sprang, and my children. It belongs to us, and we belong to it. I will never leave it, nor shall my children. We are Germans. Leave us alone."

Without one weapon, without anything but the strength of her dauntless soul, she defied those men, and they went away and left her and her children untouched.

Rarely does a peasant woman meet with such an emergency for herself and her children. If she did, would she come through it as nobly? I do not know. Often, though, she shows as much courage in getting through the daily trials of poverty and hardships.

I shall never forget how brave my own mother was against the monotony of poverty, and hunger, and hardship. I shall never forget how she made the whole world happy for us just by her joyous singing; how she amused us and laughed with us and taught us her own philosophy of life.

If it rains, I never say, "Alas, it is raining today." I always say, "Tomorrow, I'll bet you the sun shines."

MY DEAR little Austrian mother taught me that when I was only a baby playing about her feet. That spirit, those bright anticipations, are a gift every mother, no matter how poor, can make to her children. It is a gift that I have tried to make to mine.

After all, motherhood is giving—and this Christmas spirit that rules the world for only a day each year is in the hearts of mothers all year long. How often I have seen a poor mother save a penny here, a penny there—only the poor know how hard it can be to save a penny—and buy a bright ribbon to tie up a little girl's curls, a brave red fire engine for a little boy's empty hands, a glittering star to dance on a sprig of Christmas green—symbols, all, of the greater gifts every mother would spend her heart's blood to make to her children!

My dear children! All that I am today, they have made me. They have been my ambition and my inspiration. All the efforts I have made have been for them, that I might smooth their path in life, that I might spare them the hardships of my youth. And in return, one of my children, my little Lotte, saved my life twice. Not many mothers

can tell such a tale of their eldest girl.

It was in the black winter of my life, which came after so brief a summer. I was alone with my four children. We were poor, so poor that we rarely had enough to eat, and I saw my babies hungry. And then the last, most terrible thing happened to us. The sheriff came and took away our furniture for debt. They could do that in Germany.

They left us only one little bed, the children's bed, and a terrible broken-down stove and a table. For the first and almost the last time in my life I knew complete despair, and a terrible thought came to me. I said in my heart, I will take my children to the railway, and I will speak nice things to them, so they will not be frightened, and we will walk before a train and all die together. I was half insane with heartbreak, or I should never have dreamed of such a frightful thing.

I took my baby in my arms, my children August and Lotte and Henry were by my side, and we walked and we walked, until we saw the railway where the swift express trains passed. And somehow, something must have come to my little Lotte, and she appealed to me with the only thing that would have stirred me from my madness. She pulled my arm and said, "*Liebe Mutter*, please, please, take us home. I am so cold."

I looked down at her little red hand resting on my arm, saw her shivering, and I was no longer a madwoman—I was a mother. A mother who was shocked at herself for letting her babies get such chills. We went home as fast as we could go, and for five pfennigs bought two bricks of charcoal, and we had a fire in the old stove, and gathered around and held one another close, so happy to be warm and all together in the living land again. Never again in my whole life could I get an idea like that—to kill myself.

Again it was Lotte who saved my life, when she was still just a tiny girl. I was working too hard in the theater, singing steadily and trying to keep house, never too well fed, and never any too warm. And one day I had a hemorrhage, and they brought me home from the theater unconscious. The doctor came—the free doctor the opera house kept for its employees—and found me lying on my bed with only little Lotte, five years old, to take care of me. We had never too much fire, but what warmth we had was grateful. Still, the doctor thought it was too much. He took that baby aside, and he said to her:

"There must be no fire. Mother must be cold. You must get ice from the butcher's on the ground floor, and I will show you how to break it in little pieces. You must watch the clock and slip little pieces of this ice in your mother's mouth every hour. If you do not do this, your mother will die."

What a thing to tell a child of five years—a baby, she was no more than that! So when I woke to consciousness my Lotchen was standing by me with a bowl of ice in her hand, and the very first thing I noticed was that her little arms and shoulders were wrapped in an old scarf, and her lips were blue with cold.

I started to speak to her. "But my child, why are you so cold? What is it?"

Like a grown woman she hushed me. I must not talk. The doctor had told her that, too. All through the day, the little one had watched me, had stayed in that icy room by my side, had broken tiny pieces of ice and given them to me.

My little Lotte, she gave me my life twice, in return for the life I gave her. She is happy now in Germany, a mother herself. I know that she is as beautiful a mother as she was a daughter.

But all the good mothers are not Germans. In this great, so-wonderful country, there is less poverty. Women know better how to take care of their children. And again I tell you, there are no better mothers than the rich mothers.

I often think of dear Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, who was such a kind friend to me in California. She was not only a devoted mother, but a devoted grandmother. In her lovely home there was a room for each grandchild, where they could stay when they visited her on their vacations. She built a wonderful swimming pool just for them, and the example of her beautiful life was always before them.

SOMETIMES I think the most wonderful mothers that I have ever seen are a part of that delightful group all New York City knows—the Roxyettes. You see them on the stage, dancing like fairies in their draperies of chiffon and lace, and you cannot imagine them living the lives of simple domestic wives and mothers. And yet, when I was singing at Roxy's, every evening backstage, in the dressing rooms, would be waiting a grandmother, or a sister, with a basket; and in each basket was a baby, a dear, delightful, chubby, sleeping baby. Now this is something you would never dream from out in front—the babies were there to be nursed between performances! Imagine that!

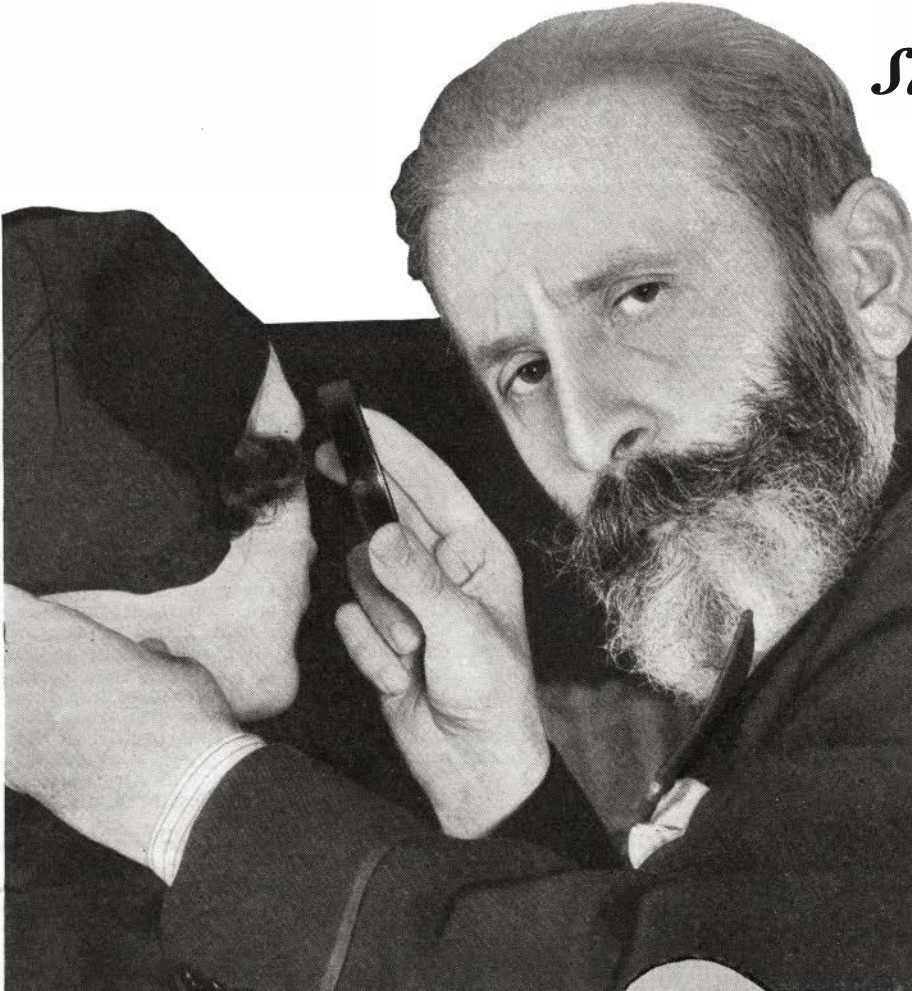
How it took me back—seeing those mothers with their babies—to my own youthful struggles! Why, with one of my babies I even ran home between acts to nurse her, night after night. I lived just across the street from the opera, and it was easy to slip past the doorkeeper and be back right on the minute—all but one thing. There was no time to take off my make-up and change my costume. It simply could not be done. And most of my parts were character parts—contralto rôles frequently are, you know. So I simply threw on my coat and ran—ran as fast as I could—knowing I would lose my place if anyone ever discovered that I had slipped out in the middle of the performance.

The first time I tried it, I nearly frightened my baby into spasms. She screamed and screamed. Imagine an old witch with a false nose picking you up out of your bed, when you are only a baby! But soon she learned that, paint or no paint, it was only mother, and I nursed my baby at the proper time through the whole opera season without anyone's ever being the wiser.

An *artiste* should not marry. That is a hard saying, but a true one. It is impossible to be both a mother and an *artiste*—only a woman of iron can do it. People say to me, "But you—you are an *artiste*—and also a mother."

A mother—yes, but an absent mother through years and years of the most formative period of my children's lives. It was for me to provide their bread and butter, and I threw myself into the struggle for subsistence—but always and always my heart was torn by longing for them. And always I was thinking of those tender moments at twilight when children bring their little confidences to their mother's keeping, or at bedtime, when baby souls question and confide. Perhaps those moments guide a whole

"It cleared her Complexion surprisingly quickly"



surprisingly quickly

says the noted
DR. LEON HUFNAGEL,
Paris Dermatologist

One of the best known skin specialists in France, Dr. Hufnagel, co-author of the famous "Traité de Dermatologie," describes this typical case:—

"Mlle. D—typist. Persistent furunculosis (boils) and pimples on face and neck. Complexion muddy. Complained of headaches.

"Patient had been subject for years to constipation. X-rays showed intestines weakened by laxatives. I prescribed yeast.

"In 3 weeks her evacuations became normal. Her skin eruptions dried up and no others appeared. Her headaches disappeared and her digestion greatly improved."

Dr. Hufnagel is Chief of the Dept. of Skin Diseases of the Hospital of the Rothschild Foundation in Paris.



"A POOR COMPLEXION" states Dr. Hufnagel, "is usually a sign of poisons in the system. External treatment, therefore, is not enough.

"I advise people suffering from constipation and skin affections to add yeast to their diet. It is the surest corrective for skin eruptions that I know."

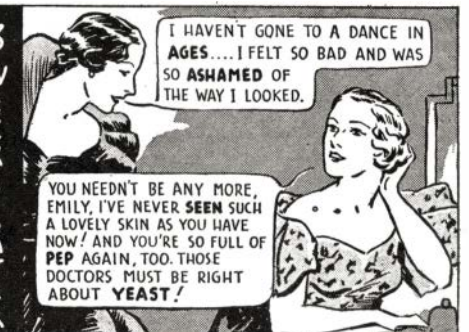
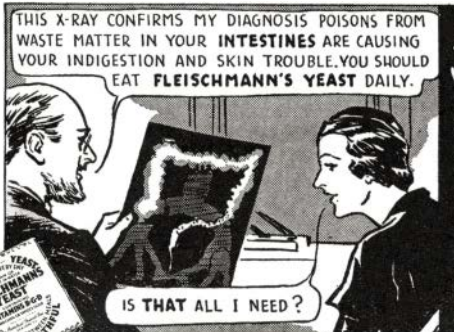
Eaten daily, Fleischmann's Yeast actually strengthens the intestines—softens the clogging food residues—promotes the daily evacuation of bodily waste that is so essential to a clear skin and abundant energy.

Just eat 3 cakes of Fleischmann's Yeast daily—before meals, or between meals and at bedtime—plain or dissolved in a third of a glass of water.

You can get Fleischmann's Yeast (rich in vitamins B, G and D) at grocers, restaurants, soda fountains. Try it—now!

"I am a teacher," writes Miss O'Brien. "I'd become run-down—had indigestion. Felt miserable..."

"Then my face began to break out in eruptions. I was horrified. I worried about it terribly..."



"So I went to my doctor. He advised Fleischmann's Yeast. I ate it faithfully."

"Very soon my health improved. Indigestion left and my skin cleared up. It was wonderful!"



after life. And when they came, and my children would have turned to me, where was I? In South America, perhaps. At the opera or the concert hall, certainly—all dressed up in a fancy costume with a painted face, singing on the stage.

I have been a mother for a great many years, and a grandmother, too. But only in October did I become an "official" mother—the mother of the American Legion. It began way back at the beginning of the war, when my heart was torn with the going of my five sons.

My boy August went back to fight for Germany. My boy Hans, who would have fought for the United States, died. Henry and Ferdinand, my sons, and Walter, my stepson, all joined the American forces. And even my youngest, George Washington, who was born just after I came to this country . . . he was only eighteen, but he would go. As for me, I was only an old woman with no sons any more. And so I took the whole American Legion to my heart.

All through the war I gave my voice and my love to those boys, who seemed to me to be so near to my own boys. And since the war I still go to see them, all through the country in hospitals where those boys who left us strong and healthy, looking forward to life and love and marriage and children—are still dying. Perhaps you do not know that there are still hospitals full of these fine young fellows like my sons and yours, broken, wounded, maimed, by that fearful war we sent them into.

Whenever I am singing anywhere near a war-time hospital, I go out to visit them. And I look at the doors of the wards, and whenever it says on the door "No Admittance—Keep Out," on account of some terrible disease, that is the ward I go into. I know those are the boys no one else visits!

I was singing with the symphony near one hospital, and I took my accompanist with me and told the superintendent of the hospital to gather all the boys together, that I would sing for them—give a little concert. He took me into a large room, with a piano, a chair or so at one end of it. Far at the other end were the boys.

It did not look right to me. I stepped

forward, and I held out my arms to them, and I said, "Well, boys, why so far away? Come up close to me so I can look into your faces."

There was dead silence, and not a man moved. I had a terrible feeling in my heart. Something was wrong, and I did not know what it was.

Then the superintendent said to me in a hurried whisper: "Madame, they have been instructed to keep at that distance. Most of these men are tubercular. You must not be exposed to infection."

Well, I gave that man such a look! I walked out front and I said, "Boys, come up here close to me, or I do not sing."

They came on crutches, they came in wheel chairs, crowding—smiling. And I smiled back at them, although my heart was breaking, and I walked among them, touching their coat sleeves, smiling at them. I sang them all my songs, and I made them all my funny faces, and then they made me sing "Danny Boy." They always want that. They laughed and then they cried, and I laughed and cried, too.

But not many of those brave boys who went out to fight are in the hospitals, thank God! Many of them came back even better than they went. I laugh whenever I think of the time I was singing in Chicago, and I had word that a train of boys was coming back from the war. I was going into the hotel after my concert when some of them in uniform came by. They knew me, of course—I sang to so many of them in the camps.

"Why, there is Mother—there is dear old Mother Schumann-Heink!" they shouted, and they surrounded me and hugged me and beat me on the back with their hard young hands until my shoulders were sore. I was the nearest they could come to their own mothers.

Those are the things that are good to remember. Thank God, some mothers' boys came back, even if one of my own did not.

And one strange thing I must tell you—one of many strange things that have come to me in my life. The first time I ever sang for the boys at a camp, of course, I had to sing "The Star-spangled Banner." Like most people

who were not born in America—and most people who were—I did not know the words, but just sang the tune after the first few lines. A young reporter finally wrote: "Schumann-Heink sang with her glorious voice 'The Star-spangled Banner,' but she would oblige us if she would tell us in what language she sang the words." The next day he wrote out the words for me, and I learned them every one.

Right after the armistice I was singing in Kansas City, when another young reporter came to my hotel and asked me to sing Taps at the funeral of his buddy. I had just heard the news of my August's death, and my heart was broken, but I said I would come. I did not know the name of the buddy who was dead; I only knew the place to go and the name of the boy who asked me to come.

I took a great bunch of flowers with me, and when I went up to the coffin, I looked at the dead boy who lay there and I recognized him.

It was the young man who had written out for me the words of "The Star-spangled Banner."

I sang for him—it was all I could do. And after I had finished, I bent over, and I kissed his cold smiling lips, and I said to him, very low: "Good-by, my son. Carry this kiss with you to my own dead son."

Memories like these, hundreds of them, of those boys, are a part of my very soul. And never have I had a prouder day than when they selected me to be their Mother.

Dearest among my treasures is a line I once received with a gift from the Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, brother of the murdered Czarina:

"Der groessten Erda und der treuesten Mutter" ("To the grandest Erda, and the most faithful mother").

It is a fine thing to be a singer—to give yourself up to music, to feel yourself a disembodied instrument through which divine harmonies speak. It is an even finer thing to be a mother—to give yourself up to life, and to feel the mighty forces that we call Creation fulfilled in you.

I thank God that in this life I have been granted both great gifts.

William Lyon Phelps, one of America's outstanding literary figures, contributes to February *Cosmopolitan* an article of especial interest to everyone over 30 years of age

Low Lies His Bed by Bess Streeter Aldrich (Continued from page 29)

my arm gif out. And who do you suppose hear of it and say I shall come at vonce viddout vaiting and gif the rest of the money himself?" She paused for dramatic effect. "Mr. T'eadore Harms!"

Yes. Theodore Harms would do that.

Mrs. Parker knew him well. He had been her Harry's chum, had spent many a long-gone night under her roof, had worked in her husband's bank, had gone away and made a fortune. And so he had paid part of old Anna's way at the Home? How could she tell old Anna that if Theodore Harms had not paid *all* of her own expenses she, Mrs. David Daniel Parker, must needs have gone to the poor farm instead?

But old Anna had more to ask: "And Mr. Parker died, didn't he? Tsk! Tsk!" "Yes." Anna need not know that it was by his own hand.

"My man died, too. My Emil. You remember? So goot, so kind to me. Always collect my vash money. Sometime even carry home the clothes himself. Always say, 'Mamma, don't pump all dat vater now; vait till it stop storming.'" And still old Anna was not

through: "And your son, you lost him, too—your Sam?"

"In the war."

"And your daughter, too?"

"Yes."

"Tsk. Tsk. Poor dear! Poor dear!"

But Mrs. Parker was turning away now. She could not stand more.

"Vell," old Anna had a parting word, "a merry Christmas to you. Ve vill vel-come you gladly."

A merry Christmas indeed! When there was nothing more in life. Nothing but bitterness and blackness and emptiness.

In the two days that followed, old Mrs. Parker lived in the midst of Christmas commotion and planning, but the activity of it washed like waves unnoticed against the stone statue that was herself. Once from a north window she had caught a glimpse of the cupola of her own old home through the winter trees, and had pulled down the shade.

But in the late gray afternoon of Christmas Eve she had raised the shade, almost against her own volition. Irresistibly some unseen force had seemed

to draw her to the window again. An early light turning on from a near-by building threw the cupola into relief, its outline as distinct as a child's paper-doll house. At that moment a light flashed on in the tower room, two of the windows just discernible through the trees.

Suddenly old Mrs. Parker had a great desire to go down there. For the first time since coming she wanted to look upon it, desired deeply to see it lighted this Christmas Eve, to torture her sick mind further with the sight. With self-inflicted bruises she wanted to add to the anguish of her heart.

She began planning, craftily, as only those who are mentally ill can scheme. She knew they would be assembling for the tree soon after dinner in the big reception room. It would be necessary for her to be at the dinner table, so that no one would suspect her unusual plan. If her wraps could be handy she might be able to get out in the confusion that would follow the dinner.

With painstaking deliberation she wrapped her soft black hat and a scarf inside her coat, turning the fur side

Lovely Women



(above) MYRNA WILLIAMS comes from Cheyenne—out where men are men and women are—well, judge for yourself. She was educated in Switzerland and has been studying dramatic art. Her ambition is to become a motion picture actress—a profession for which she seems ideally suited—even to her dazzling white teeth.



(above) MARGARET HORAN was an artist's model. En-route to Chicago one day, she happened to be looking her prettiest when a prominent film executive—Hollywood bound—happened to be looking his sharpest for a new actress. A film test was arranged, following which Miss Horan got a Hollywood contract.



(above) At the Brooklyn motion picture theatre where RUTH S'OVALL once gold tickets, they said she had a "nice honest face." Then a famous New York illustrator decided she was a "very pretty girl." Her work for artists and photographers spread her fame—and now she is in a new picture "Roman Scandals" with Eddie Cantor.

(right) A New York photographer clipped a picture of JESSIE SHANKS from a department store ad and sent for her to pose. Now she has all she can do in her work as a photographer's model yet finds time to study for her "land of hope"—the theatre.



(left) EDITH TRIVERS, following her graduation from a private school for girls in New York City, posed for pictures and studied for the stage. She is an excellent horsewoman, a swimmer and likes tennis. Last winter she played in "Absent Father." Now she's wondering about Hollywood.

WHY NOT MAKE YOUR TEETH LIKE THEIRS

... WHITER, MORE BEAUTIFUL?

Among the more than two million women who have changed to Listerine Tooth Paste from other brands are many professional beauties.

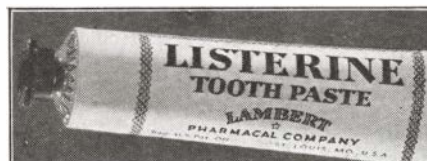
These girls find that Listerine Tooth Paste makes their teeth look whiter, gives teeth a brilliance not obtainable from old-type dentifrices.

Listerine Tooth Paste has proved again and again that it does "bring out" the naturally beautiful lustre of tooth enamel. It works wonders even with teeth that seem to be "off color."

A special polishing ingredient . . . far softer than enamel . . . perfectly safe . . .

removes the dingy film-coats with but little brushing. Stains yield to it with surprising speed.

There is a refreshing mouth effect from using Listerine Tooth Paste which also accounts for the favor it finds. You are conscious of a sweet, pure breath after



using. Gums seem firmer and healthier.

Is it any wonder, in view of these results, that women by thousands are changing from old-type dentifrices to this? Some of these former brands cost fully twice as much as Listerine Tooth Paste. Yet at 50¢ and even more they accomplish no more than this generous tube which is never priced higher than 25¢, often less.

Heed the trend. If so many women find Listerine Tooth Paste helps them, you may find it will do wonders for you. See if proper care can give you "teeth like an artist model's." It is worth a trial. Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, Mo.

LISTERINE TOOTH PASTE • 25¢

inward so that the worn lining only was visible. Her galoshes she would wear to dinner. No one would notice them under the long black skirt and she could not risk taking the time to put them on at the last moment. She went down early in that zero half-hour just preceding the meal when all were tidying themselves for dinner, and deposited her bundle in a small coat closet near the side entrance. The excitement of what she was doing gave her the first real interest in life since she had come.

When the bell rang, the old ladies came from their rooms, some spryly, some feebly, but all childishly eager.

The dinner tables were sparkling and gay with greens. Poinsettias paraded proudly down the center of each, and there were cards of crusted snow-covered bells at the plates.

THERE WERE several tables in the large room. Old Mrs. David Daniel Parker, who had eaten at the tables of governors and senators, ship captains and millionaires, sat at the same one with old Anna Kleinschmidt, who in her darkest days sometimes had not eaten at all. There were three others at that particular table besides the matron—an old Mrs. Tuttle, as little and brown and twittery as a partridge; an old Mrs. Murphy, large and solid and immobile, as though, having found a resting place after many weary years, she wanted only to experience the luxury of fixity; and an old Mrs. Sargent with magenta cheeks, flamboyant earrings, unbelievably ink-black hair and a distinct line of demarcation between the gay youthfulness of her face and the wrinkled column of her neck, like a gay Marie Antoinette head on the shoulders of Whistler's Mother.

Mrs. McIntosh pinned a sprig of holly on each old lady, on the flat old silken chest of Mrs. David Daniel Parker and on the mountainous gingham one of old Anna Kleinschmidt, and on all the others.

Old Anna sat next to Mrs. Parker and was excited to the point of hilarity. She drank her tea with gusto, smacked her lips over the soup, was as exuberant as a child that there was to be chicken. It was as though she were having all the good things of life at once, as though she were experiencing enough food, warmth and light for the first time in her life.

"Oh, if Emil could see me now," she whispered to Mrs. Parker. "My Gott. Eatin' oyster soup until I could bust."

It would have been exceedingly distasteful to Mrs. Parker in other days, but now she did not care one way or the other. She looked upon her neither with dislike nor liking; was merely callous to those about her.

The dinner was over. All the old ladies were moving toward the parlors, some with excited exclamations in anticipation of the pleasant evening to come. Mrs. Parker with her cane stood by the coat-closet door waiting until the last one should go in. It was old Mrs. Sargent, preening before a glass, giving her too-inky hair a pat into place.

The hall was empty now. Old Mrs. Parker slipped into her ancient seal coat and her soft black hat and stepped out upon the side porch. It was colder than she had thought when in the shelter of the warm house, so she buttoned the coat tightly, turning up the collar, and tied the scarf over her hat. Then she started slowly down the drive, tapping her way along with careful steps.

Now that she had left the drive of the Home and was out on the street, she realized there was greater familiarity

about the little city than she had sensed in her ride up from the station. There was the old Rhodes place looking fairly natural behind the street lights, and the Kennards' house, though changed into a duplex, was still recognizable. They brought back vivid memories of social events in a day when society was composed of a definite membership.

Old Mrs. Parker, tall and erect, tapped as rapidly forward as her bad limb would allow. Two blocks down this way and one over to the east. She had lost sight of the cupola of her old home, which up to this moment had guided her like a beacon.

Suddenly at the end of the second block her knee buckled, and she stumbled and would have fallen if she had not been close to a low brick wall. She clung to the iron railing above the bricks for a time until she felt that she could go on. But the damage was done; the knee had been twisted and pained with every step. It was snowing and colder.

She was frightened now, and thought with longing of the restful security of Room Twenty. She must get back somehow. That block around the corner to her old home seemed suddenly too long a journey to be attempted. She wanted to cry with disappointment as though she were missing a definite engagement there, as though in reality the family expected her.

But someone was coming down the street, someone short and squat with duck-like waddling, a shawl over her head.

Old Mrs. Parker had never been so glad to see anyone. She grasped the outstretched hand of old Anna as though it were a life belt.

Old Anna was merry with chuckles at the smartness of her own mind. "I miss you and I look in your room, and when I find your coat gone, I know shust where to go. I say, 'Anna, where in de whole world would you like most to go on dis Christmas Eve?' 'Back home,' I say to myself. 'Vell, dat's vhere Mis' Parker go, too.'" She chuckled. "Come, now, I help you."

With her cane on one side and old Anna on the other, Mrs. Parker went on.

There it was—the wide porch and the white pillars familiar against the dark bricks. Lights shone in every room, and each pane held its Christmas wreath. Beyond the French windows a tree stood tall and proud and erect. Like old Mrs. David Daniel Parker. Several children were dancing about near the shining thing, and occasionally the form of an older person came into sight.

AND THEN a strange thing happened. To the woman standing there on the walk, clutching her cane and old Anna, the scene was so familiar that she herself became an integral part of it. Although her frail old body stood, tall and erect, in the snow and the cold, her spirit seemed to merge into the family group there in the high-ceilinged room. The sensation was sharply poignant, infinitely precious.

Suddenly something broke—ice that had long covered her heart—sweeping out on a wave of Memory. Instead of a bitterness, she felt only tenderness at the familiar sight. In place of coldness, warmth.

"Ain't it nice," old Anna was saying, "dat it shust go on and on—Christmas lights and Christmas trees and Christmas spirit? All over town, no matter who lives in 'em, de nice Christmas candles burn on. In yours; in mine. My old house across de tracks—I go over to see it dis afternoon. De folks got nine kids, and dey vas all hollerin' about

Christmas and tyin' holly on de dog—same as mine used to do." Old Anna shook her fat sides. "Come, shall ve go home now?"

"Yes. I'm ready to go—home."

There was the slow snowy walk back to the Home, where for a moment they saw the matron open the door at the side porch, heard her say something about "letting in a bit of fresh air" and a familiar echo from farther in the hall, "Yes, a little fresh air."

They waited under the trees until the door closed and the bulky shadow was gone, then they mounted the wide steps and went into the cheery warmth of the building.

A great circle of chairs was being made about the tree and all the old ladies were seating themselves with girlish commotion. It seemed they were going to sing. The carolers had been there and sung and the radio had given forth much melody, but now the old ladies were going to make Christmas music of their own. To create! Ah, that was the thing that could stimulate.

"Here, Mrs. Parker." "Sit here, Mrs. Parker." She was still new enough to be given a preferential politeness.

So old Mrs. Parker, as tall and erect and proud as the Christmas tree, seated herself between the matron and old Mrs. Tuttle, who was as little and brown and fluttery as a partridge.

They took hold of hands to form a huge circle of arms around the tree.

"My, how cold your hand is," the matron said solicitously, "almost as though you'd been outdoors."

Old Anna Kleinschmidt leaned across old Mrs. Murphy. "It's the excitement and nervousness," she said to the matron, and as though she had just made a discovery: "My Gott! Mine is, too. See?" And she put her hard old hand against the matron's cheek to prove her point, and then shook with old laughter.

So with their hands—wrinkled old hands that had trimmed a thousand trees—they formed a circle around the tree with its shining star at the top.

Old Mrs. Sargent, who had been a music teacher, gave the pitch, and the others joined in, their voices not quite in key, a bit cracked and hoarse, entirely aged—but energetic.

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning!

Shine on the darkness and lend us Thine aid:

Star of the East, the horizon adorning . . ."

Surprisingly, old Mrs. Parker felt a lessening of bitterness, a lifting of shadows. Nothing was different. She was still here on the charity of Theodore Harms—not nearly so independent as old Anna, who had earned all but a hundred dollars; still sleeping on a bed furnished through the courtesy of the Thursday Club. But after all, she had lived a full life; with all these other old women had kindled Christmas fires on the hearthstone of a home.

"Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,

Low lies His bed with the beasts of the stall."

Yes, another had known anguish and sorrow and a lowly bed.

Old Mrs. Parker merely hummed the tune under her breath, but old Anna Kleinschmidt shouted it lustily:

"Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch who cares for us all!"

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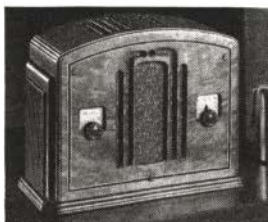


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The Sawdust Trail by Rex Beach (Continued from page 23)

tonneau and tent which advertised her mastery of the dark arts had been replaced with Scriptural quotations.

Bless the Lord who healeth all thy diseases. Psal. 103. 3.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust. Isa. 26. 19.

I will heal thee . . . and add unto thy days. 2 Kings 20. 5.

I cast out devils, and I do cures today. Luke 13. 32.

These and others were boldly stenciled wherever there was room for them, and they implied that Thirteena had been sent to cheer the broken-hearted, to make the sick to walk and the dumb to shout.

Regarding her work with satisfaction, she told her daughter that if anyone asked her where she got this stuff she could refer him direct to chapter and verse. Now, let them try to put the bee on her!

No more of this minstrel make-up, either. She and Alice could strut regular clothes. As soon as the money came in, she'd buy the girl more clothes than Greta Garbo had. Hey! Hey! Hotcha! And hi-de-hi! This graft was the cats. Teena was fiercely triumphant.

"But you can't work miracles!" the girl protested. "It's lying to—"

"Who says I can't? Who's going to prove it? People get well nine times out of ten, and the doctor takes the credit. I'm going to do the same. Sickness is mostly imagination, and I've got magnetism or hypnotic power or—I don't know what it is, but it does something. That's more than this Dann has. He builds up his act with music and shouting, and I can do the same. You see, there's something about religion itself that stirs something in all of us. Why, it even gets me! I've been watching this fellow work, and sometimes it was as much as ever I could do to sit still. I caught myself wanting to shout amen with the rest of 'em."

"It frightens me when you talk like this," Alice confessed. "Don't you believe in anything?"

"Of course I do," Teena declared, with apparent candor. "It's just my way of putting things, sweetheart. If I didn't believe in occult things, how could I do my own stuff? I've always been a healer and you know it, but the medicoes and the preachers won't let me practice. Well, yonder is my license, right from the oldest medical college in the world." Aloud she read her texts. "You can't arrest a prophet. We may be a couple of misguided zealots but we're honest toilers in the vineyard. Get it?"

"We?" Alice faltered. "Where do I figure?"

"You're going to play the organ and—"

"What organ?"

"I've got one. You can lead the singing."

"But I don't know any hymns."

"Hold your horses, lady. I got about twenty books from Brother Dann, and the organ will be here at noon. Choir practice starts today. I want you to memorize every tune, while I read up on the Bible. I'm going to memorize the whole thing."

"I can't do it. I won't!" the girl cried.

"Oh, you won't!" Teena exclaimed. "Well, you'll pump those pedals till you have legs like a bicycle rider." At Alice's expression she changed her tone. "Don't get me wrong, darling. I'm not kidding religion. I've really fallen hard for it. You've been teasing me for weeks to

tackle something honest, and now the first time I do you start crabbing."

"Of course if you're really sincere—"

"I wouldn't fool you, dearie."

"I know you can cure people," Alice admitted.

"Of course. But I've got to wise up my spiritual nature. I'll begin in a small way. And another thing! I'll have to change my name. Thirteena Pierce! Madam Thirteen! Too fakey! Brother Dann spoke about a woman in the Bible who was no better than she should have been. Mary McSomething."

"It's Magdalen, Mother!"

"McDillon's the name I'll take!" Teena cried enthusiastically. "I'll be Mary McDillon."

FOR A HUNDRED miles in both directions on U. S. No. 1 were signs proclaiming the comforts of Murdock's Valley View tourist camp. Motorists of moderate means bound South in the autumn and North in the spring had advertised its clean beds and chicken dinners until it now enjoyed a steady patronage.

It is seldom that any tourist camp entertains a guest for more than a night or two, but the Valley View had one who was something of a fixture. For several weeks, now, he had retained his cabin and had eaten two meals a day in the dining room. His name was Ball; he was engaged in reconnoitering the route for a railway and his days were spent in tramping over the hills. He was a bearded, silent man of about forty. Mrs. Murdock was the only person around camp who had exchanged a dozen words with him.

Tonight, while he was waiting to be served, he sat as usual with his elbows on the table, his face covered by his hands.

Mrs. Murdock, a talkative person, inquired, "Are you going to the revival tonight?"

Ball shook his head.

"You should. Mrs. McDillon is a real good preacher."

"She's a real loud preacher," said Ball. "She has kept me awake for the last three nights."

"I think the organ sounds lovely under the trees, don't you? And the girl is pretty. So's Mrs. McDillon, for that matter."

"Claims to be a healer, doesn't she?"

"Oh, she is! And an awful good woman. She reads her Bible all day."

"Has she really worked any miracles yet?"

"Haven't you heard? Why, she's healed I don't know how many. There wasn't twenty people at her first meeting. The next night there must of been fifty, and then a hundred. She can take your hand and tell you right where you're sick. I don't know whether it's prayer or just laying-on of hands, like these doctors you hear about. But I don't see that it makes much difference, do you?"

Mr. Ball signified with a shrug that it made no difference whatever to him. He ate his meal in silence, then rose and went to his cabin.

Mrs. Pierce, or Mary McDillon as she now called herself, was still pretty green at this new profession and she had made but little so far, but daily she became more firmly convinced that she had hit on what she termed "a good racket." It was hard, she said, preaching to "hicks," and in order to impress them she had to use showmanship; was forced to employ every art and stratagem, every trick and

turn she had mastered as an occultist, palmist and crystal gazer. Actually, she was strongly mesmeric, she was healthy and unbridled, and she had definite appeal. Too, anyone at all inclined to put faith in miraculous healing is, she knew, already half sold and three-quarters cured.

Tonight, as she passed out her hymn books and looked down from the tonneau of her battered car upon her audience, she assured herself that if she ever whipped her ghost dance into shape she could make the average revival look tame. There were sick faces in this crowd; here were people who suffered and who would grasp at anything. They were, in fact, made to order!

Mary had learned the psychological effect of community singing, so she got the most out of Alice and her organ. Moreover, she was too keenly aware of her own shortcomings to make any exaggerated claims for herself. Simplicity, modesty, honest fervor was her line. She apologized for her ignorance and confessed that she wholly lacked the gift of tongues. Neither did she preach any formal doctrine. She called herself merely a sinner to whom God had vouchsafed a tiny spark of spirit, and it was her task to breathe it into a flame. Her sight was dim; she spoke the Word haltingly. Occasionally, nevertheless, she was blessed with the power to heal. Those present could lend it strength, she declaimed, by praising the name of God in song.

Alice was rapidly becoming a real asset, for her thirsty soul had avidly welcomed religion. Her voice was true and sweet; her rapt attention to her mother's words, her fervid eagerness was inspiring.

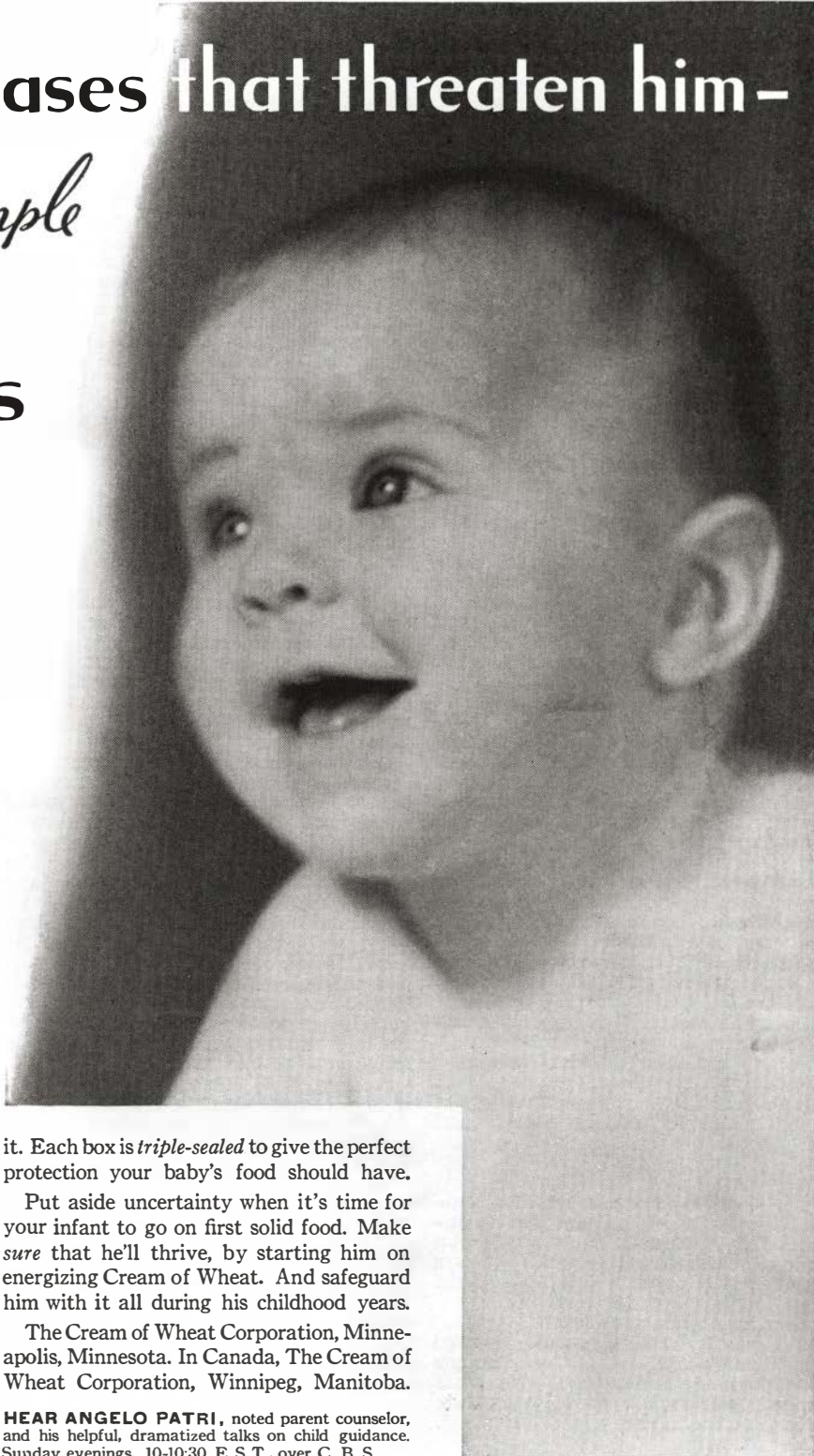
Mary's sermon, if it could be called that, was formless, crude, but her listeners were not critical and they were moved less by eloquence than by earnestness. With deliberate determination she whipped her emotions into a froth, drove herself at a gallop, and when she stumbled into incoherencies she snatched at some Biblical quotation and floundered out. Already she had memorized many verses, and there is a sonorous quality to the Scriptures which ever exerts a spell.

SHE WAS slangy; she was colloquial; she was coarse. Often her audience laughed, but never in derision. She did not rise to her best, however, until she went among them and laid hands upon those who invited her help. There was a peculiar warmth in the woman herself and a galvanic quality to her touch. When she closed her eyes and lifted her voice in a prayerful appeal she resembled, indeed, some stately sorceress at her rites.

More than one sufferer felt instant relief. Alas, if she had lived like Christ her power would be unailing; it would flow like the waters of Siloam, she told them. It was her appointed task to pass among the lowly and bring what comfort she could. But things cost money. She needed new tires on her car. Those who felt inclined to assist in her crusade against sin, sickness and death could drop something in the basket when Alice passed it around. And remember, she added, you couldn't get to heaven on a two-bit piece.

When Mary counted up that night she had more than twenty dollars. She had earned every penny of it, however, and she was in such a mental state that sleep was impossible, so when Alice was in

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bed she went out under the pines to compose herself.

All of the cabins but one were dark. As she passed it, she saw a man sitting on the doorstep in an attitude of dejection. His head was in his hands.

"Good evening," she said. "What ails you, brother?"

The man raised a bearded face. His voice was flat as he said, "Nothing. I'm always the last one to bed."

"You're Mr. Ball, aren't you?"

"Yes, Jim Ball."

"Mrs. Murdock told me about you. Did you hear me preach tonight?" Mary was as eager for praise as any artist.

Dryly Ball said, "Yes, I heard. Pretty hard way to make a living, isn't it?"

"It is indeed. But I'm about my Father's business."

"How did you learn to be a healer?"

"That's something you can't learn, my friend. The power comes from on high. I merely sing unto the Lord a new song; I compass people about with prayers and they're healed. By the way, you—don't happen to have anything to drink?"

The man shook his head, then suddenly collected his thoughts. "Yes, I have—a bottle of shine. It's somewhere around." He rose and Mary followed him across the threshold; she watched him explore the premises aimlessly. "I'm terribly forgetful," he apologized.

"Not so terribly," said she.

Ball paused. "No? Why?"

"There's something you'd like to forget and can't. Mrs. Murdock told me all about you."

"That old buzzard! She gives me a headache." Ball found the bottle, and as he poured Mary shut the door.

"I suppose I shouldn't touch this but try going ten rounds with Error and see if you aren't dry. Well, here goes!" She grimaced; her breath caught as the liquor burned her throat.

Ball helped himself to a drink and shuddered. "I'm sorry. Think it'll hurt us?"

"Let's wait and see." Mary smiled, and Ball's countenance lighted responsively. "So you're a railroad builder!" she said, without apparent reason.

Ball started. "Why, yes. That is, I'm exploring a route. I like the woods and the hills."

"WHAT'S THE sense of a railroad through here?" There was no answer. "Mrs. Murdock can't puzzle you out but I was born with a veil. She says you duck at the sound of a motor cycle. Why?"

"Ever hear a machine gun?"

"Not yet. But I hope to make Chicago in this act clicks. And that reminds me: I could use a man about forty years old, height six feet, gray eyes, white teeth. Even if he did wear a beard."

"Me? How?"

"Business is building. There's money in this game and I'm going to need somebody to do my leg work. With decent clothes, you could front for any troupe. Besides, it doesn't look right for two women to cruise around alone."

"I can understand that. You're a fine-looking woman, Mrs. McDillon."

"You wouldn't fool me, party? Would you seal that compliment with another?" Mary eyed the bottle.

"With pleasure." He rinsed out her glass, dried it and presented it to her. His hands were well formed and nicely cared for. She took one of them and spread it open, then studied the lines in its palm.

"If you're a railroader I'm an acrobat," she announced.

"How do you know? What makes you think I'm not a railroader?"

"There's a little man with a peaked hat who tells me things, and he's never wrong. You think I'm a fake but I'm not. I cured some of those people tonight." She nodded complacently, for the liquor had warmed her again and her mood was expanding. "I'm not saying how I did it. What's the diff? Eh, party?"

"You're an extraordinary person," Ball asserted.

"Sure! We're a couple of queer ones, Jim. You're all ace-deuce, yourself. You don't know where you're at. Trouble of some sort. You remind me of a big shaggy dog that's been kicked around. Well, I've been kicked around, too, but it didn't lick me. Fake, am I? You're down and out, and about ready to jump off a bridge. What's more, your name isn't Jim Ball any more than mine's Mary McDillon. But that's oke with me. Let's team up."

Her listener looked startled. He opened his lips, but the newly made evangelist raised her hand.

"Listen, fella! I don't want to know who you are or what you did. I'm a genuine mystic. I mesmerize and hypnotize: I read cards and tea leaves. I interpret dreams and the signs of the Zodiac. Right now, my occult powers tell me that you need a job and somebody to look after you. Join up with the show. There's a good living in it. What d'you say?"

Ball said nothing. Mechanically he reached for the bottle, and Mary extended her glass. She did not leave the cabin until the liquor was finished.

As long as Alice could remember she had lived in fear of her mother and completely under her domination. Teena's precarious mode of living—shady, at best—her periodical outbursts of temper, her harsh intolerance were enough to make any girl miserable; the shooting of Nick Veeder had come as a climax which left her shaken in health. Lately, however, she had begun to fill out, and her fragile beauty was returning.

And why not? Teena—now Mary, even to her daughter—had been reborn. Having discovered a mission in life, she had become a new woman. Her sermons had improved steadily, and so had her disposition. Not once had she flown into a tantrum. She was sweet to strangers, and they treated her with marked respect. People no longer nudged one another and exchanged remarks, for mother and daughter dressed like other women, and that in itself was an enormous relief to Alice.

She blessed the day her mother had experienced a change of heart and her natural affection, which had been smothered all these years, began to bud and bloom.

Attendance at Mary's meetings had grown, money was rolling in, and the evangelist spent it lavishly. For every dollar she spent on herself, however, she spent two on the girl. But her extravagance was limited to clothes and personal belongings; for business reasons she still insisted upon stopping at tourist camps, and though she had started a bank account, nobody but Jim Ball knew anything about it.

This prosperity, this change in the elder woman, dated back to that week at Murdock's Valley View when Jim had joined the show. Why he had done so, how Mary had prevailed upon him to abandon his railroad work, Alice never could understand—unless he, too, had heard the call. Probably that was it.

Jim was a strange person. He puzzled

both women. Physically he was lusty and upstanding, but he had no personality whatever; he was utterly colorless and peculiarly irresolute. On the other hand, he was as friendly, as affectionate, as gentle and as obedient as a Newfoundland dog, and one couldn't help liking him. While not actually deficient, he had only part of a mind; he was like an empty seashell into which a hermit crab in the person of Mary McDillon had crawled.

Mary spent nearly every afternoon in his cabin working at her sermons, with the excuse that interruptions distracted her and that being with Jim was like being alone. His placidity soothed her.

She was poring over her Bible, today, making notes and laboriously memorizing passages. She looked up to say, "Here's a good one, Jim. Listen!"

BALL TURNED a lackluster gaze upon his employer as she read:

"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me' . . . Swell, isn't it? I can say it like this, 'You who heareth me heareth him; you who despiseth me despiseth him.' Meaning Jesus, get it?"

Ball said nothing.

By and by the woman broke out again, "Oh, boy! Listen! 'Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.'" She waited for comment, then complained, "Lord, you're cold! Don't you get any kick out of the Word?"

"Sure! I love to hear it but—you twist it all around."

"I make the Bible work for me."

"That's the point. I break out in a sweat whenever you fake—"

"Fake! And me an honest healer! There's too much *preaching* about religion; too many words and too few deeds. I prove the Gospel by my works. Now, about that verse I just read: I had a Midway booth once, next to a snake charmer. Could you catch me a rattlesnake and pull out his bridge work?"

Ball shook his head. "No. Why?"

"It would be swell sometime if you discovered a poisonous serpent in the front row. You'd start to kill it but I'd stop you with that gag about the power to tread on it. I'd pick up Brother Snake and carry him out. *What a performance!*"

"You'd break up the meeting. You'd be pinched if—"

"But I'd crash every front page in the country! It's just an idea. No good, I guess. At that, I bet I could handle a rattler with fangs and everything if I worked myself up to it. You know, Jim, when I get going I go into a sort of—of state. Almost a trance. The Gospel gets real to me: I actually believe it! Naturally, that's what puts it over, but it scares me sometimes. You don't think it'll ever get me, do you? Gee! I'd hate to go soft."

"People sometimes do."

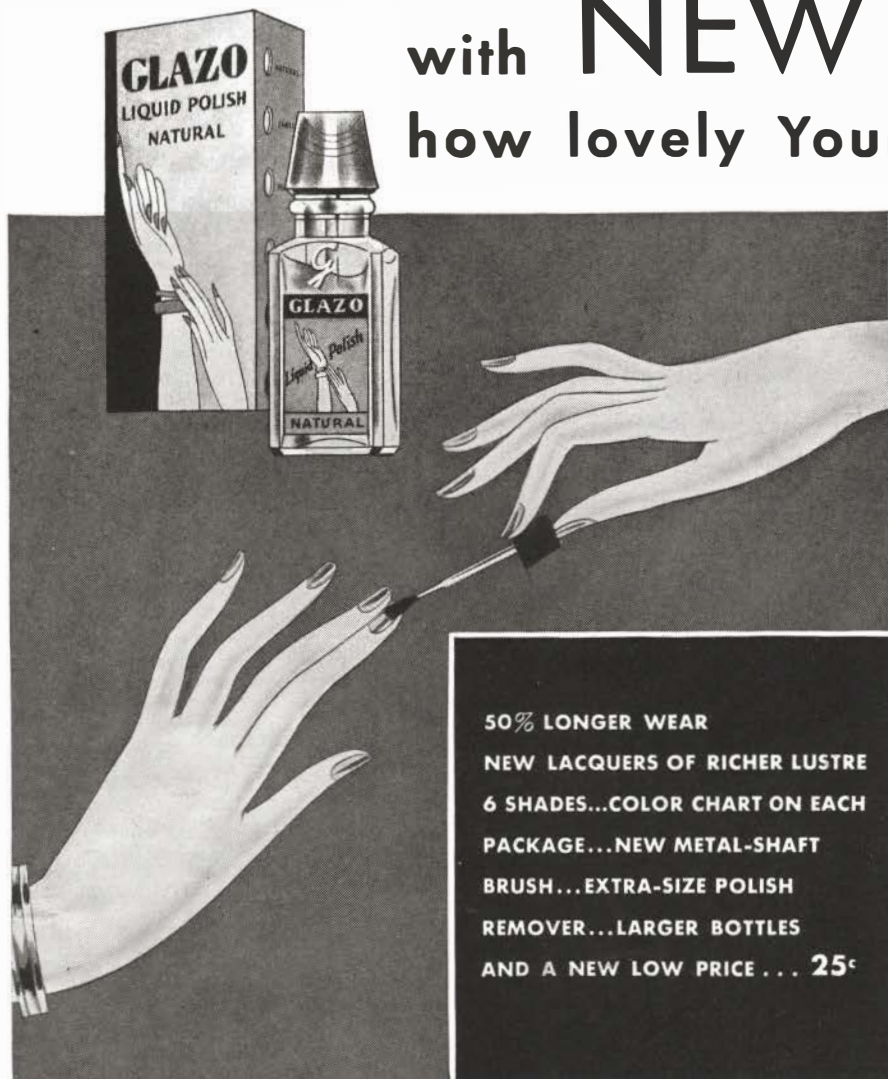
"Yes, and smarter guys than me. I'm not kidding, big boy. I can't read the old quieter here without getting ideas." Mary tapped her Bible. "It stirs me up. I suppose that's because I'm probably naturally religious." Ball smiled, whereupon the woman said, "Well, then, psychic. It's the same thing."

"No, it's not. I'm religious; you're a pagan. You're just a witch doctor. You howl and rattle a gourd and—"

"I do like hell!" Mary flushed angrily. "I'm a real crutch-buster. How come they unbuckle their trusses if I'm counterfeit? I'm fed up on your cracks. If you're so particular as to how and why,

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get out. Grab yourself another job." An instant, then Jim said, "I wish I could."

The storm cloud passed as swiftly as it had appeared. Mary smiled. "So? It's like that, is it? You want to and can't. Well, that's a compliment."

Ball nodded, whereupon she rose, bent over him and pressed her lips to his. His arms encircled her; he drew her down upon his lap and she lay against his breast. A thrill ran through him as she stroked his head.

"Do you want to run out on me now?" she murmured.

The pressure of his arms increased. "I do and I don't. What ails me, Mary?"

"It! Animal magnetism!" said the woman. "I've got it, plenty."

"I—I can't think for myself any more."

DON'T TRY. I'll do your thinking. I don't want a scholar with this act. I want a *man*. You quit me and—I'll kill you!" With her strong hands she seized him by the hair; roughly she worried him. "I'll never let you go. *Never!*"

After a while she said dreamily, "Gee, it's lucky I met you. I was all haywire. Nothing was right. Now I'm happy. A good man and a good thing! I'm a big shot, fella, but I need something to put me all the way over. I've got to get the preachers back of me to land real money. Why, I don't average a buck-a-backache. I've got cinders in my kneecaps from praying on dumps. I want to play hip-podromes and colosseums: I want to see my name in lights over Madison Square Garden."

"Lay off New York," said Ball. "Dowie preached at the old Garden and—"

"What do you know about New York? Ever been there?"

"Why, no. Ye-yes, of course."

"All right. My error. You've been everywhere and seen everything, you big bum! What I mean, I'd like to get set and have Alice marry some nice boy. She cramps my style. Lord, if she ever knew about us! D'you think I eat cloves on account of my public? Huh! Much as ever she'll let me have a smoke. If ever I find the right man for her, you and I'll have a vacation. I'll take you to Niagara Falls. Maybe we'll go to Paris."

"Paris!" Jim's eyes brightened; he smiled reminiscently.

"My God! Don't tell me you've been *there!* I'll bet you drove over in your limousine."

"*Yoo-hoo!*" The call came from Alice, and the mother rose hastily.

"Dinner's ready. And we've got fish, just for you. Alice and I hate fish."

The first clash between Alice and her mother came as an indirect result of their unaccustomed prosperity. Contentment, self-respect, good clothes had worked a miraculous change in the girl, and she was now the recipient of occasional attentions from young men. Oddly enough, however, she shrank from them and Mary undertook to reason with her.

"What ails you, dearie?" she inquired.

"I don't like boys," Alice confessed.

"That's unnatural. You must get over it. At your age I had a dozen fellows chasing me and it got worse as I grew older. You'll never get married if you don't go out and meet people."

"All they do is ask me to go riding."

"Well? They'll never shell-road a girl in your line of work. They wouldn't dare. You know, there's no law to prevent a fellow from proposing marriage in a roadster."

"I don't want to get married."

"You were crazy to marry Nick—"

Mary checked herself at the peculiar expression which leaped into her daughter's face. Incredulously she asked, "Surely you're not thinking about that skunk?"

The color fled from Alice's cheeks. Wildly she cried, "Don't call him that! I won't let you! Haven't you done enough to him?"

"I gave him what was coming to him."

Alice opened her lips to frame a passionate protest, then suddenly she averted her face.

"Look here, young lady." Mary twisted the girl around. "I ordered you to put him out of your mind."

"You ordered! Who can order a thing like that? You can't order the wind to stop blowing."

"Don't be silly!" This admonition was accompanied by an impatient shake. "Nick Veeder—a bum; a cripple! What can he do for you?"

"Who crippled him?"

"That's enough! He's no good."

"So you say."

"Don't I know? If you cared anything for me, you'd have more pride than to think about him. Thirteen months in a dirty jail!"

"He had nothing to do with it. You know very well it was your own fault."

"Be still!" Mary shouted. "What do you mean, stirring me up like this? You know I can't preach when I'm sore; it tears me up to lose my temper." She controlled herself with an effort and spoke in a more normal voice. "Darling, I've fought and schemed and worked for you all my life. I want you to be happy."

"Then leave me alone," the girl implored.

"But dearie, you're young and pretty. You've got some of my magnetism, too, or the boys wouldn't like you. You'll marry sooner or later so—"

"Never!"

Mary lowered her brows. "You've made up your mind, eh?" The girl nodded. "Hm-m! Something going on here and I've been too busy to notice it. Has Nick been writing to you?"

Alice's gaze met hers defiantly. "Yes."

The evangelist uttered an oath, and her daughter flinched as if at a blow. "Oh, Mother!"

"I haven't seen any letters. How did he manage it?"

"He wrote in care of Jim."

"Jim! Why, the loafer! You're *both* cheating!" Mrs. McDillon's eyes became ringed with white, like those of a savage horse. She clenched her hands.

"Jim didn't mean any harm. He does anything he's asked."

"I'll teach him to meddle. I'll put a dent in his skull." She turned as if in search of some weapon, and Alice seized her. Mary flung her aside. "He's getting altogether too bossy. I'll run this troupe. Now, listen to me! Cut out the letters. Hear? If you write another line to Nick I'll—horsewhip you."

For once Alice proved that she had inherited some of her mother's quality; through chalky lips she said, "Very well, whip me!"

This revolt astonished and further enraged the elder woman; in a voice that shook she promised, "I'll do more than that, Miss Independence. If you disobey me, if that tramp ever writes you another line, I'll *kill* him. I mean it! I can't miss him twice, and you tell him so. Sit down and write him!" Forcefully she thrust Alice into a chair. "I'll read the letter when it's done and I'll mail it, too. Now"—she drew a deep breath—"I'll put that manager of mine on the slab."

With her eyes blazing insanely, she stormed out of the cabin, and a moment

later Alice heard her screaming at Ball. The girl flung herself upon her bed, crushing the pillow over her ears, but that only sufficed to muffle the shrieks, the blasphemies and finally the sounds of crashing furniture and dishes which issued from the near-by shack. People came running from all parts of the camp; they listened in stupefaction. Madam Thirteen was in one of her famous tantrums, and she gave a much better show than Mary McDillon, the revivalist.

There was no meeting that night, nor for several nights thereafter. Mary was as weak, as listless as any victim of an epileptic seizure; Alice was a pallid wraith and Jim Ball took to the woods. He left his cabin at dawn every morning and he did not slink in until after dark; he ate nothing. Poor, gentle Jim! His feeble mind was in a turmoil. The girl longed to comfort him but dared not.

When at last Mary took the platform she preached upon the demons that harass the flesh and proclaimed herself to be all that was vile. This interested her audience, and as she warmed up she derived a masochistic pleasure in berating herself. There was nothing conservative about Mary McDillon. She ran her meetings like a medicine show, and inasmuch as she often found it necessary to exaggerate symptoms in order to advertise a cure, she now piled on her own wickedness, thus throwing into relief the miracle wrought by faith.

There had indeed been a miracle. She had sinned sorely; a devil had entered into her but she had wrestled with him until the dawn . . . It was, she said, the old, old clash between truth and error. She had passed through fire; she had been purified . . . She had cast that devil out, she announced.

Mary preached as ardently as ever; she exercised her mesmeric art to the utmost but the collection was not what it should have been, and the next day she broke camp.

Sorrowfully she confessed that she was in no condition to go on with "the work." It would probably take her days to recover her equilibrium. That's what came of upsetting a person like her; Alice and Jim must be careful never, *never* to throw her into another rage. Some people could stand it but she was too high-strung. It was cruel of them to subject her to such suffering. However, it was her cross and she would bear it.

ALICE PROMISED to be more considerate in the future. Jim was too crushed and miserable to say anything, so having once more put herself in command of the situation, Mary's spirits revived.

Jim, it seemed, was ready to quit, but the revivalist had managed to talk him out of it. Anyhow, she had spent an hour in his cabin and he was once more her docile dog.

The quarrel, however, had stunned him. He was more dazed, more irresolute than ever, and he sometimes regarded Mary with an expression akin to fear. His distress became more pronounced as time passed. He ate like a sparrow; he complained of insomnia.

The time soon came when Mary was too busy with other affairs to pay much attention to him, for her reputation as a revivalist and healer had spread, and upon her arrival at the next large town she was waited upon by some church dignitaries who professed interest in her work.

They asked her a good many searching questions and she was shrewd enough to be perfectly frank—up to a certain point.

*A strange
discovery*

...an
exciting test
for women



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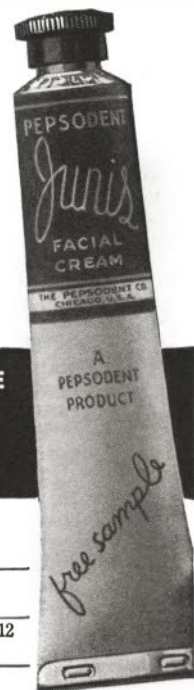
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She had no creed; she preached a simple doctrine, so she told them. With disarming humility she confessed her ignorance of ecclesiastical formulæ and her total lack of religious training. Nevertheless, heaven had blessed her with a crude but persuasive eloquence and she could sway an audience. That was her simple, passionate form of divine worship.

As to her healings, about which she knew her visitors were skeptical, she was even more reticent. She asked them to come and see for themselves.

This they did, and they were impressed. Among other healings they saw her apparently cure a child of infantile paralysis. A boy with steel braces on his legs was brought to her in his mother's arms. Mary laid her hands upon him; she unbuckled the braces. He walked alone, and his mother went wild with joy. She knelt; she embraced the evangelist's knees and kissed a fold of her dress; tears streamed from her eyes.

Mary feared the woman had overacted this part of her performance. To Ball she confessed later, "The kid made a dandy shill but—I'm not sure I need any stooges. Maybe I'm going crazy, but I begin to feel as if I *could* actually cure him."

"You're not the first healer."

"I know. What bothers me is to figure out where the real stuff ends and the fake begins." She laughed shortly. "I've got to watch my step."

This was by far the most important place in which Mary had performed; it supported at least a dozen churches and two newspapers of state-wide circulation. With assistance from the former, she secured the use of a vacant lot near the business center; in return for half-page advertisements in each of the latter, she got the promise that reporters would be sent to cover her first big meeting and that their stories would receive space.

One of the churchmen who had interviewed her was a mill owner and she talked him into lending her sufficient lumber for benches and a platform; a contractor she induced to do the carpentry work for nothing. Next she bought, on time, a secondhand tent; a job printer, on similar terms, struck off for her a thousand posters and she set Jim Ball to putting them up.

THIS TOOK time and hard labor. Nightly she preached at the roadside; by day she worked like a dynamo. She was too busy, in fact, to notice that Jim was going from bad to worse, and when finally on the day of her "grand opening" Alice told her that the man was sick and should go to a hospital, the news came as a shock.

Mary promptly vetoed the hospital suggestion. What a fine ad that would be! How inconsiderate of him to fall ill at such a time! Perhaps she could cure him; if not, she'd get a doctor in the morning. She had arranged for the services of a church choir and was leaving at once to settle the details. It was important that tonight's performance go over.

"There doesn't seem to be much the matter with him," Alice told her. "His head aches and he has a little temperature, that's all."

"Still grouching over that row, I suppose."

"I'm afraid so. It nearly killed him. He idolizes you, Mother. You've cast a spell over him."

"And I think the world of him. But I always speak my mind; I spill my poison, and then I'm through. I'm no hypocrite. That's better than nursing a grudge. You

look after him, dearie, and tell him that ache is all phooey. What's he got in his head to ache, anyhow? Not a thing! His hat's been empty ever since he bought it." Mary laughed nervously, then confessed, "Lord, I'm in a state! Stage fright, I guess."

"Nonsense. You mustn't be frightened." "Oh, indeed! Tonight means a lot. If I put this over we'll have a booster in every pulpit! We'll be top-notchers, and good for a whole season in key towns." With a hasty kiss she strode out of the cabin.

"Why don't you go up with the others tonight and let Mother cure you?" Alice inquired of Ball later that afternoon.

"Too much voodoo about her stuff." "Jim, how can you say such a thing? You've seen her cure hundreds of people."

The man closed his eyes. "That's true. I shouldn't have said it."

"If she can help strangers—"

"She might not want me to come up."

"Why, she'd never know you. She doesn't see faces or people."

"Maybe I will," said Ball. "I certainly feel rotten."

Mary McDillon was at her best that night. A local minister opened the services with prayer. The choir sang well; the audience was attentive and respectful. Mary exulted at the dignity she had attained; it stirred her to realize that she had risen from the dust and had become an important person.

She began her sermon, as always, in a low key and built up her effects as she proceeded. Unlike most evangelists, she did not browbeat her listeners: she did not call them doubters, moral bankrupts, cheaters and the like; she implied they were sincere believers and had faith akin to hers. It was her desire to strengthen that faith and to prove it was as potent today as ever it was, not alone to cure the sick of soul but also the sick of body. That spirit was in this meeting; they would embrace it with song and prayer; they would make of this tent a shrine.

She repeated the story of a certain miraculous grotto: of the Vision that had revealed itself to a child; of the Voice that had directed her to dig in the sand and to drink of the waters and bathe in them. How the girl had dug with her fingers in the dry dust and how clear waters had appeared; how the rock had poured forth a living stream which was still gushing, and which brought trains of weary pilgrims from all over the world.

Not all who go there are cured, she reminded them; perhaps not one in a hundred. Nevertheless, there has accumulated over the years an overwhelming volume of proof that healing has indeed occurred. This, she said, is but one of many such shrines, and at each the story is much the same. Many come; a few are reborn. Here, tonight, too much must not be expected.

Gradually Mary worked herself up into an enthusiastic abandon and surrendered herself to that peculiar trance-like exaltation which she had cultivated. The choir sang; the audience raised its voice; excitement grew.

She scarcely recognized Jim Ball when he shuffled up the sawdust aisle and mounted the stage along with the others; to her he was only another sufferer in whom a malignant devil had taken lodgment. Upon that demon she laid hands and with epileptic frenzy she wrestled with it. Sustained emotion spreads like fire, and the woman had undoubted mesmeric force. Soon the place was in tumult, and her treatments evoked shouts, groans and cheers.

When it came time for Mary to put

the "bite" on her audience, she was no less forthright than during her sermon. She did not beg; she commanded. If this city wanted her to carry on it would have to come across. She would guarantee a good show every night, provided she got support, but the expense was heavy. Furthermore, she was ragged. So was her angel-faced daughter. Stand up, Alice, and take a bow! Give the little girl a big hallelujah! That was Alice's best dress and they were living in a tourist camp, with one change of underclothing! How about some new undies? Who would lead off with the price of some step-ins?

There was a shout at this and a murmur among those who were easily shocked. The latter had learned, however, that this evangelist was "different." She had warned them that she led straight from the shoulder. *Her coarseness, it was evident, was not irreverence, either; she merely spoke the jargon of the street.*

MARY RUSHED ON, to the delight of many, "And listen, brothers! While you're at it, buy your wife a set. The little woman probably needs it more than we do. Shame on you! Let your hearts swell to the size of a celery seed and dig deep, for in God you have a source of unending supply. Let's hear the rustle of frogskins while we join in singing, 'All to Jesus I Surrender, All to Him I Freely Give.'"

Again there was a guffaw. This woman lifted you, and she dropped you with a bump. After an emotional paroxysm it was a relief to laugh. It was like riding in a roller coaster.

The revivalist and her daughter, too, were exhausted when they returned to the camp. Alice was silent; Mary talked incessantly, for she was still keyed up to concert pitch. Her eyes glowed; jealously she hugged the shopping bag in which that evening's collection reposed. Her fingers itched to count it. What a triumph!

Realizing that her mercenary chatter was getting on Alice's nerves, she stopped at Jim's cabin, ostensibly to see how he felt. The place was dark. She snapped on the light, then went to his bed and thrust her hand under the mattress. The bottle was in its accustomed place. She poured a drink, then dumped the contents of her bag on the spread and smoothed out the crumpled bills.

She saw several tens and twenties among them, and her eyes dilated. What the devil was keeping Jim? Half the fun was in counting up. It seemed odd to drink alone. He certainly was a comfort; in hours like this, he stilled the ferment in her and she found rest in his arms.

Lord! How fast fives and tens and twenties ran into money. A band would help her. Why not a troupe of trumpeters since "the song of the Lord began with trumpets." "With trumpets . . . make a joyful noise before the Lord." There was an idea. Eight girls in white. No, thirteen! Her lucky number. There was a Ladies' Silver Cornet Band in town and it was starving . . .

So Jim was on the prowl again, the big sap! He should know better, with a fever. Mary felt a sudden pang; she became alarmed. Night air! She had promised to get him a doctor in the morning. Tough to have him sick, and her a healer. She rose and moved about the cabin.

When a half-hour had passed she went looking for the man. It was an aimless quest and it served no purpose, but the thought of him in pain or in

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possible peril would not permit her to sit still.

What possessed the idiot to bring this worry on her? Always thinking of himself, of course; never a thought for her! In something of a panic she considered phoning the police, but of course that wouldn't do. She remembered, now, seeing him on the platform and treating him. What if her hypnotic power had worked with reverse English? No telling how it would act on one of her own; this Gospel mystery was nothing to tamper with, it now seemed.

She dragged herself back to the tourist camp and there saw something which dismayed her. A light shone in her quarters; in front of the door stood a couple of cars; voices issued from the cabin, and they were the voices of strangers. Mary felt a wave of physical sickness surge over her. Jim was injured! He had been killed!

She began to run.

As she stepped into the light her eye caught the blue of a policeman's uniform and she recoiled; with the officer were two men who looked like reporters. They and Alice all spoke at once.

WHERE HAD she been? Had she heard about Jackson Taber? There was a ten-thousand-dollar reward.

"Mother, it's Jim!" Alice's voice, high-pitched with excitement, cut through the babble. "Our Jim! The most marvelous thing—"

"Is he hurt?" Mary demanded.

For a moment she made little out of what was told her. The words were clear enough but her brain refused to register them. "His mind is restored." "Remembers everything." "Cured at your revival." "Biggest story that ever broke in this town." "Your daughter was just telling—"

"Wait!" Mary exclaimed in an agitation the others could not fathom. "His mind? Whose mind? Who is Jackson Taber?"

"Jim Ball! He's that big lumberman from Duluth who disappeared." The policeman was speaking now. "You must remember. It was in all the papers. They thought it was a snatch but it seems he had kind of a stroke or something. Anyhow, he walked into the station about ten o'clock tonight and wanted to know what town this is. He behaved so queer we called a doctor, and then it all came out. We phoned Duluth and got his brother—"

"It's a miracle!" Alice broke in. "He was sick and I induced him to go to the meeting and be healed. I never dreamed—"

"My paper was all set to razz you, Mrs. McDillon," one reporter confessed. "You know this faith healing is usually the bunk. But the boss shot me out here to check up, and if the story is straight I'm to give it all I've got."

"You'll collect that reward," the officer averred. "Who's responsible for turning this Taber up if you ain't?"

"Where is he?" Mary inquired.

"The doc's got him."

"I must see him. Quick!"

"No chance. He's all shook up and they've got him under observation at the hospital."

"They won't let anybody see him until his mind is quieter."

"I'll see him!" Mary asserted. She turned, then halted on the threshold and spoke harshly. "I suppose, of course, he's married. They all are."

On the way across town the reporters shot questions at her and at Alice, for it was important to get this story on the wire at once. Duluth was frantic for

details. The whole country would be electrified at the finding of Jackson Taber. Mary had made herself nationally famous at one stroke.

The evangelist was deeply stirred, to be sure, but not by the sudden renown she had achieved. Of that she seemed to think little. She was interested only in Jim—that is, Jackson Taber—and what was known about him. When asked about the method she had employed in working this miracle she had little to say. It appeared to frighten her. She had effected more difficult cures than this. After all, it wasn't much to bring back a man's mind. The story lay only in the fact that he was a somebody. That, she supposed, would attract more attention than all of her other feats. Her intertwined fingers strained at each other. She asked to be driven faster.

She did not see Jim that night. No member of the party was allowed to go up to the lumberman's room. Mr. Taber was in a highly nervous state; a sedative had been administered; it was imperative that he have absolute rest and quiet.

"It won't hurt him to see me," Mary angrily persisted. "Didn't I cure him?"

"Presumably you had something to do with it. The excitement at your meeting, the emotional turmoil—"

Mary snorted. "I suppose the real credit is yours. You did it!"

The physician flushed; firmly he declared, "You can't see him, and that's that. He's had a hypodermic and he's asleep."

"But Mother really brought his mind back," Alice asserted. "He's been acting queerly, these last few days. I got him to go to the meeting and— You know he's one of us. We love him."

"And I dare say you'll be able to collect the reward," the doctor said with a sidewise glance at the evangelist.

"To hell with the money!" Mary cried savagely. Seizing Alice's hand, she strode out of the waiting room.

The Taber story indeed created a sensation. Mary McDillon's name was in headlines from one end of the country to the other, and from the local morning paper she learned that Henry Taber, the lumberman's brother, had hired a plane and was flying from Duluth. He would arrive within a few hours. Taber Brothers, prominent mill owners . . . Mysterious disappearance; rumored kidnapping; police baffled . . . James Ball . . . Amnesia . . . Mary McDillon. Everywhere was her own name but nowhere any mention of a Mrs. Jackson Taber or any little Tabers. Thank God for that!

Her Jim! And she had taken him to be some common crook; an absconder, perhaps. What ailed her intuition? She could no longer call herself psychic. He had disappeared while she was in jail; no wonder she had never heard the name. Would he remember what had happened since his seizure? Well, anyway, he'd remember quickly enough, once they were face to face and he heard her voice, felt her touch. All she had ever found it necessary to do was lay her hands on Jim . . .

So she was famous at last; she had made the front page. A hollow triumph if he turned against her. Jim was the one man she had ever met— Oh, but certainly he'd remember! She'd make him. She was Mary McDillon. She had— it.

Again she was refused admittance to the sick room; once more press representatives dogged her, and now they had cameramen with them. The city had suddenly awakened to her presence, and a record meeting that night was certain. The chief of police had arranged for a special squad to handle the crowd. "Just

one more shot, please! How about a smile? Thank you . . . How did she intend to dispose of that ten-thousand-dollar reward? . . . Was it true that she had only one change of underclothes? . . . Could she promise a miracle every evening?"

Mary was distracted, for people swarmed around her; they followed her wherever she went, and some implored her to lay her healing hands upon them. Children goggled at her; old women seized her dress and pressed it to their withered lips. They mumbled blessings. It was like a dream.

The second Mary McDillon revival was described in the local papers as the most extraordinary religious spectacle the city had ever witnessed. The side walls of Mary's tent had to be lowered and the entire lot upon which it stood was thronged; the streets near by were jammed with automobiles. Amazing stories of instantaneous healings were upon everybody's lips. Amplifiers were being installed as rapidly as possible; the papers said a troupe of trumpeters had been engaged. According to the evangelist, the Spirit of God had descended upon the city. She had hopes of accomplishing a great work here.

During the next several days Mary lived in a peculiar state of bewilderment and incredulity; she experienced the keenest feeling of triumph and the most maddening apprehensions. Letters and telegrams poured in upon her; interviewers, promoters and advertising men hounded her until her head was in a whirl: she was offered dates at fair grounds, theaters, baseball parks and bowls; civic bodies and church organizations importuned her. She was asked to indorse a hundred articles of merchandise—for a fee.

Every morning she sent flowers to Jackson Taber, but no message came from him or from his brother. This angered her, and likewise it provoked dire misgivings. How dared they keep her from him! Why couldn't she see him for a moment? Probably he had told his brother the truth, or had babbled to the doctors and this was their doing. Or else he remembered nothing.

Probably there was a black hiatus in his mind, and when they met he would see her with the eyes of a total stranger. That would be hell! Or perhaps he was worse than they said. Mary was frightened and she was furious, too. She felt like storming into the hospital and putting an end to this uncertainty.

NOT UNTIL a week had passed, a week of triumph and a week of misery, did she receive a message. Then a note came from Jim's brother Henry asking her to call at the leading hotel at a certain hour. The very brevity of that message was ominous. She took Alice with her, and as they drove through the streets she held the girl's hand; there were beads of moisture upon her lips and temples.

They were shown to the parlor of a suite, and there Henry Taber met them. Before he had opened his mouth Mary knew him to be her enemy, and her heart sank. The man's gaze was cold; his greeting was polite but hostile.

"Is Jim—I mean, is he here?" Mary inquired in a voice she did not recognize.

"Yes. The doctor allowed him to leave the hospital last night. As soon as he can travel I'm taking him home."

"Does he remember us?" Alice wanted to know. "It's dreadful to think—"

"His mind is quite clear. He remembers practically everything that happened both before and after his accident.

There is a week or two about which he is vague."

Mary felt suddenly weak and tremulous. ". . . so happy! We've been so worried." It was Alice speaking. "You see, he lived with us."

Henry Taber explained, "He's still in no condition to discuss business, so I'll have to do the talking."

"What does that mean?" Mary inquired. "Doesn't he want to see us?"

"He has told me everything, madam, and"—Taber shot a glance past Mary towards the girl—"it will spare him if we arrive at an understanding."

"About what?"
"Why, about you. Naturally, this publicity is distressing to a man of his position. Let's do without any more."

Alice undertook to speak but her mother snapped, "Be still!"

With a hint of mockery in his tone, Henry proceeded, "He's more than grateful for your care and your many kindnesses, Mrs. McDillon. So am I. We propose to make a cash settlement for any possible claim you may have. One moment, please!" Mary had moved towards the inner door but the brother interposed. More sharply he said, "Jack was a sick man when you found him. He was totally irresponsible."

"What of it? I didn't come here for blood money."

"Let's call it a contribution to your cause." It seemed there was an unpleasant taste in Henry Taber's mouth. "We'll be liberal if you'll sign a release."

"I'll sign nothing!" At a sound from her daughter Mary ordered her to leave the room, but the girl did not move.

"I expected something like this. You're the type," Taber exploded. "I suppose you expect him to marry you!"

"Jim!" Mary cried wildly.
The door opened; Jackson Taber appeared. He looked ill and was unsteady on his feet; nevertheless, he was not the weak, irresolute Jim Ball whom the women had known.

"Let me handle this," he said to his brother. Then he turned to Mary. "I've arranged with Henry to pay you well. In fact, we'll double that reward to avoid any scandal."

"Is that all you have to say?"
"What more is there to say? You're out for the money. My 'cure' has put you on your feet, and I see by the papers that the churches have taken you up. You're on your way to Madison Square Garden at last. Congratulations! There's one born every minute."

Stormily Mary inquired, "Wasn't it a real cure in your case? You ought to know. Ask the people in this town if I'm a fake. Ask anybody—"

"Ask the mother of that boy with infantile paralysis!" Jackson cut in with a curl of the lip. "You paid her twenty dollars. I recall something, too, about a rattlesnake. I was to pull out its fangs." He laughed harshly. "Unfortunately for both of us, I remember too much. I wish to God you'd left me as I was."

"I—wish I had."
"It's a shock to a man to realize he's made a beast of himself."

"Jim, I haven't changed. You can't hate me, after all I was to you. It isn't possible!"

Mary turned at a sound behind her, to find that Alice, whose presence she had wholly forgotten, had slumped back in her chair. The girl's head lolled; her cheeks were the color of chalk.

It was Henry Taber who lifted her and laid her on a couch. Mary called her sharply, then seized her hands and began to rub them. "Quick! Some water!"

As Jackson disappeared into the bedroom Henry seized the telephone and

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Washed wrong! Wool harsh, shrunken so that buttons won't button — leggings bind Jerry's legs.

Washed right with IVORY SNOW! Just as soft and roomy as new.

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What makes the differences? The washing, my dears! The suit on the right was washed correctly with pure, fluffy IVORY SNOW which dissolves perfectly in LUKEWARM water. The other one wasn't.

YOU CAN DO IT!

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1. Lay garment on paper and cut or draw outline to show size.

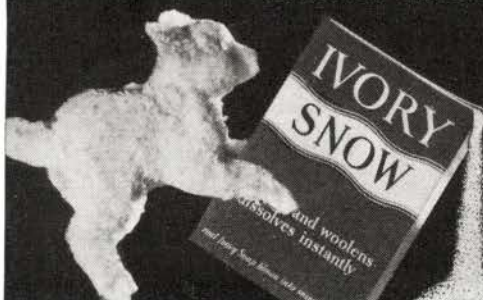
2. Make a generous lukewarm Ivory Snow suds. You can safely use enough SNOW to make big, rich suds because Ivory Snow is pure.

3. Don't rub. A big fluffy Ivory Snow suds saves rubbing. Cup garment in your hands and squeeze suds through. Two sudsings are better than one.

4. Rinse in 3 lukewarm waters of the same temperature as your SNOW suds. Squeeze out as much water as possible without twisting or wringing.

5. Lay garment on your paper pattern and pull it back gently to size. Dry it flat away from heat.

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called for the house doctor. For a few moments there was confusion.

Alice was slow in reviving; they did not succeed in rousing her.

Henry tried to reassure the elder woman by saying, "Don't excite yourself, Mrs. McDillon. The child is only in a faint."

Mary lifted a face convulsed; her eyes glared at the men. "Damn you both!" she cried hoarsely.

Jackson flinched, swayed; then he groped his way out of the room.

It was a half-hour later. Alice was still unconscious. The doctor looked grave. This was more than a faint, he said; these cataleptic seizures—after-effect of severe shock—frequently lasted for some time. She should be taken at once to a hospital. The girl was anæmic, run down. Had she been under any long-continued strain? She would be much better off in a hospital where—Oh, no, it wouldn't hurt her to be moved! Might do her good, in fact.

Now, now! There was no sense in her mother carrying on like this; everything possible would be done. An attack of this sort sometimes left the sufferer in a state of—well, suspended animation for a long while. Hours. Days, possibly. However, there was seldom any permanent impairment of the mental faculties. The doctor understood that Mrs. McDillon was something of a miracle woman; here was an opportunity to exercise her powers!

Late that afternoon Alice opened her eyes but there was no intelligence in them, and she did not recover sufficiently to speak or to understand what was said to her. She lay in a coma. Mary sat by her bed thoroughly frightened, utterly helpless for once in her life. Those glazed, half-open eyes were like the eyes of a corpse; Alice's cheeks were the color of death.

The mother was at a loss what to do, for she had called upon her mediumistic powers and they had failed her miserably. Her mind was in chaos and specters haunted it. Over and over again, she endeavored to summon her mesmeric force but its exercise involved a self-hypnosis of which she was utterly incapable. Concentration was a feat at which her sick brain rebelled.

SEVEN O'CLOCK! She remembered with a shock that she was to preach at eight. There would be a record crowd. A fine come-down to confess that she couldn't cure her own child! She sent word that there would be no meeting.

There would never be another meeting, she later told herself. She'd never preach again. The mere thought of it had of a sudden become unbearable.

That was a hideous night for the evangelist. She spent it bent over Alice's bed or pacing the corridor outside the room. At one moment, remorse overwhelmed her and she was weak with dread; at the next, she foamed with rage at her own impotence and reviled the name of Taber. She had never dreamed that she could love—or hate—any man with such tigerish ferocity. Which was it? She felt his arms crushing her; then she recalled his accusations and his look of loathing. Jim Ball had no code of right and wrong. This Jackson Taber was a—a coward and a hypocrite.

Blackmail, eh? All the big shots feared that. But he had no right to expose her in front of Alice. The doctor had said something about "permanent impairment of the mental faculties"! Had this accursed voodooism robbed Alice of her mind and given it to Jim? She must

think no more of him; she must concentrate on that poor broken flower.

Scriptural verses, Biblical quotations kept intruding themselves. They were a part of her evangelistic patter, and she repeated them now with the tongue of a parrot. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "And, behold, a woman of Canaan . . . cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord . . . my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

It was a torture to mouth what now seemed meaningless nothings. That went down with the boobs but she was smart. And yet, there *might be something in it*. She remembered reading, "Divine Love has met and always will meet every human need." Well? Her need was extreme. Jim loathed her. Alice was dying. She was Mary McDillon, the Miracle Woman! What a laugh! Inside her brain that little imp with the peaked hat was cavorting insanely. Her world had crashed.

The Reverend T. J. Derby, pastor of one of the poorest, smallest churches in the city, was surprised to receive a call from Mary McDillon. Having openly criticized her circus methods, he could not wholly conceal his embarrassment at the meeting.

"I looked you up, Doctor Derby," Mary began, "and I was told that you know more about God and do the most good of any minister in town."

"Why, that's very flattering."

"Have you seen my show?"

Doctor Derby's discomfiture increased. He confessed that he had not attended any of the revivals.

"I know how you feel and I don't blame you," she told him. "But you're a specialist in your line; you know your stuff and I need your help."

"Financial help?"

Mary shook her head. "Just—teach me to pray."

Derby saw that she was sincere; his expression altered. "Teach *you*? Isn't that your business?"

"It's my racket! I'm just a trick healer and I muscled into this game because I could make it pay. I broke in to rob the till."

"It's my racket, too," the minister said with a smile. "But for me there's mighty little money in it. Tell me what troubles you."

"I'm licked. The thing is too big for me. I've got healing hands and I'm—well, psychic. First I used to burn punk sticks and tell fortunes and all that, but the cops kept prodding me. This revival business looked safe, so I read up on the Bible. Easy pickings, I thought. And it was, too, but—*there's more to it than I figured*. I've got a bear by the tail, parson. I can't let go and I don't dare hang on."

"Strange! They call you a real wonder worker. I've heard extraordinary tales—"

"Oh, I stage a good show! And mind you, I've got *something*—I help a few—but it's all *me*. Understand? I use the Bible for a build-up. I'm just a voodoo woman in a Salvation Army bonnet."

"Why do you tell me this?"

"*Because I've discovered that you can't fool with religion*. You can't use God for a come-on. I've got to swallow the whole thing or—*or quit*."

Doctor Derby was a man of understanding. He waved his caller to a chair; then he smiled down at her. "I dare say it's like other 'rackets.' Once you're in, you can't get out. You won't quit, Mrs. McDillon. You've gone too far."

"And my name isn't Mary McDillon.

either. I pulled that for a gag." She explained how she had taken it, and the pastor nodded.

"Hard-boiled, aren't you? Well, two Marys followed Christ to the foot of the Cross; Mary, the Mother, and Mary Magdalen. They were the only ones who really believed in him."

In an uncertain voice the woman exclaimed, "But I *don't* believe! That's why I'm here. I—I'm in a hell of a fix." Briefly she told about Alice, and the man looked grave. "The doctors can't do a thing for her, and neither can I. I presume that's because I'm not on the level, see? But who is? I couldn't go on preaching, even if I had the heart, for how can I pretend to cure others when my own child is—dying?" The speaker uttered a dry sob.

"At the Crucifixion the crowds said, 'He saved others; himself he cannot save.'"

THE TRUTH is, I'm fed up on cheating. I'm going to fold up. But that's okay; I promised God I'd do *anything* if only He'd—give her back to me." Again Mary choked; then she broke out savagely, "What makes me sore is to weaken. Gee! I hate to turn soft when this is the only easy thing I've ever had, but I'll do it for her."

"Tell me more about the case, about her and about yourself."

Mary did so. She even talked about Jim Ball, and her frankness caused the minister to exclaim, "Mary, Mary! Christ cast seven devils out of your namesake. I'm afraid you have several left in you."

"You said it, parson! But please don't ask me to pray. I've been on my knees all night. After all, if mother-love won't do the trick, what will? God couldn't love that girl any better than I do."

"Was it mother-love that made you shoot Nick Veeder?"

"Sure. He's no good."

"Even so, I'd send for him if I were you." Mary paled; she shook her head. "She's your child, it's your problem, but if it were mine, I'd forget myself entirely. This is your Gethsemane, Mary McDillon. You're at the foot of the Cross and I'm not going to pray for you or with you. Why should I, when perhaps you're closer to the Truth than I am! Oh, you don't realize it *but you are!* Otherwise, you wouldn't have bared your soul to me."

"I don't pretend to understand this healing power of yours; you say there's nothing divine about it but I'm inclined to think there is. To bring comfort, to ease pain, to lighten suffering is a gift from above and you should consider it holy. I wish—oh, how I wish I had it!"

"Really?"

"I'd go on with it, develop it, encourage its development and—yes, I'd capitalize it as you've done."

"That sounds queer."

"No doubt. But you see I have a reason. There's a boys' camp up in the mountains—all the boys there are bad boys. I'm its only support and—I can't carry the burden much longer." The minister smiled wistfully; his bright eyes dimmed. "I can't talk money out of my congregation the way you do out of yours. I only wish I could. I—I think I'd steal for those boys if I knew how. No, Mary, don't be a quitter. You have the chance to do a bigger, better job than mine. Make the most of it."

"I—can't! I couldn't bear—"

"Continue with your revivals and your healing, only be honest, be sincere. Don't cheat. After all, you're merely robbing yourself."

"All right, I'll do it! I'll be honest.

I'll preach and heal for nothing if—if Alice gets well."

"Trying to make a deal, eh?" Derby shook his head. "You can't dicker with God."

"You're a real guy," Mary said. "I didn't know preachers came like you."

An hour later, when she left, Derby inquired at the door, "Have you ever been to church?" The caller shook her head. "Come tomorrow. Then tell me how I can build up *my* show."

Mary did go to church on Sunday morning; later that day, she called at Jackson Taber's hotel and asked to see his brother. "You offered me twenty thousand dollars to sign some trick paper," she told him.

"Yes."
"Could you squeeze in another five?"
The man flushed angrily. "You're a contemptible, avaricious, unscrupulous woman."

"Call me anything, Brother Taber. Jim said I'm out for the money and don't care how I get it. He's right as rain. Twenty-five grand, Henry! No more, no less. Then show me the dotted line and hand me your quill." She did not even read the document when it was placed before her; having signed it, she said, "Make out the check to bearer."

On Monday morning, the Reverend T. J. Derby called at the hotel and insisted upon seeing Mr. Jackson Taber at once on a matter of importance. In considerable agitation he explained, "I saw by this morning's paper that you gentlemen are leaving town today."

"Yes."
"Naturally, I couldn't let you go without expressing my amazement, my gratitude and—receiving your instructions."

"Instructions for what?"
"To be frank, I wanted to assure myself that I'm not dreaming. It seems too incredible!"

The brothers exchanged glances, and reading their expressions, all animation fled from Derby's face. He drew a deep breath and released it reluctantly. "Then it *was* a mistake! I was afraid so." He fumbled for his wallet, and with trembling fingers extracted a check and handed it to Jackson. "I might have known. There was no letter or anything. Of course, I assumed it was for my boys' camp. However—he tried to smile—"there's no harm done."

Jackson Taber stared at the check. He turned it over, then passed it on to Henry. The latter asked sharply, "How did this get into your hands?"

"It came in the mail an hour ago. Twenty-five thousand dollars from a perfect stranger! Naturally, it was too much for a poor preacher." Derby uttered a sound intended to imitate a laugh. "I must say, though, it's rather a painful joke. I don't see the point."

"The check is good," Jackson asserted brusquely. "That's my signature, and the money's in the bank."

"Then—? I don't understand."
"Neither do I. It was given to Mary McDillon."

"As a contribution to my—?"
"No. For her own use. She looked after me when I was sick; she restored my mind."

"And you *paid* her for doing that?" Derby inquired incredulously.

"She demanded it."
"She held him up, Doctor Derby; bled him white. You see, Jack traveled with her and—"

"I know; she told me the whole story." Jackson flushed. Henry waved the check excitedly. "Look out for her! She's dynamite! She's up to some game."

An instant—then the minister agreed,

HAPPY ENDING

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"Yes. A new game. An altogether new game, God bless her!" A sudden moisture filmed his eyes and he blinked it away with an apology. "Pardon me; I'm an emotional man. I know Mary McDillon better than you do. Mr. Taber, can you give me a moment alone?"

"Jack's in no condition—" his brother began, but the minister assured him:

"What I have to say won't hurt him. Please!"

Henry shrugged, and passed into the bedroom.

He was astonished, ten minutes later, when Jack burst in on him and seized his hat. "Where are you going?"

"To the hospital. Mary's there."

"Hell's bells! Are you crazy?"

"Sure! Crazy to let her go. Crazy to hold her in my arms again."

"What? That woman?"

"That woman! I'm going to marry her. You'd better come on over." He dashed out into the hall.

"Third door on the right, but go

quietly," the nurse cautioned. "She mustn't be disturbed."

Taber tiptoed down the hall and pushed the door open so silently that Mary McDillon did not hear him. She was sitting beside Alice's bed; or, rather, she had collapsed against it in an attitude of utter exhaustion. There were sooty smudges under her eyes, and her cheeks were tear-stained.

"Mary!"

She looked up, and one hand stole to her throat. Then she laid a finger on her lips and silently framed the words, "Sh-h! She's asleep." Taber beckoned and she rose, moved towards him. With lips close to his ear she whispered: "She came to an hour ago. I'm so happy!"

He drew her out into the corridor, where he could trust himself to say, "I just came from Derby. I know everything."

Mary did not heed his words, for her mind was concerned with something more important. "I've sent for Nick and he's on his way here. When I told her

that she went to sleep like a kitten. It's dreadful! I tell you, Jim, he's no good."

"Neither am I, dear, but I love you." Taber held out his hungry arms.

"Why, Jim, I—I thought you were cured!" she said breathlessly. "Wait! I can't marry you. You're a big shot and I've made a—a deal to go on preaching."

"You can break it."

"Not this deal. It's one I'll never break. I'm going back to preach on the dumps; I'm going to kneel in the cinders."

"Yes. Derby told me. Very well. Preach as much as you like. A little honest religion won't hurt me, either. We can be married today, now."

"Mother!" The call came from the sick bed, and Mary started.

"Don't go!" she exclaimed. At the door she turned a radiant face and whispered, "Let's think it over carefully—for a minute or two. And Jim, I knew something nice would happen today. It's the thirteenth!"

Special—an exciting Short Novel, "New Year's Eve," by Faith Baldwin—complete in February Cosmopolitan! Don't miss it!

The Cat Had 9 Lives by Achmed Abdullah (Continued from page 63)

instructions had been given to the assistant Political, R. W. Carter, during an official reception at Belvedere, the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, where at least two hundred other guests had been present. He, in his turn, had slipped it to me while he was brushing against me in the Indian Museum, which is called by the natives the *Jadu Ghar* or "House of Magic."

Twenty-four hours later, I left for Kashmir, obviously on leave, in reality to draw a red herring across my trail. I had some capital shooting there; going quite far up, accompanied by a first-class *shikari*, and bagging, in the few days I spent there, a splendid ibex with thirty-four-inch horns, two brace of musk deer and some burrels.

I returned to Calcutta. I put up at the Great Eastern Hotel. For the space of a week I went about like a regular sight-seeing tourist—from the Maidan to Fort William, from Howrah to Dalhousie Square, from the Old Church to Kalighat Temple. I registered under a Scottish name, with passport and incoming mail all complete.

I was sure at the time—am, indeed, still sure—that my mission was known to nobody except the four principals whom I mentioned, and that I was never shadowed for a single moment. Not even on that evening when I went forward toward the Colootallah in search of Balendra Kumar; when, by the same token, I went toward the rim of a grim, cruel, coiling mystery which will continue to weave its bitter spell across Hindustan as long as—and this, of course, means forever—three hundred million Aryans bow in worship before Durga the Great Mother, the Six-Armed Reverence, the Emblem of Lust and Destruction.

I was familiar with the very high-hat Calcutta bounded on one side by the exclusive bar of the Bengal Club and on the other by the equally exclusive pews of St. Andrew's Kirk. The Calcutta I was entering now was not high-hat; in fact, not hat of any sort, but entirely turban—and ragged, ruffianly, and, I have no doubt, verminous turban as, presently, I skirted the Jora Bagan and bored into a labyrinth of alleys, a packed, greasy wilderness. You may, though I hope you do not, know their

English and American counterpart: the Scotland Road Division of Liverpool, New York's Bowery and Hell's Kitchen of a generation ago, or Chicago's First Ward during the legendary days of Hinky Dink.

Alleys they were that teemed with a riotous, fantastic, lawless motley of Oriental life—cursing, spitting, laughing, bickering, fighting. Dirty alleys. Alleys of "black-town," the real Calcutta, unromantic and fetid and drab; quite unknown to the tourist and, too, to the white resident.

Smells here. Smells of filth, hashish, unwashed bodies, cloying perfumes.

Alleys where policemen are conspicuous, and therefore safe, by their absence.

Alleys plunged into bitter, blotched darkness; yet with sudden brutish flickerings and stabbings of light that show sights which a man would rather not see.

Alleys where those who wish and have the money can buy many a thing difficult to purchase across the counter of a *sahib's* department store. Such things, for instance, as a dagger and the grimy fist that holds it to stab your enemy between the shoulder blades—and the price fairly reasonable.

I hurried on, farther and farther away from the white man's Calcutta. At every corner there were new scenes and new faces, though the same vices and the same smells; and it grew steadily darker—until at last I got to the Colootallah; and I knew that I had got there by a queer happening.

For, as I stopped to light a cigaret and as the crimson spurt of the match brought my face into sharp relief, a white-turbaned Indian stepped suddenly out of the drooping purple shadow of a postern directly into my path, barring it with his great bulk. Instinctively, I reached for my revolver. But the other touched his forehead, mouth and breast with two fingers in sign of peace.

He said: "Be pleased to follow me."

His words were in English. So were mine: "Follow you—where?"

"Balendra Kumar is waiting for you," he announced.

I drew back. I was amazed. I was nervous, afraid.

There was a short silence. Thoughts crowded rapidly through my brain.

This thing, I asked myself, how was it possible? I was sure then, and am still sure, that the secret of my mission and my identity was known only to the four principals, all vitally concerned in the matter and not one of them a traitor or in sympathy with the nationalists; that there had been no leakage; that every precaution had been taken; that not once since my arrival from the north had I been shadowed.

You will say: "But these people *must* have known; *must* have found out!"

And I will reply: "They *could* not have known; *could* not have found out!"

On the other hand, they *did* know. And I shrugged my shoulders; I remembered an Afghan proverb: "When the impossible happens, it happens. A stone swims in the water. A monkey sings a love song."

I stepped close to the stranger. "How—how do you know?" I stammered.

His reply was silly; was, perhaps, not silly at all: "The gods know—everything."

I considered what I should do. Finally I shrugged my shoulders. I made up my mind to see it through. "All right," I told him. "I'll come with you."

I endeavored to have my voice sound steady and sort of blasé. I doubt that I succeeded, for the man said:

"No harm will come to you." He added after a while: "Though you are a renegade—to Asia, the great mother!"

Here were florid and pompous words, typically, melodramatically Hindu. It was this which gave me back my equanimity and my sense of humor—and so I followed him; followed him into the heart of the Colootallah, and the wind there howled like a starving wolf, and the blackness there was blacker than ink, and how the man found his way except by smell was more than I could guess.

So black it was that I could see neither house nor beast nor man. Yet life was everywhere; everywhere I was conscious of eyes staring at me through the darkness—eyes used to that same darkness. Occasionally I heard whispering voices, bare feet pattering away on mysterious errands, the shiver of garments brushing past, a faint clanking of jewels and crackle of steel.

On, on we went, through a sinuous,

sardonic winding and twisting of narrow passages, a maze of cheap bazaars and rickety houses.

Not quite so much darkness here. Pale, insincere lights from the windows and open doors of dives.

Then, again, the darkness, the inky void; and once, coming from it, I heard a cry. A cry of infinite fear and desolation. A heavy thud. A rattling, agonized gurgle as if deep from a man's, or perhaps a woman's, throat, followed by silence.

No sign anywhere. No threatening shadow looming black through the black, gliding back into the black. No twinkle of murderous dagger stabbing the opaque. No actual physical sight to motivate, to explain.

Just the cry, the thud, the death gurgle—and the soggy pall of silence. One of those fantastic, illogical Indian mysteries, clouded out of nothing, for nothing, maybe because of nothing.

The guide's voice cut through my thoughts: "Here we are."

We entered a cul-de-sac that ran the gamut of tall, whitewashed walls without windows or doors and was lighted by the flickering smoky flame of a torch clasped to a post. At the farther end the cul-de-sac was sealed by a lonely, towering house.

There was a low, massive, brass-studded door. The Hindu opened it with a long skewer-like key which he took from his waist shawl. He led me down a dark corridor; opened another door and ushered me across the threshold.

"I shall call Balendra Kumar," he said, and left.

The room where I found myself was a blaze of light—electric light, incongruously enough—and after the swathing blackness of the Colootallah it blinded me momentarily. But presently my eyes became used to it. I looked about me; saw a large place very simply furnished; saw, set into a niche, an enormous statue, perhaps fifteen or sixteen feet high.

I walked up close to it.

It was raised on a square pedestal on which was painted a panorama of all Hindustan's motley myths and legends and superstitions—from the "Chhadanta Jataka," the birth story of the Six-Tusked Elephant, most beautiful of Indian legends, to the ancient tale of "Kaliya Damana" which relates how Krishna, the god of youth, overcame the hydra Kaliya; from color-blazing designs picturing Rama, Siva and Lakshmi meditating in their forest exile, to a representation of Bhagiratha imploring Siva to permit the river Ganges to fall to the thirsty earth from its matted locks; from scenes where lost souls, souls of those who had denied the deities or had married low-caste women or had slain Brahmans or had stolen the property of temples, were tortured in the *Tamisra*, the Hell of Outer Darkness, to scenes where a variety of devils, Dakinis and Yoginis and Shankinis, danced about in that frightful, obscene revelry in which Hindu religion delights.

The statue itself was carved from a single block of shiny black basalt; with thick, sensuous, red-painted lips that were twisted in a cruel smile; round its neck a double girdle of human skulls, and skulls, too, hanging from its long-lobed ears. It had six arms. One of them held a sword, the second the head of a bearded man, the third a drum, the fourth a cobra, while the other two hands were empty and raised to bless the worshippers.

Before the statue's feet were spread the utensils of sacrifice: dishes for the

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burnt offerings, silver lamps, gongs, conches, jugs, copper cups. Cups, I noticed, that were filled with blood—naturally, since this was Durga the Great Mother, the Emblem of Lust and Destruction; and instinctively I snapped my fingers with the superstitious Moslem trick of warding off evil and heathenish influences.

I turned as I heard a voice.

"You like our Durga?"

A man stood there. He was small, dark-skinned and insignificant-looking, dressed in black. Speaking in English, he introduced himself as Balendra Kumar. He asked me to sit down, offered me cigaret and match. Our conversation was curiously stilted and unreal.

"I SUPPOSE," he began slowly, "you are here to investigate my wicked past—to see if you can't implicate me in that recent regrettable bomb outrage?"

"You were mixed up in it, weren't you?" I rejoined bluntly.

"Can you prove it?"

A silence. He continued:

"I know precisely what is in your mind; as I knew precisely—even before the British decided on it—that you would be sent on this mission."

"Rot!" I exclaimed.

"That's what your lips say. Not your heart. Listen!" He leaned forward; he quoted my former thoughts almost word for word. "You had a double plan. If I turned out to be an honest fanatic, you meant to bring false witnesses against me, to swear my life away. But if you found me just an ambitious, venal Bengali, then you were going to offer me money—and a small government position. Am I right, Abdullah *sahib*?"

I did not reply. He laughed.

"You imagine you are clever, eh?" he demanded. "You think that the British are powerful, eh? Well, perhaps Durga is more powerful." He rose and went to the door. "Wait for me, my friend. And, in the meantime, take another good look at her." And he pointed at the black basalt statue.

He left. I was alone. Fear came to me, touching my spine with clay-cold fingers. But I got over it. My guide had promised that I would not be harmed. I believed him. And anyway, I was in for it now.

I walked back to the statue. I took another look—and as I looked, I remembered half-forgotten tales that I had heard here and there.

Tales whispered by Anglo-Indians. Tales repeated with a curse and a shiver of apprehension. Tales always denied—strangely—with the same curse and the same shiver. Tales discredited by the most thorough and unprejudiced scientific inquiry. Tales dismissed as asinine drivel and blinking, sanguinary nonsense by all the best people.

Tales—if you prefer to believe them, and personally I suggest you may as well—of a secret society that is as powerful throughout India as the Camorra was formerly in Italy and the masked men of the medieval *Fehm-Gerichte* in Germany; a society whose members, called "thuggee," whence the English word "thug," have forgotten the age-old feud between Hindus and Moslems and have combined in the same dread, dark worship before Durga the Destroyer, Durga of the Thousand Names, Durga of the Thousand Cruelties.

Tales of human sacrifices on the altar of the six-armed goddess. Tales of horrible sadistic rites. Tales of men and women attacked at night—not because of profit or hate, but because of

the lust of killing itself and some twisted, obscene religious symbolism—after the time-honored habit of the thuggee: with the rumal, the kerchief, quickly dropped from behind over the victim's head and pressed tightly against the throat, the two thumb joints rammed and jerked violently into the windpipe, a choked, agonized death gurgle, a triumphant cry of: "Hail, Durga! Hail, Great Mother! Hail, Smashana Kali!"—and then another human life extinguished, another soul winging across the Sword-Leafed Forest of *Usipatra Vana* to feed the ravenous maw of Durga the Destroyer.

Tales, I tried to convince myself, that could not be true. Why, this was the twentieth century, the century of enlightenment and progress and sanitary plumbing.

Still, "Perhaps Durga is more powerful," Balendra Kumar had told me.

Right then the man returned. He was accompanied by another Hindu, a tall, fat man in priestly robes who held a naked sword in his right hand. "A sword," explained Balendra Kumar, as he saw the startled expression on my face, "that is meant for my neck—not yours."

I gaped. I said: "Eh?"

"Just that, my dear old fellow," he replied, aping my Oxford drawl.

Then, without any ceremony or lengthy sacerdotal hocus-pocus, he knelt in front of the idol. The priest raised the sword. He brought it down with full force. There was the sickening sound of steel slashing through flesh and tissue and bone; a thick stream of blood; and Balendra Kumar's head rolling on the altar steps like an overripe pumpkin.

The priest bowed to me. A moment later, unhurriedly and in silence, he left the room.

I stared. I wanted to shriek; could not. I was frightened to the core. I grew yet more frightened, close to the danger line of hysteria, when I saw the cut-off, bleeding head moving its lips; when I heard the voice of Balendra Kumar speaking in that same mocking Oxford drawl:

"Right-oh! Perhaps Durga is more powerful."

Then I became panic-stricken. I wanted to get out of this place as quickly as possible. I made for the door; stopped when, again, I heard the voice.

"Wait! You'll lose your way. The guide will take you back—to the white man's Calcutta."

I turned.

I saw no cut-off head. I saw no pool of blood. I saw only Balendra Kumar standing there, leaning against the altar, in the prosy act of lighting a cigaret . . .

A miracle?

I have no idea.

Perhaps it was a trick; a hypnotic stunt; optical illusion; autosuggestion.

You can explain it by any scientific or pseudo-scientific term that pleases you. All I knew was that I had seen what I had seen and heard what I had heard. I knew, too, that I could not write it down in my official report. So I contented myself with the usual bureaucratic bluff by advising my superiors that I had the matter "well in hand."

Maybe I did. Maybe I didn't.

At all events, three nights later—although I denied promptly that I had anything to do with it—a small section of the Colootallah was swept by flames. One house, at the end of a cul-de-sac, was entirely destroyed. Among those who perished was Balendra Kumar, whose black magic evidently had not been able to overcome the bright red magic of fire.

His name was Sigismondo Gomez y Calderon. He referred to himself, with

irony, as a half-breed, explaining that his late father had been a rich brewer from Oviedo, while his mother was the daughter of a Castilian grandee.

In externals he took after his mother's people. For he wore the inalienable stamp called pedigree and blood in his chilly gray eyes, his hawkish nose, his thin lips, the wide sweep of his shoulders and the extraordinary smallness of his hands and feet. But in his mode of life he was more like a brewer—living coarsely, riotously, thoroughly enjoying himself and having few inhibitions.

In fact, his reputation was somewhat thumb-marked by having been hawked through several continents. In the bars and on the race tracks of Ostend, New Orleans, Miami, Havana, San Sebastián and Biarritz, men spoke of him with faint envy and dropped a knowing, tolerant eyelid over his sins. Women did the same; they liked him and more than liked him, although Nemesis, in the form of gout and dyspepsia, had put its sign upon him, although his once clear-cut features were swollen, his hair thin and graying and his paunch sadly obvious.

It was unavoidable that he and my father should become intimate friends. They liked the same wines, and different women. For a while they were partners in a racing stable.

It was Don Sigismondo whom my parent consulted when he decided that I would have to marry money.

For years my maternal grandfather had remitted regularly and handsomely. But he had become annoyed by my persistent refusal to return to Afghanistan and had cut me off with the proverbial shilling—or rupee, in this case. I had appealed to my father. He had come through, also regularly and handsomely, until he himself met temporary financial reverses. Therefore his matrimonial ideas where I was concerned.

A number of men whom I knew had contracted marriages of convenience, the husband supplying title and social position and the wife supplying the bank account. They seemed happy enough; happier, some of them, than other couples of my acquaintance who had married for love.

After all, even if a man does not marry a girl for her money, there are moments when—sorry for the pun—he likes to have a little change.

So, WHEN my father announced his decision, I did not argue or kick. Nor, on the other hand, did I take much interest in the matter, except that I formed my own plans about what to do with the bride-to-be's fortune.

I intended to retire from the British service and go in wholeheartedly for the things which—I thought then—made life worth one's while: a flat in Paris, a house in London, a shooting box somewhere in Ireland, a trout stream in Norway, a moor in Scotland, a villa on the Riviera, a blue-ribbon French chef, a good-sized yacht and a stableful of horses—all blatantly tangible things; but that's how it was with me in those days. I was wise enough to realize that I might get bored with this sort of existence. Well, I considered, I could always pull a few wires and get back into the service.

This proves that I was not an idealist. How could I be? I was so young—and I have always held that idealism is an attribute of sated middle-age, not of selfish, greedy youth which wants what it wants when it wants it.

I was never sure by what process my

father and Don Sigismondo picked out the girl. She was the second daughter of a multimillionaire Jewish banker in Paris. Let's call her Suzette Berg. She was a picture to delight a Spanish painter, quite intemperately beautiful with her raven-black hair, her olive complexion, her profile so exquisitely chiseled.

Not long ago I saw her photograph in a Sunday-newspaper rotogravure section. She is still charming to look at—though she is a grandmother today and the wife of a British general who made a considerable name for himself in the Near East.

Everything was arranged in the proper, stiff, conservative French manner. Her parents were approached by Don Sigismondo. My father—again through the intermediacy of Don Sigismondo—bargained spiritedly about the dowry. Finally a compromise was reached, and I was permitted to pay court to Suzette—whom so far I had not met.

We were introduced at the house of mutual friends. There we sat next to each other during one of those interminable French dinners that, starting with a thin soup and a glass or two of dry Pouilly, work their pitiless way through *langouste à la Bordelaise*, flanked by flower-scented Meursault, to a *poulet cocotte*, a grilled fillet of beef, three vegetables and a bottle of one of the "grands vins," such as vintage Musigny or Romanée, and wind up with salad, cheese, fruit, a little champagne, coffee and liqueurs.

The two victims, Suzette and I, exchanged sidewise glances, while the rest of the company paid—most ostentatiously—no attention to us, as they conversed about this and that and the other thing.

I know I felt self-conscious; felt like a silly fool. I have an idea that she did, too.

But she never admitted it. She told me, a good many years later: "I had a lot of fun watching you. You were so flustered. Why, you ate your soup with the coffee spoon—and you sprinkled powdered sugar on your oysters!"

An untruth. We had no oysters.

At last the dinner ordeal came to an end. But for days the ritual continued. I sent her flowers every morning; saw her at tea at people's houses; took her once to the opera, with a chaperon in attendance.

Then, one day, after swallowing hard, I pronounced my carefully rehearsed speech: "*Mademoiselle, j'ai l'honneur de—*"

I did not have time to finish. She, also, had been carefully rehearsed. She picked up her cue too quickly and interrupted with a whispered:

"*Oui, Monsieur le Prince!*"

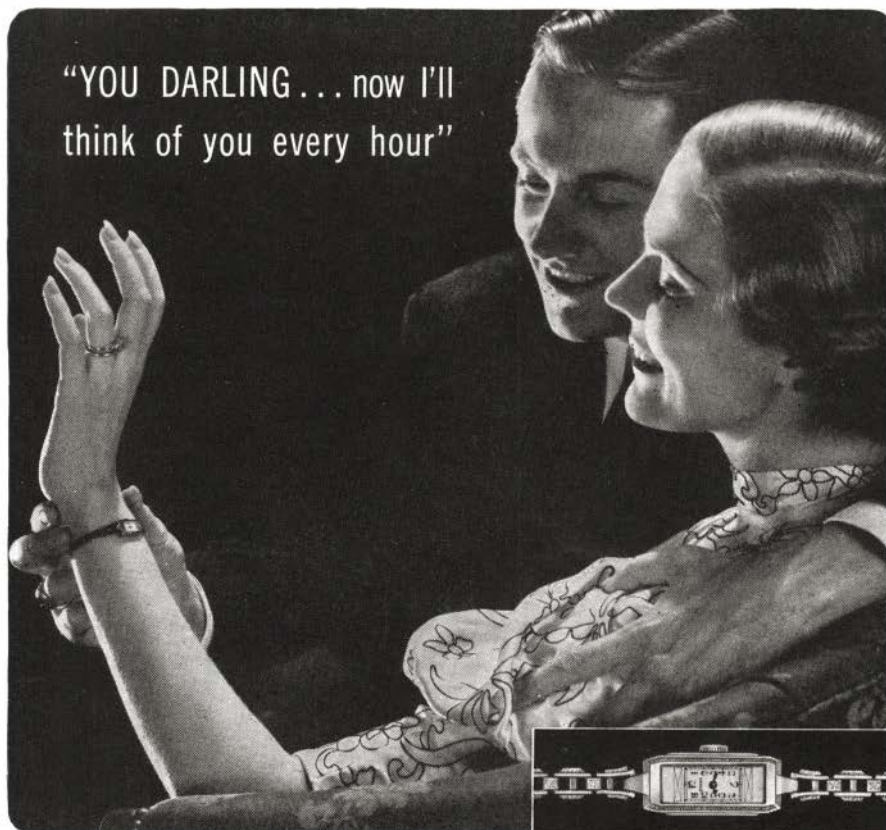
So that was that. We were a betrothed couple. The whole proceeding had been about as romantic as a plate of Russian cabbage soup; and I was prey to a certain reaction, a certain unhappiness. Perhaps, I thought, money was not everything, after all; perhaps it would be a mistake to give up my former life—empire-building, adventure, the companionship of my pals . . .

But it was too late. The next day, the engagement was announced in the *Figaro* and the *Gaulois* and—Russian papers please copy!—in the *Novoe Vremya* and the *Journal de St.-Petersbourg*. My father gave me his blessing and left for Moscow.

Next Month—the concluding chapter in the reminiscences of Achmed Abdullah, adventurer in many lands

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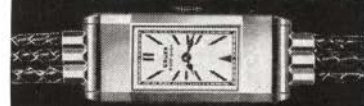
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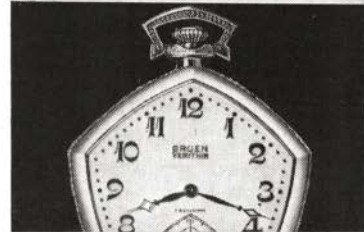
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A Strong, Silent Man (Continued from page 57)

at the already sufficiently buoyant audience, and was fined ten dollars by the management for such garrulity, he has ever since maintained in public an unbroken silence.

When first I went away to school, a pious woman of my acquaintance wrote me from her home in Germantown a little homily on the temptations ahead of me. The letter worked up to the following injunction: "Have courage, my boy, to say No!" At first I was a trifle confused by this exhortation, because her tremulous Spencerian hand was hard to read and I thought she had said, "Have courage, my boy, to say No. 1."

But here, standing where we left him on the tenement doorstep, is one who was to have the courage to say nothing at all. Compared with him in his public appearances, the late Calvin Coolidge was an old chatterbox. He is the only living American who has achieved a world-wide fame and earned (if not hung onto) a considerable fortune by the simple process of keeping his mouth shut. You know him as Harpo Marx.

What is now a settled policy of silence was adopted by accident when Harpo first went on—or rather was pushed on—the stage. It was when the irresistible Mrs. Marx had finally launched herself as an impresario.

She started with one son, one tenor and a pretty girl. This trio was billed somewhat effusively as The Three Nightingales. The Three Nightingales were scheduled to start, at Henderson's in Coney Island, a cross-country vaudeville tour, with Mrs. Marx going along as manager.

Harpo was then a bell boy at the Hotel Seville, his meager wage augmented by the quarter Cissie Loftus used to pay him every week for escorting her dog on a tour of the lamp-posts in Gramercy Park. At the thought of her Ahdie left behind with no one to see that he ate properly, no motherly hand to give him a *Schlag* when he misbehaved, Mrs. Marx broke down. At the last moment, she called a cab, drove to the Seville, plucked her offspring from the bell-hop bench in the lobby, hurried him to a costumer for the conventional boutonniere and white-duck pants, and made him change into these as the cab proceeded to Coney Island.

THEY GOT there just as the curtain was rising. There was time only to shove the added starter onto the stage. From sheer terror, he stood through the turn with his nose pressed to the backdrop. From a seat in the orchestra, his elder brother kept a fascinated eye on the white-duck pants and was able to perceive that Harpo was nervous.

Slowly, through the ensuing seasons, the Marx Brothers learned their trade, becoming, in time, a celebrated vaudeville act. When, after the war, one of them—the one with a reputation for dancing the slowest whirlwind finish in the two-a-day—mutinied and went into the cloak-and-suit business, Mrs. Marx extracted her youngest from his class in high school and flung him into the breach. You see, she was a woman who carried a spare. In 1924, the Marxes achieved the unsubstantial glory of seeing their names written in lamps on the Broadway sky.

By this time, Harpo had patiently learned to play the instrument from which he eventually took his nickname, and always he was content to wander

his wordless way through the lunatic mazes of their shows, a master pantomimist in a gabby age. Of course such a mute resorts to endless tricks to woo your easy laughter. I remember the bewilderment of a London hat shop when he gravely ordered a straw hat that should collapse like an opera hat. I remember the care with which he designed the evening clothes for his first entrance in "Animal Crackers."

That was a farce of night life in Long Island society which Groucho wanted to call "While London Sleeps." Harpo entered in full evening dress with ebony cane, top hat, cape-coat and everything. It was the point of this elaborate costume that when a deferential footman started to take his hat and coat, everything would come off in his hands, leaving the guest standing in a modest pair of pink-striped bathing trunks.

This device was ever a source of innocent merriment in the audience, but one evening at the 44th Street Theater in New York, it went especially well. On that evening, Harpo had lingered overlong at a poker game and reached the theater with not a minute to spare. However, his entrance cue found him in the wings, breathless, but outwardly in order. At the cue, he sauntered nonchalantly on to the familiar burst of applause and the usual sibilant twitter from the dowagers out front. "That's the one that plays the harp." "That's the one that never says anything." "That's the one with the red wig. Isn't he just too sweet!"

As always, the footman stepped up to take his coat and hat. As always, the interlocking costume came off as a unit. But this evening there was what the vaudeville advertisements call an Extra Added Super Feature. He had forgotten to put on his bathing trunks.

Meanwhile, great mushroom fortunes were being made in the movies, and always there was someone to whisper in his ear that he would do well to quit his brothers and take that eloquent silence of his out to Hollywood. But he procrastinated. Indeed, he procrastinated until all the movie palaces were wired for sound, so that he arrived in Hollywood to share with Charlie Chaplin the only quiet left in America. Into each of the Marx scripts there was written a witless mute for him to play, and these pictures have now made it part of the American credo that Harpo could not speak if he wanted to.

In the preparations for their next picture, there was, to be sure, a dreadful moment when it looked as if he might have to loosen his tongue. The Marxes are to do "Of Thee I Sing" for the films. This is the Kaufman-Gershwin extravaganza which has had two sequels. One is the witty satire with music produced last October and called "Let 'Em Eat Cake."

The other sequel was the translation of "Of Thee I Sing" into terms of the screen, and in this travesty of the government at Washington, there did seem to be no rôle for a pantomimist. Wherefore Harpo began tuning up his vocal cords and reviving the old story that when he finally opened his mouth, a moth flew out. But a happy idea came to his rescue. There would really be no need for him to speak at all. He could play the Vice-President.

It is generally agreed that, with the exception of the one and incomparable Chaplin, Harpo can say more with a twitch of his lips, a shrug of his shoulders and a roll of his urchin eyes, than

most of us can express with all the resources of the dictionary. But I cannot pretend that off stage his pantomime is always effective.

For instance, there was that time when, in order to permit the Marxes to cancel a performance in Battle Creek, it was necessary for one of them to be taken seriously and convincingly ill. Mrs. Marx assigned this thankless rôle to Harpo. She instructed him to be seized with an attack of appendicitis, and a physician was summoned to issue a certificate.

NO ONE could have given a better performance. The moist brow, the dreadful pallor, the agonized writhings, the hollow groans—all were superb. There was only one flaw. No one had told him on which side his appendix was located, and he guessed wrong.

Then there was the night when a group of us were dining under the June stars at Fiesole. A bird was singing in an olive tree and I yearned to know if it was a nightingale. None of us knew enough Italian to ask the waiter, so Harpo undertook to make the inquiry in pantomime. The waiter was puzzled at first, and then a light dawned. "Yes, indeed," he said in perfect English, "every half-hour from the square in the center of the town."

But at that I recall a day when Harpo's gift for peculiar facial expression was not without its utility. It is among his less winning tricks to twist his features into a mask suggesting a Neanderthal idiot with a knack for mayhem. Strangers abruptly confronted with it are credibly reported to be heard for weeks thereafter screaming in their sleep. Now there are ten of us who own an island in a Vermont lake, and one of our chief occupations in August is repelling landing parties. Local Romeos and Juliets come for amorous dalliance in our bosky dells, and family groups debark for light refreshment. Vainly does our shore line bristle with "No Trespassing" signs. No one respects our riparian rights.

One day a rowboat drew up and tethered at a tree conspicuously adorned with one of Neysa McMein's hand-painted "Private Property" signs. It was a party of three men and three women, planning to spread a basket-lunch on our carpet of pine needles. They were singing snatches of song as they unloaded their groceries when the bushes parted and a strange apparition strolled upon the scene. The general effect was that of a Jewish Mowgli gone suddenly homicidal. His face was nicely calculated to freeze the blood. In his right hand an ax swung suggestively. He was stark-naked.

Our unbidden guests stood not on the order of their going. There was none of this old-fashioned nonsense about women and lunch-baskets first. All six waded out with the boat and climbed in as best they might. For hours thereafter, the lake was strewn with paper cups and deviled eggs, while stuffed olives tossed in wavelets on the shore.

Yet they might have stayed in safety, for in all my wanderings around the world, I have met no one with a more hospitable heart, or a more gracious spirit. After all, this bit of clowning did no harm unless some of the picnickers got pneumonia, and unless you count the unquenchable rumor still circulating in Vermont that our innocent island is a nudist colony.

Christmas, 1933

(Continued from page 17)

better world, how sure we were that out of the appalling travail endless blessing would be born for all mankind.

Now, of course, we are living in a disillusioned generation. Of course, the world seems at times like a huge whispering gallery filled with the echoes of many souls, saying that life has let them down.

Nevertheless, some of us refuse to surrender. To us great faiths have not become mere fantasies, great hopes castles in Spain, great social ideals mirages without substance. Our Christmas Day will know no cynicism. Our angels will still be singing over Bethlehem.

This does not mean that the Master brought the world a soft and easy gospel. He certainly did not. The Christmas story itself includes the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, and from that cruel beginning to tragic Calvary, only six miles away in space and thirty years away in time, Jesus saw plenty of this world's sin and suffering. If he met a disillusioned time with a message that brought faith out of fear and courage out of cowardice, it was not because he was a sentimentalist.

For one thing, he believed that the universe is morally law-abiding, and when he saw disastrous circumstances following outrageous personal and social conduct he did not fall into cynicism. He thought that in a morally governed world such law-abiding consequences were to be expected.

Many today, seeing widespread disaster, collapse emotionally and cry that the world is crazy. Our ideals have failed us, they say; our great faiths and hopes have turned out fantasies which lure us to sacrifice and then let us down; this is a crazy world!

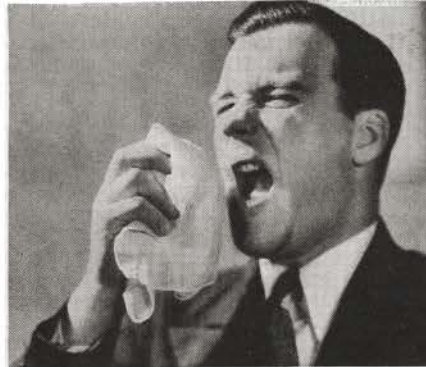
The fact, however, that desperate trouble befalls multitudes does not by itself indicate that the world is crazy. What if a man could break all the laws of health and still be healthy—would not that indicate a crazy world? But our western civilization has broken all the laws of social health, and the fact that, in consequence, we suffer calamity indicates, not so much an insane world, as a world whose foundations are laid in law, so that whatsoever a civilization soweth it also reaps.

Deeper yet, Jesus would regard much of our current gloom as emotional self-indulgence not intellectually justified. Disillusioned people commonly regard themselves as hard-headed realists who, at last, are facing facts. As a matter of history, however, clear-sighted idealists have uniformly been nearer right than cynics have ever been.

Repeatedly chaotic times have come when baffled minds have given up hope. So the French Revolution made a fair beginning, promising liberty, equality, fraternity, and then came to a dismal end with tumbrels rumbling through the city's streets, and falling guillotines—after which, to the horror of the liberals, came Napoleon's tyranny. Many were disillusioned then. Wordsworth, for example, was plunged into dismay. But mankind, after all, did turn the corner of a street in the French Revolution.

By and large, that is a true picture of typical historic facts. The idealists who have believed in such causes as religious liberty, public education, freedom of scientific research, and have kept on believing in them, even when their generation seemed to let them down, have been

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nearer right than the cynics have ever been.

Deeper yet, Jesus would no more be disillusioned now than he was in his own difficult and baffling time, because he would interpret, now as then, a troubled era as a call for help. A day like this says two things to a man: first, this is a disappointing age; and second, I tremendously need *you*.

The most stimulating motive that can play on human life is to be needed. To be called for, to feel the stimulus of being banked on, is a sure antidote for cynicism. We never yet saw anybody rising up to answer a call for help over whom disillusionment had power. The pity is that this sense of being individually needed, which was so real in war, grows dim in peace. An article in the Atlantic Monthly in 1917, when we were entering the war, said this:

The greatness of a whole nation is so inextricably bound up with its individuals that I beg again each one of you now to say to himself or herself, "This means *me*. It means me and *my* life, *my* best self, *my* highest ideals, if the magnificent opportunities of the times are to be realized."

How we did rise in answer to such calls in war time! Now, however, multitudes are listening to another kind of voice out of this chaotic crisis, so that they walk about collapsed in spirit and dismayed in mind. And if some of us find this generation not so much disheartening as challenging and stimulating, it is because we still hear that call for help which makes a man's soul say to itself, This means *me*. It means me and *my* life.

To be sure, the individual often seems helpless. That, however, is no answer to our proposition. Whittier, we are told, was much impressed by a fact, narrated by his father, that when an Indian tribe went on a drunken debauch, invariably one Indian was selected to stay sober. Even one Indian can do *that*.

So when the crowd goes mad and crashes through the moral standards on which decent society depends, this Indian proposes to stay sober. When, in panic, men cry, "Democracy is dead and the liberties our fathers fought for must be surrendered to Fascism!" this Indian proposes to stay sober. When fear grows contagious and men say, "We cannot build a decent economic life," or hysteria sweeps the nation and the mob cries for war, this Indian is going to stay sober. Even one Indian can do that, and, as we know, instead of one, there are multitudes of us who could do that with saving effect.

Much of our disillusionment springs from self-pity; we feel so sorry for ourselves that we do not hear the call for help. Life is not fair to me, we say; life is not just to the individual. To which the answer is, Of course life is not just to the individual. Since when has any man of insight thought it was or expected it to be? Was life fair to Jesus? Was the Cross just? The scales of God come level in the end, but seldom within an individual's lifetime.

Not since the day Christ was crucified has Christianity been able to teach that life is just to the individual. Christian faith, however, has done something else. A friend of mine was stricken with infantile paralysis in youth—terribly. Someone, sympathizing, said to her, "Affliction does so color the life!" "Yes," she said quietly, "and I propose to choose the color." There was a strong soul rising above self-pity and disillusionment.

This generation does need *you*. This troubled time is not the end of mankind's road. Humanity has greater days ahead of it than the wildest idealist can possibly conceive. We have now in our possession powers which would enable us to reduce the whole business of supplying mankind's material needs to a few hours' work per man per day. It is crazy to suppose that because we are muffing the ball now we never shall find the way to handle it.

Only, the disillusioned will not find the way! No, not this nor any way to anything! The disillusioned are civilization's total loss. They have pitied themselves so much they have not heard the call for help.

DEEPER YET, Jesus would reprove our disillusioned hours because we do not see that a man, professing to believe in a social cause, must give it a long-term faith. We cannot expect to get great business carried through on a short haul. If we do, we are living under an illusion and had better be disillusioned.

The cynics, who sit in the seat of the scornful and poison the air with their depreciations of human life, are not the realists they think they are. Half the time they are men who flared up like tinder with fine enthusiasm about a worth-while cause. They said to themselves, "We will blow upon our hands and get this done tomorrow"; and then, discovering to their dismay that it was not done tomorrow or the next tomorrow or the next, they clothed themselves in solemn gloom, saying, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Jesus knew the kind. "Immediately," he said, "it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away." Such persons are capable of a short-term, but not a long-term faith.

To be sure, one sympathizes with them. It is not easy to say about a social cause that it may take a thousand years to bring it to its goal but that, for all that, we will live for it now and, if need be, die for it. That is a great deal to ask of human nature. What men said about God in Isaiah's time they are saying yet: "Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it."

So, when we make a swift stroke to get a good thing done—a prohibitory law to stop drink, an Economic Conference to stabilize currency, a Disarmament Conference to reduce the engines of mutual destruction, an ecclesiastical council to unify the church—and little or nothing comes of it, we are easily disillusioned. What is the use? we say.

Jesus was of another sort. He had causes concerning which he nailed the flag to the mast and refused to agree that a lost battle meant a lost war. We had better do the same. Prohibition may fail, but in the end we can get a sober nation. The agencies of peace may disappoint us now, but war can be made as obsolete as medieval torture chambers. Our economic life may be in chaos but, pushed by desperate circumstance and pulled by the most amazing economic possibilities any era ever had, we can, in the end, achieve a humane society. Men may say that the church in wide areas is a cause of lamentation and alarm and that Christianity is dying, but *I am confident man will never live without it*.

In these things I believe with a long-term faith. If you say that I shall die before they are achieved, I say: "Then let my children take up the torch, and after them let their children and their children's children join the apostolic

succession of those faithful souls whom this world cannot tame. It takes a long-term faith to do great business or lift a man's soul from disillusionment."

Last of all, Jesus surely would remind us that his basic principles of ethics, far from being discredited, are being confirmed. For example, unselfish care for the lowliest and the least, which was Jesus' specialty and which has always seemed to cynics incredibly ideal, is obviously a basic law of life now, *without observing which no civilization can be secure*. In the long run, we never can keep for ourselves anything for which we care most unless we share it with the whole body of the people.

We want health for ourselves and our families. Then we must share it. Epidemics know no boundary lines, and scarlet fever is no respecter of social classes. There is no assurance of health for anybody save as assurance of health is shared with everybody. That principle everywhere applies and ever more clearly as our modern society evolves.

Once I could have had a well in my back yard and had clean water for myself alone, but now my well is the city waterworks, and if anyone is to have good water everyone must have it. Once I could have kept my money for myself in an old stocking. Now my old stocking is a bank, and if anyone is to have safe banking everyone must have it. Once I could have clad myself in armor, which common folk could not afford, and as a well-accoutered knight could have defended myself, but now the individual's defense must be an adequate police force, and if anyone is to have it everyone must share it. For this is a law of life: *We never can possess unless we share*.

The present economic crisis has put that in raised letters for all the world to see. Behind the natural divergencies of opinion as to the cause and cure of our catastrophe, there seems to be among all competent schools of thought a clear agreement at one point: we thought that we could make more money for ourselves by producing more goods to sell; and so, with the increased efficiency of the new machinery, we went on building more factories to sell more goods to make more money for ourselves, and all the time we kept forgetting that if we were going to make more money for ourselves by selling more and more goods, the whole body of the population must be more and more able to buy them. So, forgetting *that* in our thirst for private profit, *we practiced mass production without providing mass consumption*.

IN CONSEQUENCE, in a boom year like 1927, when we were producing more and more goods to sell, there were about twelve million of our population living at the level of bare subsistence, and twenty million living at the minimum level of health and efficiency. So, at last, because we tried to keep prosperity *without sharing it*, we lost it.

Jesus was everlastingly right about unselfish service to the lowliest and the least. As Lord Asquith put it, "The test of every civilization is the point below which the weakest and most unfortunate are allowed to fall."

These are sobering times but I, for one, am not disillusioned; certainly not about the teachings of Jesus. The Christian interpretation of life at its best, far from being fantastic and illusory, is a terrific fact, against which the mad unreason and selfish greed of the world having now run headlong, we are shaken and undone.

A Rich Woman

(Continued from page 41)

may I have another check tomorrow morning?"

She had her check and also a breakfast of waffles and honey before she went back to Bleeker Street. She ate her breakfast in bed, of course, and old Mirabel, drinking coffee with her, was aware that if Damaris hadn't been so infallible she would have been delightful. She had russet hair in a deep-waved mop, and wore at the moment russet-hued satin pajamas bought in the days of her father's affluence. She had on the ring old Mirabel had given her.

"I suppose I ought to give it back," she said doubtfully, "but it's so gorgeous . . ."

Old Mirabel smiled at her. There were, after all, certain humorous aspects of Damaris' acceptance of the depression. But the depression itself was not amusing. As the days went on, old Mirabel learned the tragedy of it all. She gave with her right hand and gave with her left. Her mail came, and she hated to open the letters which made pitiful appeals for assistance. "Help me or I lose my home!" . . . "Help me or I lose my hold on all that I believe to be right and good!" . . . "Help me, or I die!"

Old Mirabel wrote checks and checks and checks. At last even her secretary protested. "Dear lady, if you keep on doing so much for others, they won't do it for themselves."

"But what can they do for themselves in times like these? It's driving me mad. They are on my mind when I go to bed and when I wake in the morning. When my breakfast is served, I can hardly eat it, for thinking of those who are without food. And when I see all my fat maids and my fat butler, and think how fat I am myself—"

The secretary was practical. "How would it help if you were thin? You've got to get things straight. Why don't you decide what you want to give away and get someone to plan it for you?"

There wasn't, old Mirabel said, anyone who could do it. Damaris, of course, might.

"Oh, Damaris!" the secretary flamed. "What does she know of poverty? I was one of ten children, and my father drank. You can't tell me anything—but my mother never asked for a penny. We got along somehow, and I think we were happy."

The secretary was as young as Damaris; her hair was black and she had clear gray eyes. She said to old Mirabel, "You're the kindest person I've ever known except my mother. She's a saint now in heaven. They say I have hair like hers, and eyes. But I pray God I may have something of her sweetness of soul."

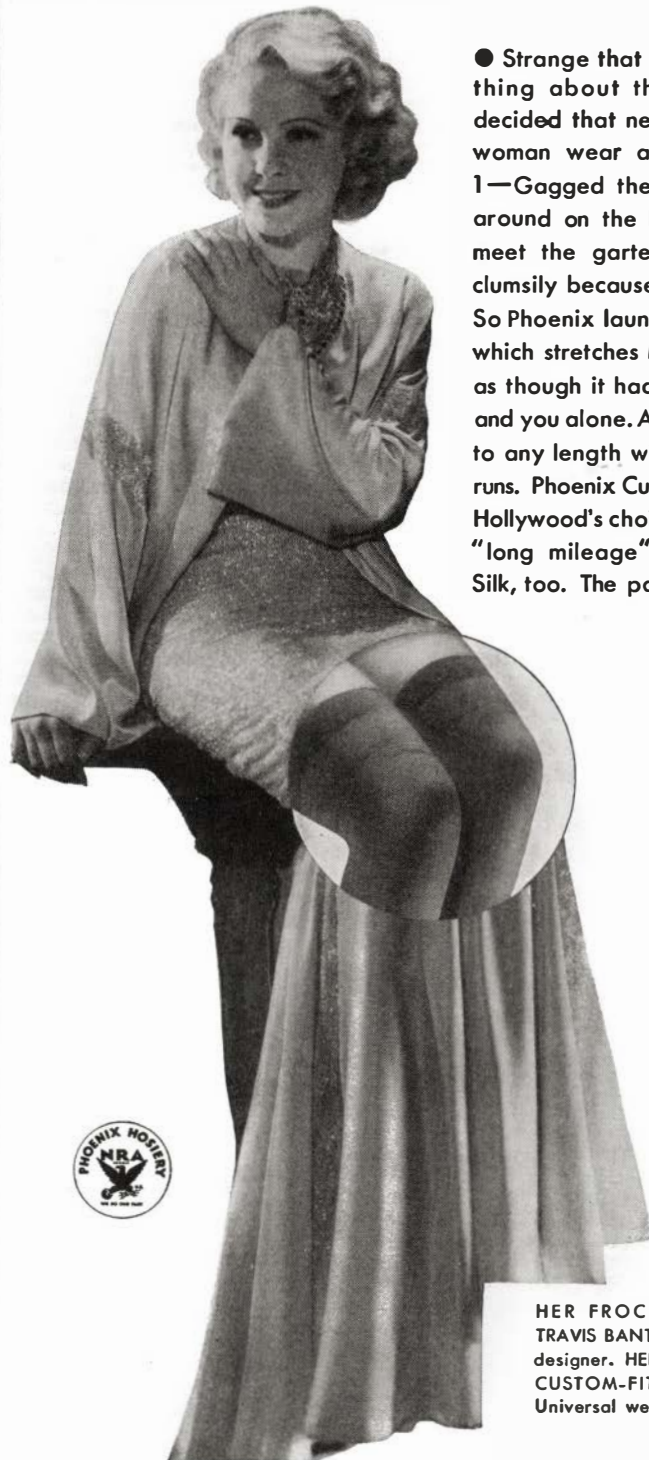
Christmas came, and old Mirabel was busy. She and her maids packed baskets and baskets of food, and boxes and boxes of warm clothing.

Damaris, coming in and seeing the baskets tied up with green and red, protested. "Your generation is impractical, Aunt Bella. You ought to use your influence and money to get laws passed to help the people, instead of bothering with all these baskets."

"There are more laws than baskets," old Mirabel told her, "and I'd rather be impractical with a Christmas basket than practical with a politician."

So Christmas passed and the New Year came. It was very cold and the world was very unhappy. Old Mirabel's heart was always aching. It ached so that it got to be a physical matter. She

Ended!—hosiery troubles common to 9 out of 10 women



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HER FROCK—a custom model by TRAVIS BANTON, Hollywood's famous designer. HER HOSE—PHOENIX with CUSTOM-FIT TOP. JUNE CLYDE of Universal wears this costume (Above).

PHOENIX HOSIERY

with **CUSTOM-FIT TOP**

lost her appetite. Her maids were anxious about her, and the portly butler.

Even Damaris was worried. "If you'd be more scientific and less sentimental, you wouldn't act like this. Why don't you come down with me to Bleecker Street and talk with the strikers?"

"If I should come down with you to Bleecker Street," old Mirabel told her, "I'd die."

The secretary was more understanding. "I know what's the matter," she said. "You've got my mother's kindness, but not her strength of spirit. She had to fight like a cat to defend her kittens. You can't get flabby with ten babies to feed."

Old Mirabel wasn't listening. A bell had rung downstairs. "Is that my mail?"

"Yes."

"Bring it."

She read it and lay back on her pillows, and neither moved nor spoke, and in a little while the secretary called the doctor.

The doctor came and looked at old Mirabel. "What's this all about?" he asked. "You were never like this."

"The world was never like this," said old Mirabel. She shut her eyes wearily.

The doctor wrote a prescription and handed it to the secretary. "She seems to have something on her mind."

"She has the whole world on her mind," said the secretary, "and her disease isn't on your list."

The secretary was very young and very pretty, and her prettiness and youth were a challenge to the doctor. "If you're as wise as that, you might give a name to your new disease."

"It's a long name," said the wise young secretary, "but a good one. She has sympathy-itis. She's sorry for everybody except herself." The doctor laughed, but the secretary didn't. "You may laugh if you like," she said, "but I'll bet you can't cure it."

The doctor came every day after that, and always he found old Mirabel in bed. She would rouse herself in the mornings to read her mail and sign checks, then she would shut her eyes and call it a day.

Her relatives also came. They were all fond of Aunt Mirabel, but they couldn't understand what was the matter with her. "Anyone as fortunate as you," her cousin Muriel told her, "should feel full of the joy of living."

SHE SPOKE as if the joy of living was like wine to drink. But old Mirabel knew that to drink well, one must drink with others. And all about her were empty glasses.

Cousin Muriel said a lot of things to old Mirabel. She was, indeed, quite carping. Old Mirabel had been for some time aware of this attitude on the part of those who had accepted her bounty. They seemed always trying to prove that the acceptance of her money put them under no obligation. Old Mirabel didn't want it proved. She gave without thought of herself, and without expectation of gratitude on the part of others.

Muriel persisted, "If I were you, I'd go to Florida, and stop playing angel in the house for the rest of us. You spoil Damaris, letting her come here for weekends and all that, and giving her money."

"Well, she works so hard."

"She doesn't know what work means," blazed cousin Muriel. "Wait till she has to wash her dishes!"

She stopped suddenly and shut her lips tight. Cousin Muriel was too proud to tell of the things that had happened to her. She rose and looked down at old Mirabel lying in her bed. Old Mirabel wore a bedjacket of pink crêpe with frills

of yellow lace. Her silver hair was gathered into a topknot of curls.

"You've kept your looks," Muriel said with bitterness, "but why shouldn't you, with all your money?"

She went away, and old Mirabel lay thinking about money and what it had to do with looks. There were, to be sure, cold creams and tonics and facials. But old Mirabel had a feeling that if she hadn't a penny, she would still have a complexion and a wave in her hair.

If she hadn't a penny!

The sound of the words rang out suddenly as if they had been spoken. If she hadn't a penny, what would happen? No one would be wanting things of her; no letters would come to her in the mail.

She fell asleep thinking, and waked to find her secretary beside the bed. The secretary's name was Kate. She had letters and some checks to be signed, and the afternoon had waned. In a half-hour old Mirabel's dinner would be brought up, and the secretary would be free. She wasn't tired. But she was glad when the day was over, for it was after her working day that her real life began.

She said to old Mirabel, "You're looking better."

Old Mirabel said, "I am. Muriel wants me to go away, and I've been thinking about it."

"The change might do you good."

"I need a change," said old Mirabel, "but not Florida or California or the south of France." She signed her checks and shut her eyes. "Ask Rufus Prout to come in the morning. I want to see him."

She was not sure why she wanted to see Rufus, but she knew something was going to happen. She knew, indeed, that it must happen, for six months had passed since she had taken to her bed, and the fall days were now upon her.

It was not until everybody in the house was asleep that her mind was made up. It was a clear, cool night, and her window looked out on a vista of tall black trees against a silver sky. Through that window all the world seemed at peace, yet she knew it was not at peace!

And now the words that had been forming in her mind began to link themselves together. She saw them as if they were written against that silver sky: "*Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.*"

Old Mirabel knew the very chapter and verse where you found that in the Bible. She had read it a lot of times. And it had always seemed to her dreadful that so much had been required of the Rich Young Man. It had seemed, somehow, unfair that in order to gain the treasures of heaven he must relinquish the treasures of earth.

But now it didn't seem dreadful. It seemed indeed splendid. For what, after all, mattered the treasures of heaven, if one could get rid of the treasures of earth and the worries that came with them?

Then suddenly there swept into her mind the memory of the happiest man she had ever known. Down through the long aisles of the night, at the very end where the moon dropped, she seemed to see a small old-fashioned farmhouse and herself a child sitting before the fire, with an old man beside her. He was peeling an apple, and he cut it in quarters and impaled a quarter on the point of the knife and held it out to her.

He was her grandfather, and he had lived in the house all by himself. He had had rich sons and daughters, but he had lived there alone, welcoming them when they would come. And the child Mirabel had loved nothing better than to be with him, though he never bought her toys or gave her money.

The things he gave her were better than money. He made a little set of furniture out of wood, which he carved with his knife. He shelled nuts for her, and popped corn. He had a pink and white complexion and silver hair. Old Mirabel looked like him.

Old Mirabel owned the house he had lived in. It had come to her by inheritance, and some years ago she had let a maid of hers, Mary, have it when she married, without rent for as long as she wished. Mary was now as old as her mistress. Her husband, too, was dead, but she still lived on in the little house, a serene old soul in her sixties.

OLD MIRABEL lay thinking about her grandfather's house. And when she slept she dreamed of it, and in the morning when the lawyer came, she said: "You've brought my will with you?"

"Yes."

"I wish you'd read it aloud."

The lawyer read with patience. It was a good will. Old Mirabel had remembered her family, her friends, her church and her charities. And when Rufus Prout finished reading, she said surprisingly, "I want all the terms of my will carried out while I am living."

He stared at her in consternation. "But my dear lady, you can't mean it! You wouldn't have anything left for yourself."

"I don't want anything," old Mirabel said, "except my grandfather's house and enough to keep me. I'm going there to live with my old maid, Mary. If I give my money away, I won't have anything to worry me." And she smiled as if that settled it.

In spite of himself Rufus smiled back. But he tried to dissuade her. "A thing like that isn't done."

"It is done," said old Mirabel, "if I do it."

A little later, Rufus talked it over with Kate, the secretary. "Of course she's mad. No sane woman would do a thing like that."

"All saints," said Kate, "have been more or less mad. You ask the psychiatrists."

Rufus considered that. "Perhaps you're right," he said, "and I don't mind telling you this—that she has left something to you and something to me. She's making herself poorer than either of us."

"She will never be poor," said Kate. "She has something better than money."

Old Mirabel decided that no one was to be told until she had gone away. "If I died," she said, "my will would be read after everything was over. When my plans are made, I'll give a dinner. I shall be saying good-by to them all, but they won't know it."

In the weeks that followed, old Mirabel's family and friends saw in her great improvement. She no longer lay in bed. She went from one room to another. She seemed very busy doing a lot of things that had no meaning.

The rosy maids talked about it. "It's as if she was going away," they told one another, and the portly butler said, "If she was going away, she'd have had me get her tickets. You women don't think about anything but making monstrosities."

But the buxom housekeeper was sure there was a mystery. She had found old Mirabel sobbing over a pair of Dresden candlesticks. She could not know that old Mirabel was trying to decide whether she should take the candlesticks with her to her grandfather's house. They had been given her by her husband on the night of their bridal,

and he had looked over her head into the mirror, with the light of the candles shining on the glass. Old Mirabel's curls then had been a ruddy gold and had framed her blushing countenance.

It was hard to leave many things, but she took the candlesticks with her. She would set them, she decided, on the nice old maple dresser, and would see her husband's face as she had always seen it—young, and ardent, and eager!

At last the time had come for old Mirabel to give her dinner. She invited all the family, and everybody accepted but Damaris. "It's silly for you to spend so much money when everybody is starving."

Old Mirabel had almost forgotten about the starving people. "You don't think I'm getting hard-hearted, do you?" she asked Kate anxiously.

"I think," Kate said, "that if all hearts were as soft as yours, the world would be a feather bed."

It was at this time that old Mirabel spoke to her young secretary of what she had left her. "I hate to feel that I'm robbing you of a job, so there will be enough to keep you from privation. And some day I want you to come to see me. I'm not telling many people where I shall be, for I am not sure many of them will care to come. But somehow I feel that you will care."

"I shall care so much," said Kate, the secretary, "that not only shall I come, but I shall bring my children. Now that you are not needing me, I am going to be married. I am going to marry Jimmy Murphy. He hasn't a cent, but he has a job, and he loves me. And if you give me any money, we'll not touch it till we are old and haven't anything ahead of us. Jimmy's the salt of the earth, and if God should give me ten children as He gave my mother, I'd want every one of them to be like Jimmy."

She wept for happiness and could not go on. And old Mirabel said: "If I had a daughter, I should want one like you."

That same night Damaris came in to say she had changed her mind. "I'm coming to your dinner. I need something to increase my morale. If I had the money, I'd go to Russia."

Old Mirabel said, "Perhaps the way will open."

And Damaris said, with some impatience, "We have to open ways for ourselves. That's the difference, Aunt Bella, between your generation and ours. We do things—you dream them."

Old Mirabel smiled. "Darling child," she said, "it's wonderful to have your dreams come true."

Damaris looked at her. There was something about Aunt Bella these days—something she could not define. But it was—different. Damaris did not feel so infallible as formerly. She had quite unexpectedly fallen in love, and she didn't know what to do about it. The man was poor, and she was afraid of poverty. She had never been afraid of anything before, and it robbed her of her cocksureness. She found herself wanting suddenly to curl up in Aunt Bella's arms and cry on her shoulder, and most surprisingly, she did it.

"Darling heart, what's the matter?" old Mirabel asked.

"Oh, the sweatshop girls aren't enough."

"Enough for what?"

"To make a woman happy."

She told old Mirabel all about it. "If I were sure I dared share his poverty," "You've got to be sure," said old Mirabel, "or you'll hate yourself." She hoped Damaris would make her decision before the dinner party. After that, with money in her hands, she might not be able to



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prove to herself or to her lover the high quality of her passion.

The dinner party was set for Thanksgiving night. All the maids were busy, and the butler and the buxom housekeeper, but old Mirabel had come to the end of her efforts. A little trunk had been packed, and a bag or two.

When the time came, old Mirabel put on a sheer black velvet that showed her milk-white neck and arms, and wound a string of pearls about her neck. The pearls would go to Muriel, and there was an emerald ring for Damaris, and a lot of things for the others.

For the first time the Dresden candlesticks were not there as she looked in the mirror, for they were packed in the trunk which was already on its way to the little house which was to be old Mirabel's home till her life ended.

IT WAS really a wonderful dinner—with three men helping the portly butler, and all the maids in their best caps and aprons, and old Mirabel, as lovely as beautiful age can be, at the head of her table. It was said afterwards that her beauty was almost as dazzling as in the days when she had sat there a bride. Toasts were drunk to her health: "May you live long and prosper."

Rufus Prout drank with the others. He felt as if he were playing a part in some fantastic drama. Old Mirabel had indeed been nothing if not dramatic. Towards the end of the dinner, her secretary came in and whispered.

Old Mirabel rose. "You won't mind if I leave you for a moment?"

She stood in the doorway smiling at them, waved her hand, and was gone!

It was Damaris who discovered she was nowhere in the house. Damaris was bursting with the news of her engagement. She had decided to marry the man she loved in spite of poverty, in spite of everything. And she wanted to tell Aunt Bella—Aunt Bella who had a heart and who understood.

"Aunt Bella—Aunt Bella!" She went through all the rooms calling. But at last she came back to the dining room and said, "I can't find her."

It was then, as they started from their chairs in consternation, that Rufus Prout rose and spoke. "She wished me to tell you the reason of her going. She left with me something to read while you were all assembled. I think you will be glad to listen."

And it was while Rufus Prout was reading the will that old Mirabel, with Kate, her secretary, was speeding far out and beyond the city. They stopped at a wayside inn for the night, and it was towards sunset of the next day that they arrived at the house where old Mirabel's grandfather had spent his days.

Mary, the maid, opened the door and let them in. A fire was on the hearth and a fat cat purred in front of it. Old Mary was rosy and fat. Except for certain elegancies the little house was not so different in its air of comfort and content from the big one which had been left behind.

Kate said, "What a darling place!"

And old Mirabel said, "When I get my candlesticks on my dresser, I shall feel quite at home."

The next morning she drank her tea in front of the fire, while old Mary made golden squares of toast for her above the glowing coals. It was snowing outside and the flakes fell softly. On the hearth the fat yellow cat slept peacefully. The world seemed filled with lovely silence. No one came or went.

And there was no morning mail!

Old Mirabel said, "It's wonderful to get away from everything."

Old Mary went on buttering toast. "You can't get away from life," she remarked austerely.

As if to confirm her words, there was wafted to them on the wings of the wind the faintest breath of sound.

"Listen," said old Mirabel; "listen."

She rose and went to the window. A lean gray cat stood like a ghost on the steps. The snow was falling on her, and one paw was lifted. Her eyes were haunted with hunger. The cold blast blew the fur along her back.

"Oh, poor thing!" cried old Mirabel.

As she moved towards the door to open it, old Mary said, "If you let her in, you'll let in trouble."

Yet when the cat entered, tip-tipping on her toes, it was old Mary who poured milk from the jug.

The yellow cat by the fire opened his eyes and shut them again. He was filled and fed, and willing to share his good fortune with the wayfarer. She drank the milk rapidly, her tongue lip-lapping it over the edge. Then for a moment she sat at ease, making a poor effect of smoothing her rough fur with her tongue, but was up again shortly and at the door, and when they let her out, she was off in leaps and bounds above the mounting drifts.

And when she had gone, old Mirabel said, "A little milk is nothing."

And old Mary said, "It's a lot to a hungry cat."

At noon the old ladies ate again. And it was while they were eating that once more the cat mewed at the door, and old Mirabel, looking out, saw on the steps behind her three kittens, with their tails sticking above the snow like tiny signals of distress.

And when old Mirabel let them in, old Mary said, "I told you you were letting in trouble."

But even she had to admit that it warmed the heart to see the lean, long cat in the coziness of a blanket-lined basket, with her kittens about her.

So the days went on, and the lean cat waxed plump, and old Mirabel and old Mary were aware that Christmas was on the way.

They knew it not only by the calendar, but by the wagons going by with Christmas greens, and by the turkeys hanging by their necks at the butchers', and by the toys burgeoning in all the windows of the shops in the little village where they went for their supplies. But the two old women made little preparation, for they had nothing to give, and as old Mirabel said, "Last year it was dreadful, with all the running about and buying, and no one wanting what I bought for them."

She said it bravely, but in the back of her mind was a thought of her big house, and her rosy maids and her portly butler and her buxom housekeeper, and of Damaris of the russet hair, and of Kate, her secretary, and of all the family coming in for Christmas dinner, and for a moment homesickness assailed her, but only for a moment. And she said to old Mary, "We'll go to church on Christmas morning, and have a nice chicken for our dinner."

But as it happened they didn't go to church, nor did they have a chicken, for a few days before Christmas old Mirabel, walking forth at dusk with old Mary, found herself on the edge of a settlement of ten small houses. The snow had wrapped the houses in winding sheets, and no smoke came from the chimneys. The little settlement was, indeed, so dead and deserted that one might have believed the houses empty,

except that now and then a door opened and men and women came forth on dreary errands.

"The men are out of work," old Mary explained, "and they and their families are starving."

They walked on in silence for a moment. Then old Mirabel said, "We could do without a chicken."

"What's one chicken among so many?"

And old Mirabel said, "There were five loaves and two fishes."

Old Mary felt that the day of miracles was past, but she did her best to follow her mistress in her flights of faith, so they stopped at the butcher's and bought meat for soup, and in the morning old Mirabel stirred the soup and added this and that—potatoes and carrots and rice and onions—so that they had a great pot of it, and old Mary kneaded the dough for crusty bread, for there was flour enough and to spare.

And old Mirabel, cutting up a turnip, said, "If I hadn't given away all I had I might have helped them."

And old Mary said, "If you had all the money you have given away, there would still be people to help. The poor share as we are sharing, and warm their hearts at each other's fires."

And the next day when they went forth to feed the people, old Mirabel found that old Mary was right. All through the years she had written checks for church and charity, but never before had she shared her own short rations, and the thought gave her courage.

The butcher had lent his boy and his cart to help with the baskets and buckets, and when everybody had been served and satisfied, the men of the settlement gathered about old Mirabel and told her why they were without work or wages.

Their employer was an old man and they hated him. "He could have kept the shop open all winter," said a man with a dark and brooding face, "and saved us, but he wouldn't. And now we are desperate, and some day we shall hate him so much that we shall find a way to hurt him."

And as he spoke it seemed to old Mirabel that the faces of all the men were dark, and that the women were afraid. And she said, "Let me speak to him. Surely if he knows the truth—!"

And they told her, "He knows the truth already."

BUT OLD Mirabel couldn't believe it. She was sure that no heart could be hard enough to make people suffer. But when she reached home and stood at the window, and saw a man striding by, with a boy following with a basket, and old Mary said, "That's the master of the workmen," she began to tremble, for the old man had a fierce face and a hawk's nose and an eagle's eye, and his hair which had been red was now frosted. And there was a bleak look about him as if the frost had penetrated and had left him cold. And when he was lost to sight in the gathering darkness, old Mirabel wondered if she would ever dare challenge that wild old man.

Yet when the morning came, she felt, unexpectedly, a sense of adventure, as a knight might who goes forth to battle. She felt, indeed, that fighting blood was in her veins and that nothing was left in her of the woman who had taken to her bed because of the world's depression.

And so at last she came to the old man's house, which was as huge and hard as a granite boulder, and the man who opened the door had a stony stare, and when at last she was shown into the presence of the master of the house, he

roared at her like a lion, "To what do I owe this pleasure?"

He did not ask her to sit down, for she wore a plain black coat and a little black hat, and until she spoke he had judged her to be one of the women from the village, but when he heard her charming voice, he hurriedly drew out a chair, and as she thanked him her cheeks were pink and her eyes were bright, and her heart was in a flutter.

She managed, however, to speak with calmness. "I've come to ask you to give your men work for the winter."

"I allow no interference with my affairs."

"But I've been to their houses, and they are starving."

"My good woman, you are wasting your time."

"But with Christmas coming!"

"All days are alike to me. I make no difference. And now, may I remind you that it is time for my luncheon?"

Old Mirabel couldn't believe her ears. He was sending her away as if she were a beggar. And suddenly her courage left her and she began to cry, and as she took out her little handkerchief to wipe away her tears the old gentleman saw that the handkerchief was sheer and fine, and there was wafted towards him the faint scent of lilac.

And old Mirabel raised her wet eyes to his and asked, "Is it nothing to you that you are hated?"

"Who hates me? My men? And why not? Why should I think of them or of their happiness? Am I kinder than God, who took from me all that life meant or will ever mean? If I am unjust, is not He unjust who has made me suffer?"

He was not roaring now. His voice was broken and harsh, and old Mirabel faltered, "I—I didn't know."

Again the tears fell, and presently she was gone, leaving behind her that faint fragrance of lilacs. And the old man went in to dinner, but he could not eat.

All he could think of was old Mirabel's tears. It had been a long time since he had seen a woman cry. He pushed his plate from him, and roamed restlessly through the rooms. They were big rooms, and long ago at this season had been lighted until they swam in a golden haze, and at his side had moved a slight and lovely figure, and there had been a big tree which touched the ceiling, and it was bright with candles and a wax angel hung at the top, and in front of the tree, laughing and shouting, were the two small sons who in later years had been lost in the war.

And when the dreadful news had come the old man's wife had wept in his arms. It was in the time of lilacs and their fragrance had filled the garden, and the lilacs were still blooming when they had laid his wife away. The air had been soft and warm, but his heart had seemed frozen, and all these years it had been like ice in his breast.

So restless was he that he went out of doors and walked to the top of the hill that looked down on the workmen's huts. It had stopped snowing, and the moon shone. He could see the little houses in their winding sheets of snow. There were no lights in the windows and no smoke rose from the chimneys. And tomorrow was Christmas. Perhaps behind some of those dark windows little children were looking forth in vain hope that they might see the flying forms of reindeer—or hear an echo of the kind old saint.

And as he thought of those watching children and the tears of old Mirabel, the old man found himself walking suddenly toward the village . . .

The next morning, when he waked, his

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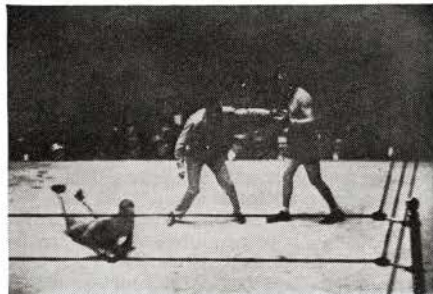
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valet stood beside the bed with a basket in his hand.

"What's that?" the old man asked.

"A woman brought it."

"Open it."

And when the basket was opened, out stepped a kitten with a red bow about its neck, and a card that said, "A Merry Christmas."

And the old man said, "What woman?"

"She lives down the road, sir."

"Put the kitten in the basket and I'll take it back."

"Let me do it, sir."

But the old man ate his breakfast and rushed away through the storm, for it was again snowing, and as he went on his way, he met a peddler floundering along beneath his heavy pack, and the peddler said, "For God's sake, buy something that I may find a warm hearth this Christmas Day and a bite of dinner."

And the old man said: "There are ten warm hearths up there on the hill. And tell them I sent you."

He rushed on again till he came to the cottage, and when old Mary had opened the door, he went in and demanded, "Who sent this darned kitten?"

And old Mirabel answered, "I did." "Why did you send it?"

"Because I knew you were unhappy."

"Did you think to cure unhappiness with a kitten?"

"I had nothing else to give—and it was Christmas."

The old man looked at her. There were no tears this morning, but rather a kind of calm serenity. Her silver hair was gathered high in a knot. Her skin was pink and white, and a knot of holly was pinned against her snowy collar.

And the old man said, "You had much to give last night of courage and of kindness, and you made me ashamed. I have come to tell you that there is a fire in each of those ten houses, and a good dinner, and a tree for the children. And the men go back to work on Monday."

But she couldn't believe it until he showed her, helping her through the snow to the top of the hill, where she looked down on the ten houses and saw smoke coming from the chimneys, and the sounds of horns tooting and of drums beating and of children shouting.

And old Mirabel said, "It is a miracle."

And the old man said, "You are the miracle."

It was at noon that they came back to the cottage, and old Mary had ready a simple dinner. And the old man said: "May I share it?"

And old Mirabel said, "It is loaves and fishes."

The three of them sat down, and One sat with them unawares, so that the simple fare became a sacred feast. And when at last the old man rose and made ready to go, he said, "May I come again, and again, and again?"

And old Mirabel said, "Yes."

And before he went, he wrapped the kitten she had sent in a fold of his scarf, so that it lay warm against his heart, and as he made his way through the falling snow, old Mirabel watched him until he was hidden from her sight.

And old Mary said, "I told you that you couldn't run away from life."

And old Mirabel answered, looking out upon the falling snow, "Why should I run away from—happiness?"

And for a long time the two old women sat by the fire and talked, and at last old Mirabel snuffed her candles and went to bed, and old Mary closed the shutters and covered the fire.

And Christmas Day was over!

Seven Men Came Back (Continued from page 53)

absent, he—Kettle—might produce a skewer.

"No, she did not. Bought it art of a box. That reminds me, Mr. Bastable, of a certain occasion. Jerry was givin' us jip, and one of my officers couldn't find 'is box-respirator, nowhere. Stuck in the mess dugout, 'e was. Yes, and I found 'is box-respirator for 'im, and tied 'is tie for 'im."

There was silence. Bastable, the color of cream cheese, seemed to hesitate, to hang upon the edge of a precipice.

"You have a good memory, Kettle."

"I 'ave that. But I ain't one to rake up a dead rat with friends—unless—"

It was Sherring who led the conversation elsewhere. Loviebond was looking shocked. Pitt was polishing his glasses as though to enjoy some future glance at a particular countenance. Crabtree's head was in air, like a stag with antlers raised. Kettle watched his vis-à-vis like a terrier waiting for its enemy to venture again into a particular back yard.

Bastable did not venture. He listened to what these other men had to say, and when Doctor Pitt told a humorous story, he laughed at it.

If he had been grossly offended by Kettle's primitive candor, he had the offense and was blandly cheerful. He did not belong to a world that gave hard knocks in public. The social struggle was for him an affair of paper, of telegrams and telephone calls, ambuscades planned and carried out in an office. He preferred silk to steel. But if any rough fellow jostled him, he did not forget it. He would not jostle back, but set a cord to catch the other fellow's feet.

Already it was said in the City, "Young Bastable's a nasty man to quarrel with. He waits and gets back at you."

Bastable drank wine with these other men, joined in their toasts. He drank Sherring's health, and Kettle's health. He showed himself facetiously forgiving towards Kettle.

"No more box-respirators, Kettle."

The late mess orderly grinned at him. What was Mr. Bastable's game?

It was not a completely successful evening. A chilly wind blew through its conviviality. Loviebond presided at his end of the table with the air of an anxious chairman on edge lest the meeting

should again get out of hand. He talked shop to Bastable.

Insensibly, a gap that was both physical and emotional separated the City from the soil, medicine and failure. The rift became obvious when the cigars were lighted. Sherring, Pitt, Crabtree, with Kettle as a humorous attachment, gravitated towards the fire. Bastable and Loviebond remained at the other end of the table. They had the private affairs of a company to discuss.

"Scuse me, gentlemen, but can't we send Mr. Steel a telegram?"

"Excellent idea, Kettle."

"Fancy Mr. Steel a farther! Marvelous. 'E was a lad, too, for the girls."

Bastable was crushing out the stump of his cigar. He spoke softly. "What about going to my flat? We shan't be missed. They'll go on talking till midnight about Old This or Old That."

Loviebond looked bothered. "I have to settle the bill."

"My dear chap, I'll leave a couple of fivers downstairs. My text is, Never be held up by trifles."

"Sherring's paying for the drinks."

Bastable said, almost inaudibly, "Or, rather, his wife is. Sleeping partner or dancing partner, doesn't matter much which."

Una met her brother with the pony trap at Midworth station. She had driven in from Darrel's through a tenuous white mist, with the stars very bright overhead. Winter was on the road; this would be her third winter at Darrel's, and she wondered how she could bear it. Rising in the raw darkness and pottering about by candlelight; gray dawns, gray days, mud everywhere, until your mind became muddled. Then, at four o'clock, more darkness, six hours of semi-gloom until you went to bed.

She met her brother cheerfully. "Had a good time, Dave?"

"Oh, yes."

She knew at once that the evening had disappointed him. "Everybody there?"

"No, Steel couldn't turn up. Some domestic business. By the way, old Sherring's married."

She was persuading the pony out of the station yard, and a lamp lighted her face. It was curiously stern and set. She

said, "I had an idea that something of the kind was in the air. I'm glad."

It was a lie, but lone women may have to go through life telling lies, or become that unwanted product of sterility, the subacid, busy, autocratic spinster. Her brother was silent for nearly a minute.

"I'm worried about old Sherring."

"Why?"

"Oh, he seems to be living a rather hole-and-corner life. What do you think he is?"

She said that she had no idea.

"A kind of dancing master. He married a girl who gave dancing lessons. They run a sort of school; go out to night shows—and give exhibitions."

"How perfectly thrilling!"

"Thrilling! A man like Sherring! Why, it's—fantastic."

She wanted to laugh. "Perhaps. You see, Dave, it's such a new and fantastic world. It hasn't your—phlegm."

"Well, I should call it a rotten life. No stability."

Stability! She said no more to him on the subject. She was conscious of the stars and the mazes of the mist. Dancing in London! Mysterious streets, passionate humanity, macabre night shows, music, a poignant, adventurous restlessness! She could have run laughing into such a life—yes, with Sherring.

The pony stumbled, and she gave the reins a tug. "Idiot!"

Sherring walked home under the same stars. Pitt had ordered a taxi and had offered to give Sherring a lift.

"Where do you want to go?"

"Don't bother, old man. It won't take me ten minutes. I like walking."

Was it that he had wanted to be alone, or that he had been shy of confessing to Pitt that he lived in Quorn Street, over a shop? Snobbery? No, his reluctance to show up Quorn Street had reserved to itself other subtleties. He had expected a clash with Bastable, and in the clash he had given the brass of Bastable a happy blow. But it was not he who had silenced Bastable. Kettle had done that.

A seedy failure! That was how men like Bastable and Loviebond would class him. His friends might be more kind. "Poor old Sherring." He had caught Crabtree looking at him as a man may

look at a beloved and stricken dog. Pity? Oh, damn the pity! And yet he had paid for their drinks with Mira's money.

He came to Portman Square, walked round it twice. He was not ripe to return to Quorn Street, and in confronting the significance of Quorn Street, he thought of Charlie Flanders lying in bed creating hats. What was the difference between Sherring and Flanders? Both of them were attachments to a feminine world. They lived upon a woman's show, but he—Sherring—was more to be pitied, in that he had the use of his legs. Poor Charlie could not help himself.

Money? Certainly he and Mira were making the Monmouth Square show profitable. Yes, unexpectedly profitable, and he—like a disinterested ass—had insisted that its banking account should be in Mira's name. It was not even a joint account. He could not touch that money. But did he want to touch it? Was not his wife the dominant partner, and he an ornamental and useful adjunct? The Manetti School! There would be no Manetti School without Mira.

Was their romance over? Had he kissed and possessed, and in and through her surrender reached reality? Moreover, she might surrender to him physically, but in other matters she was showing signs of independence. It was her show.

He went forward towards Quorn Street. He found himself hoping that he would find Mira in bed and asleep. Strange, but tonight he did not want to meet his love face to face. He could not look it in the eyes and laugh. Almost it had become a secret shame to him.

Mephistopheles? What a poor Mephisto was he! Flicking Bastable's pound note to a waiter, and living inside the shoes of a dancing mistress! The spring, Regent's Park, a soft white chin, a poignant mouth. Sex—subtilized? Oh, damn!

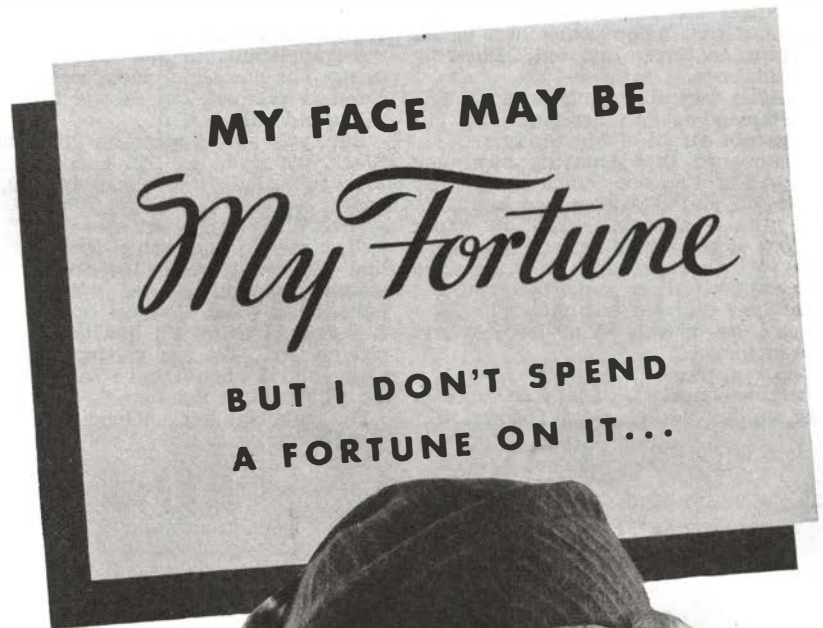
He reached Quorn Street, let himself in, and crept quietly up the stairs. He entered the sitting room, switched on the light and saw the sofa by the window. It was not a very accommodating sofa, but it would serve. He took off his jacket, collar, tie and boots, turned off the light and lay down.

There were some men, the sensualists, to whom a woman in Mira's position was fair game. That she was married might be considered both an added provocation and a safeguard. The Sherrings were performers, hired people. They dressed up and exhibited themselves for cash. Marriage was a mere costume which a woman in Mira's position might be expected to put off with her night-dress, while an accommodating husband accepted an appointment elsewhere.

But Sherring was not an accommodating husband, and most certainly his wife had no leanings towards other forms of professionalism. She might be a little too eager to welcome patronage, and to exert charm in encouraging it. Inevitably, her profession had brought her in contact with the casual, vicarious sensualist. She may have had more experience with the type than Sherring had had. These casual gentlemen, having savored Monmouth Square, and been kept very much at arm's length by a husband who was so obviously the man in possession, had behaved themselves or gone elsewhere.

But Mr. George Stanger was different, a thickset, well-greased man about town. He came to the Manetti School for tango lessons. He was the sort of sleek, supple swashbuckler who contrived to make such a dance sexually insolent.

Sherring had met many men, but never a creature like Stanger. There were elements of decency in most men,



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but Stanger was impertinently indecent.

"Mira, if that fellow comes here again, I'm going to throw him out," Sherring had said, once.

But Mira was all for appeasement. Oh, yes, Stanger was an arrogant ass, but she was not afraid of Mr. Stanger.

It happened that Sherring had gone down to Norbiton one Sunday to see the Steel baby, and returning late to collect Mira from Monmouth Square, he found the door of the studio locked. He heard voices, Mira's voice, and he knew that Mira was both angry and frightened.

"Give me that key—at once!"

"Don't be a fool. You haven't any sense of humor."

"The key, please."

Sherring knocked. His face wore a bleak smile. "Hello! May I come in?"

THERE WAS a moment's silence before he heard Mira at the door. "Jack, this cad has the key."

"Mr. Stanger?"

"Yes; he had the cheek to—"

"Tell him to unlock the door or I'll kick it in."

The key was surrendered. Sherring, standing in the vestibule, saw Mr. Man-About-Town looking both sheepish and defiant.

"Evening, Mr. Sherring. Your wife and I have been having a little joke. She dared me to—"

Mira was pale. "This cad, Jack—"

Sherring took three deliberate steps toward Stanger. He did not utter a word, but his fist whipped out, and Stanger went backwards.

He was up, ugly and full of fight. "If you want a row about your—"

In ten seconds Sherring had him out in the passage. There was a savage scuffle there. Stanger was knocked down. His mouth emitted foul words.

"Why, you bloody fool, your woman—"

Sherring was more than angry. He got Stanger up and held him against the wall. "You swine, be quiet!"

He twisted him to the top of the stairs, gave a push and a kick. Stanger went down that first flight like a man taking a header. He lay there for some seconds, watched by Sherring; then he gathered himself up.

"My hat and coat, please."

Sherring almost laughed. Brazen swine! He went for Stanger's hat and coat and flung them down.

"Get out!"

And Stanger got out, his pallor somewhat bloodied. It was a most unseemly occasion. He took a taxi to his flat, and the Manetti School saw him no more.

Sherring found his wife in tears, tempestuous tears. As Mrs. Sherring and founder of the Manetti School, she had begun to think of herself as a social figure, a woman of affairs whose dignity was to be respected, and Mr. George Stanger had smashed this delicate china. He had treated her like some cheap little wench whose virtuous protests were part of the conventional provocation. Sherring sat on the sofa with his weeping wife on his knees. He did not say, "I told you so," with regard to Stanger.

"You had better let me inspect your men in the future, my dear. It's not always a nice world."

"It isn't as if I hadn't snubbed the beast, Jack. I had just finished with Miss Maitland when he came in and said he wanted us both to dine with him. He stayed on and chatted."

"I don't think he is feeling chatty now, Mira. And luckily he didn't mark me."

She sat up and examined his face. "Oh, my dear, your lip's bleeding."

"Perhaps I bit it! But look here, dear—est, in the future you will hand over all male applicants to me. I'm wise as to men. The complete blackguard is not a common product, but in the future I'm taking no risks."

She put two fingers on his cut lip. "Jack, it's made me feel horribly cheap. It hasn't made me—cheap to you, has it?"

"Not likely!"

"Let me do something for your poor lip." She went for her bag and produced cotton wool and powder. "Turn to the light, dear. Yes, it's just split slightly. But Jack, I think I'd like to take on a girl or two. We are getting a rush of work, and I should have someone with me when you're not here."

He smiled at her. "Good idea. Have you anyone in mind?"

"Yes, I know a nice girl who was at the Rutland. She's keen to come."

"You'll still require a partner?"

"You? Oh, of course. Why, you're extraordinarily good with—"

"The middle-aged and the—"

"Don't be silly! There are so few men in our profession who will take trouble. And you don't frighten people."

His expression was whimsical. "Yes, I'm quite a nice tame rabbit."

Their "profession"!

Mira had some right to be proud of it, but in Sherring Monmouth Square was provoking more than an incipient restlessness. Was he to conceal it? And if it could not be concealed from his secret self, could it remain hidden from his wife? This futile assumption that he was being convincingly male when chafing over a parquet floor to the music of a phonograph! A gentlemanly parasite, a night-club clown, a diner-out at other men's expense! Even the caddishness of Stanger had revealed to Sherring just how much importance the ordinary man attached to the person of Miss Manetti's husband. Probably Mr. Stanger had regarded him as little better than a fellow who lived on a woman.

Life might tempt you with a roving commission, send you gold-grubbing in Alaska, or beach-combing in the Pacific, but that was not a matrimonial affair. A wife might attend to your buttons and your socks, but the world of men expected you to purchase those items. And what did men like Pitt and Crabtree think of him in their secret souls? Poor old Sherring, a gentlemanly waster, of no use in the competitive scheme.

It had been just the same at school. He had fooled and slacked. At the end of two successive terms he had filled the bottom place in a math class, and an acid master had asked him a question: "Sherring, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" He had smiled sweetly. "No, sir. I'm a hopeless ass at math."

Was not life proving to him that he was a hopeless ass at most things? The war had been different. In the war he had been able to display some of the conventional attributes of the gentleman: courage, poise, that curious gift for exercising a quiet authority. He had escaped from the strange business of making money. The war had been like an intensely serious game in which he had played for his side. At school he had been good at games.

Poor little Mira! She was a warm-blooded, vivid creature, and her hot blood had involved him in this surrender. Mrs. Flanders had given him the advice of a kind, self-sacrificing fool. His marriage had been a disgraceful surrender to conventional sentiment.

It was the wife who suggested that her

partner needed a new lounge suit. In spite of pressings, Sherring's trousers were not what they should be, and appearances had to be considered.

"Jack, you must have a new suit."

Incidentally, at the moment, he could command no adequate supply of money. He was depending upon Archie Steel's monthly refund, and when a check did arrive it became mere petty cash.

"Can't afford it."

"Don't be silly. Of course we can afford it. Clothes are part of the show. Go to see your tailor."

He made some excuse, and then it did occur to Mira that all checks were paid into her account. Like many women who are responsible for finance for the first time in their lives, she was lacking in a sense of proportion.

"You have some money, haven't you?"

"Not much."

"Well, draw on our account."

Was she so very innocent? Couldn't she appreciate the irony of the position? He explained.

"It's not a joint account. I wanted the show's money to be in your name. I can't write checks."

She looked poignant. "Oh, I'll write you a check, then. You want some new dress shirts, too. Will twenty pounds do?"

"Plenty."

"Do I make the check out to you?"

"Yes. 'Pay John Foster Sherring'—and sign it 'Mira Sherring.'"

She sat down at her bureau and took her check book from a drawer, and he watched her write that check. Didn't a woman understand? But damn it, it was his own fault! What right had he to feel bitter? But while her pen moved over the paper he descended into a sudden pit of secret shame.

She tore out the check and passed it to him with a smile of naive tenderness. "Go and rig up, old thing."

He took the check, but his face betrayed something of his humiliation.

"What's the matter, Jack?"

He made himself smile. "Nothing."

"It's your money as well as mine." She was so ingenuous about it that he realized how little she understood that the economics of their marriage were beginning to poison his pride. But how could he tell her? She might love him, and yet fail to understand.

SUDDENLY HE laughed. "When your show is well on its own legs, Mira, I shall begin to think of legs of my own."

She was wide-eyed. "What do you mean? Not another job?"

"Well, yes."

"But I want you here. So many of the women prefer a man to teach them. You're my partner. There are all sorts of possibilities."

He was putting the check away in his wallet. "Well, we'll see! If I can add to the bank balance, why not? I might get something that would leave me part of the day—and the evenings."

"Feeling fed up, Jack?"

"Not a bit. Just wondering whether I could not produce something more. Don't you worry."

That is the last thing a man should suggest to a woman, and when the suggestion was left in her lap Mira began to reflect upon it. Also, it is an open question whether a woman should discuss her husband and their private affairs with another woman, for if she needs reassuring she may be sure that there is something amiss with her affairs, and if she asks for advice she should remember that advice is often unpleasant and rarely accepted.

"My dear, I'm worried about Jack."

Mrs. Flanders might have declared that she was not responsible for other husbands. But what was the disharmony in the Sherring marriage? Sherring wasn't ill, was he?

"No, it's not that. He's funny."

"What do you mean by 'funny'?"

"He talks about getting a job. Connie, don't men become bored very quickly?"

"Some. But what's the matter with Jack wanting a show of his own?"

Mira looked shocked. "You mean that Monmouth Square is—my show?"

"Well, isn't it?"

"No, it's a partnership. It's as much his show as mine. We halve the lessons. He seemed so keen to begin with."

"Ever wondered why?"

"Why? But it's a good show. We are doing ever so much better than we expected. And old Mr. Wilson has been a perfect dear. He won't let us pay him back."

"My dear, don't think me a beast, but Jack has done all he can to help make your show a success. After all, a man who went through the war . . . Besides, you've got an unusual husband."

Mira looked poignant. "You mean he's jealous of my show?"

Mrs. Flanders gave her a glance of kind tolerance. She was growing wise to the limitations of this pretty, vivid thing. "No, no. You're keen on your show and its success, aren't you? Well, doesn't it occur to you that your husband may feel that he wants a job of his own—a man's job?"

Mira's pretty mouth betrayed sulkiness. "He has always lost his jobs. I thought I had found him a job that—"

"My dear!"

"Well, what have I said wrong now? If our show grows, he can be a director or manager for me."

"For you? Exactly! It's no use giving people advice. Don't tie your man up. He may know what he wants, and he may not want it merely for himself."

"You are trying to tell me that he is ashamed of being—"

Mrs. Flanders became almost severe. "Now, don't be temperamental. If you want me to tell you what I think, I'll tell you. A man like Jack can't fill his life by dancing around with women. A man ought to tussle with men. If you're wise you'll leave him free to find a billet."

"But he never keeps them. He says so himself."

Mrs. Flanders gave it up. "Well, let him lose them. It may be his hobby!"

If marriage was proving for Sherring an exploration of the profound loneliness which may envelop a man even in the presence of his wife, he concealed his feelings. If passion is followed by pity, Sherring's compassion was not self-pity. He was growing wise as to this vivid, eager creature who was so ready to grasp at material things. Could he blame her? If their mating had been a mingling of beautiful, sensuous sex, the surrender had been mutual, and the aftermath was for his reaping. His wife's vision was so immediate and vital. She was tempted to resent other people's searchings of their souls.

But as Sherring came to realize his mate's limitations he knew moments of fear. Like a baby, she reacted to glitter and color, newness, mere objects. Her touch explored surfaces, and Sherring was a surface—the man whose looks had piqued her, the playfellow, the bedfellow, the dancing partner. It was not in her nature to divine or to go deep.

Moreover, her world had been one in which sensational creatures sought satisfaction, and could she be blamed if her standard was that of a little girl who

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had gazed curiously into shop windows? A certain fastidiousness had saved her from making herself shabby merchandise. She wanted things "nice." She wanted to climb her bean stalk into some prosperous other world in which all sorts of desirable things grew on trees. Her very fastidiousness had given a sharp edge to the lips of her ambition.

Sherring's gayety as a lover had delighted her. It was perhaps natural that she should have assumed that he would scramble up the bean stalk with her, and laughingly share any fruit that was to be found. She did not understand the more sensitive prides. Her pride had been a girdle of chastity worn to propitiate a nice fortune. She had refused to make a fool of herself, and then had fallen over the edge with Sherring.

He had married her.

They were making money.

What conceivable grievance had he against life?

Did the women pupils bore him?

Well, apparently, he had found commercial routine even more boring.

They could have no end of fun together, Mira and Monte, play girl and play boy. But he had ceased to laugh as he had laughed a year ago.

She wanted to say to him. "Laugh, Jack; for God's sake, laugh. Life's fine and lovely."

Sherring often went to Norbiton to see Archie and Mrs. Archie and their baby. He went down to have tea with them, choosing Sunday, for on Sundays Mira liked to stay in bed till twelve, and to spend the afternoon by the fire reading a novel. It was her rest day, when she played cat on a cushion, but on Sunday night she and her husband generally had an engagement to dance at the Green Cat or some other club.

Master Eric Valentine Steel also lay on a cushion, and he made noises and kicked. He was a healthy, good-tempered child.

Sherring, with his first finger clasped by one of Eric Valentine's little fists, found a strange satisfaction in watching this small piece of flesh. Life began by being supremely natural and unsophisticated. It asked you for everything and nothing. It clutched your finger and bubbled. It could raise infernal squalls, and yet be so restful.

"Does he shout at night?"

No, Eric Valentine slept like an angel. Only occasionally did one of the parents have to get up and dandle the infant, and that parent was Archie.

"He's really marvelous with baby."

Sherring quizzed Archie. "I remember you carrying a bag of bombs, babe."

Archie was staring at his son. "Bombs! Does seem funny, doesn't it? That young fellah is a bit of a bomb, sometimes."

Sherring noticed that Archie was kind to his wife. He had ceased to be the mere young sex-monger, the full-eyed egoist. Eric Valentine was persuading his father to settle down. Archie was feeling responsible.

Queer thing, life! Sherring would reflect, while talking to the Steels and watching their baby. Human putty like this, which would mold itself into—what? The plastic stuff out of which man was building beauty or ugliness. Or was it God? Why did one small creature become a gentle, sensitive, fastidious man, and another a mere brute?

Was the sensitive product more significant than the brute? To the brute the dreamer of dreams might appear to be a futile, finicking, feeble person, of no use in a rough-house, knowing nothing of uppercuts and straight lefts to the jaw. Had civilization made for too

much refinement? What were the exact values of a picture gallery in Bond Street and a pub in the Waterloo Road?

The war may have been brutal, but it failed to turn certain men into brutes.

Peace could be even more brutal. It looked at you with a sullen face.

But why worry? Life was a jigsaw puzzle. Eric Valentine lay and kicked, gurgling at Sherring.

Steel walked to the station with him. He treated Sherring as his father confessor.

"Gee whiz, Skipper, but I was nearly over the edge. Silly ass! Sylvia's been a sport to me. I've toned down."

"It's just a question of finding out the things that are worth while, Archie."

"But that can be a large order. I don't know what was the matter with me last year. I was simply mad on girls. Ever been that way, Skipper?"

"Yes. I got over it. Some chaps do; some don't. It's the idea of newness that gets one—strangeness."

Archie held on to Sherring's arm. "That kid has made a difference to me. And Sylvia's becoming a friend. Didn't know how much I was hurting her. After all, most of us are soft-hearted asses; we don't like hurting people."

"God's truth, Archie. That's why the world goes on."

During the early part of the winter Sherring persisted in trying to procure employment. He wrote letters and sought interviews and answered advertisements. He put himself in the hands of an association for assisting ex-officers; he had to appear before a small committee, and when its members inquired into his financial position, he had to confess that he was in business with his wife.

"What do you do, Captain Sherring?"

"I teach dancing, sir."

"Are you in debt?"

"No. It's a question of self-respect."

Sherring was given to understand that London was full of more pressing and tragic cases than his—men who were suffering in stomach as well as in soul. The members of the committee were gentle to Sherring, but they reminded him that he had work of a sort, and he apologized for having approached them.

"I feel I ought not to have come to you, gentlemen. I'm sorry."

"If your position should change, Captain Sherring, apply to us again."

BUT THE world was much more candid than these gentlemen who considered the needs of the middle-class unemployed. It asked Sherring a blunt question: "What can you do?"

He asked himself that same question: "What can you do, you devil?" And when he set out to catalogue his qualifications he became conscious of his commercial uselessness.

He could say, "I know a little about cars, but I couldn't take down an engine and reassemble it. I know a little about business, but not enough to make me an efficient clerk. I used to play a good game of cricket. I can box quite nicely. I can speak a little French. Someone might employ me as a secretary, but I can't type or write shorthand. I'm too old for the police. If I had been able to remain in the army, peace-soldiering would have bored me. I don't know enough about the land to be a land agent; in fact, I cannot claim any serious commercial value. I'm just a gentlemanly fellow who loathes routine; a drifter." In conclusion he could add, "I can dance."

London had nothing gentlemanly to offer Sherring. It did not want him as

a clerk or as a salesman. It might have suggested to him that with a little influence he might obtain a secretaryship, or be engaged as a gentleman chauffeur. Or had he considered a post as valet? Could he press clothes?

Years ago, he had been offered a niche in the social scheme as the son of a successful country solicitor, and he had scorned it, to become one of those wandering spirits who must move from place to place. Possessed of a private income, he might have been a successful shooter of big game, or a motoring pioneer, or a species of gentlemanly Wandering Jew.

But he could dance. He could order a dinner and impress waiters. In many respects he was a social asset. Women liked him. He made them dance better than they could. He might be an inoffensive parasite, but he was not a cad.

THE WORLD of commerce said to him, "Well, your wife's right, after all. She does fill a niche, and you had better slip in beside her as her shadow. Yes, you can dance, and that's about all you can do. If your hands and your head are useless—well, concentrate on your feet."

Yet Sherring's increasing dislike of himself as a gigolo was to emerge into the very forefront of his consciousness. The little London tragedy of Mira and Monte was threaded upon the silk of a man's will to dance. As Mira Manetti's partner he had been silk, a lover lost in movement, a gay rhythmical body unvexed by any inhibitions. As the husband of Mrs. Sherring, her shadow and assistant, the thing was different. Within the fluid flesh the spirit began to creak. He had ceased to dance to music. He performed for money on a sort of stage. He was a kind of clown, a social sponger, an attachment to his wife.

Suddenly he became acutely self-conscious. He felt the stare of the world upon him, and if it was not unfriendly, it might be contemptuously tolerant. On those public night-club occasions he began to burn. The redness of poor Mephisto was like a universal blush. The easy glide, the indifferent casual poise began to desert him. His body became like a mechanism in which the wheels were being interfered with by the fingers of a sensitive intelligence.

One night at the Green Cat Club he caught a couple of men laughing at him. Seated at a table with two women, they observed him from under ironic eyebrows. He had not been dancing too well, and after that laughter he began to dance like a man made of wood.

Mira's face was close to his. He was aware of a slightly impatient frown. "What is the matter with you tonight?"

His face winced into a smile. "I'm a bit off-color."

"Do let go. You're like cast iron."

He could have said to her, "My God, I'm feeling a damned ass."

Relax he could not. His conscious self kept castigating his physical self, and with each blow it uttered the accusation. "You damned ass; you thrice damned ass."

Mrs. Sherring had been playing with an idea, and early in December it took shape. The Manetti School of Dancing had prospered beyond their expectations, and Mira was feeling that something was due to her public. In fact, it was the moment for a gesture. The Manetti School should present a New Year's show to its patrons. Moreover, it would be an excellent puff.

"I've been round to one or two hotels. Jack. The Brandon will let us have

their room and serve light refreshments."

"The Brandon?"

She explained that the Brandon, regarded as a hotel, was not exactly a posh place, but it was in a good neighborhood, Knightsbridge, and the ballroom and cloakrooms were excellent. Also, she was in touch with an orchestra, and orchestras might be expected to be scarce on New Year's Eve. The decision had to be made promptly.

He had not the heart to crab her scheme. "What's it going to cost?"

"About thirty-five pounds."

"The price of about ninety lessons. Still, as you say, it will be a gesture. Well, go ahead."

But that was only part of the picture. She was keen that they should evolve a new dance, something arresting and original, and advertise it on their cards. "Special Exhibition by Mira and Monte." Her imagination was leaping into pagan picturesqueness. Why not something classic, like the Nymph and the Faun?

Sherring raised objections.

Inwardly, his new self-consciousness was asserting that it would be damned if it would prance to order like a man he-goat. Make a hairy fool of himself in public! No, thank you.

"Much too difficult, dear. You might do it, but I should let you down."

"But why not try?"

For once he was firm with her. But having objected to this, he was constrained to humor her by consenting to play shepherd to her shepherdess, in a garland of vine leaves and a sheepskin.

Mira booked the Brandon room, engaged her orchestra and sat down to make out a list of the people who were to be invited. Mr. Wilson, of course. Sherring suggested that they indulge in a *beau geste* and give Mr. Wilson dinner before the show. Let Mira ask Connie Flanders to make up the party.

Mira extracted a list of names. "We might send out cards to your friends. That nice Doctor Pitt and some of the officers you know."

Sherring demurred. He could not tell her that he was ashamed of his share in the show, and that he would not exhibit himself before Pitt and Crabtree and Loviebond. He had been a man to these men, not a poor, performing pro.

"They wouldn't be interested. Besides, they all live out of town."

"Doctor Pitt doesn't. St. John's Wood might be useful."

"He's much too busy. I don't want to worry a man like Pitt."

She was not deceived. He was making excuses. He did not want his friends to come to the Brandon. She was hurt; piqued. Was he shy of exhibiting his wife and his marriage to these other men who were his friends?

She had written down the name of Doctor Pitt, and with a look that was both poignant and peevish she put her pen through the name. "Oh, very well."

Sherring's wife knew nothing of haruspicy or star patterns, but the last day of the year was unfortunate in its omens.

December thirty-first proved to be a dastardly day. It enveloped itself in fog—a raw white blanket. The dance orchestra had arranged to attend at Monmouth Square at eleven o'clock to rehearse the Sherring exhibition dance. Mira had chosen Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" as an accompaniment, a fantasia of dancing daffodils and leaping lambs, but only two members of the orchestra turned up, the pianist and the drummer, and the "Spring Song" proved wintry.

Mira was angry. "If you are going to let us down like this—"

She was called to the telephone. The



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orchestra leader wished to say that he was sorry but he was nursing a cold and himself for the night's necessity.

Mira and her husband tried out the dance to the piano and drum, and though all the movements were familiar to them, Sherring fumbled several steps. His wife suddenly broke off the rehearsal. She was angry and upset. The drummer persisted in producing facetious rat-tats where the music surged skywards. Irresponsible joy, leaping lambs, streaming sunlight, west wind—rat-tat!

Mira's lips bit her words. "Perfectly useless; perfectly fatuous! You can pack up. We'll wait for the real show. I hope to heaven you'll be able to put some pep into the thing tonight."

The drummer tapped his drum. "Don't worry, Miss Manetti. A couple of bottles of fizz and we'll bubble like brooks."

They departed, and Mira walked up and down hand in hand with her vexation. "They expect champagne, do they?"

SHERRING WAS gentle with her. "Worth it, probably, Mira. We'll all have champagne. Makes one fluid."

"I have a good mind to phone Horrocks and tell him he and his band can go to—"

He put an arm round her. "I know. Damned exasperating, but things will be all right tonight. A good dinner—and some wine."

The telephone bell rang, and Mira ran to the receiver. "Hello. Who's that? I can't hear you. Yes, this is Mrs. Sherring. What? Oh, I'm so sorry. In bed? How very trying!" She turned protestingly to her husband. "It's Mr. Wilson now. He's got flu."

"Poor old lad. Is he speaking?"

"No, the butler."

"Say how sorry we are, dear."

Mira resumed her conversation with Mr. Wilson's butler. "Please say how sorry we are. Tell him to take care of himself . . . What? He's sending some flowers to the Brandon? How kind of him! Please thank him."

She hung up the receiver. There was no kindness in her eyes at that moment.

"Oh, damn! Everything's gone wrong."

Sherring tried to reassure her. "Just like the dear old war, my child; but we won the war."

The Sherrings went around to the Brandon after lunch to see that everything was in order. The decorations of the big bare ballroom, which were in French-gray, matched the fog in the street. The place was cold and dreary. On a table in a corner Mr. Wilson's flowers looked like a mass of colored wax wrapped in gray wool.

Mira gave a little shiver of protest. "Jack, it's like a station waiting room."

"No heat on yet, perhaps." The room had radiators, and he felt one of them. "Just coming on, I think. We'll see about that."

He was aware of Mira standing in the middle of the room, a little figure in black, vaguely forlorn and dismayed. He did not see her as a figure of tragedy, nor suspect that the seeds of tragedy lay in this dreary room. Obscure, trivial happenings that would sprout in one short hour. He was conscious of sudden compassion. He crossed to the door and turned on the lights.

"That's better. It isn't fair to catch a room like this undressed. Wait till it's full of pretty frocks."

A grand piano stood in a recess, and Sherring raised the lid of the keyboard and sat down. He could vamp a few tunes, and he crashed out a fox-trot.

"How's that? Try the floor, dearest."

She put her hands on her hips. "Give me a tango, Jack. Can you manage it?"

"Rather."

He attempted a tango, and she began to dance, but after a few steps she gave it up. The sensuous, sinuous swagger melted out of her figure. She drooped.

"No use getting stale."

Gently closing the piano, he stood up. "Let's look at Wilson's flowers. By Jove, he must have sent half his conservatory. Flowers bring luck."

They were to dine at seven-thirty. Sherring was insisting upon that dinner, though the principal guest had failed them. He knew that Mira was nervous, and probably he was much more on edge than she was. Champagne was necessary. He dreaded an attack of self-consciousness.

At six, Mira went up to dress. He was leaving her the bedroom and the ordeal of a new frock, an exquisite thing of amber chiffon; he could change in the sitting room.

Connie Flanders was equally busy below. She was coming to the Brandon for a couple of hours to cheer the show with her cheerful countenance.

About six-thirty Sherring heard his wife's door open. She went hurriedly downstairs. There was agitation in the swift descent.

"Connie, I've ripped a gather."

"Oh, my dear! Let's look."

The damage was not too disastrous, and Mrs. Flanders found thread to match the frock. She knelt and sewed, while Mira restrained a moody restlessness.

"Everything has gone wrong today, Connie."

"Nothing like getting things over."

"I'm frightfully nervous. I have a feeling that the show is going to be an utter frost."

Mrs. Flanders protested. "Don't be silly, my dear. There you are. You look lovely."

"I don't feel lovely."

Mrs. Flanders was moved to scold her cheerfully, but afterwards, when the unmerciful thing had happened, she remembered that mood of Mira's and wondered at it.

They dined; they shared a bottle of champagne, and Mrs. Flanders realized that both the Sherrings were desperately nervous. She knew that Sherring could be gay, but this gayety of his was different. In it she divined a note of pathos. Sherring was passionately anxious that neither he nor the night should disappoint his wife. He was much too anxious.

In the taxi he sat facing the two women. Connie was holding one of Mira's hands, and Mira's fingers were hot and febrile. She was restless, irritable.

"Let's have a window down, Jack. It's awfully stuffy."

He lowered one of the windows two inches. "Pretty raw tonight."

His remark reminded her of the rawness of the Brandon ballroom.

"I hope to heaven they've warmed that room up."

He smiled and patted her knee. "Don't worry. I crashed round there just before six. Everything was O. K."

Half an hour later, Mrs. Flanders was beginning to think that all their fears had been groundless. She had mothered Mira in the dressing room and sent her out with a kiss and three kind words: "You look lovely." The big room was warm and bright, and its grayness had taken on a sheen of silver. The floor gleamed. The jazz band made cheerful noises as it tuned up.

Sherring had an idea. "Come along. Just one cocktail tune before we start. I want to try the floor."

The band responded, and Sherring swept across the room to his wife.

"Dance, my dear—dance?"

For a moment she hesitated, and then, with a sudden glimmer of the eyes, gave herself to him. It was a happy moment, a moment in which both of them felt supple and relaxed.

"I can move tonight, dearest. By Jove, if I were dead I could get up and dance with you. It's going to be a success, our show."

The first arrivals surprised the Sherrings dancing. Mira, laughing, broke away and skated across the floor to welcome her first guests. She had become animated, her vivid self.

"Splendid of you to come! Jack and I were just being children."

The room began to fill, and Mira and her husband stood by the door and received the crowd. Obviously, Sherring was proud of his wife; he waited slightly behind her, as though the social occasion were hers. There was no jealousy in him. For the moment he was happily unself-conscious.

People stood about in groups, or sat on the gilt chairs ranged against the walls. Sherring would diverge occasionally to introduce solitary souls. Mrs. Flanders watched Sherring and his wife. She felt relieved. The show, promised to be alive and easy. Mira looked vivid and happy.

Then—an untoward circumstance!

Mrs. Parris arrived, towering in orange and black, her face a white confection, and with her a tall man who looked distinguished and felt it. He had one of those very small heads like the head of a bald eagle, a hooked nose, a round, prominent chin. His eyes were those pale blue eyes which see everything, but are without kindness. Sherring had met those eyes under the gold braid of a staff hat.

Mrs. Parris drawled, "I've brought Colonel Dudenny."

Colonel Dudenny shook hands with Mira and nodded at Sherring, and the soul of Sherring flushed and fell flat.

"Good evening, colonel."

He was aware of the soldier regarding him with calm curiosity. Colonel Dudenny had appeared in a battalion line or billet with just that same icy air.

"New profession for you, Captain Sherring," he said.

"Yes, sir; one has to improvise."

"So I gather. Turning field boots into dancing pumps."

Sarcastic swine! Sherring's mood changed from mulled wine to ice. A shiver of self-consciousness ran through him. Of all the damnable coincidences! That Mrs. Parris should have produced this particular man!

COLONEL DUDENNY seemed to be enjoying some frozen jest. "I hear you are to give us an exhibition."

"Yes, sir."

Sherring escaped to welcome other people, but the poor dancer was dead in him, a puppet stuffed with sawdust. Exhibition? Exactly! He was to exhibit himself to Colonel Dudenny in a sheepskin and vine leaves. How damnable! Yet what did the man matter?

Sherring had been silk. He was wire, and then wood. The presence of that other man was like some paralyzing, hostile power.

Sherring was shaking somebody's hand and thinking. "That fellow is here to watch me make a fool of myself."

And that was the beginning of the night's obscure tragedy.

The Sherrings had gone to dress for the exhibition dance, and when Sherring saw himself in the mirror he felt that

he could not show himself in that ballroom. Clown, ass, mountebank!

Someone knocked at the door. It was Connie Flanders.

"Jack," she said. "Mira's waiting."

He opened the door and walked past her, and when Mrs. Flanders saw his face she was shocked. He looked like a man going to meet the scorn of a ribald crowd.

Mira had been waiting by the glass doors of the ballroom, and she was not pleased. "What have you been doing?" "Sorry, dear."

He was conscious of feeling sudden pity for this pretty, impatient creature who was his wife. Poor little Mira! She was angry with him for being late, and her anger added to his emotional confusion, the yea and nay of a complex disharmony. Compassion challenged him to dance with her as her dream-shepherd, and not to damn the display by performing like a wooden doll. What were they but a couple of mountebanks?

She gave him a protesting look. His face scared her. "What's the matter with you? Nerves?"

It was one unhappy touch. He was trying to relax and her flash of temper stiffened him. "All right, Mira. I'm ready."

"For pity's sake, smile and look pleased."

She flung through the glass doors, and he followed. They had arranged with the orchestra that their entry should be greeted with a vibrant chord, a roll of the drum, and then a clash of cymbals. A pause, while they bowed to the room's salutation. The "Spring Song" was to open with a subtle, piquant softness. Mira would run into the center of the room while her shepherd gave chase.

Sherring saw Colonel Dudenny directly opposite him, attached to the wall like some sardonic caryatid in evening dress. That which should have been a rippling run became a self-conscious stride. Sherring's legs felt and looked like the limbs of a pair of compasses.

Mira waited, poised. He saw her eyes. There was a kind of shallow glare in them. She smiled, but her mouth was like a little wincing wound. He was a mere piece of taut twine covered with hoarfrost.

They danced, and Sherring danced like a man counting his steps. Always he seemed to be a shade of a second behind his wife. She was prompting him, this body of his which was a wooden contraption pulled by strings. Mira's smile became set. He was making a fool of himself, and clogging the flow of her easy movements.

Faces, staring faces; Colonel Dudenny's figure plastered against the wall.

Mira, with that set smile, breathing her humiliation at him: "Let's cut it short."

What did she mean? Her face expressed smiling shame. He was making a complete mess of the show. The dance should have risen to a crescendo in which Sherring caught his wife and swung her aloft. He had not bungled the movement in practice, but he bungled it now. She had to help him with a little surrendering leap, and somehow he missed the movement, clutched her, but half a second too late. He was conscious of her slipping from him, of a faint rending sound.

She crashed.

Silence; staring, shocked faces. Even the orchestra became mute, and then fell pell-mell into more music. Only then did Sherring lose his self-consciousness in pity for his wife, anger against himself.

He had Mira in his arms. He carried

her to the glass doors. Someone opened them. The doors closed. They were alone in the vestibule. "Dearest, I'm—"

She struggled out of his arms. She struck him across the face with a stinging hand. "Oh, you fool!"

He stood there watching her rush from him and disappear into the dressing room. Good Lord, what a damnable mess he had made of her show! Someone went past him and paused. It was Mrs. Flanders.

"Do something. Go back and explain."

"Explain?"

"Tell them Mira wasn't well. Tell them—anything."

"But it was my fault."

"Never mind, man, whose fault it was. Go in and smile. Say something. It's up to you."

He turned back; he repassed the glass doors. There was an expectant hush. "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm supremely sorry but my wife ought not to have danced tonight. She was not feeling well."

He was aware of voices murmuring sympathetically. He made a sign to the band, and the musicians struck up a fox-trot.

Sherring smiled with that lie in his heart. "Please dance; please enjoy yourselves."

They danced.

He went into his dressing room and flung off his clown's clothes. "Oh, you fool!" He resumed the conventional black and white. As he tied his tie he addressed his face in the mirror. "Smile. Go back into that damned room and try to pull the show together."

The orchestra were playing the opening bars of a waltz when he walked through the glass doors. He stood there for a moment, head up, smiling. He saw Mrs. Parris and the Dudenny man opposite him, and walking across the room to the couple, he bowed to the lady.

"May I have this one?"

He was aware of Dudenny's ironic face. "No more crashes, Captain Sherring."

Sherring smiled at the other man's eyes. "Hardly, sir. I may have let my wife down badly, but that's history."

They danced, and Sherring danced remarkably well, though his thoughts were in Mira's dressing room. He was watching for his wife. Would she come back?

Mrs. Parris drawled at him. "What was the matter with you two?"

"There was nothing the matter with Mira."

She squinted at him. "But didn't you put the blame on your wife?"

"Dear lady, wasn't it obvious that I was the mutt? My wife wasn't herself—because I had stage fright."

"Poor lad."

"Poor jackass!"

"You're all right now."

"Quite. With you, could it be otherwise?"

She was pleased. "Gallant fellow."

Mrs. Parris might think what she pleased and tell the whole room what she thought, but her inferences were not what Sherring had expected. Mrs. Parris was always kind to the man, and her supposition represented Mrs. Sherring as a young cat who had clawed a high-strung husband into a state of panic.

She put it that way to Colonel Dudenny after her waltz with Sherring. She said, "Anyone could see the poor lad was scared stiff. Madam had been putting him through his paces."

Colonel Dudenny was not particularly interested in Sherring. "Pretty sorry exhibition for an ex-officer. I suppose he lives on the woman."

"Possibly. But is that of any significance in these days?"

Mrs. Sherring had not rejoined her

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guests, and her husband, going in search of her, stood hesitant outside the dressing-room door. He knocked. The voice of Connie Flanders answered his knock.

"Yes. Who is it?"

"Jack. May I come in?"

"Mira's changing."

"All right. Tell her the show's going quite well. Ask her to come and forgive me—by dancing."

There was a murmur of voices, one of them persuasive, the other petulant, but no one came to the door, and Sherring walked quietly away. So his wife was still feeling bitter towards him! Poor little Mira. He went back to the ball-room and danced.

For more than an hour he worked hard to make the show a success. He danced with the dullest of the school's pupils. He saw that the band was cheered with champagne. He led people to the buffet in an adjoining room where light refreshments were served.

He heard Colonel Dudenny asking for a whisky, and there was no whisky. He apologized to the colonel. He interviewed a waiter, who produced a bottle of whisky for which he—Sherring—paid.

Colonel Dudenny welcomed the whisky. "Just a spot." Dudenny's spot reached a third of the way up the glass. "I hope your wife has recovered, Sherring."

"Please don't worry, sir. She'll be with us soon."

It was nearly midnight before Mira reappeared among her guests. She had a high color and bright eyes. She laughed at herself and her husband; she made a joke of their crash.

"My fall, Mrs. So-and-So! But with a married woman, if she falls with her husband, does it matter?"

She was a little too noisy in her vivacity, but one thing she would not do, dance with her husband. He had looked at her almost with the eyes of a remorseful dog.

"Try me again, Mira?"

She had laughed and given a flick of the head. "My dear, do your duty. There's Miss Symes sitting out."

Obediently he had rescued Miss Symes, and discovered that his wife was dancing with Dudenny.

HE HAD a feeling that Mira's slim body retained deeps of anger and humiliation. She had not forgiven him. The storm was muffled. It waited for him behind a flushed face and a too-vivid smile.

Sherring was waiting for his wife in the vestibule. Everybody had gone; the lights were out in the ballroom, and a night porter was hovering to lock the doors. Mira loitered. She had nothing to do but change her shoes and put on her cloak, and join him with the small suitcase that held her shepherdess' frock.

Sherring had arranged for a taxi. It was waiting for them, and he had put his own suitcase inside it. He knocked at his wife's door. "The taxi's here."

She did not answer him, and feeling anxious, he opened the door. She was sitting in front of a gas fire smoking a cigaret, her cloak over her shoulders, the suitcase ready on another chair.

"What do you want? Can't I be alone for a minute?"

Her passionate sulkiness was prepared to express itself to the very limits of unreason. To every yea of his, she would answer with a nay.

"The taxi's ready."

"I don't want a taxi."

He tried gentleness. "Come along,

dear. You're tired. After all, the show didn't go so badly."

She tossed her head. "Badly? It was a filthy frost."

"Oh, not quite that. I'm sorry I let you down. Come along, Mira."

She rose and collected her suitcase. "I'm going to walk."

He let her pass him, for he did not take this whim seriously. He followed her out, but on reaching the street, she ignored the taxi and walked off without waiting for him.

He stood for a moment undecided. Could he chase her along the street, argue with her while the taxi driver listened? The thing was too foolish. He felt in a pocket for some silver.

"The lady wants to walk. I'll pay you the fare."

The taxi man was ancient, blue-nosed and sardonic. He had no illusions about women and their ways. "That's all right, sir."

"How much do you want? Will five bob do?"

"Make it seven and six, sir. I've been waiting 'ere for 'alf an hour."

Sherring made it seven and sixpence, recovered his suitcase, and went in pursuit of his wayward wife. What a waste of money, and what a fatuous anticlimax! The night was raw, so raw that he turned up his collar. He overtook her. He wanted to carry her suitcase.

"Hand it over, dear."

"I can manage, thanks."

She was all profile to him, and as they passed under a street lamp he saw that her cloak was open, exposing throat and chest to the cold. Well, really! Could unreason be rasher, more extravagant?

"Cover yourself up, dear."

"I'm all right, thanks."

"You're not all right. You can't come out of a hot room and walk about like that."

"I'm too hot."

He became impatient. "You're too—something else. Now, no nonsense."

He caught her arm, and dropping his suitcase, swung her round. He began to fasten up her cloak, but she struggled with him and broke away.

"Let me alone! I know what I want."

"That's your trouble; you don't—at this moment. If you want to row me, go ahead. Say what you jolly well please, but cover yourself up."

She walked on, and he picked up his suitcase and followed her. As he drew up beside her, he reached out and turned up the collar of her cloak.

"Don't be silly. It's not worth all this bitterness. Can't you forget that it was I who made an ass of myself?"

She folded back the collar of her cloak. "I'm not being silly. I'm too hot. What was the matter with you tonight?"

"Call it an attack of nerves."

"If you had cared sufficiently for my show—"

He answered her gently. "My dear, doesn't it occur to you that if I hadn't cared a damn, I might have been less nervous?"

She would not shake off her sullen mood. "I've never been let down in a room before. I dare say it pleased Mrs. Parris—and some of the women."

"As a matter of fact, I don't think it did anything of the kind. I told Mrs. Parris it was all my fault. Now, cover yourself up; it's beastly cold."

But she was obdurate. She walked all the way to Quorn Street confronting her mortification and that raw night air. If her professional pride had been martyred, her body should share in the

distress. She was hysterical, moved to exaggerate her suffering in every way.

Sherring remained mute. His only thought was to get her home and put her to bed. She was just an emotional child who had burst into tears at a party.

He unlocked the side door of Number 5. "Give me your suitcase."

She surrendered it to him. She gave a little shudder. "I'm so cold."

He was beyond exclaiming at her strange perverseness, and at this sudden revulsion. He was worried about her.

"Run upstairs and light the gas stove."

SHE OBEYED him. He followed her up the dark stairs, and as he passed Mrs. Flanders' door, it opened.

"Jack!"

He paused. "That you, Connie? I say, could I get something hot? Mira's cold."

"I'll run down and heat some milk."

"You're an angel! I'll come down for it. I want to get Mira to bed."

"And a hot-water bottle."

"You're twice an angel!"

Mira was undressing before the stove. She had a pinched look, and with an anxious glance at her, Sherring found his whisky flask and went downstairs to Connie. She was in the kitchen standing by the gas stove and watching over a saucepan of milk. She had the kettle on.

"How did she get cold? Didn't you drive?"

Sherring gave her a helpless smile. "She was badly upset. Everything wrong, poor kid. Wouldn't do anything I wanted her to do."

"Oh, like that! Let her alone, Jack. Tomorrow—"

He said, "I won't fuss her. I wish she hadn't taken the thing so seriously. All my fault."

Mrs. Flanders smiled at him as she poured the milk into a glass, and Sherring added some whisky. "She'll forgive you tomorrow. Is it too hot to hold?"

"No. All I hope is that she hasn't got badly chilled."

"Run up with that. I'll bring you the hot-water bottle."

"Thrice an angel."

Sherring found his wife in her night-dress, kneeling in front of the stove. She looked up at him as he entered, and he saw that her bitter mood had passed. The smile she gave him was tremulous.

"Sorry, Jack."

"Here, drink this. Feeling warmer?"

"A little."

He put her dressing jacket over her shoulders. "Connie's getting you a hot bottle."

She shuddered and laid her cheek against his arm. "Silly of me, Jacko. Right in off the deep end. Better now."

He knelt beside her while she drank her hot posset, and her dark eyes looked at him shyly. They were velvet.

"I hope I shan't have to pay for being silly."

"Stay in bed tomorrow. I'll run the show."

Mrs. Flanders came to the door with the bottle, and Sherring rose to take it.

"Thanks so much, Connie."

"Good night, you two."

"Good night, Con, dear."

Sherring slipped the bottle between the sheets. He turned back the clothes, and picking up his wife, he carried her to the bed. She clung to him for a moment.

"Oh, Jack, I've been a beast to you."

"That's all right, dearest. Snuggle down and get warm."

The tragic dissolution of "Mira and Monte" sends Captain Sherring downhill—in Warwick Deeping's February Installment

Wine Goes Native (Continued from page 47)

celebrating repeal in the United States because it may open the former market to their wine. They have been celebrating another imaginary flow of gold from the *Etats-Unis* which they could hide away in the old sugar bowl.

But California wine growers—27,500 of them—have other ideas. They have been studying how to bottle up that golden stream for home use. And they have reached the point where today they do not have to take off their hats to any foreign vintner.

They are all set to supply tasty, healthful and scientific wines in place of the vintages tramped out by the pink-toed peasant gals abroad. The Americans are off to a new start. In ten years they plan to have an American wine picture that is truly native.

French representatives of vintners have been nosing about in preparation for launching their wine fleet to arrive simultaneously with repeal. Recently, one came to look over the ripening market. He wound up in the huge distributing plant of the Cribaris, one of the largest California vintners. Down on the banks of the Hudson, the Frenchman found himself surrounded by towering Cribari vats containing 250,000 gallons of California wine from two to twelve years old.

An official whammed a cask with a bung starter. He inserted a long glass tube known to the trade as a "wine thief" and drew a glass of pale-gold Pacific sunshine. Monsieur sipped and rolled his eyes.

"But surely," he said, "this is one of your chateau wines."

The American employee grinned. "Nix," he said, for he had been in the A. E. F. and had hoped to see the day when a Frenchman would appreciate something American. "No, sir, that's *vin ordinaire* in the U. S. A. Can you beat it?"

That's just what the American vintners are trying to get over. About the lowest-grade American wine made by our reputable wineries is superior to most of the foreign ordinary wine which is dolled up under fancy labels and passed off as special vintage.

Most wine drinkers forget that wines they drink abroad are mostly *ordinaires*. Most of the champagnes are artificially charged. And a cobwebbed bottle can be produced overnight in a damp cellar by sprinkling a little sour milk on it. It amounts to this: Names of European wine-producing localities have become known because there wasn't any competition in the United States.

Ten years hence, the Americans say, connoisseurs will be selecting Dewey & Sons, Paul Masson, B. Cribari & Sons, Paul Garret vintages, or the products of perhaps twenty others of the American wine dynasties which have hitherto been little known. Corks will pop just as merrily from champagne made in Penn Yan, New York, or San Benito, California, as from Pol Roger.

New York State sent out a challenge to European champagne makers long before Prohibition. Paul Garret, of Penn Yan—he's known as the dean of American wine makers today—worked for years to make champagnes comparable to those of France. He exhibited them at the Paris Exposition in 1900, and they attracted so much attention that the French passed a law that nobody could call a wine "champagne" unless it was made in the Champagne region of France.

There isn't any reason, American vint-

ners say, why Americans in the future shouldn't be calling for San Benitos, San Simeons and Madrones instead of Bordeaux, St. Juliens, Burgundies, Rudesheimers, Bernkastlers and Johannisbergers.

All this might have been happening now if it had not been for Prohibition. America has had the making of a great wine industry all along, but the war and Prohibition delayed it.

Doctor A. Newmark, the Australian wine chemist, who is in the United States wondering at our wine industry, told me that nearly all French vines are grafted on American roots. Seems that Europe's vines were killed by *Phylloxera*—that's a sort of grapevine eczema—some years ago. Well, American vines had been all through a battle with those grapevine measles—and survived. The roots were stronger, and the Europeans grabbed them. So there goes the European claim to superiority of grapes.

American grape farmers were getting tired of European wine domination when Prohibition came on, and they have put the past thirteen years to good use.

First, they began hiring expert chemists from all the wine-producing countries in the world. Those chemists found that our grapes grow in the same longitudes as the best in Europe. The soil is chemically the same, and as for California—well, it's got every kind of altitude and weather condition necessary to the industry. They even found a weather advantage in favor of California, in that sunshine lasts longer in the autumn, which allows the grapes to make the maximum amount of sugar.

They found out, also, more about the chemicals or spores known as "enzymes." Soon as the grapes are crushed, those enzymes begin working on the sugar. Half of the sugar is turned into alcohol and the other half is turned into gas. The scientists learned how to control that process to the point of perfection. And that ruins another foreign claim to superiority.

The scientists experimented with 435 kinds of grapes grown in America and picked out 60 that will make every kind of wine known. Sixteen varieties would be plenty, they say.

Twenty or twenty-five old-time wine makers had the idea America could be made a great wine country. They stuck to it and pinned their faith on ultimate repeal. Here's the way they figure it out:

Before Prohibition, the United States consumed as much as 50,000,000 gallons of wine a year. And yet, wine making was an infant industry. Then, in 1917 and 1918, about 2,000,000 thirsty samplers went to Europe in the A. E. F. Well, they were soon calling old *vin blanc* and *vin rouge* by their first names. Tourists began going abroad and flirting with the weepings of the foreign vines. There must have been 7,000,000 of those tourists. There were the homemade-wine drinkers, also.

Counting all these with reasonable Americans who just naturally like wine; counting on the people, who have got over the stool-eating habit of the '20's and who will welcome leisurely, gracious living—well, the wine growers are convinced that America is a wine-drinking nation.

One of the first things they are going to do is to take wine out of the luxury class. They expect a basic Federal tax of twenty cents a gallon. At that rate, table wines can be bought for as low as twenty-five cents a bottle. And they

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● Kruschen is not a new product—made in England for more than a half century—it was recently introduced into the United States and is now being made here of the same formula and quality—sold in every civilized country in the world—Kruschen must have merit and safety to have enjoyed such continued worldwide use.

● Kruschen contains many of the same efficacious ingredients as do a number of the world famous European Spas which doctors have prescribed from time immemorial for overweight patients—and to-day, for fat people who haven't the time or money to make trips abroad—hundreds of doctors prescribe Kruschen—they take it themselves as well as give it to their wives and daughters because they know it's a SAFE, EFFECTIVE Treatment—one which promotes better health as well as reduces excess weight.

● An 85c jar lasts 4 weeks and is sold by druggists everywhere. Make sure you get Kruschen—for your health's sake accept nothing else.

*FREE: Write E. Griffiths Hughes, Inc., Dept. C. 10, Rochester, N. Y. for book (plain wrapper) giving full details of Kruschen Treatment ALSO precious aids for obtaining youthful beauty.

already have aged brands corresponding to Chablis, Burgundy, Tokay and all other marks of wine, that will cost as much as foreign wines, minus the duty. The tariff of \$1.25 a gallon on still wines and six dollars on champagne is all the protection the Americans are asking.

American cellars are empty. The thirst has grown many millionfold. There will be more Wet states than before Prohibition. And all the good wine there is today to satisfy what the vintners estimate is a 200,000,000-gallon-a-year thirst, is 23,243,000 gallons of storage wine and 13,239,000 gallons of wine made this year in half-skeptical anticipation of actual repeal.

As to American names for wines: For the first few years the vintners will stick to the foreign names for different types. But the name of the locality and of the producer will be featured until the public learns the American wine districts as well as Frenchmen, Germans and Italians know theirs.

The vintners want a bottle of, let's say, "Cuesta Encantada" to be known as

coming from that famous California ranch. And if it happens to be a bottle of "Rancho Hiram Johnson," they want the public to know just what type to expect—dry or sweet, red or white, still wine or champagne.

The wine makers are going to take the mystery out of wine-card terms, also. Wine *sec* is going to be *dry* wine, and the customer will be told that "dry wine" means that all the sugar of the grapes has been turned into alcohol. The sweet-wine drinker will know that his favorite brand contains some of the original grape, because alcohol has been added to stop fermentation before all the sugar has been converted by natural fermentation.

California's stake in our wine industry is the largest. Its production of 2,000,000 tons of grapes a year leads New York with a 75,000-ton production. Michigan produces 65,000 tons, Ohio 30,000 tons, with Illinois, Missouri and other states trailing along.

The second *début* of little La Vina means a lot more, however, than simply

prosperity to grape growers and the pleasure of consumers. Hundreds of men are already rehabilitating four hundred wineries in California and another hundred in other states. Makers of wine casks, bottles, labels, corks, glassware, coolers, wine restaurant fixtures; wine waiters, salesmen—dozens of other trades have gone into action.

Railroads enjoyed a high percentage of their gross revenue from the transportation of grapes in the best years. The cross-continent haul of legitimate beverages will make up for that. Glass-lined tank cars—which look like oil tankers—are being built. Fleets of trucks are being mobilized. A new industry is getting under way and it's all velvet because it's one that we weren't counting on.

Johnnie Barleycorn may be a useful citizen. Lotta Suds may be a nice, useful gal to have around the house. But sparkling little La Vina is the glamorous one, and the one with the unexpected gift. Give her a salute:

To-kay, La Vina!

Thank You, Jeeves! by P. G. Wodehouse (Continued from page 35)

in my bosom, so to speak, for years and years and years, gave a cough and there proceeded from his lips these incredible words:

"In that case, sir, I fear I must give my notice."

There was a tense silence. I stared at the man. "Jeeves," I said, and you wouldn't be far out in describing me as stunned, "did I hear you correctly?"

"Yes, sir."

"You actually contemplate leaving my entourage?"

"Only with the greatest reluctance, sir. But if it is your intention to play that instrument within the narrow confines of a country cottage . . ."

I drew myself up. "You say 'that instrument,' Jeeves. And you say it in an unpleasant, soupy voice. Am I to understand that you dislike this banjolele?"

"Yes, sir."

"You've stood it all right up to now."

"With grave difficulty, sir."

"And let me tell you that better men than you have stood worse than banjoleles. Are you aware that a certain Bulgarian, Elia Gospodinoff, once played the bagpipes for twenty-four hours without a stop? Ripley vouches for this in his 'Believe It or Not.'"

"Indeed, sir?"

"Well, do you suppose Gospodinoff's personal attendant kicked? A laughable idea. They are made of better stuff than that in Bulgaria. I am convinced that he was behind the young master from start to finish of his attempt on the Central European record, and I have no doubt frequently rallied round with restoratives. Be Bulgarian, Jeeves."

"No, sir. I fear I cannot recede from my position."

"But dash it, you say you *are* receding from your position."

"I should have said, I cannot abandon the stand which I have taken."

"Oh." I mused awhile. "You mean this, Jeeves?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have thought it all out carefully, weighing the pros and cons?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you are resolved?"

"Yes, sir. If it is really your intention to continue playing that instrument, I have no option but to leave."

The Wooster blood boiled over. Circumstances of recent years have so shaped themselves as to place this

blighter in a position which you might describe as that of a domestic Mussolini; but, forgetting this and sticking simply to cold fact, what is Jeeves, after all? A valet. A salaried attendant. And a fellow simply can't go on truckling—do I mean truckling? I know it begins with a *t*—to his valet forever. There comes a moment when he must remember that his ancestors did dashed well at the Battle of Crécy, and put the old foot down. This moment had now arrived.

"Then leave, dash it!"

"Very good, sir."

I confess that it was in somber mood that I assembled the stick, the hat and the lemon-colored some half-hour later, and strode out into the streets of London. But though I did not care to think what existence would be like without Jeeves, I had no thought of weakening. As I turned the corner into Piccadilly, I was a thing of fire and chilled steel; and I think in about another half-jiffy I should have been snorting, if not actually shouting the ancient battle cry of the Woosters, had I not observed on the sky line a familiar form.

This familiar form was none other than that of my boyhood friend, the fifth Baron Chuffnell—the chap, if you remember, whose aunt Myrtle I had seen the previous night hobnobbing with the hellhound, Glossop.

The sight of him reminded me that I was in the market for a country cottage, and that here was the very chap to supply same.

I wonder if I have ever told you about Chuffy. Stop me if I have. He's a fellow I've known more or less all my life, he and self having been at private school, Eton and Oxford together. He spends most of his time down at Chuffnell Regis on the coast of Somersetshire, where he owns an enormous place with about a hundred and fifty rooms and miles of rolling park land.

Don't run away, however, on the strength of this, with the impression that Chuffy is one of my wealthier cronies. He's dashed hard up, poor bloke, like most fellows who own land, and only lives at Chuffnell Hall because he's stuck with it and can't afford to live anywhere else.

If somebody came to him and offered to buy the place, he would kiss him on both cheeks. But who wants to buy a

house that size in these times? He can't even let it. So he sticks on there most of the year, with nobody to talk to except the local doctor and parson and his aunt Myrtle and her twelve-year-old son, Seabury, who live at the Dover House. A pretty moldy existence.

Chuffy also owns the village of Chuffnell Regis—not that that does him much good, either. I mean to say, the taxes on the estate and all the expenses of repairs and what not come to pretty nearly as much as he gets out of the rents, making the thing more or less of a washout. Still, he is the landlord and, as such, would doubtless have dozens of cottages at his disposal.

"You're the very chap I wanted to see, Chuffy," I said accordingly, after our initial what-ho-ing. "Come along with me to the Drones' for a bite of lunch. I can put a bit of business in your way."

He shook his head. Wistfully, I thought. "I'd like it, Bertie, but I'm due at the Carlton in five minutes. I'm lurching with a man."

"Well, bring him along, and we'll make it a threesome."

Chuffy smiled rather wanly. "I don't think you'd enjoy it, Bertie. He's Sir Roderick Glossop."

I goggled. It's always a shock, when you've just parted from Bloke A, to meet Bloke B and have Bloke B suddenly bring Bloke A into the conversation.

"I didn't know you knew Sir Roderick."

"I don't, very well. Just met him a couple of times. He's a great friend of my aunt Myrtle."

"Ah, that explains it! I saw her dining with him last night."

"Well, if you come to the Carlton, you'll see me lurching with him today."

"But Chuffy, old man, is this wise? Is this prudent? It's an awful ordeal breaking bread with this man. I know. I've done it."

"I dare say, but I've got to go through with it. I had an urgent wire from him yesterday telling me to come up and see him without fail, and what I'm hoping is that he wants to take the Hall for the summer, or knows somebody who does. No, I shall have to stick it, Bertie. But I'll dine with you tomorrow night."

I would have been all for it, of course, had the circs been different, but I had to refuse. I had made my arrangements and they could not be altered.

"I'm sorry, Chuffy. I'm leaving London tomorrow."

"You are?"

"Yes. The management of the building where I reside has offered me the choice between clearing out immediately or ceasing to play the banjolele. I elected to do the former. I am going to take a cottage in the country somewhere, and that's what I meant when I said I could put business in your way. Can you let me have a cottage?"

"I can give you your choice of half a dozen."

"It must be quiet and secluded. I shall be playing the banjolele a good deal."

"I've got the very shack for you. On the edge of the harbor and not a neighbor within a mile except Police-Sergeant Voules. And he plays the harmonium. You could do duets."

"Fine!"

"And there's a troupe of black-face minstrels down there this year. You could study their technique."

"Chuffy, it sounds like heaven."

"By the way, what has Jeeves got to say about all this? I shouldn't have thought he would have cared about leaving London."

I stiffened a little. "Jeeves has nothing to say on that or any other subject. We have parted brass rags."

"What!"

"Yes," I said, "from now on, Jeeves will take the high road and I'll take the low road. He had the immortal rind to tell me that if I didn't give up my banjolele he would resign. I accepted his portfolio."

"You've really let him go?"

"I have."

"Well, well, well!"

I waved a hand nonchalantly. "These things happen," I said. "I'm not pretending I'm pleased, of course, but I can bite the bullet. My self-respect would not permit me to accept the man's terms. You can push a Wooster just so far. 'Very good, Jeeves,' I said to him. 'So be it. I shall watch your future career with considerable interest.' And that was that."

We walked on for a bit in silence.

"So you've parted with Jeeves, have you?" said Chuffy in a thoughtful voice. "Well, well, well! Any objection to my looking in and saying good-by to him?"

"None whatever."

"I'll go round to the flat after lunch."

"Follow the green line," I said, and my manner was airy, and even careless. This parting of the ways with Jeeves had made me feel a bit as if I had just stepped on a bomb and was trying to piece myself together again in a bleak world, but we Woosters can keep the stiff upper lip.

I lunched at the Drones' and spent the afternoon there. I had much to think of. Chuffy's news that there was a troupe of black-face minstrels performing on the Chuffnell Regis sands had weighed the scale down on the side of the advantages of the place. The fact that I would be in a position to forgo with these experts and possibly pick up a hint or two from their banjolele on fingering and execution enabled me to bear with fortitude the prospect of being in a spot where I would have to meet the Dowager Lady Chuffnell and her son Seabury frequently.

I had often felt how tough it must be for poor old Chuffy, having this pair of pustules popping in and out all the time. And in saying this I am looking straight at little Seabury, a child who should have been strangled at birth. I have no positive proof, but I have always been

convinced that it was he who put the lizard in my bed the last time I stayed at the Hall.

But, as I say, I was prepared to put up with this couple in return for the privilege of being in close communication with a really hot banjolele. It was not, therefore, the thought of them which, as I returned to the flat to dress for dinner, was filling me with a strange moodiness.

No. We Woosters can be honest with ourselves. What was giving me the pip was the reflection that Jeeves was about to go out of my life. There never had been anyone like Jeeves, I felt, as I climbed somberly into the soup and fish, and there never would be.

A wave of not-unmanly sentiment poured over me. I was conscious of a pang. And when I stood before the mirror surveying that perfectly pressed coat, those superbly creased trousers, I came to a swift decision.

Abruptly, I went into the sitting room and leaned on the bell. "Jeeves," I said. "A word."

"Yes, sir?"

"Jeeves," I said, "touching on our conversation this morning."

"Yes, sir?"

"Jeeves," I said, "I have been thinking things over. I have come to the conclusion that we have both been hasty. Let us forget the past. You may stay on."

"It is very kind of you, sir, but—are you still proposing to continue the study of that instrument?"

I froze. "Yes, Jeeves, I am."

"Then I fear, sir . . ."

It was enough. I nodded haughtily. "Very good, Jeeves. That is all. I will, of course, give you an excellent recommendation."

"Thank you, sir. It will not be necessary. This afternoon I entered the employment of Lord Chuffnell."

I started. "Did Chuffy sneak round here this afternoon and scoop you in?"

"Yes, sir. I go with him to Chuffnell Regis in about a week's time."

"You do, do you? Well, it may interest you to know that I repair to Chuffnell Regis tomorrow. I have taken a cottage there. We shall meet at Philippi, Jeeves."

"Yes, sir."

"Or am I thinking of some other spot?"

"No, sir, Philippi is correct."

"Very good, Jeeves."

"Very good, sir."

Such, then, is the sequence of events

which led up to Bertram Wooster, on the morning of July the fifteenth, standing at the door of Seaview Cottage, Chuffnell Regis, surveying the scene before him through the smoke of a cigaret.

I had carried on according to plan, and here I was, on the fifth morning of my visit, absolutely in the pink. The sun was shining. The sky was blue. I wouldn't be exaggerating if I said that a great peace enveloped the soul.

A thing I never know when I'm telling a story is how much scenery to bung in. I've asked one or two scribes of my acquaintance, and their views differ. A fellow I met at a cocktail party in Bloomsbury said that he was all for describing kitchen sinks and frowsty bedrooms and squalor generally, but the beauties of Nature, no. Whereas, Freddie Oaker, of the Drones, who does tales of pure love for the weeklies under the pen name of Alicia Seymour, once told me that he reckoned that flowery meadows in springtime alone were worth at least a hundred quid a year to him.

Personally, I've always rather barred long descriptions of the terrain, so I will be on the brief side. As I stood there that morning, what the eye rested on was the following: There was a nice little splash

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of garden, containing a bush, a tree, a couple of flower beds, a lily pond with a statue of a nude child with a bit of a tummy on him, and to the right a hedge. Across this hedge, Brinkley, my new man, was chatting with our neighbor, Police-Sergeant Voules, who had looked in with a view to selling eggs.

There was another hedge straight ahead, with the garden gate in it, and over this one espied the placid waters of the harbor, which was much the same as any other harbor except that some time during the night a whacking great yacht had rolled up and cast anchor in it. And of all the objects under my immediate advisement I noted this yacht with the most pleasure and approval. White in color, in size resembling a young liner, it lent a decided tone to the Chuffnell Regis foreshore.

Well, such was the spreading prospect. Add a cat sniffing at a snail on the path and me at the door smoking a gasper, and you have the complete picture.

No, I'm a liar. Not quite the complete picture, because I had left the old two-seater in the road, and I could just see the top part of it. And at this moment the summer stillness was broken by the tooting of its horn, and I buzzed to the gate with all possible speed for fear some fiend in human shape was scratching my paint. Arriving at destination, I found a small boy in the front seat, pensively squeezing the bulb, and was about to administer one on the side of the head when I recognized Chuffy's cousin, Seabury, and stayed the hand.

"Hullo," he said.

"What ho," I replied.

My manner was reserved. The memory of that lizard in my bed still lingered. And while, as I say, I had no legal proof that this young blighter had been the author of the outrage, I entertained suspicions that were tantamount to certainty. So now I spoke with a marked coldness.

It didn't seem to jar him. He continued to regard me with that supercilious gaze which had got him so disliked among the right-minded. He was a smallish, freckled kid with airplane ears, and he had a way of looking at you as if you were something he had run into in the course of a slumming trip. In my Rogues' Gallery of repulsive small boys I suppose he would come about third—not quite so bad as my aunt Agatha's son, Young Thos., or Mr. Blumenfeld's Junior, but well ahead of little Sebastian Moon, my aunt Dahlia's Bonzo, and the field.

AFTER STARING at me for a moment, he spoke. "You're to come to lunch."

"Is Chuffy back, then?"

"Yes."

Well, of course, if Chuffy had returned, I was at his disposal. I shouted over the hedge to Brinkley that I would be absent from the midday meal and climbed into the car and we rolled off.

"When did he get back?"

"Last night."

"Shall we be lurching alone?"

"No."

"Who's going to be there?"

"Mother and me and some people."

"A party? I'd better go back and put on another suit."

"No."

"You think this one looks all right?"

"No, I don't. I think it looks rotten. But there isn't time."

This point settled, he passed into the silence for a while. He came out of it to give me some local gossip.

"Mother and I are living at the Hall

again. There's a smell at the Dower House."

"Even though you've left it?" I said, in my keen way.

He was not amused. "You needn't try to be funny. If you really want to know, I expect it's my mice."

"Your what?"

"I've started breeding mice and puppies. And of course they niff a bit," he added in a dispassionate sort of way. "But Mother thinks it's the drains. Can you give me five shillings?"

"What do you mean, five shillings?"

"I mean five shillings."

"I dare say. But what I want to know is, how have we suddenly got on to the subject? We were discussing mice, and you introduce this five-shilling motif."

"I want five shillings."

"Admitting that you may want that sum, why should I give it to you?"

"For protection."

"What from?"

"Just protection."

"You don't get any five shillings out of me."

"Oh, all right." He sat silent for a space. "Things happen to guys that don't kick in their protection-money," he said dreamily.

And on this note of mystery the conversation concluded, for we were moving up the drive of the Hall and on the steps I perceived Chuffy standing. I stopped the car and got out.

"Hullo, Bertie," said Chuffy.

"Welcome to Chuffnell Hall," I replied.

I looked round. The kid had vanished.

"I say, Chuffy," I said, "young blighted Seabury. What about him?"

"What about him?"

"Well, if you ask me, I should say he had gone off his rocker. He's just been trying to touch me for five bob and babbling about protection."

Chuffy laughed heartily. "Oh, that. That's his latest idea."

"How do you mean?"

"He's been seeing gangster films."

The scales fell from my eyes. "He's turned racketeer?"

"Yes. Rather amusing. He goes round collecting protection money from everybody. Makes a good thing out of it, too. Enterprising kid. I'd pay up if I were you. I have."

I was shocked. Not so much at the information that the foul child had given this additional evidence of a diseased mind as that Chuffy should be exhibiting this attitude of amused tolerance. I eyed him keenly. Right from the start I had thought his manner strange.

Usually, when you meet him, he is brooding over his financial situation and is rather apt to greet you with the lackluster eye and the careworn frown. He had been like that five days ago in London. What, then, had caused him to beam all over the place like this, and even to go so far as to speak of little Seabury with what amounted to something perilously near to indulgent affection? I sensed a mystery, and decided to apply the acid test.

"How is your Aunt Myrtle?"

"She's fine."

"Living at the Hall now, I hear?"

"Yes."

"Indefinitely?"

"Oh, yes."

It was enough.

One of the things, I must mention, which have always made poor old Chuffy's lot so hard is his aunt's attitude toward him. She has never quite been able to get over that matter of the succession. Seabury, you see, was not the son of Chuffy's late uncle, the fourth baron: he was simply something Lady Chuffnell had picked up en route in the

course of a former marriage and, consequently, did not come under the head of what the Peerage calls "issue." And, in matters of succession, if you aren't issue, you haven't a hope. When the fourth baron pegged out, accordingly, it was Chuffy who copped the title and estates.

All perfectly square and aboveboard, of course, but you can't get women to see these things, and the relic's manner, Chuffy has often told me, was consistently unpleasant. The result of this had been that the Dowager Lady Chuffnell was not one of Chuffy's best-loved buddies. Their relations had always been definitely strained, and what I'm driving at is that usually, when you mention her name, a look of pain comes into Chuffy's clean-cut face and he winces a little, as if you had probed an old wound.

NOW, HE was actually smiling. Even that remark about her living at the Hall had not jarred him. Obviously, there were mysteries here.

I tackled him squarely. "Chuffy," I said, "what does this mean?"

"What does what mean?"

"This bally cheeriness. You can't deceive me. Not old Hawkeye Wooster. Come clean, my lad; something is up. What is all the ruddy happiness about?"

He hesitated. For a moment he eyed me narrowly. "Can you keep a secret?"

"No."

"Well, it doesn't much matter, because it'll be in the Morning Post in a day or two. Bertie," said Chuffy in a hushed voice, "do you know what's happened? I'm getting Aunt Myrtle off this season."

"You mean somebody wants to marry her?"

"I do."

"Who is this half-wit?"

"Your old friend, Sir Roderick Glossop."

I was stupefied. "But old Glossop can't be contemplating matrimony?"

"Why not? He's been a widower more than two years."

"Oh, I dare say it's possible to make up some kind of a story for him. But what I mean is, he doesn't seem to go with orange blossoms and wedding cake."

"Well, there it is."

"Well, I'm dashed! But there's one thing, Chuffy, old man. This means that little Seabury will be getting a really testing stepfather, and old Glossop just the stepson I could have wished him. Both have been asking for something on these lines for years. But fancy any woman being mad enough to link her lot with his. Our Humble Heroines!"

"I wouldn't say the heroism was all on one side. About fifty-fifty, I should call it. There is lots of good in this Glossop, Bertie."

I could not accept this. It seemed to me loose thinking. "Aren't you going a bit far, old man? Admitted that he is taking your Aunt Myrtle off your hands—"

"And Seabury."

"And Seabury, true. But even so, would you really say there was good in the old pest? Remember all the stories I've told you about him. They show him in a very dubious light."

"Well, he's doing me a bit of good, anyway. Do you know what it was he wanted to see me about so urgently that day in London? He's found an American he thinks he can sell the Hall to."

"Not really?"

"Yes. If all goes well, I shall at last get rid of this blasted barracks and have a bit of money in my pocket. And all the credit will be due to Uncle Roderick, as I like to think of him. So you will kindly refrain, Bertie, from nasty cracks

at his expense. You must learn to love Uncle Roddie for my sake."

I shook my head. "No, Chuffy, I fear I cannot recede from my position."

"Well, go to hell, then," said Chuffy.

"Personally, I regard him as a life-saver."

"But are you sure this thing is going to come off? What would this fellow want with a place the size of the Hall?"

"Oh, that part of it is simple enough. He's a great pal of old Glossop's, and the idea is that he shall put up the cash and let Glossop run the house as a sort of country club for his nerve-patients."

"Why doesn't old Glossop simply rent it from you?"

"My dear ass, what sort of state do you suppose the place is in these days? You talk as if you could open it and step straight into it. Most of the rooms haven't been used for forty years. It wants at least fifteen thousand quid spent on it, to put it in repair. More. If some millionaire like this chap doesn't take it on, I shall have it on my hands the rest of my life."

"Oh, he's a millionaire, is he?"

"Yes, that part of it is all right. All I'm worrying about is getting his signature on the dotted line. Well, he's coming to lunch today, and it's going to be a good one, too. He's apt to soften up a good bit after a fat lunch, isn't he?"

"Unless he's got dyspepsia. Many American millionaires have. This man of yours may be one of those fellows who can't get outside more than a glass of milk and a dog-biscuit."

Chuffy laughed jovially. "Not much. Not old Stoker." He suddenly began to leap about like a lamb in the spring-time. "Hullo-ullo-ullo!"

A car had drawn up at the steps and was discharging passengers.

Passenger A was J. Washburn Stoker. Passenger B was his daughter, Pauline. Passenger C was his young son, Dwight. And Passenger D was Sir Roderick Glossop.

I must say I was pretty well a-twitter. It was about as juicy a biff as I had had for years. To have encountered this segment of the dead past in London would have been bad enough. Running into the gang down here like this, with the prospect of a luncheon party ahead, was a dashed sight worse. I removed the lid with as much courtly grace as I could muster up, but the face had colored with embarrassment and I was more or less gasping for air.

Chuffy was being the genial host. "Hullo-ullo-ullo! Here you all are. How are you, Mr. Stoker? How are you, Sir Roderick? Hullo, Dwight. Er—good morning, Miss Stoker. May I introduce my friend, Bertie Wooster. Mr. Stoker, my friend, Bertie Wooster. Dwight, my friend, Bertie Wooster. Miss Stoker, my friend, Bertie Wooster. Sir Roderick Glossop, my friend, Bertie . . . Oh, but you know each other already, don't you?"

I was still under the ether. You will agree that all this was enough to rattle any chap. I surveyed the mob. Old Stoker was glaring at me. Old Glossop was glaring at me. Young Dwight was staring at me. Only Pauline appeared to find no awkwardness in the situation. She was as cool as an oyster on the half-shell and as chirpy as a spring breeze. We might have been meeting by appointment. Where Bertram could find only a tentative "Pip-pip!" she bounded forward, full of speech, and grabbed the old hand warmly.

"Well, well, well! Old Colonel Wooster in person! Fancy finding you here, Bertie! I called you up in London, but they told me you had left."

"Yes. I came down here."

"I see you did, you little blob of sunshine. Well, sir, this has certainly made my day. You're looking fine, Bertie. Don't you think he's looking lovely, Father?"

Old Stoker appeared reluctant to set himself up as a judge of male beauty. He made a noise like a pig swallowing half a cabbage, but refused to commit himself further. Dwight, a solemn child, was drinking me in in silence. Sir Roderick, who had turned purple, was now fading away to a lighter shade, but still looked as if his finer feelings had sustained a considerable wallop.

At this moment, however, the Dowager Lady Chuffnell came out. She was one of those powerful women who look like female Masters of Hounds, and she handled the mob scene with quiet efficiency. Before I knew where I was, the whole gang had gone indoors, and I was alone with Chuffy. He was staring at me in an odd manner and doing a bit of lower-lip biting.

"I didn't know you knew these people, Bertie."

"I met them in New York."

"You saw something of Miss Stoker there?"

"A little."

"Only a little?"

"Quite a little."

"I should have imagined you were great friends."

"Oh, no. Just fairly pally. She goes on like that with everyone."

"She does?"

"Oh, yes. Big-hearted, you see."

"She has a delightful, impulsive, generous, spontaneous nature, hasn't she?"

"Absolutely."

"Beautiful girl, Bertie."

"Oh, very."

"And charming."

"Oh, most."

"I saw a good deal of her in London."

"Yes?"

"We went to the Zoo and Madame Tussaud's together."

"I see. And what does she seem to feel about this buying-the-house binge?"

"She seems all for it."

"Tell me, laddie," I said, anxious to get off the current subj., "how do the prospects look?"

He knitted the Chuffnell brow. "Sometimes good. Sometimes not."

"I understand."

"This Stoker chap makes me nervous. He's friendly enough as a general rule, but I can't help feeling that at any moment he may fly off the handle and scratch the entire fixture. You can't tell me if there are any special subjects to avoid when talking to him, can you?"

I considered. "Well, if I were you," I said, "I wouldn't harp too much on the topic of B. Wooster. I mean, if you were thinking of singing my praises—"

"I wasn't."

"Well, don't. He doesn't like me."

"Why not?"

"Just one of those unreasonable antipathies. And I was thinking, old man, if it's all the same to you, it might be better if I didn't join the throng at the luncheon table. You can tell your aunt I've got a headache."

"Well, if the sight of you is going to infuriate him . . . I'm glad you told me. You had better sneak off."

"I will."

"And I suppose I ought to be joining the others."

He went indoors, and I started to take a turn or two up and down the gravel. I was glad to be alone. I wished to muse upon this matter of his attitude towards Pauline Stoker.

I wonder if you would mind just going back a bit and running the mental eye



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over that part of our conversation which had to do with the girl.

"Anything strike you about it?"

No?"

Oh, well, to get the full significance, of course, you ought to have been there and observed him. I am a man who can read faces, and Chuffy's had seemed to me highly suggestive. Not only had its expression, as he spoke of Pauline, been that of a stuffed frog with a touch of the Soul's Awakening about it, but it had also turned a fairly deepish crimson in color. The tip of the nose had wiggled, and there had been embarrassment in the manner. The result being that I had become firmly convinced that the old schoolmate had copped it properly.

Quick work, of course, seeing that he had only known the adored object a few days, but Chuffy is like that. A man of impulse and hot-blooded impetuosity. You find the girl, and he does the rest.

WELL, IF it was so, it was all right with me. Nothing of the dog in the manger about Bertram. As far as I was concerned, Pauline Stoker could hitch up with anyone she liked and she would draw a hearty "Go to it!" from the discarded suitor.

You know how it is on quiet reflection in these affairs. For a time the broken heart, and then suddenly the healing conviction that one is jolly well out of it. I could still see that Pauline was one of the most beautiful girls I had ever met, but of the ancient fire which had caused me to bung my heart at her feet one night there remained not a trace.

Analyzing this, if analyzing is the word I want, I came to the conclusion that this changed outlook was due to the fact that she was so dashed dynamic. Unquestionably an eyeful, Pauline Stoker had the grave defect of being one of those girls who want you to come and swim a mile before breakfast and rout you out when you are trying to snatch a wink of sleep after lunch for a merry five sets of tennis. And now that the scales had fallen from my eyes, I could see that what I required for the rôle of Mrs. Bertram Wooster was something more on the lines of Janet Gaynor.

But in Chuffy's case these objections fell to the ground. He, you see, is very much on the dynamic side himself. He rides, swims, shoots, chivvies foxes with loud cries, and generally bustles about. He and this P. Stoker would make the perfect pair, and I felt that if there was anything I could do to push the thing along, it should be done unstintedly.

So when at this point I saw Pauline coming out of the house and bearing down on me, obviously with a view to exchanging notes, I did not leg it but greeted her with a bright "What ho!" and allowed her to steer me into the shelter of the rhododendron shrubbery.

All of which goes to show to what lengths a Wooster will proceed when it is a question of helping a pal, because the last thing I really wanted was to be closeted with this girl. As our relations had been severed by post and the last time we had forgathered we had been an engaged couple, I wasn't quite sure what was the correct note to strike.

However, the thought that I might be able to put in a word for old Chuffy nerved me to the ordeal, and we parked ourselves on a rustic bench and got down to the agenda.

"How perfectly extraordinary finding you here, Bertie," she began. "What are you doing in these parts?"

"I am temporarily in retirement," I replied, pleased to find the conversation opening on what I might call an

unemotional note. "I needed a place where I could play the banjolele in solitude, and I took this cottage."

"What cottage?"

"I have a cottage down by the harbor."

"You must have been surprised to see us."

"I was."

"More surprised than pleased, eh?"

"Well, of course, old thing, I'm always delighted to meet you, but when it comes to your father and old Glossop . . ."

"He's not one of your greatest admirers, is he? By the way, Bertie, do you keep cats in your bedroom?"

I stiffened a little. "There have been cats in my bedroom, but the incident to which you allude is one that is susceptible of a ready—"

"All right. Never mind. Take it as read. But you ought to have seen father's face when he heard about it. Talking of father's face, I should get a big laugh if I saw it now!"

I could not follow this. Goodness knows, I'm as fond of a chuckle as the next man, but J. Washburn Stoker's face had never made me so much as smile. He was a cove who always reminded me of a pirate of the Spanish Main—a massive blighter and piercing-eyed, to boot. So far from laughing at the sight of him, I had never yet failed to feel absolutely spineless in his presence.

"If he suddenly came round the corner, I mean, and found us with our heads together like this. He's convinced I'm still pining for you. He looks on himself as the stern Victorian father who has parted the young lovers and has got to exercise ceaseless vigilance to keep them from getting together again, little knowing that you never had a happier moment in your life than when you got my letter."

"No, I say!"

"Bertie, be honest. You know you were delighted."

"No, dash it, really! I always esteemed you most highly."

"You did what? Where do you pick up these expressions?"

"Well, I suppose from Jeeves, mostly. My late man. He had a fine vocabulary."

"When you say 'late,' do you mean he's dead? Or just unpunctual?"

"He's left me. He didn't like me playing the banjolele. Words passed, and he is now with Chuffy."

"Chuffy?"

"Lord Chuffnell."

"Oh?" There was a pause. "Have you known Lord Chuffnell long?" she asked.

"Oh, rather."

"You're great friends?"

"Bosom is the *mot juste*."

"Good. I hoped you were. I wanted to talk to you about him. I can confide in you, can't I, Bertie?"

"Of course."

"I knew I could. That's the comfort of having been engaged to a man. When you break it off, you feel such a sister."

"You mean, you look on me as a brother?"

"Yes, as a brother. How quick you are. And I want you to be very brotherly now. Tell me about Marmaduke."

"I don't think I know him."

"Lord Chuffnell, idiot!"

"Is his name Marmaduke? Well, well! How true it is that one doesn't know how the other half of the world lives, what? Marmaduke!" I said, laughing heartily. "I remember he was always evasive and secretive about it at school."

She seemed annoyed. "It's a beautiful name!"

I shot one of my swift, keen glances at her. This, I felt, must mean

something. Nobody would say Marmaduke was a beautiful name without good reason. And sure enough, the eyes were gleaming and the epidermis was a pretty pink.

"Hullo!" I said. "Hullo, hullo, hullo!" Her demeanor was defiant. "All right, all right!" she said. "Less of the Sherlock stuff. I'm not trying to hide anything. I was just going to tell you."

"You love this—ha, ha! Excuse me—this Marmaduke?"

"I'm crazy about him."

"Good! Well, if what you say is really so, be prepared for tidings of great joy. I'm a pretty close observer, and a certain bulbous look in the old boy's eyes when a recent conversation happened to turn in your direction has convinced me that he is deeply enamored of you."

She wiggled her shoulder impatiently. "I know that, you chump. Do you think a girl can't tell?"

I was nonplused. "Well, if he loves you and you love him, I fail to comprehend what you are beefing about."

"Why, can't you understand? He's obviously dippy about me, but not a yip from him."

"He will not speak?"

"Not a syllable."

"Well, why would he? Surely you realize that there is a certain decency in these matters, a certain decorum? Naturally he wouldn't say anything yet. Dash it, give the man a chance. He's only known you five days."

"I sometimes feel that he was a king in Babylon when I was a Christian slave."

"What makes you think that?"

"I just do."

"Well, you know best, of course. Very doubtful, I should have said myself. And anyway, what do you want me to do about it?"

"Well, you're a friend of his. You could give him a hint. You could tell him there's no need for cold feet."

"It is not cold feet. It is delicacy. As I just explained, we men have our code in these matters. We may fall in love pretty nippily, but we feel that it ill beseems us to make a bee line for a girl like a man charging into a railway restaurant for a bowl of soup."

"What utter nonsense! You asked me to marry you after you had known me two weeks."

"Ah, but there you were dealing with one of the Wild Woosters."

"Well, I can't see—"

"Yes?" I said. "Proceed. You have our ear."

BUT SHE was looking past me at something; and, turning, I perceived that we were no longer alone.

There, standing in an attitude of respectful courtliness, was Jeeves. I nodded affably. This man and I might have severed our professional relations, but a Wooster is always debonair. "Ah, Jeeves."

"Good afternoon, sir."

Pauline appeared interested. "Is this Jeeves?"

"This is Jeeves."

"So you don't like Mr. Wooster's banjolele?"

"No, miss."

I preferred that this delicate matter be not discussed, and it may be, in consequence, that I spoke a little curtly. "Well, Jeeves? What is it?"

"Mr. Stoker, sir. He is inquiring after Miss Stoker's whereabouts."

I turned to the girl with an air of courteous dismissal. "You'd better push along."

"You won't forget what I said?"

"The matter," I assured her, "shall have my prompt attention."

She legged it, and Jeeves and I were alone together in the great solitude. I lighted a cigaret nonchalantly.

"Well, Jeeves, we meet again."

"Yes, sir."

"Philippi, what?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope you're getting on all right with Chuffy?"

"Everything is most pleasant, sir. I trust your new personal attendant is giving satisfaction?"

"Oh, quite. A sterling fellow."

"I am gratified to hear it, sir."

There was a pause. "Er—Jeeves," I said.

A rummy thing. It had been my intention, after exchanging these few civilities, to nod carelessly and leave the fellow. But it's so dashed difficult to break the habit of years. I mean to say, here was I and here was Jeeves, and a problem had been put up to me of just the type concerning which I had always been wont to seek his advice and counsel, and now something seemed to keep me rooted to the spot. I found myself irresistibly impelled to consult him just as if there had been no rift at all.

"Er—Jeeves," I said. "I should like, if you have a moment to spare, to split a word with you."

"Certainly, sir."

"I wish to canvass your views regarding old Chuffy."

"Very good, sir."

"You will agree with me that something's got to be done about the fifth baron, I take it?"

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

I was impatient with this—what the dickens is the word I want? "Come, come, Jeeves. You know what I mean as well as I do. You can't tell me you've been in his employment for nearly a week without observing and deducing and forming your conclusions."

"Am I correct in supposing, sir, that you are alluding to his lordship's feelings towards Miss Stoker?"

"Exactly."

"I am, of course, aware that his lordship is experiencing for the young lady a sentiment deeper and warmer than that of ordinary friendship, sir."

"Would I be going too far if I said that he was potty about her?"

"No, sir. The expression would meet the facts of the case quite adequately."

"Very well, then. Now, mark this. She, too, loves, Jeeves."

"Indeed, sir?"

"She was telling me so specifically when you came along. She confessed herself dippy about the man. And she's extremely upset. Her feminine intuition has enabled her to read his secret. She detects the love-light in his eyes. And she is all for it. And what is worrying her is that he does not tell his love, but lets concealment like—like what, Jeeves?"

"A worm i' the bud, sir."

"Feed on his something."

"Damask cheek, sir."

"Damask? You're sure?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Well, then, what on earth is it all about? He loves her. She loves him. So what's the snag? In conversing with her just now, I advanced the theory that what was holding him back was delicacy, but I didn't really believe it. I know Chuffy. A swift performer, if ever there was one. If he didn't propose to a girl the first week, he would think he was losing his grip. Yet now look at him. Missing on every cylinder. Why?"

"His lordship is a gentleman of scruples, sir."

"How do you mean?"

"He feels that, being of straitened means himself, he has not the right to propose marriage to a young lady as wealthy as Miss Stoker."

"But dash it, Love laughs at—no, it doesn't—it's at locksmiths, isn't it?"

"At locksmiths; yes, sir."

"Besides, she isn't as rich as all that. Just comfortably off, I should have said."

"No, sir. Mr. Stoker's fortune amounts to as much as fifty million dollars."

"What! You're talking through your hat, Jeeves."

"No, sir. I understand that was the sum which he inherited recently under the will of the late Mr. George Stoker."

I was stunned. "Good Lord, Jeeves! Has Second-cousin George kicked the bucket and left all his money to old Stoker?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now I see. Now I understand. This explains everything. I was wondering how he managed to be going about buying vast estates. That yacht in the harbor is his, of course."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well, well! But dash it, George must have had nearer relations."

"Yes, sir. I understand that he disliked them all."

"You know about him, then?"

"Yes, sir. I saw a good deal of his personal attendant when we were in New York. A man named Benstead."

"He was potty, wasn't he?"

"Certainly extremely eccentric, sir."

"Any chance of one of those other relations contesting the will?"

"I do not imagine so, sir. But in such a case Mr. Stoker would rely on Sir Roderick Glossop, of course, to testify that the late Mr. Stoker, while possibly somewhat individual in his habits, was nevertheless perfectly sane. The testimony of so eminent a mental specialist as Sir Roderick would be unassailable."

"Then there's no chance of Miss Stoker ever being anything except the heiress of a bird with fifty million dollars shoved away behind the brick in the fireplace?"

"Virtually none, sir."

I brooded on this. "H'm. And unless old Stoker buys the Hall, Chuffy will continue to be Kid Lazarus, the man without a bean. One spots the drama of the situation. And yet, why, Jeeves? Why all this fuss about money?"

"Yes, sir. But his lordship has peculiar views on this particular matter."

I mused. Yes, I reflected, it was quite true. Chuffy is a fellow who has always been odd on the subject of money. It's something to do with the Pride of the Chuffnells, I suppose. I know that for years and years I have been trying to lend him of my plenty, but he has always refused to put the bite on me.

"It's difficult," I said. "One fails for the moment to see the way out. And yet you may be wrong, Jeeves. After all, you're only guessing."

"No, sir. His lordship did me the honor to confide in me."

"Really? How did the subject come up?"

"Mr. Stoker had expressed a wish that I should enter his employment. He approached me in the matter. I informed his lordship. His lordship instructed me to hold out hopes."

"You can't mean that he wants you to leave him and go to old Stoker?"

"No, sir. He specifically stated the reverse, with a good deal of vehemence. But he was anxious that I should not break off the negotiations with a definite refusal until the sale of Chuffnell Hall had gone through."

"I see. I follow his strategy. He wanted you to jolly old Stoker along

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till he had signed the fatal papers?"

"Precisely, sir. It was this conversation that led up to his lordship's revealing his position as concerns Miss Stoker. Until his financial status is sufficiently sound to justify him in doing so, his self-respect will not permit him to propose marriage to the young lady."

"Silly ass!"

"I would not have ventured to employ precisely that term myself, sir, but I confess that I regard his lordship's attitude as somewhat hyper-quixotic."

"We must talk him out of it."

"Impossible, sir, I fear. I endeavored to do so myself, but my arguments were of no avail. His lordship has a complex."

"A what?"

"A complex, sir. It seems that he once witnessed a musical comedy, in which one of the *dramatis personæ* was a certain impecunious peer, Lord Wotwotleigh, who was endeavoring to marry an American heiress, and this individual appears to have made a lasting impression on his mind. He said that he refused to place himself in a position where comparisons might be instituted."

"But suppose the sale of the house does not go through?"

"In that case, I fear, sir—"

"The damask cheek will continue to do business at the old stand?"

"Exactly, sir."

"What would you advise, Jeeves?"

"I fear I have nothing to suggest at the moment, sir. The difficulty being essentially a psychological one, I find myself somewhat baffled. As long as the image of Lord Wotwotleigh persists in his lordship's conscience, I fear that there is nothing to be done."

"Of course there is. Why this strange weakness, Jeeves? It is not like you. Obviously, the fellow must be shoved over the brink."

"I do not quite follow you, sir."

"Of course you do. The thing's perfectly clear. Here's old Chuffy, for the nonce just hanging dumbly round the girl. What he needs is a jolt. If he thought there was grave danger of some other bloke scooping her up, wouldn't that make him forget these dashed silly ideas of his and charge in?"

"Jealousy is undoubtedly an extremely powerful motivating force, sir."

"Do you know what I am going to do?"

"No, sir."

"I am going to kiss Miss Stoker and take care that Chuffy sees me do it."

"Really, sir, I should not advocate—"

"**P**EACE, JEEVES. I have the whole thing taped out. It came to me in a flash as we were talking. After lunch, I shall draw Miss Stoker aside to this seat. You will arrange that Chuffy follows her. Waiting till I see the whites of his eyes, I shall fold her in a close embrace. If that doesn't work, nothing will."

"I consider that you would be taking a decided risk, sir. His lordship is in a highly emotional condition."

"Well, a Wooster can put up with a punch in the eye for the sake of a pal. No, Jeeves, I desire no further discussion. The thing is settled. All that remains is to fix the times. I suppose lunch would be over by about two-thirty. . . . Incidentally, I'm not going in to lunch myself. I shall remain out here. Bring me some sandwiches and a half-bot of the best."

"Very good, sir."

"And by the way, the French windows of the dining room will be open in weather like this. Sneak near them during lunch and bend an ear. Some-

thing of importance might be said."

"Very good, sir."

"Put plenty of mustard on the sandwiches."

"Very good, sir."

"And at two-thirty inform Miss Stoker that I should like a word with her. And at two-thirty-one inform Lord Chuffnell that she would like a word with him. The rest you can leave to me."

"Very good, sir."

There was a fairly longish interval before Jeeves returned with the food-stuffs. I threw myself on them with some abandon.

"You've been the dickens of a time."

"I followed your instructions, sir, and listened at the dining-room window."

"Oh? With what result?"

"I was not able to hear anything that gave an indication of Mr. Stoker's views regarding the purchase of the house, but he appeared in affable mood."

"That's promising. Full of sparkle, eh?"

"Yes, sir. He was inviting all those present to a party on his yacht."

"He's staying on here, then?"

"For some little time, I gathered, sir. Apparently something has gone wrong with the propeller of the vessel."

"He probably gave it one of his looks. And this party?"

"It appears that it is Master Dwight Stoker's birthday tomorrow, sir. The party, I gathered, was to be in celebration of the event."

"Was the suggestion well received?"

"Extremely, sir. Though Master Seabury appeared to experience a certain chagrin at Master Dwight's somewhat arrogant assertion that he betted this was the first time that Master Seabury had ever so much as smelled a yacht."

"What did he say?"

"He retorted that he had been on millions of yachts."

"And then?"

"From a peculiar noise which he made with his mouth, I received the impression that Master Dwight was skeptical concerning this claim. But at this moment Mr. Stoker threw oil upon the troubled waters by announcing his intention of hiring the troupe of Negro minstrels to perform at the party. It appears that his lordship had mentioned their presence in Chuffnell Regis."

"And that went well?"

"Very well indeed, sir. Except that Master Seabury said that he betted Master Dwight had never heard Negro minstrels before. From a remark passed afterwards by her ladyship, I gathered that Master Dwight had then thrown a potato at Master Seabury; and for a while a certain unpleasantness threatened. But the imbroglio was fortunately short-lived. Master Dwight protested that his hand had slipped, and the apology was gracefully received."

"Well, bustle back and see if you can hear some more."

"Very good, sir."

I finished my sandwiches and half-bot, and lighted a cigaret, wishing that I had told Jeeves to bring me some coffee. But you don't have to tell Jeeves things like that. In due course, up he rolled with the steaming cupful.

"Luncheon has just concluded, sir."

"Ah! Did you see Miss Stoker?"

"Yes, sir. I informed her that you desired a word with her, and she will be here shortly."

"Why not now?"

"His lordship engaged her in conversation immediately after I had given her your message."

"Had you told him to come here, too?"

"Yes, sir."

"No good, Jeeves. I see a flaw. They will arrive together."

"No, sir. On observing his lordship making in this direction, I can easily detain him for a moment on some matter."

"When did you see Miss Stoker?"

"About a quarter of an hour ago, sir."

"Funny she doesn't turn up. Ah!"

I had observed a gleam of white among the bushes. The next moment, the girl appeared. She was looking more beautiful than ever, her eyes, in particular, shining like twin stars. Nevertheless, I did not waver in my view that I was jolly glad it was Chuffy who, if all went well, was going to marry her, and not me. Odd, how a girl may be a perfect knock-out, and yet one can still feel that to be married to her would give one the absolute pip. That's Life, I suppose.

"**H**ULLO, BERTIE," said Pauline. "What's all this about your having a headache? You seem to have been doing yourself pretty well, in spite of it."

"I found I could peck a bit. You had better take these things back, Jeeves."

"Very good, sir."

He gathered up the plate, cup and bottle, and disappeared. And whether I was sorry to see him go or not, I couldn't have said. I was feeling a good deal worked up. Taut, if you know what I mean. On edge. Tense.

Pauline had grabbed my arm. "Bertie," she was saying . . .

But at this point I caught sight of Chuffy's head over a shrub, and I felt that the moment had come to act. I waited no longer. Folding the girl in my arms, I got home on her right eyebrow. It wasn't one of my best, I will admit, but it was a kiss within the meaning of the act, and I fancied that it ought to produce results.

And so, no doubt, it would have done, had the fellow who entered, left, at this critical point been Chuffy. But it wasn't. What with only being able to catch a fleeting glimpse of a Homburg hat through the foliage, I appeared to have made an unfortunate floater. The bloke who now stood before us was old Pop Stoker, and I confess I found myself a prey to a certain embarrassment.

It was, you must admit, not a little awkward. Here was an anxious father who combined with a strong distaste for Bertram Wooster the notion that his daughter was madly in love with him; and the first thing he saw when he took an after-luncheon saunter was the two of us locked in a close embrace. It was enough to give any parent the jitters, and I was not surprised that his demeanor was that of stout Cortez staring at the Pacific.

A fellow with fifty millions in his kick doesn't have to wear the mask. If he wants to give any selected bloke a nasty look, he gives him a nasty look. He was giving me one now.

Fortunately, the thing did not go beyond looks. Say what you like against civilization, it comes in dashed handy in a crisis like this. It may be a purely artificial code that keeps a father from hoofing his daughter's kisser when they are fellow guests at a house, but at this moment I felt I could do with all the purely artificial codes that were going.

There was just one instant when his foot twitched and it seemed as if what you might call the primitive J. Washburn Stoker was about to find self-expression. Then civilization prevailed. With another look he collected Pauline, and the next moment I was alone and at liberty to think the thing over.

Romance 3.2 (Continued from page 73)

like a man and a brother. "Sure. That's the bad news."

She did not get down to the beach for a day or two; that is, before breakfast. House guests had arrived. Also, her father, after various choleric long-distance calls, departed suddenly in a plane for New York. On the beach at the proper bathing hour Crystal saw the lifeguard. She wasn't the only one who saw him.

"Mercy," breathed little Mrs. Elkins, the widow from Syosset, and promptly proceeded to drown. She weighed ninety pounds, every pound full of the devil.

The lifeguard yanked her out and deposited her unceremoniously in Crystal's arms. Crystal twinkled at him demurely. "Can't you do your own saving?" the lifeguard demanded, and departed down the beach to keep an eye on a handful of Gold Coast youngsters.

Mrs. Elkins sat up and asked, blinking, "Where is he?" and Crystal said gently, "He's gone. And Millie, he isn't a deposed Georgian prince. He's a tough baby from Chicago. Go down on someone else's beat next time."

"I don't know what you're talking about!" cried Mrs. Elkins, aggrieved.

Mr. Collins returned from New York. He had aged a couple of years and was insupportably rude to his guests and barked at Crystal. He talked retrenchment and wired wild instructions to his brokers.

Crystal wasn't very much alarmed. This was all in her father's day's work. She couldn't remember the time when he wasn't stewing about something or other and waiting for something to break. It generally broke in his direction and made him another million.

Shortly after Mr. Collins came back from New York, two young men arrived at Palm Beach, by different trains, and took up their lodgings. One was tall and slender and dark, with a curious poker face and keen eyes. The other was short and slender and fair, with a frank, open expression and a pleasant manner, and within three hours of their arrival, both were interested in Crystal.

The short fair gentleman, one Lansing Carruthers, was presented to her at Bradley's by her father. Tom, it appeared, had met Mr. Carruthers somewhere or other. The tall dark gentleman wasn't presented to her at all.

Mr. Carruthers appeared stricken by an almost fatal fascination. He managed to be wherever Crystal was at almost any given time. As for the tall dark gentleman, whose hotel-registered name Crystal, by bribery and corruption, discovered was Crawley—he, too, managed to be wherever Crystal was, always at a distance, but with increasing obnoxiousness.

He appeared to be alone, as was also Mr. Carruthers. He would sit at a table at the tea hour and watch Crystal as she danced. This disconcerted her. She danced often with Mr. Carruthers, and that embarrassed her considerably because Mr. Carruthers reached only to her shoulder. And whenever she passed the table where Mr. Crawley sat, she found his dark eyes intent upon her.

"You know," murmured Mr. Carruthers, "you're the most beautiful woman here. I—I've been reading about you, a lot; seeing your pictures. Never had the nerve to ask old Tom to introduce me. Not until recently. Ran into him in town; told him I thought of coming down here."

Mr. Carruthers wasn't, of course, romantic. Still, he was soothing sirup.

And Mr. Crawley was romance personified.

He was there a week before he spoke to her. The occasion wasn't particularly exciting. Crystal and Mr. Carruthers were walking away from the gaming tables at the Beach Club. Crystal dropped her handkerchief. And before Mr. Carruthers could retrieve it, there was Mr. Crawley—his face expressionless but his eyes watchful, burning—bending from the waist, straightening up, the handkerchief in his hand. He said, "You dropped this, I believe?" in a deep and quite toneless voice.

Crystal took it from him, the silly wisp of lace and chiffon. She was conscious of looking her best in a backless black velvet frock, made on the classic lines which were her own, and affording a marvelous contrast to the creamy expanse of skin which no exposure to sun lamp or sun itself could tinge with bronze.

She said, "Thank you so much," and felt her heart flutter. Did she fancy the slightest pressure of the fingers which offered her the handkerchief? She smiled and flushed from sheer excitement and embarrassment, and Mr. Crawley smiled back, watchful and intent.

The next day a gardenia arrived, without a card.

And the next

And the next.

Every day, a single gardenia, the texture and color of her own skin. A little box, and no name. Every day she wore the gardenia under Mr. Crawley's somber dark gaze.

Years ago, someone wrote a book about a lady of high degree and a gentleman who loved her but who never spoke with her, a gentleman who sent her, until he died, white violets, nameless and fragrant. In her childhood Crystal had read that book. She recalled it now, vaguely. She thought, I wonder if he thinks that I—?

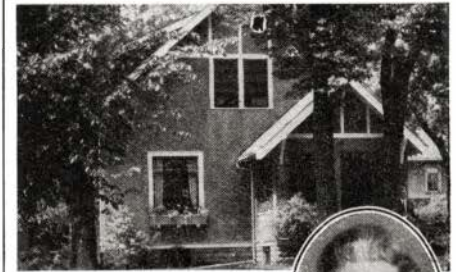
But of course not. Impeccably dressed, evidently blessed with plenty of this world's goods, living at the most expensive of the hotels, and in bearing and manner and physical appearance the very epitome of a gentleman—it was beyond reason that Mr. Crawley should think her socially sacrosanct.

After all, mused Crystal, taking her siesta in the villa patio, who was Tom Collins originally? A wild red-headed genius of a madman, self-educated and self-sufficient, out of the Middle West, with all the delicacy and finesse of a battering ram, driving his way to fame and fortune.

She was so immersed in the thought of Mr. Crawley that she took little heed of the mincing Mr. Carruthers, who still pursued her. And when he suggested that they drive to Miami, just the two of them, some moonlit evening, to dine and dance and then drive back, she consented without knowing what she had said and almost floored Mr. Carruthers, who for two weeks had been endeavoring to detach Miss Collins from her circle of friends and her preoccupied parent.

It so happened that Tom Collins again made a hurried trip to New York just before the day fixed for the excursion to Miami. He flew and he flew early, and after he had gone Crystal went down to the beach for a morning swim to think things over. There was Smith the lifeguard, slightly sardonic and browner than ever. She had seen him every day; attended by Mr. Carruthers, she had appeared on the beach and taken her swim

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at the fashionable hour, accompanied by the ceaseless chatter of Mr. Carruthers and the knowledge that at not too great a distance Mr. Crawley swam and watched and waited.

"Well," said the lifeguard, "I see you've hooked a fish."

Crystal clasped her hands about her knees and looked out at the blue horizon. She said dreamily, "He's never spoken to me."

"Are you goofy?" asked the lifeguard. "Every time I see him he's talking. What in thunder does he find to say?"

"Oh." Crystal turned her blue, bemused gaze upon him and smiled. She said, "You mean Lansing Carruthers?"

IF HE'S the little blond geranium with the rustless wrist watch and the wave in his hair, I do. Seems to me I've seen him somewhere before. Can't place him. It wasn't," he decided, grinning, "in any lumber camp. Or at the A. C. Or the training camp."

"Training camp?" asked Crystal.

"Once," said Smith the lifeguard, "I thought I'd give Tunney a run for his money. At that, I got fairly far. Smashing Smith, that's me. But I decided that there wasn't much future in it; or, rather, it was decided for me over the count of ten and a hell of a fine wallop administered by a large and ferocious Hunky. No, it wasn't at the training camp that I saw your friend Carruthers. But where was it?"

Crystal wasn't interested. She began to think that somehow the lifeguard personified a sort of indifferent, detached and impersonal fate. It wasn't until after that first strange morning with him on the beach that Crawley the mysterious had come into her life. She said suddenly, a little tremulous, "There's—there's someone. He hasn't spoken to me. but—" She told Smith about the gardenias.

Smith looked at her a trifle more sardonically than before. He asked, "That means a lot to you, huh?"

She nodded. She said, "Even if he never speaks, never acknowledges that he's sent them. Oh, especially, I think, if he doesn't. Can't you see? I mean, he hasn't tried to meet me, and he sends—I think he sends—the flowers. It's—its romantic," said Crystal, flushing. "It—" She looked up frankly, more wistfully than she knew, her eyes bluer than the sky of Florida, bluer than the Pacific Ocean. "I mean, I never thought that anyone could go romantic over a girl who stands six feet and weighs—never mind what I weigh," she ended hastily.

The lifeguard laughed. Then he sobered. The lifeguard said absurdly, "You poor little kid."

For the first time in her life, or at least since her babyhood, a man had called Crystal Collins "little." And she never even noticed it, staring out to the horizon, thinking, wrapped in her vague and warming golden dreams.

"But Carruthers," the lifeguard was insisting, "now where have I seen that guy before?"

Crystal shook her head. She said, "It doesn't matter. He's from New York, I think. Dad knows him." She added indifferently, "He's amusing. I'm driving to Miami with him this evening to dine and dance. But—"

"You going alone with him?" asked the lifeguard, not too idly.

Crystal nodded.

"Where's your old man?" asked the lifeguard, a conservative gentleman.

Crystal widened her eyes at him and laughed. "Chaperons went out before

speaking-easies came in. Besides, I can take care of myself—more's the pity."

"Is that so?" asked the lifeguard.

When the gardenias arrived later that morning there were three of them, and still no card. Crystal treasured them in the ice box until evening. And when at dusk she stepped into her roadster and, with Mr. Lansing Carruthers beside her, took off in the direction of Miami, she was wearing them.

It was an amusing trip. Mr. Carruthers could be most entertaining. It was pleasant to dine with him, less pleasant to dance with him until suddenly, looking over his crimped blond head, Crystal discovered a tall dark gentleman at a table near by, his eyes intent and watchful and grave.

For the first time in years Crystal stumbled in her even gyrations and stepped heavily on her partner's foot. Mr. Carruthers made a few deleted remarks in a harsh tone quite unlike his usual mellifluous accents.

Crystal, scarlet, stared down at him with horror. "I—I'm so sorry," she said.

Mr. Carruthers recovered himself, apologized, and limping, guided her back to their table.

It was fairly late when they started home. As they drove away from the town, a car which had been following them gathered momentum. Mr. Carruthers who was driving, at his own suggestion, looked nervously in the mirror. It looked very much to Mr. Carruthers as if he were being trailed. He didn't exactly like the idea.

But he knew another road. A pretty road, and not much used. He turned off upon it.

"Why?" asked Crystal idly, fingering the withering gardenias gently, lying back in the comfortable seat, wrapped in her dreams and her wondering.

"Oh, it's a little longer," explained Carruthers, "but it's prettier. And it's not as much traveled."

He stepped on the gas. The car shot forward. There was wind in the palm trees, and a smell of ocean. Then there was another turn in the road, another, and the car took a bumpy path deep into darkness and loneliness.

The car stopped.

"What on earth?" asked Crystal, amused and not at all afraid. After all, she could break Mr. Carruthers over her knee, should his intentions prove dishonorable or even merely silly. Then she said, "Oh!" abruptly, for she could not break the snub-nosed revolver which was now snuggled against her ribs.

"Get out," ordered Mr. Carruthers, and even the wave in his hair seemed to straighten. "Get out, baby, and give me the pearls. You'll have a long walk back to Palm Beach or Miami, and this is a nice fast car. By the time you get where anyone else is, I'll be in a fast plane headed for—heaven, perhaps. Make it snappy," said Mr. Carruthers. "I've wasted too damned much time over you, big girl, as it is."

Crystal got out. She was a smart girl. She didn't grapple with firearms.

Two men came walking softly down the bumpy trail, having left their cars nearer the main road. The rest was confusion. There was a lifeguard named Smith who did some expert tackling, and a snub-nosed revolver flew into space. There was a gentleman named Crawley behind a businesslike gun.

When it was all over and Mr. Carruthers, who had been voluble, was silent and sullen, Mr. Crawley made a brief explanation, after issuing his orders. "Smith, if you'll drive Miss Collins back in her car, I'll take Dapper Joe back with me and the boys." He said

briefly to Crystal, who was standing without a word in the darkness which had recently been so tumultuous, "I'm Horace Crawley of the Marvel Insurance Company. Smith," added Crawley, with a firm grip on the subdued Carruthers, "will explain as we go back."

He disappeared down the road with Mr. Carruthers beside him. And presently the lifeguard said:

"Climb in. Want to drive?"

"You drive," said Crystal in a small voice, "and—not too fast."

They drove, and not too fast, back to Palm Beach.

"It's this way," said Mr. Smith soothingly: "I thought I'd seen that little blond bozo before. Only he wasn't blond. Then I remembered. I remembered a line-up back in Chicago. I was there—interested spectator," he added hastily. "And it all came back to me. That's Dapper Joe. A swell jewel thief; gets to know people. Social, and all that sort of boloney."

Crystal wasn't interested. She asked feebly, "But—but Mr. Crawley?"

"Well," said Smith the lifeguard, a little embarrassed, "he's a dick for the insurance people, see? Those pearls of yours, they run into big money. And there was a rumor—just one of those things," he explained lamely, "doesn't mean anything, but you know how people are—that—that your old man was hard-up and wanting cash. And the insurance people decided to send a man down to keep an eye on the pearls."

"If they thought that my father—" Crystal began indignantly.

"Pipe down," said Smith gently. "It's all in the day's work. This is the depression, you know. And honorable gentlemen who carry heavy insurance on portable goods have been known to lose 'em overnight when they were in a tight spot. It's all on the up and up. And moreover, Dapper Joe appears. Your friend—I mean Crawley—recognizes him. That's his job. And he sees Joe's clubby with your father—and you. That's all."

"Then I recognize him. Right after you told me you were going to Miami with him. And I got talking to Crawley on the beach. I—well, maybe I was interested in him, see, because of something you said. I'd seen him around where you were. And somehow we got talking about Dapper Joe. And the rest was easy, when Crawley heard you were taking the jaunt to Miami. That's that."

HE ADDED grimly, "And it's damned lucky we trailed along. If he'd hurt you—I made Crawley take me. Kept out of the way so you wouldn't see. And he brought two other huskies, in case of trouble."

But she wasn't thinking of Dapper Joe. She said, sniffing like a small child, the big girl who was six feet tall and weighed heaven knew what, "I've been an awful fool." She added bitterly, "If I ever go romantic again!" And then she sat up straight and breathed, "But—the gardenias."

"Heck," said the lifeguard, turning a corner on two wheels, "I sent those. I suppose I had a nerve . . ."

That was along in the latter end of February. Early in March, the Collins family was back in New York. And Mr. Smith the lifeguard had a job.

"I can use a man like that," said Mr. Collins. He hadn't much use for college men, anyway; he hadn't been one himself. High school was oke with him. So were lumber camps and the rosined ring and sailing ships and the dozen-odd jobs which had fallen to Mr. Smith's lot. And Mr. Collins had property in Mexico

where all hell might pop any day. Having pulled off the last deal, after all, he could afford a new manager for it, couldn't he? To Mexico went Mr. Smith.

Then it was April. The United States of America had had a new President for a little over a month, and a new deal as well. It had beer, too. And Smith, coming up from Mexico to confer with his chief, stretched his long legs under a library table on Park Avenue and looked upon a bottle of amber brew. And Mr. Collins found he had to go to another room to look for a nonexistent map. "What's it like in Mexico?" asked Crystal.

"Hot," replied Mr. Smith, "and I live in a shack." He cocked a gray eye at her. "It needs," said Mr. Smith, "a woman's touch. I—look here, Crystal, I've been crazy about you, ever since that first morning. And you need someone to look after you. You haven't a grain of common sense. Could you—do you think you could stand the gaff, in Mexico?"

"I could stand it anywhere—with you," said Crystal, who had known that for some time now.

She was six feet tall but he was taller.

What's what in wines and other alcoholic beverages—how and when to serve each—is interestingly told in February Cosmopolitan by Captain Louis Boffo, famous connoisseur

Germany Today (Continued from page 25)

now were taking part in the political life of the country on equal terms with members of other classes. To me, for whom revolution had meant destruction, death and all the horrors and cruelties of class war, this upheaval seemed strangely peaceful.

I boarded a German boat on my way to Europe. In due time we arrived in Bremerhaven. The passport and customs officials bothered no one; we sauntered off the ship and boarded a waiting train which was going to take us to Bremen. On the railway platform a Norddeutscher Lloyd band in blue coats and white caps was playing waltzes and polkas on brass instruments. The salt air was lalmly.

The contacts I had in Bremen gave me the hope that I should be able to see something of interest there, and I decided to try my luck. The hotel I was directed to was a dignified old place but with every modern comfort. My room had a balcony near enough to the street to be a good observation point. There was very little noise, only the occasional clanking of a tram car and the tinkling of bicycle bells, for automobiles were few, the traffic consisting almost entirely of bicycles.

With hardly any exception the people looked poor and were badly dressed. The men's suits, of cheap lightweight materials, creased heavily. The women seldom wore either silk dresses or silk stockings. Few of them wore any stockings at all; even with town dresses they went about in white cotton socks. Shoes were mostly a combination of leather and material, and the leather was of bad quality.

There were not many uniforms among the passers-by, except the dark green ones of the police and an occasional brown Nazi shirt. The brown shirts were more numerous in the evenings after work hours, when they would be hurriedly pedaling through the streets to their meetings and beer gatherings. In the evening, the town assumed a festive air. Against the background of a medieval market place, of narrow streets and beautiful old monuments, a joyous crowd

She was strong but he was stronger. She found herself very expertly kissed; and more than once. She said dreamily, "You're pretty brutal."

"Like it?" asked Mr. Smith, whose first name was Bill.

She *liked* it. She said, after a while, "I'll love Mexico, Bill. It's so romantic."

"Don't pull that stuff on me," said Bill, holding her tighter. "The real thing, that's better than romance, a lot better. Romance is the bunk. You went romantic on me once and nearly lost your pearls. By the way, you can put those in the safe deposit. Better do it tomorrow."

"Why tomorrow?" she wanted to know. "I have to get back to Mexico next week, and you're coming with me."

She sat up, trying to draw away a little and not succeeding. "Romance," said Crystal, "is three point two."

"Now what do you mean by that, infant?" asked Bill.

"A novelty," said Crystal, "but weak. This is the real thing. It's a hundred proof," declared Crystal, coming even closer, "and I'm all for it. When do we leave for Mexico?"

wandered around, collected in cafés, stood in groups on sidewalks.

The day after my arrival my hopes were fulfilled. Mr. Reuver, the Statthalter or governor of Bremen and of the principality of Oldenburg, having heard about my interest in the new Germany, offered to show me in person a concentration and a voluntary working camp. I accepted with alacrity, and the next morning at nine three gentlemen called for me at the hotel. The governor, one of Hitler's earliest supporters, was clad in the mustard-colored Nazi uniform with some embroidery at the collar. He was thickset and of medium height. I had been told that he was the "rough diamond" sort, and had spent many years in the German colonies in Africa.

The second gentleman wore plain clothes, and probably was a prison inspector, as he disappeared after accompanying us to the concentration camp. The third was the chief of police, stiff and formal, a man of the Prussian-officer type in a dark green uniform with a very high collar and a trailing sword.

The hotel lobby was dumfounded by the honor which was being shown me. Employees and guests stood around and gaped at the governor and I exchanged greetings. We left the hotel in two open cars. I was with the governor. The chief of police and the plain-clothes man went in front of us. Soon we were in a factory district.

The cars stopped, and we got out in front of a long gray wall surrounding a low building. A door in the wall was opened and we walked through it and into a courtyard. There we were met by three or four brown-shirted youths, who snapped to attention and clicked their heels.

In the courtyard about sixty men were going through gymnastic exercises. A sergeant in the green uniform of the police was shouting orders, while a boy in black trunks standing beside him on the top of a kitchen table was demonstrating the movements to be executed by the detained. The men were clumsy but not unwilling.

The sight of them was certainly far

MISS MARJORIE SHEERIN of Brooklyn, N. Y., writes:—

"My cough is gone already—"

"I'm so glad I took my Doctor's advice!"

● "I had to stay home from the office," writes Miss Sheerin, "my cough was so bad. So I called the doctor. He said, 'Take Pertussin—it's the best thing there is for a cough.' Am I glad I did!... Next morning my cough was gone!"

MILLIONS OF GLANDS—like tiny water faucets—inside your throat and bronchial passages keep the tissues healthily moist.

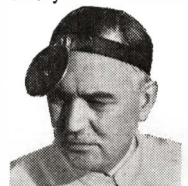
But when you "catch cold" these glands clog up with thick, infected mucus! Your throat feels tickly—dry. You cough and cough, but you can't "raise" a thing.

You must get those little moisture glands back into action, to stop a cough. And Pertussin does just that!

Doctors have found that a spoonful or two quickly stimulate the glands to start pouring their *natural moisture* out into your throat. Germ-laden phlegm is loosened. Your throat feels soothed and relieved. Pertussin is actually helping Nature herself to cure your cough!

Pertussin is the scientific extract of a medicinal herb famous in treating the most severe coughs known. It contains no narcotics, no harmful drugs. Get a bottle today!

DOCTORS PRESCRIBE Pertussin for babies, too—it's so safe. "It's the best remedy I know for coughs," writes one doctor. "I use it for my own family," another states. It won't upset the digestion.



PERTUSSIN
has been prescribed by doctors for 30 years . . . *It works safely!*

from inspiring; there was not one fine specimen among them. They came, I was told, from the lower working class and belonged to Communistic organizations.

We proceeded into the building which was formerly used by the Norddeutscher Lloyd for the housing of emigrants to the United States. Through a large refectory filled with tables we passed into the kitchen. I asked for the weekly menu and saw that the detained had two meals a day and that the fare was simple but wholesome. The larder and the storeroom which were opened for my inspection were well stocked with dry foods. The inmates themselves had to do all the housework.

Next we visited the living quarters. The dormitories had iron bedsteads in the shape of bunks on a boat, one bed over the other. All had grass-stuffed mattresses, bed linen and blankets, everything spotlessly clean. The recreation room had a big table covered with papers and books.

We saw the guards' quarters last. The arrangements were exactly the same here as in the quarters of the detained, and they all were fed alike. The young man in command of the Nazi guard was a native of Bremen and belonged to a family of small merchants. Not one of the Nazi troopers could have been older than twenty-four; they were fine-looking boys, and their eyes sparkled with enthusiasm. I was beginning to see that the old German obsequiousness was disappearing, for while there was much snapping to attention and clicking of heels, the troopers treated their superiors as equals.

Before we got back into the cars I spoke to our brown-shirted chauffeur who, the governor had told me, could speak Russian. I found out from him that he was born in Russia of German settlers in the south. He had escaped from Russia in 1918, leaving his parents behind. His father had died of hunger last year. According to him, the settlers were having as hard a time in Russia as the native peasants.

We left town and drove out into the country about thirty miles to the volunteer working camp. After about an hour's drive we turned off the macadam and for a couple of miles followed an unpaved road which led through a forest. We then arrived at a large clearing and stopped in front of a barn. On the other side of the road stood a group of temporary wooden constructions. From the distance there came the sound of men's voices singing in chorus. The singing suddenly brought back to my memory a scene I had witnessed in Germany two years previously, at a time when few believed in the success of National Socialism.

I was having tea one afternoon in a village somewhere outside of Frankfurt. The terrace of the little café in which I was seated overlooked a bend in the village street. To the country noises there was suddenly added the sound of distant singing. The street filled with waiting people. Now one could hear the tread of marching feet, and soon a company of young men in brown shirts with the swastika on their sleeve bands came into sight from behind the café.

The village showed signs of extraordinary excitement. The street cheered. Windows flew open in the houses above; people leaned out as far as they could. Girls threw flowers down upon the marching boys. Ringing greetings were exchanged. The boys marched up the street and rounded the bend. After they had disappeared the excitement slowly subsided. At the time, Hitler, Nazis and their swastika hardly existed for me.

What I was looking upon now was far less spectacular but more businesslike. A pair of oxen harnessed to a cart stood beside a huge dungheap at the open door of the barn. Men in gray caps were busy around the cart. One of them came up to meet us. He was introduced to me as the head of the camp. A fair man with an agreeable freckled face, a pleasing manner and a cultured voice. While he took us off to see the exercise field the inmates of the camp assembled at the order of the governor.

When we returned we found the men lined up in two rows in front of the barn, a hundred and twenty-four in all. The men were all in working clothes, but there was an air of breeziness about them that defied the clothes. They were all magnificently healthy looking. The governor greeted them, and they answered in chorus.

Then he surprised me by introducing me and making a short speech in my honor. He told the men he had come to them today accompanied by a guest, a foreigner. This foreigner was the cousin of the last Czar of Russia, who had lost his life at the hands of the Bolsheviks from whom she herself had escaped. She was now earning a living in America, by writing.

He laid particular stress on the fact that I wrote for American magazines and that it was as an American correspondent that he welcomed me. He explained to the men that I was in Germany to see conditions and write about them. He hoped my impressions would be favorable; that I would convey to America the greetings of a resuscitated Germany; that I would help to create a better understanding between the two nations.

I bitterly regretted not being able to express myself adequately in German, for there was much in my heart that I wanted to say. I admired these people for their courage and fortitude, but I longed to warn them against diverting from their main purpose—the struggle against the onslaught of the world's dark forces. They were risking compromising all that had been gained, by their exaggerated claims.

INSTEAD OF convincing the world of the righteousness of their cause, they were antagonizing it, arousing its suspicions, and by doing so, were playing into the hands of the very forces they sought to combat. Let them prove, now, that their intentions were peaceful; let them prove through constructive work in their country that civilization had in them a trustworthy and firm supporter.

In any case, this was hardly the place to air my views but I felt obliged to say something. I told them that I was glad to see them looking so healthy and contented; that I wished them success; that I hoped it was in peace with everyone that they saw their development.

After this important piece of advice on my part I got hopelessly mixed up, and the speech ended in laughter on both sides. This performance over, some of the camp leaders were introduced to me. Every profession was apparently represented among the inmates; there were school-teachers, physicians, lawyers. It was a model camp where men were trained to become instructors in the other camps of the region.

The company was allowed to disband, and the men went back to their tasks while we started on a tour of inspection. We first visited the barracks. In the center of the lot there was a large barn-like room used for meals, lectures and recreation; at one end there was a small

store or shop where the inmates could purchase what they needed, besides that which was provided for them by the state.

Each man costs the state two marks a day, out of which thirty pfennigs are handed to him for pocket money, the rest going for food, clothing and housing. The shop sold toothbrushes, writing materials, cigarets and cigars, beer.

The working camps had existed before Hitler's time; they were organized for the benefit of the unemployed, but for some reason were never very popular. At present, however, they are not meant merely for the unemployed.

THE CAMP leader explained that the camps were to become meeting places for all classes of society, where men from various walks of life would learn to know and respect one another. The camps were to defy the machine's personal tyranny and stupefying specialization. They would bring men back to the soil, to manual labor, to the slow but substantial things of life.

Then I was shown some examples of what the inmates were taught. In a near-by field there were a few model dikes of the simplest kind. Much of the country closer to the shore had been reclaimed from the sea and, as in Holland, a leak in a dike could bring disaster to thousands. The inhabitants of the region had to be trained to care for and repair these dikes.

They also had to know the technique of draining land. There were samples of ditches and roads suited to the various kinds of soil. Under a shed stood a carpenter's bench upon which the men were supposed to learn how to make articles in wood. There was a cupboard with cobblers' tools. In the mess room was a display of German woods; this was in connection with the reforestation campaign started by the government.

When the inspection was over, the governor and I took leave of each other. The chauffeur stood beside the car holding my coat.

"Don't forget Russia," I said to him, and his eyes suddenly filled with tears.

The German crisis attracted my interest and curiosity for many reasons. I had been in Germany in pre-war times and had kept unpleasant memories of those days. I had taken part in the struggle against Germany, and together with my country, I had suffered from the consequences of that struggle. I had returned to Germany several times since the war, and as conditions there grew worse, I wondered how long Europe could afford to be divided into two camps—the conquerors and the defeated. I wondered, also, how long Europe could keep Germany under moral subjugation. I would never have forgiven myself if I had not seen Germany in her revolt and at her present stage.

In addition to its political and moral importance, this revolt involved radical changes in post-war governmental principles and the revision of old theories.

Although the royalistic principle has at present faded into the background, the majority of Germans still remain royalists at heart. But a restoration would be possible only if Germany were united into one. The division of Germany into principalities and kingdoms with their respective dynasties would have to disappear before a new German monarch could step onto the throne.

Several candidates for this post were mentioned, but the one considered to have the greatest chances was Prince Philip of Hesse, principally on account of his marriage with one of the daughters

of the King of Italy, a marriage which constituted a liaison between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The prince had lived and worked in Italy long enough to be completely familiar with a national-socialistic form of government. My program would have been incomplete without a visit to Prince Philip of Hesse. In order to see him, I had to go to Cassel in the principality of Hesse, where he is governor.

With some friends I motored to Cassel. The hotel, an eighteenth-century building, had once belonged to the castle and had been occupied by members of the court. It had a stately entrance and a hall with columns and a magnificent old staircase. Its windows looked out over an old park. The prince, whose ancestors had reigned over the principality of Hesse, occupied two small rooms in the castle, which was confiscated years ago from his family by Prussia. His meals he took at the hotel, where I saw him on the evening of my arrival.

Dressed in gray flannels, he walked alone into the almost deserted hotel restaurant, sat down and ordered his dinner. A little later, he joined a group of English students at another table and patiently submitted to their eager questions. As I had not met him before, I wrote him a note that evening in which I introduced myself and my purpose, and next day he joined me and my friends at luncheon. At first the conversation was general, but then the others left the table and we remained alone.

Prince Philip was one of the few German princes to recognize some time ago the importance Hitler would one day acquire and the rôle he would play; he joined the movement several years previously, but not before he had met Hitler

in person. One conversation was sufficient to convince the prince of the man's sincerity and his capacities as an organizer. According to Philip, it was just this talent for organizing that had made a success of the Hitler revolution. A united nation in which there would be no Bavarians or Prussians but just Germans was one of Hitler's aims, and this he was on his way to achieve.

Philip scoffed at the idea of war. No one wanted it. The new Germany would be built up in peace. There could be no doubt about the fact that Germany needed peace to build up the new Reich on the new principles. But whether she intended to maintain peace after completing her reconstruction was a question which only the future could answer. For the present, however, it would seem that only two ways were open to Germany—one was to succeed in spite of blunders, and the other was to be destroyed by Communism. She herself will make the choice.

That afternoon I left for Frankfort, the last stop on my German itinerary. At the hotel I talked to a few people whose enthusiasm for the Hitler régime burned very low. They saw many dangers looming on the horizon and wondered whether "The Leader," as Hitler is called in Germany, would be able to cope with the vastness of the problems. Was he not too much engrossed in details and forgetful of essentials? Anxiety was expressed about his surroundings. Even if he himself realized the situation, many of his lieutenants were showing a zeal which might compromise everything.

These were my last impressions of Germany. A few hours later, I was in the train on my way to Switzerland.

Diving Girl (Continued from page 61)

room Pam slipped into her bathing suit, already a little cold with regret. It would be gray in New York.

She went out to the pool.

It lay shimmering in the sunshine, a thousand colors of gold and green and blue. People sat about in deck chairs and lounged on the sands. Mrs. Waterbury, a big hat over her gray pompadour, was playing backgammon with the Glidden boy. He was a nice boy, though a nuisance when he was drunk. There was that blond portrait painter, a jeweled cigaret holder in her white hand. A group of boys and girls, dark, swift young things, came off the tennis courts and called loudly for gin bucks.

In a long chair was a girl in cunning blue gingham. She was so pretty it didn't matter what she wore. In the sunshine, her hair was pale gold. That was Marion Tudor, most-talked-of girl in New York's younger set. She had arrived the day before, on a yacht.

Pam ran up the white steps and stood on the platform.

Against the blue sky she stood motionless, arrogant, her head of bronze curls lifted. The lovely body was hard, hard as a steel blade. Except for the young breasts that swelled under the black diving suit, she looked like a Greek boy. The long, exquisite legs that slipped down into tiny ankles, the strong slim arms and the beautiful bare back were made of molten gold.

There was only one way to describe Pam Iveragh as she went to the edge of the platform, her face insolent and impassive. She strutted. Under the golden-brown skin the muscles rippled panther-like. It was easy to understand why they called her the peacock girl.

Young Tony Rutherford, leaning against Marion Tudor's chair, laughed. "There," he said, "is something worth looking at. Who in the world is that?"

Marion Tudor did not move, but her eyes narrowed a little. She wasn't, yet, entirely sure of Tony. It would be better when she was. Quite definitely, he was the man she expected to marry. Every girl in New York had been trying to capture Tony, ever since, at twenty-one, he came into the Rutherford millions. No one had come close, but Marion knew she was close. Suddenly it meant more to her than the triumphant climax of her social career, more than just a brilliant marriage. Not much more, perhaps, but a little.

"Who is she?" Tony said again.

Marion Tudor smiled. "I don't know," she said. "Should one?"

"I should," said Tony.

The girl threw back her shoulders and lifted herself into the air, her body a perfect arch, her lovely arms outstretched. Her head was flung back, so that for a moment it seemed actually that she was flying.

Tony Rutherford caught his breath. "That was as perfect as they come."

Mrs. Waterbury leaned toward him. She liked Tony. So few people nowadays were alive. If the boy didn't have so much money he might amount to something. "That's Pam Iveragh," she said.

Tony watched Pam climb to the platform again. If Marion had only known it, he wasn't thinking of Pam as a girl at all. He was thinking of her as an athlete. He said, "You've no idea what it means, that timing and coordination. She's perfect."

Half an hour later, Pam Iveragh came

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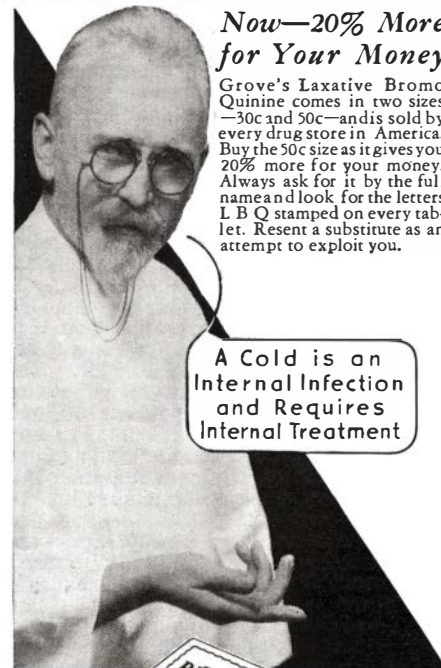
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GROVE'S LAXATIVE BROMO QUININE

down beside the pool. The white slacks and the gaudy little coat she wore concealed the golden body. But she carried herself with the same arrogant swagger. Everybody stared at her.

Mrs. Waterbury called her.

Pam said, "Hello. When are you and I going to have some diving lessons?" She was smiling. This was her last day at the club.

Mrs. Waterbury said, "Here—Tony, this is Pam Iveragh. You might not recognize her with her clothes on. Pam, this is Tony Rutherford. He does play polo—can't think of anything else in his favor."

HE was tall and slight. His face was lean, dark as mahogany from the sun. The dark hair went back from his forehead in a crest. His eyes were blue, but you couldn't see into them. And for all he looked so hard and indifferent, he was somehow terribly alive, greedy for life and reckless of it.

Pam put out her hand. His fingers were quick and strong.

"That was swell," he said, and smiled down at her. "There isn't anything in the world as beautiful as a girl in a perfect swan dive."

Pam said nothing. She could not. Her hand was hot in his, hot and clutching. The pulse in her throat was cruel. It beat like a tom-tom. The breath she drew was deep, deep as the breath before a dive, but it was not enough. It left her still breathless, empty.

"I missed you at the Olympics last year," Tony Rutherford said. "Now I'm sorry."

The blood flowed back to Pam's heart. She could feel it, running hotly through every inch of her body. Her eyes were still in his, in those amused, eager eyes under twisted eyebrows that were smiling at her a little teasingly.

She said, "Perhaps you'll come to Berlin in 'thirty-six."

"You ought to win that," said Tony.

"I intend to," said Pam.

An hour later, she sat at her window in the Breakers, staring at the dark curtain of night behind which lay the murmuring sea.

The way his hair grew back in that thick, dark crest. The palms of her hands ached to touch his hair. The way he twisted his mouth when he smiled. If he kissed you, would you feel that little twist against your lips, or would his mouth be hard and greedy?

She leaped up, frightened, incredulous of these new thoughts that were crowding upon her.

Had he noticed her at all? She went over and stood before the mirror, looking at herself, it seemed, for the first time. Her eyes were black; the pupils had swamped the blue eyes with black. She slipped off her flannel bath robe and gazed at herself. Always before Pam Iveragh had thought of her body with pride, a diver's body, the product of those long hours of work and training. Perfection. A thing of coordination and timing and rhythm.

Now she was thinking of it differently.

"I wish I could see him again," she said.

Beyond that, thought left her. She was aching, longing, dreaming. It was so new and strange, the humming sweetness that filled her. She was thirsty with the heat of it, hungry with the emptiness of it. But she gave it no name.

Tonight, she would be gone. The train left Palm Beach just before dawn. One night was left to her.

If she could see him again!

The knock startled her. Nina, in coral satin, said, "Will you kindly get yourself into some clothes? Tommy and Wyn are waiting. It's ten o'clock."

There was no place in the world like the Colony Club. The lights were paradise. The colors seeped into you and flowed through you. The palm trees against the silver sky made Pam think of something she knew, yet did not remember; something that lay ahead. The orchestra was so sweet it hurt.

Would he be there?

Everybody came to the Colony, sooner or later. Surely Tony Rutherford would come.

She prayed. Let him come. Let me see him again. Let him dance with me just once, just once, and I won't ask anything else.

He came.

He was standing beside the table, tall and dark. He was smiling, that half-teasing smile. "Will you dance?" he said.

This music will always be mine, Pam thought. When I hear it, his arms will be around me. As long as I live, this music will be part of me, even if it is all I ever have.

For she had named it now, this new thing that had happened in a few short hours. She knew now that it was love.

In Caliente last year that big, dark sports writer, the one who wrote poetry, had said, "Some day you'll fall in love, Miss Pam Iveragh, and with that hair and those eyes, it'll go hard with you if I know anything about women."

He had, it appeared, known a great deal about women.

The music stopped. It was midnight. She would never see him again. Actually, the train seemed to be bearing down upon her, a monster to bear her away. One dance wasn't enough. She loved him so, and she didn't know him at all. She must dare something for her love.

She looked up at him, with laughing, challenging eyes that were black with glory. She said, "This is my last night in Palm Beach. I'm catching the night train. I've got to go back and get ready for the Nationals. Make it a night to remember. I'd like to drive by the sea on my last night. Do you mind?"

Tony Rutherford looked at her hard, then he laughed back. "Why not?"

He got her cloak. She didn't care about Nina and the two men. She didn't care about anything.

The god of love was kind to Pam. There was a moon. And the swift, high clouds were tinted mother-of-pearl and a little wind sang love songs in the palm trees. The long roadster slipped along silently. They talked and laughed a good deal. He was coming to see her in the Nationals. How long had she been diving? He had just come back from a long yachting cruise.

The roadster stopped. Before them lay the sea, moon-kissed, the ageless sea beneath a moon as old and new as love. Pam's head was tipped back against the seat. Her young face was ivory velvet, upon which lay her scarlet lips, an offering to the moon. Beneath the ivory sheath of her dress, the lovely steel body was soft; it lay waiting for the moon to claim it.

The moon was shameless.

There was a soft rustle of palms, the music of the sea. Pam heard none of them. She heard only the silver flow of the moon that had possessed her. Blindly her hands reached out for him, found his hair, eased their hot aching.

When he had kissed her, he said, "Why, you sweet. You precious, funny little redhead."

But Pam, her head drooped against

his breast, said softly, "I love you. Forever and ever, I love you."

Tony did not hear her. He would not have cared to believe her if he had.

At last, he said, "Hey, didn't you say something about catching a train?"

Pam said, "Oh, it didn't matter, really."

The train pulled out of Palm Beach as the moon paled. In the sleet and cold, it came to rest in the dark underworld of the station in New York. Effie waited until the last passenger had departed. Then she went back to her office.

Effie had known darn well there would be trouble if Pam went to Palm Beach.

A week later, Pam Iveragh came back to New York and began the long, hard grind of championship training.

Effie, watching hawk-like, couldn't put her finger on anything. The girl was a little cockier, a little more arrogant, and much more silent. She was diving better than she had ever dived in her life. Yet Effie knew that she had to do with a different girl.

To no living soul did Pam ever mention Tony Rutherford.

For the moment she was living upon her memories—and her hopes.

They had been such pals. They had laughed and talked on the sands in the long, hot, lazy mornings. She had actually heard all about the time he was knocked from his horse in a polo game and had gone on playing, though afterwards he couldn't remember a thing that happened. He was proud of that, though it had almost broken his heart when he missed making the international team.

They danced at the Colony. He had said, "I like you, Pam."

To herself, Pam had said, "You're going to love me, before you get through."

Surely, surely, she had a right to hope.

But there had been only one wire since she came back, one little wire which said:

You left your bathing suit. How do you expect to get up in the world without your bathing suit?

Tony

Sitting on the edge of the pool, resting between dives, she watched Dotty Van Wyck going through her daily treadmill. Dotty was seven pounds overweight, and Effie was riding her without mercy.

THAT WIRE was like Tony. He was always teasing her, always kidding. He laughed at her all the time, but it was a warm laughter. He said she was more fun than a yacht and a string of polo ponies.

But, she faced it squarely, he had never once suggested that he loved her. It amused him to watch her strut into the Colony Club, in her tight, smart dancing frocks, proud as a peacock. It tickled him, when people turned to stare and said, "Oh, that's Pam Iveragh with Tony Rutherford. She's a knockout!" Kisses had come and gone, with no words to immortalize them. They were only—kisses.

"I think I'll give up swimming," Dotty Van Wyck said, clambering up to sit beside her. "I've got a chance to go into the movies."

"You'd miss the Olympics," said Pam absently.

"If I wait until after the next Olympics, I'll be playing grandmothers."

"Well, look at Marie Dressler," said Pam.

"And if I don't wait and that German gal wins, Effie will haunt me the rest of my life," said Dotty bitterly.

After all, he was Tony Rutherford and she was Pam Iveragh, a diving champ. Men like Tony Rutherford played

around with diving girls and chorus girls and movie stars. It had just never occurred to Tony that he might love her. Ah, but she could make him happy. If only he would see it. If only she could make him stop laughing.

"How was Palm Beach?" said Dotty. "I think I'll try to chisel that for myself next winter."

"You still in love with Jacky Raines?" Pam asked.

Dotty nodded. "Lot of good it does me. Funny, a lot of guys with dough and everything go for me in a big way. He's nothing but a diver, and he won't have me at any price. Oh, well, all divers are crazy. Present company excepted."

Maybe she was crazy. Tony had never stopped seeing Marion Tudor. Mrs. Waterbury had told her that. "He'll marry her," she said. "He's a Rutherford. They always marry their own kind. His father was crazy about a dancer in Paris, once. They say he gave her a million dollars. But he came back and married a chinless wench, niece of the Mayflower or something."

The old lady had meant that for a warning.

"I'm going down to the Atlantic Beach Club next week," Dotty said. "Want to come? Good place to keep in shape. Won't cost anything. They'll be glad to have us. Effie's getting hives about the Nationals already."

"Sounds all right," said Pam.

The old round of chiseling, angling, getting ready for meets. Newspaper photographers everywhere. Dressing up every evening. Sports writers who wanted to be amused. Not that any of it mattered.

Suppose she didn't see him again? What should she do? There must be some way.

Effie came in. She looked a hundred years old. By the time the big meet came off she would look a hundred and eighty. There were a lot of things on Effie's mind. She had to put on a great show and get the crowds. Dotty was a mess; it would take weeks to get her licked into shape. Eleanor Arno had gone into the movies, and Effie was trying to build up a new distance champ. You had to have champs, names, record breakers, or the crowds wouldn't come. Eleanor had always been a big drawing card. Pam's picture would help.

She sat down on a bench. "I've been making out your dives," she said to Pam. "You got one sure chance," she went on. "Berna'll beat you on the compulsory dives; we got to face that."

Pam nodded. In the Nationals, there would be four compulsory dives which each entrant must perform. On those—they were simple dives that anybody could do—nobody in the world could beat Berna. She had an effortless perfection of form that nothing could excel.

But there would be four optional dives, too. Each girl selected those herself. And where the judges rated the compulsories entirely on form, the optional dives were scored on difficulty and daring as well—they were high-point dives.

"You'll have to take her on the high-point dives," Effie said. "She's got a yellow streak. Always has had. She'll do her hand-stands from the fifteen-foot platform. She won't dare do your stuff. Here's the four I've got down for you."

Pam eyed the typed sheet, twinkling. "You couldn't think up a couple of real hard ones, could you?" she said meekly.

Dotty Van Wyck stared over her shoulder. "Jumping vestal virgins!" she said. "Running forward two-and-a-half, running gainer one-and-a-half. I'm glad I'm only a swimmer."

Effie breathed hard through her nose.

"Pam can do them," she said. "Nobody else would try it. It'll make her champion, sure."

Tony Rutherford would be there; he would see her. He'd promised. If he saw her then . . .

"Don't get in an uproar, Aunt Effie," Pam said. "I'll do them. A girl doesn't look half bad doing a gainer layout if she knows how." And she laughed.

"I take it back," said Dotty Van Wyck. "All divers are nuts."

Tony didn't write. He didn't telephone, though she knew by the papers that he was back in New York. There was a picture of him at the Opera Ball with Marion Tudor. He was playing polo at Sands Point.

It was at Sands Point that she saw him for the first time. Because she knew he was playing polo there, she got herself a chance to do a diving exhibition at the Sands Point Bath Club. Across the crowded deck she saw him and waved a gay greeting. In polo clothes he looked darker, dearer. When she finished diving, he would come over and say hello. Then something might happen.

But that was the Sunday the lightning storm broke, one of those swift storms that strike across a summer afternoon without a moment's warning. When she came out of the water, he was gone.

Pam didn't know that Tony Rutherford carried away a picture of that slim courageous figure poised against the suddenly black sky; of the way she swept down in the midst of the storm's fury, as though she were actually riding the flash of lightning that illumined her curls and her slim, brown body.

Nice kid, Pam Iveragh. Seductive as hell. He mustn't forget the Women's Nationals. Better order a box and ask Marion Tudor—and maybe old lady Waterbury.

The second time was at the Atlantic Beach Club, and that day hope was born anew in Pam, hope that grew into a determined plan, a wild prayer, in her hungry heart.

The Atlantic Beach Club had been pretty dull for Pam, except when she was working hour after hour to perfect those four dives. Then, one day, there was Tony beside her on the sands. She was smiling at him, her eyes dark, hot color in her cheeks.

Tony said, "At that, I'm pretty glad to see you. You look cute in that bathing suit. Been having a grand time?"

Pam nodded. "I always have a good time."

Tony looked at her. There was a funny look in his eyes. "I expect I ought to see more of you," he said.

His arm fell lightly about her shoulders. There was more rest in that moment, when she leaned against him, than in all the tormented nights of sleep since she had left Palm Beach.

"Coming to the Nationals?" Pam said. "I wouldn't miss seeing you become champ for anything," he said. "The gent you hear cheering loudest will be me."

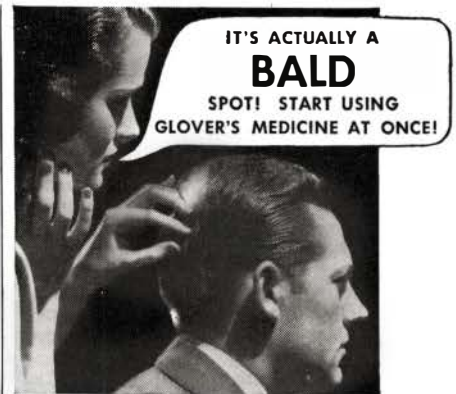
"Sure I'll win?" said Pam.

"You're the kind that always wins, Miss Peacock," said Tony.

"Promise to come?" said Pam faintly. "Cross my heart."

She didn't see him again. Every time the phone rang, her heart jumped. "I expect I ought to see more of you," he had said, but he didn't call. He'd forgotten her again. There were so many beautiful girls, famous girls, in Tony's life. Pam didn't care. One hope still flamed high within her.

The finals of the Women's National Swimming Meet came on a Sunday



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afternoon. The diving championship was scheduled for three o'clock. The field had narrowed down to Berna Johnson, Pam Iveragh, and two girls who didn't matter. Everybody knew that it was a duel between Berna, the champion, and Pam Iveragh, the challenger.

It was a clear, hot day. On the distant bay little white sailboats floated over blue water. A band played under brilliant awnings. Around the immense pool champions and ex-champions, girl and boy contestants, all in bathing suits, dangled their feet in the water and rooted wildly as the racers flew along the roped lanes. Typewriters clicked in the press box.

The crowd was big enough to satisfy even Effie. There wasn't a vacant seat, and the boxes along the green deck were filled with importance and celebrity—a famous radio singer, a movie star with orchids wilting on her shoulder, the wealth and fashion and socialites of Long Island. There had never before been such a brilliant crowd at any swimming meet.

Effie, in a purple sports suit that made her look like a distracted petunia, looked about among her swimmers and divers on the deck. There was Dotty, frantically chewing gum to overcome her stage fright. Jacky Raines, who was to give an exhibition, tow-headed and scowling. Berna Johnson, tall, composed, smiling so that her beautiful teeth flashed for the cameras.

Where was Pam?

Effie drew a deep breath. It would be over soon. This welter of suspense was the worst she'd ever experienced. That crowd had come to see Berna and Pam. Where the hell was Pam?

Just after Katie won the 440, Effie saw her.

Wearing a bathing suit of peacock-blue, what there was of it, with high-heeled blue shoes to match, Pam Iveragh strolled across the deck. Her curls were burnished, her impudent nose tilted, her lips a vivid scarlet.

Effie chuckled, as the crowd began to hum. The kid knew her stuff. She acted as though she owned the earth.

Inside herself, Pam Iveragh was saying, "This is my day. This is my day."

TODAY WASN'T just the finals of the national meet to Pam. It wasn't the day when her fourteen-year-old ambition to become diving champion of the world would come true.

On this day Pam had staked her every hope of happiness.

Tony Rutherford was there. Tony was there. In a box, from which he could see the diving to the best advantage. Marion Tudor, palely gold, exquisitely dainty, in the most perfect white sports outfit, was beside him. Marion Tudor, the girl who had everything.

Pam's heart sang, "I don't give a damn. This is my day."

No one knew better than Pam Iveragh how she looked when she stood on that diving tower. That was where she belonged; where she was queen. In that moment no other woman could compete with Pam. No one knew better than Pam how thrilling a thing was a beautiful girl diving. Everything else paled before it.

And today she would be beautiful. She meant to pour out every ounce of personality, to use every trick of showmanship, to fling forth like a blazing banner every drop of this thing that was burning within her. She'd have that crowd wild. She'd make them stand up and cheer as they'd never cheered before.

Oh, it would be a contest! Pam drew

a quick breath of delight. She wasn't afraid. Two contests. Pam Iveragh and Berna. Pam Iveragh and the pale-gold girl in her dainty white gown. Well, she was no piker. She wasn't going against set-ups. Berna was a real champion. But Berna wouldn't be champion when it was over. There would be a new champion who had defeated her by sheer daring and skill.

Tony Rutherford would see her do it, would see her crowned, would hear the crowd roar, see the reporters rushing to her, the cameras clicking. Where would Marion Tudor be then?

"I like you," he had said. Today she'd dazzle him, sweep him off his feet, break through that indifference of his that saw her as just another pretty girl.

This was her day, her game, her crowd. Today, in her triumph, no man could resist her.

She swaggered toward the starting line and knew that every eye followed her.

"You all right?" said Effie wildly. Her hat was over one ear; her face matched her dress; lists of starters and events fluttered in her hands.

Pam grinned. "I'm hot," she said.

Effie breathed relief and looked at the long pool. What in the world was the matter with that child? It was the novice hundred-yard race for youngsters. Effie's instinct for trouble directed her eyes away from the hot finish, where two red-capped little girls were battling with inches between them, toward a tow-headed kid yards behind.

"What's wrong with that kid?" she said.

Pam looked, glanced swiftly at the lifeguard, stationed in his boat, absorbed in the close finish. Then she tilted off the edge in a stiff dive and raced toward the child, who had disappeared.

No one had noticed the child, but they all swarmed about as Pam came up, swam toward the pool's edge. They took the limp little body from her arms, pulled Pam over the slippery side. The child wasn't hurt. In five minutes she'd be all right.

"You idiot!" said Effie viciously. "She grabbed you. What d'you think you are, a lifeguard? You all right?"

Pam looked at her. Effie went white. Neither of them noticed the crowd that roared Pam's name.

Pam said, "It's my neck. She pulled me against that cork thing on the ropes. Bring the doc to my dressing room when he's fixed up the kid. He can rub it out in a couple of minutes."

Effie stood panting, while the doctor's quick fingers explored Pam's neck.

"She can't dive," he said bluntly. "She's pulled a tendon. Might break her fool neck if she tried it."

There was a brief silence. Pam sat up. "Yeah?" she said. "Doc, I never knew you to be wrong before."

The doctor glared at her. He adored Pam. "You'll do as I say!" he yelled at her. "If you dive, you're crazy, that's all."

Pam stood up. She put both hands on the doctor's fat chest. "I've got to dive," she said; "I've got to. You don't understand. I'll be all right. I'm no marshmallow. Get out while I change."

Effie sat down on a stool. She was crying openly. Her face looked terrible, and she mopped it with one of her inevitable lists. All these years; all that work. Now they'd have to wait.

"Effie," said Pam, "if you scratch me, I'll kill you. Don't you want me to win?"

"Not that bad," said Effie.

Pam took off the blue bathing suit, dried herself slowly. She put on her tight black diving suit. "Come on," she said; "it's ten minutes to three."

Rumor had swept the stands. Pam Iveragh was hurt. She wouldn't dive. The contest of champions was off. The stands buzzed. Sports writers crowded about Pam as she walked out toward the tower.

"You going in, Pam?" . . . "What happened?" . . . "The doc says you sprained your neck?" . . . "Effie, you going to let her compete?"

"No," said Effie furiously, "I'm not."

PAM GRINNED. Her lips were white under the scarlet lipstick. "Effie's nuts," she said. "I'm diving. Don't worry. That doc's an old fuss-cat, anyway. I'll be in there."

They argued. They pleaded. The doctor bellowed, and Effie ordered. Pam lowered her head and stared at them under her black brows. Berna Johnson, in her white diving suit, stood aloof, watching. The guards were clearing the roped lanes out of the pool, ready for the diving. The judges, with their big score boards, had taken their places, five about the ring.

Tony Rutherford leaned over to Mrs. Waterbury. "I wonder what happened to Pam. There seems to be a lot of excitement."

Jacky Raines, himself a champion, glanced over his shoulder and said, "She hurt herself pulling that kid out. They're trying to get her not to dive."

The two girls who didn't matter finished their first dive.

The loud-speaker buzzed, roared. "Pam Iveragh."

She stood on the high tower, her hair ablaze, her head up, deliberately posing for them. There was a breathless pause before the beauty of that young body, breast lifted, shoulders back, eyes on some distant vision. Then cheer after cheer ripped the air.

She ran forward, soared into space, sweet and true, feet together, arms outstretched. Up and up, and then slowly circling down, arms out. Just before she struck the water, something happened. It was a beautiful dive, until the final moment.

"She couldn't get her head back!" Effie sobbed. "Did you see? She couldn't get her head back."

The four compulsory dives were over. Berna, flat, unhurried, perfect as a machine, had won them. Well, they had expected that. The four high points were what counted.

"That kid's hurt," said Jacky Raines, leaning against the rail of the Rutherford box. "I sure wanted her to win."

"Can't she do it?" said Tony.

The boy shook his head. "Those dives she's listed for are plain murder. No girl but Pam would try 'em. I wouldn't be so hot about it myself. Hell, you haven't any idea what nerve it takes to make 'em with that neck."

The announcer's roar reduced the crowd to tense stillness. "Pam Iveragh, in a hand-stand with forward cut-through and half gainer, from the thirty-foot tower."

"Jeez!" said Jacky Raines.

Pam went up the steps quickly. From the height she tried to find Tony; tried to find his face in the thousands that swam before her. She couldn't turn her head. The pain in her neck was like a hot knife. She couldn't do it; she couldn't! But she would.

Against the sky her breast rose and fell in gasps. Her face wasn't impassive now; it was haggard, drawn, the jaw jutted out in a stark line. But the swagger was still there. She managed that. Slowly, on the edge of the platform, high above them, she lifted herself

on her hands, up and up, her feet pointed to the sky, her body straight and still as an arrow.

Slowly she slipped forward between her arms, her body, by a miracle, floated clear of the platform, arched out with infinite grace and sank into the water without a ripple.

"One hundred percent!" Jacky yelled at Tony Rutherford.

Then he raced forward swiftly. Pam hadn't come up. He went into the water in a flat racing dive. Came up with her over his arm.

They laid her on the deck. "I'm okay," said Pam. "I'm all right. Get away from me, you fools. Effie, let me up." She sat up. The white face twisted suddenly. "I'm all right," said Pam, "but I guess—I guess—I just can't do it again."

The loud-speaker silenced the noise. "Pam Iveragh is disqualified because she is unable to complete her dives."

Pam sat on the deck, alone. The meet had to go on. Effie had rushed away to the officials. The doctor was making a hurried examination of a comedy exhibition diver. The crowd, like all crowds, had turned to watch Berna Johnson, calm and smiling, soar off the fifteen-foot tower in an easy back-dive. They had tried to take Pam to her dressing room, but she wouldn't go. What difference did it make now?

So this was the end—the end of her day.

She wasn't the new champion. The crowds weren't cheering her; they had forgotten her. Tony had seen her ignominiously defeated. Berna was still champion.

Her hair was wet and heavy against

her face, dripping against her cheeks. She was green from the water she had swallowed. Her bathing suit was clammy and twisted against her cold body. That exquisite girl in white, the girl who had everything, was still sitting serene and beautiful at Tony's side. The reporters didn't care anything about Pam Iveragh—she had been disqualified.

For the first time since she was a kid, Pam fought back the tears in vain.

A voice said, "Hey, partner, I'm here." Pam looked up wearily. It couldn't be. She didn't want it to be. Not now. Not the way she looked. Not after the licking she'd taken.

Tony took up a bath robe that lay discarded on a chair. It was a cheap bath robe, of red-and-blue toweling. He lifted Pam up and wrapped it around her.

"My poor sweet," he said. "Don't you worry, honey. I know. I know all about it."

He put his arm about her gently. Effie was there, appearing like an apparition from Punch and Judy. She stared at the tall, dark, distinguished young man who had his arm around Pam Iveragh. "Pam!" she said frantically.

"It's all right," Tony Rutherford said gently. "She's just got more nerve than sense. I'll look after her now. I'm going to take her home in my car."

In the car, Tony said suddenly, "My God, I forgot all about Marion. Oh, well, she doesn't need me. You all right, sweetheart?"

"I'm—all right," said Pam.

"You didn't want to be a champion, anyhow," said Tony, and he kissed her sweetly, as he had never kissed her before. "My poor baby. Here, let me tuck that robe around you. You mustn't get cold."



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Auto-by-dography (Continued from page 49)

family background. I never got to know him well, so completely cooped up was the poor fellow, but I saw him enough to learn his story.

His mistress must have been the laziest woman on earth. She never got out of bed until noon, and then spent the afternoons on a sofa. All morning, every morning, this fine husky dog was forced to lie at the foot of the bed. At noon, a maid brought him out for a few minutes. Then back he went to lie, chained to the sofa, all afternoon.

From what other dogs have told me it's not as extreme a case as you may think. Many people keep dogs for reasons of vanity, as Roger's mistress did, and the dog's freedom is never considered. Poor Roger seemed to lose spirit before our very eyes. He became shy. Soft, timid Roger, I'll never forget him!

Speaking of bulldogs reminds me of one from Boston whom I met a few years ago. He had just recovered from a most harrowing experience. Its happy conclusion was brought about through a steamship clerk in Brussels who happened to understand dogs. The story, as he told it to me one day when we ran into each other near Gramercy Park, concerned a trip to Europe.

"Beans," as his mistress had named him—why, neither Beans nor I could ever figure out—had been taken abroad. At the time he sailed he was a fun-loving, high-spirited fellow, ready to fight at the drop of a tail. He was placed in a kennel on board the ship. The kennels on each side of him were occupied by two overbearing great Danes, who lost no opportunity to make slighting remarks about his size.

Beans had never seen a great Dane

before, and the size plus the superior manner of those two dogs completely awed him. He told me he fought against this growing feeling of inferiority, but nevertheless, by the time he and his mistress left the boat at Brussels he had completely lost confidence in himself. A poodle snapped at him and he didn't even have the courage to snarl back. His tail and ears drooped.

His mistress soon noticed that something was wrong. She didn't know what had happened, but as Beans' transformation had taken place since she left New York she decided it must be the fault of the people who had cared for him on the boat.

So, with the unhappy Beans in tow, she visited the steamship offices in Brussels and announced that she was going to sue them, pointing to Beans' dejected appearance as evidence that something dire had happened to him. The clerk asked her when she had arrived, on what boat, and then he consulted the kennel chart of the boat. He then told her that if she would promise to take one of their boats on her return trip, he felt sure he could fix Beans up so that he would be himself again when he arrived back in New York. Beans' mistress agreed.

When they started home, Beans looked out of his kennel to find a Pekingese on each side of him. As the days passed and the boat neared the Statue of Liberty, Beans found his old self-confidence returning. After all, he told himself, he was a good fighter. He would eye the Pekes and growl, and they would retreat. By the time the boat docked, all was right with the world again.

I shiver to think of what would have

been Beans' fate if that clerk in Brussels had not been so wise. Other dogs have not been so fortunate. I remember a police dog that lived next door to us when I was very young. We were all scared to death of him, his legs were so long, and ours so short. We got so we were afraid of our own shadows.

Here again I can imagine many of my readers chuckling at the idea of a dog developing an "inferiority complex." Such a complex is, on the contrary, quite common. Constant domination of a small dog by a large one will result in the smaller one's loss of self-confidence, even among dogs his own size. Size, however, is not the only cause for such a complex. I have known cases where a pugnacious little dog has dominated a larger, peace-loving animal, with the same results.

SOME BREEDS of dogs can adjust themselves to life in cities, others are so unsuited to the roar of the pavements that they are unhappy from birth. I remember one such unhappy fellow. I used to see him on Park Avenue. He was a Russian wolfhound, and was always "aired" by a fashionably dressed woman who undoubtedly kept him because he attracted attention to herself. So completely was he inhibited by the confinement of his life that he didn't even tug at the leash, but trotted along with the docility of a work horse. And he obviously meant no more to his mistress than any other ornament.

But there must be happy city dogs, you say. Of course there are. I want to tell a little story which will illustrate how some city people who own dogs make them happy. It's not at all difficult, as you will see.

I know an Airedale named Mugsy. If ever there was a free soul, he's one. I was curious to know why he was so happy, so free from the complexes I have mentioned. One day, when we both happened to be exploring the same tree, I asked him about his life. I think you ought to know what he told me.

His master is the editor of a big magazine. Every morning before he goes to the office, he gets up a half-hour earlier than he would otherwise need to, just so he can take Mugsy out for an early stroll. Mugsy is allowed to run, romp and sniff to his heart's content. It's Mugsy's half-hour, and his master never takes it away from him. At noon he comes home and takes Mugsy out again. At night they have a longer romp, and if during the evening he calls on friends or goes to a party, Mugsy goes along.

In addition to these attentions, once during the morning and once during the afternoon his secretary calls his apartment on the phone. Nobody is there to answer, of course, but Mugsy hears it ring and it is comforting to him, for it makes him feel that people haven't forgotten him and that his master will be home before long. That's what I call loving your dog in the right way!

It warms my heart to know a case where a city dog really got a break. All of that may sound like a lot of trouble. But if you aren't willing to take trouble to see that your dog has some fun, then it would be much better not to own a dog. Better for both you and the dog.

This dog-show business has always been a puzzle to me. I have never been in one myself, but my master goes to them and I have often heard him discuss them with his friends. I also have had a number of talks with show dogs. They tell me that their owners seem to expect them to act like stuffed shirts

and have nothing to do with commoners.

I remember one English sheep dog. A handsome, burly fellow and strong as an ox. He let me feel his muscles and they were like steel. And there he was standing around all day trying not to look bored and disgusted, so his master could get a silly little piece of ribbon not big enough even to chew!

Another dog, a dressy young spaniel, told me that his master had been combing his ears, plucking his coat and brushing him until he thought he would go crazy. And then, when he was led into the ring and saw a chance for a little fun, making friends with some of the other dogs, he was yanked back and made to stand in a funny, strained position so he would make a good "showing" before the judges.

Of course you do meet members of the very best families at dog shows. They're all aristocrats. But what good does it do you?

You have probably got the idea by this time that only the city dog gets complexes, and that those who are blessed with a home in the country live a care-free, happy life.

A lot of them do, of course. But some of the most high-strung, repressed dogs I ever knew were born and raised in the country and never saw an apartment or a street car in their lives.

One of these was a bird dog. I got to know him well when my master moved into the country several years ago. He lived on the next farm, and occasionally, in the morning, we would meet and go off on exploring trips together. We never got far away, however, as there was always someone looking for him to take him home. He explained to me that they were afraid he would form bad hunting habits, going off by himself.

I had never known a real hunter before and was thrilled to have one for a friend. I imagined his life must be wonderful, until one day he began to talk about himself. He loves to hunt, he told me, but he is seldom allowed to do so and never by himself, unless he sneaks off. Day after day he had to stay in his kennel, waiting for his master to arrive from the city to take him out. That alone was enough to put him on edge.

When his master finally turned him loose, he was supposed to go out in the fields and find a covey of birds. I told him I would love to do that if my legs weren't so short. He gave a disgusted grunt. Maybe I would, maybe I wouldn't, he said. You see, he's not allowed to scare the birds—"flush" them, as hunters say. Instead, he stops the minute he smells them. "Freezes," in the hunting vernacular, and "points" toward them with his sensitive nose.

No matter how much he wants to go after those birds, he has to stand there, a bundle of nerves. Of course he's been trained to do that, and he usually does, but it's always a strain on his nerves. He has to stand there like that until he hears the gun go off; then he is allowed to retrieve the bird.

I asked him if he enjoyed it. He said he didn't know. He had never known anything else, and of course, he said, it was always a pleasure to be complimented by his master if he did his work well. On the other hand, he admitted that every now and then he would forget himself and run after the birds too soon. Then he got a bawling-out which made him miserable for weeks.

Sport? I wouldn't know about that, personally, but I do know that if a human were as nervous as that bird dog he would be in a sanitarium, and all his friends would shake their heads and say, "Neurotic!"

There's an awful lot of talk these days about new training for children. I don't know much about it except that the general idea seems to be to let the child grow up sort of unhampered. Instead of "Don'ts," doctors are advising parents to let the child do as he pleases and learn through trial and error.

It seems to me that some of this same philosophy could be used in handling us dogs.

We get "Don'ts" from the time we're born. Sweets aren't good for us, and so if we want a piece of candy we must do something silly like sitting up and begging, or otherwise acting unnatural before we are allowed to have it. Why not let us go on a candy spree now and then? Let us get it out of our systems!

I knew only one dog who was ever allowed to do this. His master said that if he could go on what he called a "bender" now and then, he didn't see why his dog couldn't. So every now and then he would give him all the candy he could hold. It made him pretty sick, but somehow he was always happier afterwards and didn't want another piece of candy for a long time.

This business of freedom is one place where cats have it all over us dogs. They do just about what they want to and I've got to give them credit for that, even if I am a dog.

There's one thing in particular that a lot of people never stop to consider when they buy a dog. They never say to themselves, "This is a long-term contract. I'm taking this dog for better or for worse until death do us part." Rather, their unconscious attitude seems to be the same as if they were buying a book, a dress, or a new walking stick. Some little puppy strikes their fancy. He's cute and lovable, so they buy him. Then the novelty wears off, and pretty soon the dog has been given away to some friend, where the process may be repeated all over again.

I wonder how humans would like it to be shifted around like that. I have known several dogs who in their puppyhood changed addresses several times. They tell me that the feeling of insecurity was terrible, and that their lives have been tinged with a certain refusal to make close attachments with their later masters, as a result.

I CAN'T HELP but laugh in my whiskers sometimes when I hear some woman feel sorry for a stray dog who hasn't any home. Such a woman usually has a dog in tow—a dog who has developed a terrific inferiority complex from being dragged past trees. And she's feeling sorry for the "bum" who's on his own!

Maybe he does go hungry now and then; maybe he doesn't have anyone to pet him, but he's certainly better off than those dogs whose masters are breaking their spirits with misguided ideas of kindness. Such masters should never have purchased a dog in the first place, for they obviously aren't willing to take on the inconveniences of owning one along with the pleasures. But there are many dog owners with whom it's not a conscious evasion, but rather ignorance of the fact that dogs need freedom just like their masters. It's these latter who I hope will not turn a deaf ear to my observations . . .

And now, if you will excuse me, I must be off to the park. I haven't been over there for nearly a week on account of my rheumatism. I must catch up on my "reading." Goodness knows what I may have missed!

Eagle Wings (Continued from page 69)

of the equator, turn south along a new type of coast. Swamp trees, all with slender straight trunks and tops of a poignant green, border the beach in a mile-wide band. Behind them spreads a vast savanna of swamp grass. Far inland the edge of the jungle draws a steady line.

Brazil. For four thousand miles now we are to fly along its coast. There is not the slightest sign of man's occupancy—no canoe, no half-seen hut, no drift of smoke, nothing. We drop down until we are flying only thirty or forty feet high. The thunder of the plane begins flushing up shore and swamp birds by the thousands and stampeding them back into the thicket—blue and white herons, great white cranes, spoon-bills, flamingos, pinkish gulls, egrets, blood-red flights of scarlet ibis. After a few minutes of this, Mr. Sullivan brings the plane back to her 500-foot level again. We draw gradually out to sea on a long reach to clear Cabo do Norte and from now on are to see little land until near our destination.

Before long, water the color of chocolate soda tells us we are over the mouth of the Amazon. It is a hundred and fifty miles wide at the ocean; but when you add the estuary of the Pará, the total width of the delta is close to two hundred miles.

At the shore of the Pará River, Mr. Sullivan heads due south on a long, slanting course to cross the river to the city. As the sun sinks, rain squalls encircle us, bringing on premature night. A dense curtain of rain moves out from shore.

Bless the radio! Without it, the prudent thing to do would be to pick out a sheltered spot behind some island and sit down on it, to spend the night in the plane. But the radio speaks—"Visibility fifteen hundred feet." Mr. Sullivan drives the ship straight into the wall of rain. There follows a long minute of dark confusion. Then the windows lighten. We are a thousand feet lower, and right over the docks of Pará. Mr. Sullivan sets us down smoothly in the stream off the airport.

An hour afterward, as we sit at dinner in the brilliant restaurant of the Grande Hotel, the rain is still lacquering the mango leaves and flooding the pavement of the Praça da Republica. But the radio gave us our minute, and we are clean and dry and seated before good cheer.

Pará is an old rouged belle deluding herself that she is still eighteen and irresistible. Gone are her flaming days, but she does not believe it. No longer do overnight millionaires pack the lobbies of the Grande Hotel and the Rotisserie Suisse and sleep in corridors turned into dormitories. The tables in the Café da Paz, where once the gambling rose to fantastic heights, are deserted. The last of the French prostitutes departed long ago. The walls of the marble Theatro da Paz mold in tropical damp.

Gone is fifty-cent rubber, and with it gone the most feverish boom since the rush to the Klondike—that monopoly in rubber which Brazil tried so hard to protect with her horticultural embargoes. Pará, seated among the echoing shells of vanished prosperity and cemeteries fat from her pestilences, regards her present tribulation as an interlude. The bad times—prices down everywhere—but hasn't she held her two hundred thousand inhabitants? It is only ten years since the river boats were jammed with rubber buyers, traders, gamblers and adventurers settling their private

quarrels with the knife or gun. Prices will go up, the old excitement will return; and Pará waits for it while grass grows in her streets.

But even in the flush times the damage had already been done. Nordic patience was mining at the foundations of Amazonian wealth. At the beginning of the 1920's coolies on British and Dutch concessions in the Far East were setting out two million acres of seedlings, acres which, in bearing, were to be the knife in Pará's heart. The cost of crude rubber production is largely in harvesting—the daily visit to the trees to collect the latex—and there is no comparison between the cost of working a thirty-mile Amazonian rubber "path" in the forest and that of gathering the milk from a Sumatran hectare of planted trees. Superior in quality though the wild rubber of Brazil may be, it fails in the new competition with the Orient.

One need not move three feet away from the Grande Hotel bar to see Pará, for the whole life of the city centers in this hostelry. Here dwells the boss of the currently victorious revolutionary party, holding his interviews with the politicians of city and state. Here lives also the military commandant, dining his subordinates. Here dwells the American consul, Mr. Selzer. Here meets the Foreign Consuls' Association. Here are held the city's smart wedding breakfasts. Here fgather the Pan American pilots from Miami and Rio, and also the young men of the resident American colony.

Head-bearers deliver everything from cut flowers to coffins. There is no more enthralling sight in Pará than that of a crew of seven sturdy fellows carrying a piano through the Praça da Republica on their heads—three on each side and one in the middle.

In a city shaded by mango trees, those in front of the Grande are the biggest and lushest. Perilous shade, for in the season the two-pound fruits drop without favor, now and then sending some unfortunate to the hospital with concussion of the brain.

At six in the morning you repair to the baby-blue shower room, frightening out a belated rat and an early green lizard. As you dress, it is prudent to shake out your shoes against possible scorpions. In mid-morning the heat begins—the daily, weekly, monthly, yearly heat which presses down upon Pará like a casque.

At the great hangars and shops of the Pan American terminal at Pará the Miami plane, with the long haul to Trinidad ahead, has taken off in the dark. Our turn is next.

We thunder off with tanks full for the long haul to São Luiz, our first stop, and with five passengers—two Brazilians, ourselves, and Mr. Paul de Kusmik, chief engineer of the division. Our pilot is stocky, thick-chested George Nixon. As a Peruvian gunboat (the Leticia affair is at its most heated point) and its brood of submarines flash past the windows, we lift off on a low trajectory over familiar terrain—the jungle bank, water-side cabins on stilts, fish weirs and traps.

The Amazon is behind. The coast loses regularity. It breaks off, and a deep bay drags in the sea to the western horizon. We enter, and are in front of São Luiz, capital of Maranhão—four hundred miles from Pará.

Off again, and along a coast wooded and better populated. Fifty minutes of flying, and we groove into Camocim, tying up to a mid-river buoy while we

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refuel. A laden rowboat brings out passengers, and when we take off we have eleven in the cabin.

It is another long grind from Camocim to Fortaleza. In this dry region there is an elixir in the air which makes Fortaleza and its state of Ceará the most progressive in northern Brazil. Clean, well-policed streets, trim parks, substantial buildings. The city's prosperity rests on the export of hides from the great herds of cattle ranging the uplands behind the coast.

We retire early in rooms with private baths and floors of rare inlaid woods, and through the French windows shines the Southern Cross, high in a glittering desert sky. Then up with a silent crowd at three-thirty a.m. to find the dining room brilliant, tables set, breakfast ready; and after that the long dark street-car ride to the airport.

In mid-morning we come down at Natal, goal of the South Atlantic flights. It is a colorful coast from Natal south. We look down on Parahyba, a village of red roofs seen through coco palms, and are off the easternmost point of the New World. A line drawn north from here touches the Azores and passes midway between Newfoundland and Ireland. The plane turns slightly west of south, and twenty minutes later we are over Pernambuco, over swamps and pools,

coconut groves—then tall buildings, street cars and city animation.

Bahia, to us arriving at dusk, is a slight impression of a high, ancient town connected with the docks, factories and warehouses of the water front by municipal elevators in towers running up to bridges built out from the brow of the hill. We leave before dawn.

We refuel at Marcellas and take off again. Now the coastal mountains begin showing the strange forms that give Rio the most amazing frame of all the cities of the world. We come in and fly at first through them—isolated sugar loaves, gray buttresses, enormous slides and precipices. A railroad under us, a yellow highway, red in the mountain cuts, ranch houses into whose patios we look. Then, through isolated cones, out to sea again, to have before our eyes, north and south, the panorama of what may well be the most beautiful mountains in the world. Leaning towers, spires, isolated masses like cathedrals, airship hangars.

And there are letter shapes—blocked-in h's, blocked-in n's. And gradually it begins to seem to my half-hypnotized concentration that the whole silhouette of this range makes a sort of script—the backhand writing of Creation. If I were a mystic, I think I would not try to discover the secret of the eternal in the measurements of the Great Pyramid or

in any such man-made object. Instead, I would come here to the Brazilian coast and decode the handwriting of the mountains—God's uncials.

We cross Cape Frio, a flat neck of land with bizarre twin hills at its tip. But now we are all watching for Rio. We come in over backwaters of tortured shapes, connected lagoons—it must be the famous bay. But no, we are out over the surf again. Then a great, smooth rock, rising sheer almost to our level, leaping leopards of the sea licking up its gray sides. A blue channel and another sentinel opposite. We swing in, and there it is on the west—Sugar Loaf, Corcovado with its cruciform and modern statue of Christ on top, the sweep of boulevards, and a magic city creeping up valleys like poured liquid seeking its level. Rio de Janeiro!

We roar past and up the bay. We make a great ten-minute tour and see it all—the straight cleavage of the Avenida Rio Branco, the famous canal street with its royal palms, the lovely curving Beira-Mar, the Corcovado Christ at close range. Then up the bay, over the great European liners at the docks, to the airport again. We circle down, and Captain Nixon sets her in for his fifteenth silken landing in succession. And there is the big launch, waiting to take us all over a bounding bay to the city.

Next Month Forrest Wilson concludes the thrilling story of his adventures on this 20,000-mile flight

Bank Holdup by Clements Ripley *(Continued from page 55)*

his head. He fumbled in his pocket. "Lessee—I got a pencil here somewheres."

One instinctive flash of warning the old man had—too late. As he reached back, the stranger's hand flicked down with a blue automatic.

"Drop it!" he warned sharply. "Up—keep 'em there! . . . Hey, Pete!"

A second man appeared. With ungentle hands he yanked the ancient Colt from its hiding place, held it up. "Jeez, Ed, get a load of this! Musta been left over from the Mexican War or sup'm."

The man with the pistol spoke out of the side of his mouth. "Cut the comedy and get busy. The stuff's in the vault back there."

Old Man Ninch had got his breath again. "Yessir, an' it's goin' to stay there. What's more, if I'd been as quick as I was ten year ago—"

The sentence ended in a grunt of pain as the pistol jabbed him. "Well, you ain't, so shut your trap, grandpop. Okay, Pete. What about it?"

The second man, who had been inspecting the vault door, flipped his cigaret away. "Set-up!" he reported. "Like shootin' fish. Take an hour at the outside. She's a ole-style combination."

"Combination, huh? Well, ain't that nice! Because grandpop here's goin' to open it for us . . . Now, listen"—as the old man showed signs of rebellion—"take your choice. Be good, and everything's sweet. Get high-headed and we'll slap you cold first and rip that can to pieces after."

"You can't do it!" The old man was shakily positive. "Bill Magoon built that vault, an' she's solid."

"Solid, huh?" Pete laughed. "Say, a ole combination like that, all I got to do is bore half a dozen holes round her and yank her out."

"Only you won't be awake to see it, grandpop," the other added. "And what's more, bein' slapped silly might not be so healthy for a ole foot-in-the-grave guy

like you. Well, talk, cancha?" He emphasized the order with another jab in a tender spot. The old man gasped. "That ain't a tickle to what you'll get," the gunman warned. "So talk, and talk fast."

The banker stared helplessly at the gun. "Dawgone me, if I was ten years younger—" He checked with a beaten sag of the shoulders. "I reckon I'm too old," he surrendered heavily. "You done got me."

Pete said, "'At's usin' your head, ole rooster. We dowanna hurt nobody—but we don't care a hell of a lot if we do. That right, Ed?"

"Shut up. Get the bag . . . Okay, grandpop; now you walk over to that crate—and be careful how you do it."

With fingers that shook, Old Man Ninch turned the dial. "Sh-she's mighty solid, though," he quavered. "If I was ten years younger—"

"Hell, you ought to've been dead ten years ago. Snappy, now!"

With the pistol prodding him, Old Man Ninch swung the door open. He turned the light on to illumine the brick interior with its old lock boxes.

"Okay! Where's the cash, now—quick!" Another dig of the pistol accompanied the words, a vicious jab below the ribs.

There was a whistling gasp. The old man tottered, swayed, one hand clutching his heart. Then, as he stumbled backward, his shoulder hit the half-open door. It shut with a clang.

For a rigid instant the two stood frozen. Then Pete leaped for the door, clawing at the crack. In the same instant the gunman whirled with a snarl. "What'dju do that for? If you're tryin' anything—"

He stopped short. Old Man Ninch had straightened and there was nothing feeble or quavery about him now. Pete's voice banged out, hoarse and frantic in the sudden stillness: "Jeez, he's torn it! There ain't a way in the world to open this from the inside."

"Correct!" The old man's tone was

mild, almost genial. "She's built solid, like I said. An' there's air in here for just four hours."

The gunman's teeth were bared. He was sweating. "And maybe you think I won't drill you. Maybe you think—"

"Maybe," said Old Man Ninch placidly. He glanced contemptuously at the menace of the pistol. "Put that thing down, boy. You done dropped your watermelon this time. The's just one man can get you out of this under a day—an' that's me."

"Wha-what the hell are you talking about?" The gunman wiped his forehead. "S'pose first you pass that gun over."

"Huh? You're crazy! Listen, you old fool, if you know some way of gettin' out of here, you spill it and spill it quick. Un'stand?"

"I never enjoyed talkin' business with a gun at my middle," said Old Man Ninch. He shrugged. "Still, o' course, shootin's a heap easier death than stranglin'. So if you want to shoot!"

For an instant the two faced each other, the one hard, desperate, like a trapped animal—the other placid. Then Pete said, "For God's sake, don't be a damn fool. He's got us!" and the gunman caved.

Deliberately Old Man Ninch inspected the gun, tried its balance, while the two watched him as leopards watch the trainer.

He turned, and from one of the steel boxes took a telephone.

"I'll call Mat Creevy," he explained, "an' get him to come down here with the sheriff. When he gets here, he'll call me from outside. Then if everythin's still all right, I'll give him the combination an' let him open up an' let us out. If it ain't all right"—he paused, glancing proudly about the vault—"well, she's mighty solid. Bill Magoon built her in eight'n eighty-four—built her an' gar'nteed her. An' I never heard tell where Bill's gar'ntee failed yet."

Edgar Guest will tell, in February *Cosmopolitan*, why Detroit is his Favorite City

Love Song (Continued from page 45)

added: "You great opera singers should know one another. Toni is the past, the Signorina the future. Toni was a grand chorus man. Now he earns an honest living by selling good wine in spite of a bad law. I hope it will be good wine this time, Toni—the last time it was—feolthy, eh, Toni?"

Landlords have to laugh at such things. The customer is always right—and always funny. So Toni laughed at this, and they climbed two flights of stairs to the dining room.

Meriel was idiotically happy. This was the life. She loved the salami and the greedy gusto of the men as they peeled off the thin rind. She liked the wooden celery that Cavenac washed and pruned. There were cocktails; none too good, but cocktails. The soup was a *minestrone*. There were clams cooked in the shell. Meriel had counted on spaghetti but Toni recommended *ravioli à la Toni*, and three kisses into the air at the thought of it.

Cavenac checked him. "Toni, did your fat head ever hear of Meriel?"

"Meriel?" Toni shook his head, then made a face of such agony that Meriel suspected an angina. Toni was merely remembering. Suddenly his tortured memory released the treasure and his features were violent with rapture. "Ah, Meriella? *Si, si! Coloratura! fioritura!*" He put his fingers to his lips and pinched out a kiss like a threaded needle, extending it to arm's length. "Didn't I sang in same opera wit?"

Now a look of crushing woe clouded his face, and his big head waggled as he mourned her silence. It amazed Meriel to see what emotion these men could feel over matters of music, food, wine, cheese.

Cavenac and Scordek grinned at Toni's volcanic excitements and watched for the effect when he heard what Cavenac said next: "The great Meriel was the aunt—*la zia*—of thees little Meriel here."

Then Toni grew epileptic, bowed low, bitterly regretted that his *Inglese* was no good for to tell her what *onore* it was to have her in his spik-izy. He ran cadenzas of Italian enthusiasm. When he had gone, Cavenac rounded on Meriel.

"Will you never tell me what happened after I leaved—left your town?"

"Well—"

"First let me tell Scordek of the man from Cheek-ago. He loves thees gerl. She loves him. It is right he should come from Cheek-ago for he wishes to *monopoliser*—to hog thees gerl for himself. When I call his fiancée a coward, he is very hangry. Of course. Why not? If I were a man from Cheek-ago and you loved me and I slandered you—I would have killed me. And he would perhaps have killed me if your dear mother had not—when you write present my *homimages* to your mother, yes? Don't forget! So from there tell me what 'appens—from where I walk out."

"Well," Meriel began, "after you left, Boyd—he was the man from Chicago, Mr. Scordek—Boyd Tallon, an engineer—he had—well, he wanted me to marry him and give up all thought of a career. He followed me home to meet my people. They loved him. He's a splendid man, really. Then Mr. de Cavenac called. Somehow, he got me to sing. He made me forget for a few minutes that I couldn't sing, and it was a very hard song to sing—by Emil Woodring."

Scordek nodded. "By Emil Woodring. It would be hard to sing."

"But worth the trouble!" Cavenac snapped. "These singing teachers want people to sing only *solfége*, scales, and

Italian dishwasher." He turned to Meriel. "Again I ask you to tell me!"

"Well," Meriel began again, "after you left Carthage I agreed to marry Boyd and give up singing forever, except about the house. He said I could sing lullabies to the children."

Cavenac turned purple and gathered his breath for an explosion, but before he could detonate, Scordek shouted:

"Let the girl talk or I'll murder you!"

"Don't mind him," Cavenac smiled.

"Go on. You were singing lullabies when Scordie interrupts."

"I began to get my trousseau ready. But as soon as I gave up singing, I was crazy to sing. I felt I should go mad. I'd poison Boyd."

"An excellent idea," said Cavenac.

Meriel went on: "Then one midnight—I called Chicago on the telephone. I said, 'Boyd, I want to go to New York and study. I just can't give up singing. I'll die if I try. Tell me what to do?' And he said, 'Why, honey, there's only one thing to do. Go to New York, of course, and study.'"

"And a very nice man he must be," said Scordek.

Cavenac snarled: "Not a nize man at all, damn him! If he'd been a decent kind of man he'd have been mean and selfish and insisted on your keeping your word. Then you could hate him and break your word with a clear conscience. But he must be so nize and kind and self-sacrificing that now you will never forget him. Good people, kind people are the worst enemies of art. That Boyd will always endanger your career. I suppose he comes soon to New York?"

Startled by Cavenac's habit of guessing everything correctly—and cynically, Meriel confessed:

"Well, he did say he would come East soon 'c see me."

Cavenac sighed. "I suppose I shall have to be his assassin. Nobody else will kill him—unless you marry him. Then you may kill him—but too late. Why, ah, why must musicians be also humans, animals? They should be like the instruments they play, the instruments they are—only instruments. But now I have a longing to hear you sing again—to sing that song of Emil's again. I want Emil to hear you sing it. Like so many good composers, he never hears his songs sung. We go to Emil's. He will play the song, and others. Scordek has not met Emil. He also will hear some good new music and learn something—if a singing teacher can learn something. They only teach; they never learn."

Toni brought in the bill, which Cavenac paid. When they finally reached the street, they climbed into a taxicab and were whisked north to Carnegie Hall. The elevator carried them high, and emitted them in a corridor faintly astir with music beating through a door at which they paused.

Cavenac pressed the bell button firmly. The piano went on to a protracted climax before it stopped. Then, after a moment of hush, the door swung wide.

Cavenac cried: "Emil! I bring Miss Meriel Lawton—and this is Scordek. Scordek is the fat man. The other is Miss Lawton."

Woodring's eyes seemed to welcome Meriel, yet question her. Are you hostile or kind? are you understanding or aloof? will you help or hurt me further?

For a long slow instant while their hands made acquaintance, their eyes asked questions and tried in vain to withhold answers.

A surprise awaited Meriel when the



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men thrust her ahead of them into the room. She abruptly encountered a girl, a rather beautiful, very young girl, who had astonishingly gathered her skirts up in a bunch between her legs and fastened them to her waist with a big safety pin.

Not only did she look as if she wore a huge diaper, but her thighs were bare to her stocking tops. Her street shoes had been kicked off and she was in what is curiously called her stocking feet, yet she was flushed scarlet and breathing hard as if she had been running.

Cavenac detained Emil while he slandered Scordek, leaving the two girls face to face in mutual wariness. Meriel, being the newcomer, waited till the other girl spoke.

"I'm Cordelia Poplin. I've been dancing to Emil's music. That's why this"—a gesture indicated the curious state of her costume.

"I'm Meriel Lawton. I'm studying singing with Mr. Scordek. And that's why those." Her gesture indicated the two men following.

BOTH GIRLS laughed comfortably. They spoke the same language. The men came forward and Emil made the introductions. Cavenac bowed low and kept his eyes low as one ought before a dancer. And he said the proper things.

"My compliments to your very beautiful legs. Your face, too, is pretty—which is not usual with dancers. What is doing that we interrupt? Let it continue. We wait."

Emil explained: "You see, I'm trying to compose a ballet for my new opera. I happened to have known Cordelia here since she was a wobbly-legged pup in my home town. I happened to learn that she was studying dancing in New York, so I asked her to come up and give me a few hints. She was honest enough to tell me that no human being could dance to my music under any circumstances, so I'm trying now to fit my music to the dancers. Dance for them, Cordelia."

Cavenac and Scordek and Meriel applauded loudly. Cordelia turned shy, but she said:

"I'll try, just so you can hear Emil's gorgeous music. There are dancing stunts that almost anybody can do with a swift kick. But to do them very slowly—that's something else again. So I have been practicing for weeks, months, all by myself—to bend far back and kick myself in the head with a very, very slow movement like this."

She rose on both toes and bent her whole body backward till her head was below her waist and her configuration was that of a great interrogation point, except that she was human and quivering with the strain. The eyes of the beholders studied her in amazement.

While they reveled in this masterpiece of creative evolution, as a breathing bas-relief, it moved; it danced uncannily, incredibly; it marched backward, forward, circled. Then one foot left the floor and rose slowly, slowly till it tapped with its sole the downcast forehead. All the while the air was shimmering with the music Emil drew from the piano as he watched.

At last the dancer raised her head, her upper body, still slowly, till she was once more reassembled in the normal attitude. Then she began to quicken her shifts of line, to leap, to kick high, to dip and swirl, to bound across space, hurdling invisible barriers, seeming to rest upon the air.

At length, in a last whirlwind of spinning velocity that made her almost invisible, she whirled herself to the couch

alongside Meriel with a reckless fillip and became a disheveled child played out and ready to weep because that was the only expression she had not drained.

The men were noisy in their praise and she smiled her thanks with a witch-like remoteness, but she was most comforted by Meriel, who put out her hand and held Cordelia's in a mute applause. There was no rivalry of jealousy; both were surcharged with power to express beauty. And this was an instant bond of friendship, respect, congeniality.

After a decent interval in Cordelia's honor, Cavenac said:

"And now, Emil, you can hear how one of your songs should ought to be sung. Miss Meriel Lawton will sing for you."

"Oh, I couldn't!" Meriel gasped, alarmed by this sudden reference to her. She held out till Cavenac began to grow surly; then she gave in, dragged herself to her feet, moped to the piano, and stood there like a slave at auction, afraid and dejected. There was no affectation in her protested fright. She was infinitely embarrassed by the presence of the composer of the song Cavenac demanded and had advertised too well. As Emil played the prelude it was so different from the one in the printed copy that Meriel did not know where to begin to sing.

Emil grumbled: "I'll have to find my music. I never can remember my own compositions."

Cavenac pushed him from the bench and began to play the accompaniment as it had been published. Meriel felt suddenly at home with the music, and strangely at home with Cavenac. Now her voice came out of the silence like the voice of another nightingale, a human bird, pleading:

"O nightingale, be still
For an hour
Till the heart sings . . ."

When Meriel had finished, Emil ran forward and seizing her hand bowed his head to it, and, for lack of original words, quoted at her:

"My God, what a genius I was then! You and Cavenac make me feel that I was inspired for once. What geniuses you both are!"

Scordek came over to pay her a crushing compliment. "I have an artist for a pupil. Don't let me lead you astray."

Cordelia was silent, staring through a reek of tears. Hers seemed to Meriel the final tribute. But Emil was seizing her by the arm with a new agitation.

"If only I could have you in my opera, I'd be sure of success."

"Opera!" Meriel gasped. "It would be years before I could sing an opera, if ever I could."

"It is only a one-act opera."

"But I can't act, I've never worn costumes. I've had no stage experience. I can't make a gesture."

"All that would come naturally to you," Emil insisted. "You're the ideal, the only one."

She was in a panic. Cavenac came to her support with a brutality not entirely welcome.

"She is right, Emil. She is far from opera. For one thing, Miss Meriel has not yet the strength to endure an opera and battle an orchestra and a chorus and the rival principals. She has not the faintest idea of operatic or orchestral time. When I play piano for her, I follow her. She delays; I wait. She hurries. I hurry. She skips. I jump. Can you imagine what would happen if in an opera she decides to omit a measure? or comes in a measure too soon? If I am conducting one hundred musicians, can I signal to them, 'The little lady has

decided to omit bar seventy-one'; 'The prima donna will hold this note till she has finish with it'?"

"Also, besides the orchestra of one hundred, there is the chorus of one hundred fatheads and fat every place else. No, no, Emil, Miss Meriel Lawton is not ready for opera." He turned to her. "But I will make of you a great opera singer; for I will teach you to conduct yourself, to count measures where you rest while the others sing. I will pound tempo into you until you have a metronome in the back of your head. You and I will have many lessons in conducting and acting while Scordek teaches you how to breathe and where, how to take off and let go, sustain, how to relax and all that. Language and diction teachers will teach you languages, and actors to act. A whole army of us will combine to make a great singer of you."

Somehow, this gave Meriel a double joy; it dispelled despair, and it promised a close association with Cavenac.

Emil broke in on her vision of this prolonged future. "While you're making ready for opera, let me hear you sing more of my songs. You fill me with a hope that perhaps I am not so bad as everybody says. Here are some I was just about to burn up. Maybe you can put a different kind of fire in them."

He sat on the piano bench and dragged her to his side. Cavenac dropped down next to her, saying:

"Once more you are what Scordie calls the what is it—the bone witch—the witchbone? You will always have many men pulling at you in many directions, Miss Meriel Lawton—and you will pull in all the other directions." She looked up at him and smiled helplessly over the puzzle she was to herself and to everybody else.

"Here is something," Emil was saying as he began to play a manuscript he could hardly read himself. It was all Greek to Meriel, but Cavenac played her notes in the upper octaves. Meriel had a gift of reading at sight, largely by insight, intuition and good luck; and usually sang a song better the first time than the twenty-first. The intervals in Emil's voice parts were cruel and baffling to an academically trained singer, but Meriel did not know enough to be misguided by them.

IT was curiously thrilling to the girl to sit there crowded between the two men. One or the other was always putting his hand on her arm in a tap of warning or correction or a caress of praise. Their six knees jostled; their thighs were welded; they were a trinity in one mood.

But gradually Emil began to steal her from Cavenac.

There was something very sweet and timid in his soul. He was afraid of so much and yet so unafraid, so shy, so fiery. He was more than the pianist who extracts from an instrument pleasant noises. He was playing on himself as she was singing out of herself, shaking the air with her own shaken membranes. He had gone ahead of her into strange fields, yet she had to complete the conquest.

Cavenac caught the fusing of their spirits and ceased to play Meriel's notes for her, slid farther from her on the bench and watched them with a growing curiosity. He rose and walked across the room to a box of cigarets.

Scordek mumbled: "Those two make a perfect match if ever there was one. Meriel is Woodring's voice. What do you think?"

Cavenac talked into the flame of the

lighted match. "I shall probably curse the day I brought these two together. And they will both curse me."

Now that Cavenac had left Meriel alone with Emil, Cordelia untangled herself and went to the piano—perhaps because she merely felt lonely and out of it; perhaps because she was afraid to leave Emil alone with Meriel. Cordelia felt the need of putting her hands on him. Women liked to touch Emil. She laid one palm lightly on his shoulder, then both, then frivolously set her elbows there and stood so close to him that his head was against her breast. When he looked upward toward her with a smile she bent and kissed his upside-down face lightly on the chin. He sighed, "Nice child!"

When Emil lowered his head again, Cordelia put her chin on the top of it, gabled her arms over it like a roof, and looked down at Meriel with dark eyes and unhappy mouth. Meriel looked up and smiled, trying to fly a flag of truce, assuring Cordelia that she had no designs on Emil.

Scoredek nudged Cavenac. "The duet is a triangle."

Cavenac muttered: "Why can't women let Emil alone? He lets them alone."

Whatever might have developed from this game was prevented by a sudden whirring of the doorbell and a clamor of voices from the corridor.

"Good night to good music!" said Scoredek: "Is there no place to hide where a bunch of drunks won't break in?"

Emil groaned as he rose from the piano: "Here we go! We're in for some heavy drinking, and gosh, how I dread it! This is probably my last chance, Miss Lawton, to tell you what a heaven I've been in while you sang. You gave a voice to those poor little dumb songs of mine. You make me feel great by your own greatness. I wanted to tell you this before I became maudlin."

"You're maudlin now," said Cavenac. "Better open the door before those apaches break it down."

They came in as through a broken dam, a flood of men and women of various sizes and ages in the early stages of intoxication. Emil was smothered with embraces by most of the women. From his wine cellar in a coat closet, he brought out two quarts of Scotch, some gin and vermouth, while his guests uncorked the bottles, mixed cocktails and high balls, found glasses and ice. Meriel, watching the marauders all talking at once, nobody listening to anybody, was suddenly confronted by a giant who carried two cocktails and smote her with a tremendous blast of song:

*"Signore! Signori! Scusatemi se solo me presento—
Io sono il Prologo!"*

A little later she learned that this was no less a personage than Verne Thorpe, famous as the cowboy barytone who was expecting to break into the Metropolitan and was already a sell-out in oratorio and recital. Sober, he would only sell his voice at so much per note. After the first drink he gave it away to everybody. He loved especially to mimic effeminate lyric tenors.

Having offered Meriel one of the cocktails, which she accepted with a smile of thanks, he leaped into falsetto with Turiddu's "Viva il vino spumeggiante," adding extravagant Italian gestures. Meriel remembered enough of the opera to reply in a bit of Lola's "No, no, Turiddu." The purity and flexibility of her few notes dazzled Thorpe; he cried:

"Why, Nellie! Nellie Melba, when did you get back from Austrylia? We great

tenors must know each other better at once."

He threw one of his long arms about her and clinked his glass against hers. She knew better than to give the embrace importance by opposing it, and she was sipping her cocktail while her up-cast eyes fenced with his downcast stare. He rather fancied himself as a flirt, and women humored him in his delusion.

Meriel was not compelled—or permitted—to remain long in Thorpe's arm, for her glass was dragged from her lips and her cocktail splashed as her right arm was seized and jerked back so violently that she spun round into the presence of a tiny little wren of a woman. This was E. J. Mapes, who was always trying to imitate a fishwife but made reservations that turned her ribaldry into baby talk.

"Oh, for the sake of the crisis, wench, keep your hands off my gigolo. He's my ma-an, *c'est mon homme.*"

Meriel stared down at her and wondered how anybody could pack so much ugliness into so small a space. Eventually she found that her assailant was actually the enormously successful novelist, the E. J. Mapes whose serials were household nourishment for millions. They were intensely domestic and highly praised for their moral tone by those who believe that literature should be blind. Meriel had read some of them and found that Miss Mapes solved problems, rewarded virtue and punished vice much more carefully than God seemed to.

Miss Mapes was embarrassed for a moment at finding Meriel a stranger, but only for a moment. She was endeavoring to escape from her own perfect world of fiction by getting drunk, and she was drawing in advance on the prerogatives of intoxication. She said to Meriel:

"I thought you were the wench I'm always dragging out from under Vernie here. Vernie is my ownie-wonie itsy sunny bitsy, ain't you, Vernie?"

"If you smile when you say it," Thorpe grinned at Meriel across the top of E. J.'s head. She lingered, marveling at the psychosis of the woman who reached up to rob Thorpe of his cocktail and drain the glass. At this he looked so forlorn that Meriel handed him hers; but E. J. appropriated this, too, then handed both glasses to Meriel and waved her hence.

"Toddle, tartlet, I have confidential news for my man."

Meriel started to walk away with the glasses, but Thorpe clutched her arm and would not let her escape. He poured yearning looks into her eyes while E. J. poured her woe into his ear.

"Vernie, I'm a lonely wench that's lookin' for a mister. Vernie, are you free?"

"Every third Thursday, darling," said Thorpe.

"Often enough. You're booked. May I call you Veronal? Whass ma'r with me? I'm a talented wom'n. I c'n write love stor' at warm a million homes, but I can't warm up one man to love me for m'self. Vernie—is that woman still there? Wom'n, if you don't go away I'll put you in my next book. Whass your name, so I can use it in my next book?"

"Why, that's Mellie Nelba, the greatest of sopranis," said Thorpe. "Don't you know anything, E. J.?"

"Is she reely? Mellie Nelba, eh? Whass her name? Does she love you, Vernie?"

"Not yet, but soon, I hope." And Thorpe tried to put into his eyes all the magic that only his voice could swing. But little E. J., with her sad ineffective eyes, touched Meriel's heart more, and

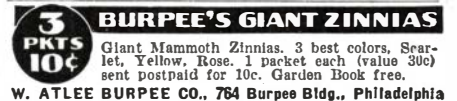


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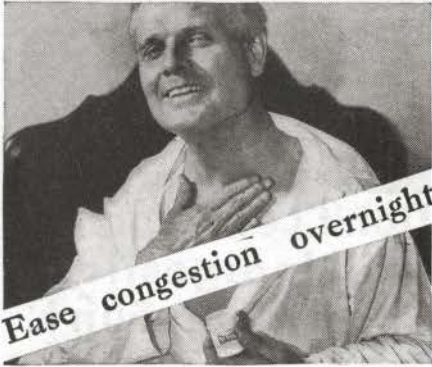
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she was glad to be forcibly removed by somebody else who used her arm like the handle of a jug. She was whirled into the presence of another very small person—this time a man. He carried two cocktails, gave her one, and saw to it that she drank it while he drank his.

"Sister," he began, "you are a sister in the vineyard of the Lord, aren't you?"

"Absolutely."
"Abs'lutely. Well, that's fine. I don't suppose it makes much difference who the hell I am or who the hell you are, but—but—for purposes of identification, I will introduce myself. I am none other than Tibor Nagy, indubi—probably the greatest oboe player in the universe. Now it's your turn to tear off the mask and fearlessly confess who you are."

"I'm Meriel Lawton."
"Well, all I can say is you don't look it. Are you married or living in singular?"

"In singular."
"Dear, dear! What are our nice young men thinking of? Do you mind if I call you Immorial for short. When I look at life, Immorial, I decide that the billy goat has the right answer to all the questions. The billy goat looks on life and sums it all up in one good Ba-a-a!"

This overwhelmed him as one of the wisest and funniest things ever uttered. He laughed so hard that he had to hold on to Meriel to keep from folding up at her feet. He so plainly and pitifully implored her to laugh with him that she laughed her best. Unfortunately, this encouraged him to repeat the Ba-a-a-a! again and again. She was glad when Thorpe caught her arm and whispered:

"E. J. has gone for a drink. Let's go some place and get acquainted."

She was dazed by this abruptness, and could not think up an excuse light enough for the occasion. The oboe player took her other arm, and turning her, bristled:

"Mr. Verne Thorpe, this lady belongs to me." Thorpe angered Meriel by thrusting the little fellow aside.

"Fellow! You annoy me."
At first Tibor Nagy resented this, but he thought of a withering retort. He said, "Six feet two of horsemeat! Ba-a-a-a!" He looked at Meriel and laughed. She laughed with him. He walked away, but at intervals thereafter she would hear him calling, "Immorial! Oh, Immorial!" She would look about, see his hand waving above the shoulders that hid his head and hear him commenting, "Ba-a-a-a!"

Since Meriel, with a stubborn smile, refused to elope, Thorpe hustled her through the crowd to a table where one of the uninvited guests was shaking up the last of Emil's gin and vermouth. Meriel was forced to take another cocktail and it softened her heart so that she saw even in Thorpe's exigence a pathetic longing unappeased. But she slipped away to Cavenac's side as he was finishing a denunciation of a bear-eyed man who walked off, sneering:

"Stick to the conductor's desk, Cavenac, and keep out of the pulpit."

Cavenac blenched, and seeing Meriel, gathered her into his arm. "He's right. I hate preachers and I am always one. But that fellow—those are the remains of Stefan Tarnowski, the greatest violinist who never was. He set Europe on fire, and America. He plays the most frightful double-stops as if he merely scratches the fiddle's neck while he thinks of something else. But he gambles; he drinks; he goes after women. Women go after him. At last one of them gets him—a damned society girl, rich to an infamy. To spite the other women she marries him. He gives fewer

concerts and is not always sober. He does not practice the violin. He plays on that woman. She wears him out. He drinks. I am just telling him to divorce his vampire and remarry his fiddle. Where is a drink?"

He dragged Meriel to the bar, but Emil's liquor was exhausted. His value as a host was gone. The bad news spread that there was nothing more to guzzle. A stampede was imminent. The only problem was where to go next. E. J. Mapes won the crowd.

"I promised Clay Payne I'd be there to an eight-o'clock dinner. He's my publisher, my meal-ticker. He'll be mad at me. So all of you mus' come with me as a bodyguard and protect a poor work-in' goil from crool publisher. Thanks to my pure family novels, he has one of the fines' booze-parlors in this part of the worl'. Now, will you come? He's jus' over on Fifth Avenue."

There was a scramble for hats and overcoats. Thorpe clung to Meriel's arm, and while they waited on the curb for a flock of taxicabs to shoot up empty and scoot away overloaded, he was murmuring: "You come with me. We'll steal off to a bosky dell and tell our real names, eh? *Andiamo!*"

He thrust her into the next taxicab and dived in after her, but before he could slam the door, little E. J. had slid in and ensconced herself on his lap. She shouted the address to the driver, then glared at Meriel and demanded:

"Vernie, Vernie, can't we escape this female? Who is she?—your personal maid, or something?"

And Meriel pretended that this remark was what she was laughing at all the way to Clay Payne's. Every passing street light illumined the miserable face of Verne Thorpe with E. J.'s little head poised like a big boutonniere on his lapel. When E. J. fell asleep, Thorpe talked love, but Meriel mocked lightly:

"You don't fool me—or any woman, my lad. Wouldn't you be shocked if we believed what you say about our dazzling beauty and our irresistible charm? Such talk is just like the skeleton keys that all you men used on nearly all women. You're like a lot of hotel robbers; you try all doors on all floors and wonder which will open. We're just as dishonest as you are. We love to let you think you're going to get in, but we keep a chain on the door. But don't we have fun! Go on, tell me more nice words."

"I'm damned if I will, you dirty little cat."

"Now that's a real compliment."

The pack rolled in on Clay Payne's sumptuous apartment with the savagery of the Jacquerie invading an ancient chateau.

It was Meriel's first glimpse of a Fifth Avenue interior. It completed the magnificence of the occasion to find that one of the lingering guests was a count—an Italian count, with a long and sonorous name. He kissed her hand with a tragic grace and attached himself to her and Cavenac at once. Meriel was dazed when even Cavenac had a good word for him. But Cavenac did not call him Count or use his patronymic. As if the man were absent, Cavenac said:

"Capotasto is a real musician in spite of being an Italian. He is one of the few Italians who has ever tried to write a symphony. And he has written a noble one."

"*Piano, piano!* You are too good, Cavenac. You flatter me."

"You know that's a lie, Capotasto. No wonder they wanted you to teach orchestration at Bayreuth. Why didn't you go?"

"The invitation is wit'drown after I

accept—for the old reason." He turned to Meriel. "Mees Lawton, I am sayerd to breeng the bad lock to averybody who is nize to me. So beware off me."

Something impelled Meriel to step to his side and take his arm. She looked at Cavenac defiantly, expecting a little sneer at her melodrama. She found in his eyes a look of surprised admiration. He gave her one of his low bows while Capotasto squeezed her hand where it rested on his arm and said: "Mees Lawton is as brave as beautiful."

Clay Payne came up to say, "Count, I wish you'd repeat that scene from your new opera that you played for us earlier. These people ought to hear it."

Capotasto went to the very grand piano and beckoned to his side an obese Italian woman whom he introduced as Signorina Bellalotti. She must have been very beautiful before she was inflated into a cluster of balloons. Her voice was like a child's, eerily light and high, as it issued from the tiny features stretched over her massive face.

Emil sat crosslegged at Meriel's feet, with Cordelia in her usual tangle of limbs at his side. Across the room in E. J.'s clutches, Verne Thorpe kept trying to seize and hold Meriel's gaze by throwing his own like a lasso.

Cordelia told Meriel that Thorpe had been a cowboy in his youth. A rich widow, a Mrs. Vibbard, had heard him singing on the range in Texas and set him on his way, breaking both her heart and her purse on him. His ingratitude had shocked Mrs. Vibbard so that she killed herself.

Clay Payne made a speech: "It may interest you, ladies and gentlemen, to know that you have probably heard in advance the next great success at the Metropolitan. I am one of the board of directors and I am going to propose it for our next program."

Everybody applauded; but Capotasto did not seem to be elated by the news. E. J. left Verne Thorpe, and hurrying to Clay Payne, dragged him to one side for a secret word. Since she led him back of Meriel's chair and her excitement made her noisy, Meriel could not help hearing what she said.

"Papa Payne, you pulled an awful boner jus' now. This Capotosto—the sooner you drop him the better."

"Stick to your writing, E. J. What do you know about music?"

"I'm passion'ly fond of music and of you. So I wanna warn you to sidestep this Capotosto. He's got the evil eye."

"The what?"

"The evil eye. He puts a curse on everything he looks at."

"Oh, Lord, E. J., you don't believe that rot, do you?"

"O' course I don't believe it, but you'll never put that Capotosto across at the opera."

Meriel studied Capotasto with a new interest. Was he a sleek snake, as morbid as a snake, as graceful and as fatal? Was it possible that such an insane superstition could have hounded him?

Suddenly Thorpe crossed the room and flung himself on the floor at Meriel's feet. He called for more drinks from a passing servant, and reaching up a long arm took a high ball for Meriel and one for himself. He set his hand on her knee when the glass was empty, and straining his eyes upward, tried to murmur, but his voice slipped and he boomed:

"You'll love me yet."

"I hope so."

That puzzled him and his head sank, but his hand was still on her knee.

It was lifted off by the little oboe man, who stole up and emitted a soft

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"Ba-a-a-a!" He said: "Immorial, let's you and Emil and me and Scordek and Cavenac go up to my studio and have a little classic music for a change. It's too gawdam gorgeous here, and the host and hostess are dying on their feet."

The thought spread. All at once everybody had had too much of the Payne hospitality—especially the Paynes.

Tarnowski went to Cavenac to say: "I've been thinking about that sermon of yours. If you will come to my home I will play for you and you can tell me if there is still hope for me." Cavenac was worn out with people and overfed on music, but he leaped at this chance to save a lost soul—as he understood the soul and what losing it meant. Tarnowski embarrassed Cavenac a little by adding: "My wife will be unable to receive you properly. She will be asleep. But we shall not disturb her; she has learned to sleep best when I play."

His laugh was wormwood. They tried to slip out and escape the mob, but their flight was observed and they were followed by the entire rabble. Capotasto begged off. He bade Meriel farewell with a look that haunted her. The evil eye! It was as beautiful a pair of eyes as ever she saw. How could one hurt the lonely soul that stared out through them?

He said to her: "A rivederla. You know what that means?"

"Au revoir?"

"Yes. To the seeing again."

Tarnowski's apartment was on Park Avenue not far away, and the crowd went through the streets, reveling in the moon that revealed through the narrow strip of sky left by the tall buildings.

Verne Thorpe tried to cut out Meriel from the herd, but E. J. hung to his elbow and she went along on Emil's arm with Cordelia at his other arm. Emil was so drugged with sleep that the girls gave more support than they got. Cavenac clung to Tarnowski, plainly trying to pour into the repentant black sheep some of his own boundless energy. With his other arm Cavenac was upholding Scordek.

Meriel was consumed with a certain curiosity. She said to Emil: "What's Mr. de Cavenac like when he's drunk?"

Emil yawned, "See for yourself. I can't keep my eyes open. He's as drunk now as you're likely to find him ever. Look at him, dragging himself over to buck up a downhearted fiddler when he's ready to drop. Have you ever seen Tarnowski's wife? Her picture gets in the society rotogravures regularly. She made Tarnowski go Park Avenue."

Meriel had never been in a Park Avenue home. She remembered now the published features of the beautiful Mrs. Elise Tarnowski (née van Tromp). She wished she might have a glimpse of one of the Manhattan swells. It would top off this endless night. The gypsies reached at last the white building. Tarnowski looked back at them ruefully as they came stringing along the street, in knots and pairs.

Tarnowski waited to gather them in a mass before he led them into the presence of the drowsy elevator man, who would have to make many trips and who despised bohemians as much as Mrs. van Tromp Tarnowski did. Cavenac and Tarnowski, Meriel and Emil coincided in the first elevator.

Tarnowski, as he fitted his key in the lock, said to Cavenac: "You might be as quiet as you can. My wife will be asleep."

He pushed the door open softly and stepped back to wait for the rest. Cavenac and Emil caught each an arm of Meriel's and marched on, while E. J. wrangled with Verne Thorpe at the sill,

holding up the rest of the party. Meriel's eyes widened at the splendor of the entrance hall as Cavenac swept her through it to where it turned into a vaulted salon like a throne room. Tarnowski had said that his wife would be asleep.

She was. She lay reclining on a divan in a gleaming house gown—also in the arms of some sleeping man.

They woke with a gasp, struggling so madly to disengage their arms that they fell back in an idiotic sprawl.

Meriel's heart stopped. The husband must be right on their heels. What could be done?

Cavenac knew. He bowed low and exclaimed: "Milles pardons, madame, monsieur! I have the wrong appartement."

He clenched Meriel's arm tight with his, fastened Emil's arm with the other, and wheeled them round in a perfect circle, marched them through the door and down the hall. Three abreast, they filled the corridor. In Cavenac's grip they brushed back the incoming swarm and broomed them into the outer hall. He drove back even Tarnowski, and closed the door himself. Dropping Emil's arm, Cavenac seized Tarnowski's and dragged him expostulating to the elevator, as he whispered:

"Your wife was asleep—in your salon. It would be quite too embarrassing to bring this gang in upon her slumbers. We go somewhere else." To the jumbled mob, Cavenac said: "This shack is too shabby. We're all going up to Tibor's and have some good oboe music."

There was much grumbling and mutiny, but Cavenac manhandled the most obstreperous into the elevator.

Tarnowski resisted in vain. He was haled into the elevator, and Cavenac neither let him go nor stopped talking till their taxicab reached Tibor's somewhat rickety studio building. Meriel felt pretty rickety herself from all she had drunk in with eyes and ears and lips. Cavenac saw that she was squeezed into the taxicab with him and Tarnowski, Emil and Cordelia.

Verne Thorpe tried to push in, too, but Cavenac thrust him out. He turned up late at Tibor's and made his way through the music to Meriel to explain:

"That E. J.! She's harder to get rid of than a Texas tick! I got her into a taxicab, took her to her apartment house and handed her to the elevator, said 'Good night!' and ran."

This suggested various retorts to Meriel, but Tibor was playing something on his plaintive oboe and she set Thorpe the example of silence. When the number was finished, Thorpe pleaded:

"Nellie, darling, I'm mad about you. I've got to see you tomorrow. The day after, I leave on a three weeks' concert tour. I've got to see you tomorrow or die. Where do you live?"

"I don't. I'm in a boarding house."

"Good Lord! I didn't know they had 'em any more. Well, where is it? What's your phone number? May I call you?"

"It's a public number. Whether I'll ever wake up again if I ever get to bed again, I don't know." She gave him the number to quiet him and added, "I can always say I'm out."

Meriel regretted that she would have no better place to receive him than that woeful parlor in the boarding house with those ghastly boarders snooping about. To go to Thorpe's rooms, as he would undoubtedly propose, would be a little dangerous. He was too powerful, too impulsive, too savage, perhaps, for management by evasion or irony. She must find some place to live where she could see people sanely—or insanely. The problem was solved almost as if her wish had been a prayer overheard and answered.

Cordelia, who had overheard, ventured: "Oh, if only—oh, no, you wouldn't—but—well, what I was going to say was that I have an apartment for two but my roommate—Dot, Dorothy Lacey—she was a singer—she got a job with a comic-opera company and it's a hit in Chicago—she won't be back for months—I can't afford to keep it alone. Dot has a piano—that's got to go to storage unless—She would sublet her half to you for almost nothing."

"My practicing would drive you mad." Cordelia shook her head. "I'm away at dancing school most of the day. And I can practice my stretching exercises to your scales."

"Go and have a look, anyway," Emil pleaded. "Here's her address." He wrote it down on a bit of paper and handed it to her, but Verne Thorpe snatched it. "Good Lord," Thorpe said, "you can't go there, Nellie. It's E. J.'s apartment house."

"Then it must be very expensive," said Meriel.

"Not the cubby-hole I have," said Cordelia. "The big ones cost more, but the little ones are cheap, especially when two people divide the rent."

Thorpe protested: "But I can't have you and E. J. in the same building."

Now, if for no other reason, Meriel had to agree to call on Cordelia and look about and talk things over. It was the only way to live; the way thousands of girls lived in the big town. Seeing Emil depart with Cordelia, Meriel suddenly realized how completely fagged she was. Scordek was asleep. Thorpe said:

"You're dying, Nellie. Let me take you home."

She shook her head and looked at Cavenac, who was at the piano with Tarnowski and Tibor Nagy.

Thorpe said: "I hate to trust you at this hour with one of those foreigners."

Tired as she was, she laughed so loud that Cavenac came swiftly to her. She explained: "It's this drunk cowboy here. I think he's got the prairie fever. He's dangerous."

"All Americans are dangerous to women—none so dangerous as Mr. Thorpe."

Too befuddled to answer, Thorpe lumbered away, and Cavenac asked Meriel if she would ride with him in the sweet morning air while he delivered Scordek and Tarnowski to their homes. She loved that. She bade her host good night and told him how pleasant it had been to meet him. And he said: "Ba-a-a-a!"

They went down in the creaking elevator, Cavenac upholding the drooping Falstaff form of Scordek and upholding the worried spirit of Tarnowski. The streets were noisy with early morning traffic, and Meriel found in this a little exhilaration. Cavenac drove first to Scordek's and Tarnowski helped him unload the drowsy whale. There was more room in the cab now. Soon Tarnowski was gone, after thanking Cavenac for saving his soul. As soon as he was out of earshot, Meriel said:

"He doesn't know how much you saved him from. It was swell of you to keep Mr. Tarnowski from having all those people witness his—well, witness Mrs. Tarnowski. But have you the right to keep from him the truth about her?"

"Pugh! he knows what she is. I wasn't thinking of him. I was thinking of myself, me. I do not like to see the fireworks that follow when people's triangles blow up. I was thinking only of me."

"Weren't you trying to save me, too, from a scene?"

"Save you, my dear? I don't intend to save you from anything, ever. So far as I can, I am going to hurl you against

the world and life and—and it won't be you that breaks. You're adamant."

"Why do you say that?" "Otherwise you would take pity on a lonely, worn-out wretch and kiss me."

She kissed him. He breathed deeply, but, always unpredictable, instead of seizing her in his arms, he snarled:

"You little fool! You must not kiss every man that asks you. Simply, you must not!"

"You're not every man." "I am not all men. But I am every man. And I have no right to your kisses. I will return the first—and last." He bent and kissed her lightly, yet not so lightly. "Keep that," he said, "and if I ask for it again—if I beg for it—don't give it to me!"

Afterwards she supposed that she must have been fairly drunk to have been so prompt with her response to Cavenac's little ironic request. At her door he kissed her hand and hurried away. He did not look back.

When Meriel's next letter reached her mother in Carthage, it found Ada sitting by the bedside of her husband, who was in the throes of typhoid fever. The nurse was out for a walk. Walter was asleep. Ada had not slept for forty-eight hours. She felt that she would never sleep again.

Ada heard the muffled doorbell ring, then the stairway creaking. She realized that Elvira, the cook, was hoisting herself to the second floor, like a self-propelled tun. Ada knew that Elvira would never climb that Matterhorn unless the need were urgent. She was at the door, and opening it just as Elvira rubbed her rough palm across it in lieu of knocking. Elvira beckoned Ada out into the hall. She held a letter, withheld it till she got her breath.

"This year special-reliver letta jus' come. Hit's from Miss Meriel. 'At means money is goin' go poppin' outen heah. I reckon hit's no use askin' could I have about fo' mo' dollars on ma nex' monf's wages. One of ma husbands—one of ma back husbands—the secon', I reckon—Joe Body, he in the jailhouse."

"What's he in for?" "Speedin'." "Speeding? With that rattletrap of his?"

"Yossum; hit's a law you can't go round no cornder faster'n eight malls a houah. An' he goes roun' at ten. So he arrested. Right flattery for that fliyya of his'n."

"All right; I'll get my purse. Would you mind letting me have that letter?"

Elvira started to laugh, but clapped a coal-shovel hand over her coal-scuttle mouth. Ada stood and read. She was not surprised by the brevity of Meriel's letter, not at all surprised by its request for money in a great hurry, nor surprised by the messages of devotion. But there was news of concern. She had left her boarding house to share an apartment with another girl—a dancer!

Ada folded the letter and stared into space. Elvira mumbled:

"Is it any bad news?" "No! No, oh, no!" "You isn't that fo' dollars right handy, is you?"

"Oh, yes, and when you take it to the jail, take a note to the bank for me. I want them to telegraph some money to New York."

"Yossum. Money! Jedus Lawd! Whynt them young-uns jus' send two words—fi' dollars. Ten dollars. Two words is enough. Hit's always money."

Ada went back into the bedroom. Walter was feebly delirious, muttering to himself in some fever nightmare, tossing



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his gaunt hands. She paused to let her heart ache for him a moment, then sank heavily into a chair by his old desk and wrote a note to the cashier at the bank asking him to telegraph a hundred dollars to Meriel at her new address. She wrote also a check, then began a letter to Meriel. She was jaded with prolonged terror for her husband's life and fighting the onset of the same fever in herself.

Such things, of course, must be kept from the children. She must not worry the children. Ada had feared for Meriel's welfare so far away, and had been glad that she had established herself in a boarding house familiar to Carthage people for two generations. Now Meriel was moving into an apartment with another young girl. Just two young girls together, and one of them to be a professional dancer! No chaperon. No older woman with them!

Of course, Ada knew from her own youth that chaperons did no good. She knew that homes were not safe; that church choirs were not safe, that coming home from prayer meeting was not safe. She knew that boarding houses in great cities were not safe. Amabel had proved that boarding schools were not safe. Nobody was ever safe anywhere.

And yet two girls in an apartment!—wouldn't their young men callers misunderstand, and misbehave? Who would protect the girls if the young men drank too much and grew violent? What would the neighbors think of the girls?

Ada would have been shattered with fear, but she had been through the dark valley with Walter for weeks and she had no strength left to be afraid with—except for the vague terror in all her members. Her blood and her bones and her nerves seemed to be panicky. She was going to be awfully sick. She blamed herself and was ashamed.

She'd better write to Meriel while her hand was steady. Then she would write and ask Walter's sister, Abigail, to come and take care of the house.

So she wrote to Meriel, her wet brow on one weary hand, her eyes swimming.

My dearest child

Your blessed letter has just come and I have just asked the bank to telegraph you the money. I am glad you have found a nice apartment and I am sure Miss Poplin must be a sweet girl if you like her. Give her my kindest regards and ask her to look after you and call a doctor the first thing if you catch cold or get sick. I worry so over you. I know you are too busy to write but write when you can so I'll know you're well.

There is no news from the other children. Of course they never write so I guess no news is good news. No news here either. You know Carthage. Your father is not here just now and does not know I am writing you or he would send his love.

I am well, of course. You know me strong as a horse and as pretty as one. I miss you so terribly. Just dying to see you. Don't skimp yourself, darling. And don't work too hard. And don't forget how much we love you, your father and I.

Your loving
Aida

As she read the letter over, hating her illiterate-looking writing and viewing with fear the shakiness of it—fear that Meriel might be frightened—she decided that she must copy it, but she could not find the strength. So she added:

P. S. My writing looks very shakey but the table is so cluttered I haven't much room and the pen is almost wore out. Love and kisses.

She addressed the envelope as carefully as if her pen were a graver's tool. She read over her letter to the bank, verified with strange difficulty the figures on the check, took four dollars from her purse and carried the lot to Elvira, who was waiting in the hall.

Elvira stared at her. "Jedus, Miz Lawton, but you look sick! Better I hadn't go befo' the train nuss come back."

"Go on about your business and don't talk so much."

"Yossum."

For once, Meriel answered a letter of her mother's promptly and with a long outpouring of love and gossip, repentance, reassurance, gratitude, adoration. It would have done Ada no end of good if she could have read it—to say nothing of answering it. Walter was still in the state that had enabled Ada to say without too much falsehood, "Your father is not here just now." Ada was not there just then, either.

Walter's sister, Abigail, was grimly taking care of the house. Abigail read Meriel's letter to see if there were anything imperative. She longed to write a scathing criticism of Meriel for such shameful extravagance and unconventionality. She wanted to remind that young woman that a young woman's place was at home taking care of her parents. But the sinking Ada had extracted from her a solemn oath that she would not let the children know of their parents' illness. Furthermore, that the bank must send the children any money they just had to have.

Meriel was too busy too variously in New York to realize how long her mother had left her letter unanswered or to worry about her.

Meriel had worries enough with her workaday, gadanight life. She had her ups and downs. But, after her first ups, her ups were less and less lofty; and her downs deeper and deeper.

"Buy-you-oo! Buy-ye-ee! Buy-you-oo. Buy-yow-wow. Damn it! I'll never—buy-yo-ho—get the damned thing! Bay-bee-by-bo-boo. As soon as I get it I lose it. Buy-you-hoo-hoo splmn wham!"

This last was the unspellable futuristic chord struck out by Meriel's forearm when it hit the keyboard and her forehead hit her forearm as her discouraged head sank and she began to sob the uncouth syllables of grief.

CORDELIA CAME from the dining room where she had been toiling at spinning like a top. Her working clothes were a very brief bathing suit, ankle-high socks and dancing slippers with boxed toes. She went to Meriel and asked: "What's the matter, honey?"

Meriel lifted her head and glared murderously at nothing—or everything. "Oh, it's those hell-fired exercises. I can't seem to get them. If I had the brains of a gnat, I'd give up and go home to Carthage, marry Boyd and settle down in Chicago, God forbid! I'll never be a singer! Even Scordek, who praised me to the skies at first, is discouraged. All he has to do is to say 'Relax!' and I tighten up like a lockjaw. The only place I relax is in my damned vocal cords." "Gah, gah, gah, dah, dah, dah?" Cordelia laughed. "The old cords tighten up when you swear. Maybe that's the secret."

"Maybe it is. I'll try it. Buy-dam-am! Buy-gah-dam! That's fine." She was laughing now.

Cordelia returned to her own treadmill.

What the neighbors thought about Meriel's noise and Cordelia's floor-thumping they kept to themselves. Most

of them were noise-makers, too; successful singers or actors or practicers upon various instruments. They had learned to withdraw their attentions from other people's horrible sounds in return for the same favor on the part of the victims of their own. They had driven Meriel almost out of her wits until she learned to draw about herself a cloak of deafness and to accept their bellowings as a dweller by the sea accepts the unresting, inescapable surf.

When she was singing herself she did not hear any other noise. But this recourse in self-defense was not available to poor Miss E. J. Mapes, who, some time before Meriel met her, had wandered into this building during a silent hour, had loved the top apartment for its quiet and signed a long-term contract before she realized that she had leased space in Bedlam.

E. J. HAD NOT been settled long before she telephoned to Cordelia's then roommate and demanded that Dorothy quench her racket at once.

"I'm sorry if I disturb you," Dorothy had replied. "But I have a living to earn, too; and my lease has a clause in it specifically permitting me to practice my singing between the hours of nine a. m. and ten p. m."

"I don't mind your singing, miss—if you can," E. J. had snarled. "It is your appalling howling that I can't stand. If you don't stop it I'll go to the police."

"You can go to hell while you're at it, but you can't break my lease."

And so E. J. had learned. She had to comment thenceforth by pounding on the floor and calling on the telephone frequently in retaliation for Dorothy's practicing. When Dorothy went to Chicago, E. J. enjoyed comparative peace.

Cordelia had expected that she would make her next outburst as soon as Meriel's first arpeggio broke the hush, but there had been no protest from above and for a good-enough reason: E. J. could not hear Meriel in Boston, whither she had gone after the all-night party. She had only now returned and she lost no time in seizing the telephone. E. J.'s voice was not disguised with liquor now and she did not employ her belligerent baby talk.

"I see—I hear that that lone wolf has got back from Chicago where the prairies offered such a fitting practice ground."

"No. The voice you heard is Miss Lawton's."

E. J. did not remember Meriel's name, if she had ever heard it. Thorpe had called Meriel "Mellie Nelba" mostly. "The name may be different but the voice is just as annoying."

"Your own voice is more unpleasant than Miss Lawton's could possibly be."

"But I can't write, I tell you."

"That's no news to me. Didn't I try to read one of your damn serials? All the critics have told you you can't write. Now you admit it. That makes the vote unanimous."

"You are an impudent nincompoop."

"The same to you and many of them."

She banged up the receiver and turned to Meriel. "Go on with your practicing."

"I'm out of the mood. I'll watch you dance."

"I'll practice that thing of Emil's if you'll play it."

"I'll do my best, but I can't read manuscripts, especially Emil's."

As an accompanist for herself and her vagaries Meriel got by, but playing for dancers was not her forte. She stopped short abruptly, leaving Cordelia in a sort of vertical split, poised on one toe with the other high in air.

"I simply can't count! Cavenac told me I hadn't the first idea of time. He promised to teach me. Been busy, I suppose."

"With some other woman—women, I suppose. They say he has lots of mistresses," Cordelia ventured, to see how Meriel would take it.

"I suppose so," was Meriel's baffling reply, and perhaps to see how Cordelia would take it, she added: "I adore Emil's music. It's almost as lovable as he is."

"Isn't it?" was Cordelia's parry.

Without looking at each other, the two girls were on the alert. They were devoted to each other and there was no rivalry in their different arts, but it was a strain on their comradeship to be both so fond of the same man and to find him so fond of both. Meriel was the interloper, the later comer, and she had no desire to poach on Cordelia's preserves. But she had not been able to decide whether or not Cordelia's preserves included Emil. He was plainly fascinated by Cordelia, and her audacious genius in the dance. But Meriel was one of the instruments in his orchestra, a living voice turning into beautiful sound his ink and the tones he silently imagined.

Though he kissed Cordelia when they met, Meriel felt that it was more a brotherly affection than a lover's. He did not kiss Meriel, yet his eyes seemed to want to—and not as a brother.

When Emil came to their apartment, as he constantly did, or when they went to his, this wordless duel went on between the two girls over the musician. They fought fairly, as good sportsmen would who are fond of each other, and admire and fear each the other's skill. Neither dared ask the other how much she really cared for Emil. Their motto was an unspoken agreement: "A fair field, and may the better woman win."

At the height of their tangled conflict the telephone bell brayed.

Meriel reached the telephone first. From it poured in the falsetto tenor of an anæmic Faust:

"*Salut demeure, chaste et pure*—which being translated means, 'Hello, apartment chaste and pure,' and I trust you are the same."

"Of course I am, Mr. Thorpe. You've been away."

"Had you noticed? Did you miss me?"

"Dreadfully. I committed suicide three times and pined away twice."

"May I come up and see you?"

"Where are you?"

"Downstairs."

"Heavens! I'm not dressed. Give me ten minutes to put on my armor."

"It will seem like ten days."

"Behave yourself or I'll make it thirty."

Cordelia recognized the familiar fencing foils buttoned with words. She said: "Shall I go out and leave the little mustang to your mercy?"

"Lord, no! This Thorpe man is too big for one woman to handle with words. I'm going to keep that poker handy; and don't you leave me for a moment."

"All right. I'll be in the offing and I'll give him fair warning that we working girls can defend our honor—when we want to."

Cordelia's idea of demonstrating her preparedness was to open the door for Thorpe and kick his hat out of his hand just as it came off his lofty head.

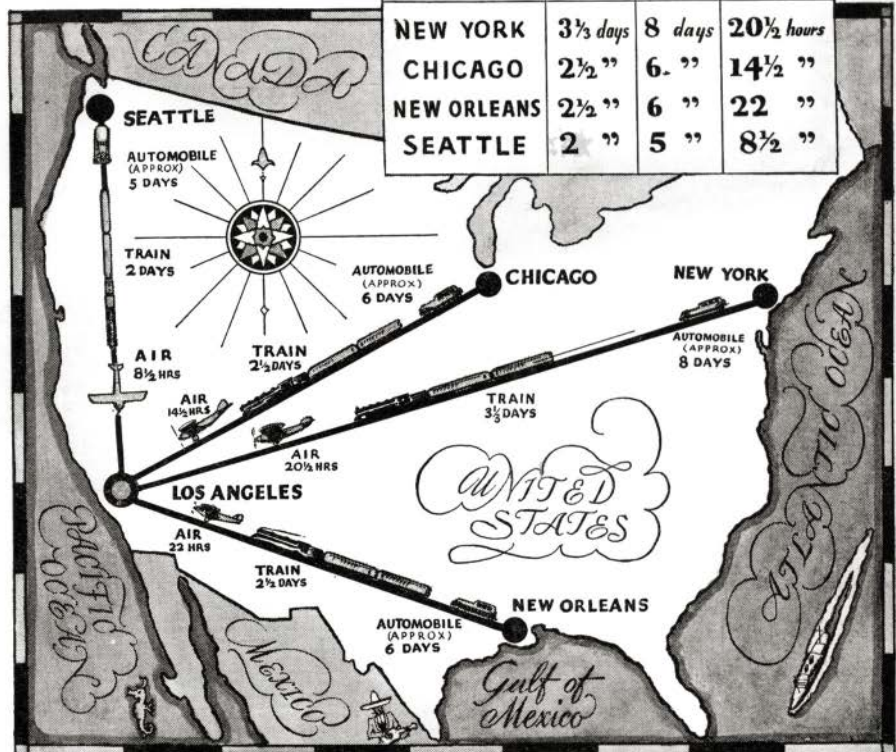
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