

10 STORY BOOK

A Magazine for Iconoclasts

November 1922



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10 STORY BOOK



Vol. 20, No. 12

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Twentieth Year

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And a few poppy little skits

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An Algerian Wooing

Adapted from the French of Louis Lecocq and Charles Hagel
by R. T. House



BROUMITCHE, the Italian fisherman, had hung a pearl necklace from a branch of a cork oak. He figured that the pearls, a gift from some discarded mistress or other in Algiers city, would be excellent bait to catch the little Arab. Hidden behind the bushes, he watched her delightedly as she reached for the necklace. Through the holes of her scanty garment he caught the satiny sheen of her date-colored skin. She was only thirteen years old, but the Arab women mature early. Broumitche chuckled.

He knew her father, Hadj Meziane, the old thief who had robbed his fish-traps again and again. "I'll pay him," he grunted.

The child stood on tiptoe, craned and

jumped, but the shining prize still hung out of reach. At last it occurred to her to shake the tree. At once the beautiful thing dropped on the grass.

When she turned, she saw the man. He had crawled out of the bushes, and lay smiling at her. She leaped back. He had picked up the necklace and held it out to her.

She measured the distance to the family hut. Could they hear her there if she screamed? Surely. It was just beyond the thicket, her father's jujube enclosure, with the great fig-tree on which the many-colored rags hung which constituted the family washing, hanging out to dry that instant.

As the man still lay motionless, she came toward him with timid



Debla

short steps, ready to spring back at the slightest alarm.

"What is your name?" the man asked.

She hesitated. Then she answered:

"My name is Debia."

He had risen to his feet, and was coming nearer her. With a friendly smile and in the softest of wheedling voices, he went on:

"Do you like the necklace? . . . Pretty, isn't it? . . . You would be very glad to have it for your own, wouldn't you?"

Still smiling, he put out a gentle hand and caressed the soft shoulder. The warmth of the tender flesh burned his rough palm, hardened by hours a day of gripping the oars.

She drew back apprehensively.

"I like to give things to pretty girls . . . You're a pretty girl . . . and young . . . young . . ."

She was not listening to him. She was staring at the necklace.

"They're real," he urged "Real; and that's pure gold."

She fondled the necklace, held it up to shine in the sun, spread it out on her henna-brown fingers with the graceful movements which even the most primitive women have at their command to show off an article of jewelry.

"Come over here where we can look at it better," he whispered. "Someone might come by if we stay by the road."

She followed him.

* * * *

One day Debia told Broumitche that her father had forbidden her to leave the hut any more except with himself or her mother.

The Italian was blind with rage. But he grew calm in a moment, and said:

"Come and work for me. You can keep my house in order, and I will give

you your keep and fifteen francs a month."

"You are mad. You know my father will have nothing to do with unbelievers."

"Then I will marry you."

"Unbeliever! Even if my father were willing, his tribe would not allow it."

Broumitche meditated. He was forty-six years old. It was time to settle down.

"If your father were to die, would you come with me?"

In her barbarous little brain she had long ago established a code of conduct, separating the permissible from the forbidden.

"Yes, I would go with you," she said decidedly. "Mother is old, and I am not afraid of her. You could give her a little money and she would say nothing more."

Broumitche proposed a hypothetical case.

"Suppose I should grow angry one of these days. Suppose your father and I should have a quarrel. Suppose I should kill him. Would you come with me?"

The question was a knotty one. She meditated. Of course her father must die some day. She had never seen a dead body, and the thought troubled her. But on the other hand, the prospect he opened was enticing. Good food, a real house to live in, a bureau with a mirror, a table, a cupboard—and her father stood between her and all this. His hand was heavy, his stomach was vast. When he had eaten his fill, it was a matter of small importance to him whether anything was left for his family or not.

Like a jurist, learned in her tribal law, she replied:

"If you kill him without a reason, his brothers will kill you to avenge his blood, and I cannot go with you. If it is his fault, you will pay my mother his blood-money and you can buy me, but to marry me you must be a believer——"

"But if I catch him stealing my fish and kill him?"

"Then you will pay nothing. And I will come to you, and no one will notice. But how can you prove that he is stealing your fish? What proof will you have?"

"What proof? Why, everybody knows he steals my fish!"

She persisted:

"But you can't prove it. If nobody sees him, you can't prove it."

She was right. He would not have the irrefutable proof which would stand up against the bribing of witnesses, so common in the African countries, or the concerted perjury of a whole tribe, unanimous in clearing one of its members of an accusation brought by an unbeliever, marvelously gifted in concocting fabulous stories.

* * * *

Broumitche sat in the dirty little village cafe, playing cards with Espinoche, the melancholy Spanish proprietor. A group of idlers stood around, waiting for the rain to cease.

"I'll play you one more game," said Broumitche. "Ho, Meziane, you old thief, come in here! Pour him a cup, and I'll pay the bill!"

Debia's father stood in the cafe door, watching the rain. He did not wait to be invited a second time. He drank his coffee with ecstatic delight. He had not eaten a mouthful since the night before.

With a great weary gesture he explained his misery.

"As Allah is good, not a sou!"

The winter was coming on, there was not fish to steal. There was nothing for Hadj Meziane to do but prowl about the village, seeking odd jobs, charity and trifling objects left unguarded.

Broumitche was losing. But the more he lost, the gayer he seemed to grow.

"Are you sure you can pay?" demanded Espinoche suspiciously.

"Pay! I can buy the cafe, if I choose, and never know the difference. Come, Espinoche, get us a package of cigarettes."

"Where did you pick up your fortune?" jeered Espinoche. "Strike a mine of Roquefort cheese? Harvest of macaroni?"

Everybody roared. Broumitche grew indignant.

"You poor vagabonds, you think I have no money? Look here!"

He opened a great bill-book and showed an enormous roll of bills.

"Did I hear you remark that I was a beggar? Did I hear you ask if I could pay my debts? I can buy and sell the whole bunch of you!"

"Miracle!" gasped the Maltese blacksmith. "He has killed a Jew!"

"Oh! oh! how much is it? How much have you?"

"A part of my little savings!" said the Italian airily. "Only a small part of them. More than a thousand francs, I tell you!"

He treated the whole company, carelessly throwing down a hundred franc note. Everybody was happy. Broumitche explained:

"When this rain stops, I am going to Algiers to put the money in the bank. I think I shall sell my house after a little and buy a bar in the city. Like you, Espinoche!"

He swept his change together without counting it.

"Good-bye, everybody! I must go now. If I stay here any longer, you'll have it all in your stomachs. Are you going home, Meziane?"

The one wrapped in his tarpaulin cloak, the other covered with an old sack, the two men plodded along in the rain. The

road grew to a river. They stopped under a great tree.

"Devilish weather!" grumbled the Italian. "It will be days before I can get to Algiers!"

"You're afraid about the money?"

"Well," said the other, shaking his head with an air of perplexity, "it would be better in the bank."

The Arab proposed a solution.

"Go home and dig a hole in the ground, and put your money in the hole. That is better than the bank."

He smiled, proud of his wisdom. They struggled on. Broumitche picked his way gloomily among the puddles.

"No hole in the ground for me! The money shall stay in my cloak, inside the house."

Meziane shut his lips tight.

"But suppose someone should come and rob you. Did you see how they looked at you in the cafe? There were bad men there, my friend! By tomorrow everybody will know you have the money in your house."

"Don't be troubled. The door is solid. The money shall not keep me awake to-night, I promise you that!"

Meziane was silent for a minute, then he agreed:

"It is true. You have a door. In our huts, there are no doors. Yes, you are perfectly safe."

They plodded on. The rain had almost stopped, but it began to fall again in great drops. They ran. At the cross-roads they separated, Meziane taking the path to the right.

"Addio, then!"

Great clouds rolled up behind them and swallowed the peaks of the Atlas. The thunder growled continually.

* * * *

It was still raining when night came. Broumitche bolted his two doors care-

fully, and dined off fish and cold boiled potatoes, the remnant of his mid-day meal, by the light of a single candle. He ate slowly and with relish, cutting cubes of bread and washing them down with wine. Then he washed a dish or two and put them away, glancing cozily about his comfortable quarters as he did so. The place had belonged to his father and mother, who had died, only a few weeks apart, half a dozen years before. There was a good bed, a gilt-framed mirror on the chimney-place, flanked by two pots of artificial flowers. There was an arm-chair, a dressing-table; there were three chromos, Jesus, Joseph and Mary. Everything was scrupulously neat. Broumitche polished his house as he polished his boat. The other room, once a dining-room, he had transformed into a store-room. There he kept his fishing-tackle, his eel-traps, his nets, his baskets, cordage, sails and paint-pots. There were provisions, besides; two sacks of potatoes, macaroni in yellow packages, rice in green bags, red peppers, and a chaplet of garlic. A bottomless chair which he proposed to repair as soon as the spirit moved him, mounted guard before the table where he braided his lines. Beyond the partition was a tiny kitchen, and besides there was a little built-on closet. It was a real house, more than large enough for two, furnished with love and care.

Broumitche smiled and stretched himself.

"Now what shall I do?"

Under the yellow flame of the candle, he drew out a pack of greasy cards and commenced a game of solitaire. He sat himself a difficult task. It absorbed all his attention. After three failures, he came through at last.

"Good!"

He breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"What time is it?"

Only nine o'clock. He thought of throwing himself on the bed. Would it not be safe to sleep an hour or two?"

He decided against sleep. It might be dangerous.

"Oh, the cigarettes! I had forgotten them."

He brought out the package he had bought of Espinoche in the morning. He smoked two cigarettes without stopping.

"Nearly ten o'clock. I must get ready."

He took down a gun from above his bed, brought it near the candle and examined it carefully. It was a handsome weapon, and he had paid a handsome price for it, in monthly installments. It was perfectly cleaned and polished, in beautiful condition. He looked it over anxiously, took out the cartridges, tried the hammers.

"Good!"

He loaded it with buckshot, made that very day, so as not to run the slightest risk of missing fire. He polished up the butt a little more with a rag, laid the gun on his bed, sat down and blew out the candle.

He waited a long time in the darkness. At last he went over and opened the door. A gust of wind slapped him in the face, carrying a sharp slant of rain.

The darkness was absolute. Near by, the sea boomed, and nearer still the brook ran furiously.

"What dirty weather!"

He closed the door, and the silence inside was oppressive.

"Ah—the cannon of Jesus Christ!"

Lightning, thunder, again and again. He could feel the house tremble.

"Good, good!"

He found his way back to the chair. Then he reached for his cigarettes. He smoked a long time—three or four cigarettes in succession.

Suddenly the chair cracked. He had left it suddenly. Dropping on his hands and knees, he crawled slowly around the outside wall. Through the four rooms he crept, gluing his ear to the wainscoting from time to time and listening.

He heard nothing but the monotonous song of the rain.

He smoked again, he reconnoitered again, he paced the room, back and forth, back and forth. At last he sat down on the floor, his back against the wall.

It was the sense of touch that told him his waiting was over. He heard no noise, he felt it. Something was knocking softly against the wall. He bent his ear down, and soon he could hear distinctly.

He felt a great sense of relief and satisfaction. The time for action had come at last.

There were two noises. First a cautious beating, then the scratching of an iron tool on the bricks and mortar.

Broumitche came back to his chair and took his gun on his knees. He lit another cigarette. The beating and scraping were growing so distinct that he could hear them from his place. All at once, from the direction of the noise, a gust of air burst in and struck cold on Broumitche's hanging hand.

Something was pushing its way into the room. The hand which was lifting a cigarette to the waiting Italian's lips ceased its journeying back and forth. It rested against the wall, throwing a faint cone of light toward the hole.

In its halo Broumitche perceived a strange shape pushed into the room; a sack wrapped around a stick. Shoved cautiously in, it moved about in every direction. The cigarette fell to the floor and went out.

Something was following the stick. Groping toward the something with the

barrel of his gun, Broumitche encountered an obstacle, a thing that was round and hard. A raucous syllable, a cry of terror and supplication, then the two barrels went off at once. . . .

Broumitche lighted the candle. A man lay in the hole, his head and shoulders well inside the room, bleeding on the sack and cudgel which he had pushed ahead of him to deceive the Italian if he were by any chance on the watch, and to catch the force of his attack.

But Broumitche had been too sharp for him.

"I am Broumitche. Ho, ho!"

The dead man was gripping a sharp, ugly knife with a blade six inches long.

"Ah, the rascal! He would have done for me!"

He stood pondering. Yes, that was the best way to handle it! Now he had his proof, and no bribing of witnesses, no Arab clannishness could break it.

He glanced at his bed. He was worn out, his eyes were falling shut. How

pleasant it would be to sleep an hour or two! No. He must not!

In the placid light of his candle, Broumitche sat down beside the bleeding head and pulled on his shoes. He must go at once and inform the gendarmes and the witnesses from the cafe. As he got ready he repeated his lesson:

"It was because he saw I had the money—who would have believed it of him?—Of course I had no idea it was Meziane I had shot. How lucky I was to wake up when I did!"

He opened the bed, lay down in it a few moments, crumpled up the pillow.

"Yes, I was lucky to wake just when I did or that knife of his would have finished me. Poor devil! And a father with a family at that!—I suppose they were suffering—and he was desperate!—Well, I must do something for the poor children I have orphaned. I will take one of them, little Debia, for example. I think she might make a fair servant here in the house."

A LETTER TO HUNG FUNG WANG

Dear Miss Vine:

You know that I love you. No more is there to be said except that my hand I offer you in marriage. Foolish it would be for me to go into details in telling to you the condition of my heart; for you, with your discerning eye, well know that you are the only girl for me. I know that I am a Mongolian and that you are the wonderful little white girl what has already done much for me. I should expect no more; but the brain cannot dictate to the heart. I will await an answer by mail, and if I do not get one I will know that you do not reciprocate my love—my love that is so strong as to tear away the pronounced race line between us.

In love,

Hung Fung Wang.

As Ethel re-read the letter that she had brought with her she lay down on the grass and laughed. It was funny and tragic. As one of the teachers of the little Chinese mission, she had encouraged Hung to educate himself and then to go into business. She had not dreamed, however, that his limited knowledge of English was to be used to pen a proposal to her. As she waited for Ralph, she considered the contents of the letter again. The thought of living a life-time with those slant eyes, the yellow complexion, the shuffling gait and the long, slender fingers made her shudder perceptibly. It was one thing to teach

(Continued on page 42.)

Beware the Dog

BY JOHN WARD CLINTON



JOHAN BATES is queer. Until last night I had thought he was a fool.

There is a vast difference between the two. When you call a man a fool you speak of a person; when you say he's queer you recognize a personality. Bates' most potent peculiarity I think is his dog or rather the place the dog has in Bates' scheme of things. You may have noticed the look men have in their eyes for a faithful, loving friend; a devoted wife tried in the test of all circumstances; for a son who has fulfilled a parent's wildest hopes. Bates had no such friend, wife or son, but he had that look in his eyes and he gave it to his dog, an under-sized, ragged-looking specimen of which Bates when questioned as to breed, said, "Well, about half French poodle and about half just dog—any breed."

Last night I saw Bates at the bench show and he had that dog with him—not even a ribbon on it to make a pretense of showing up with the canine exhibits—and so I say Bates is queer. He and his dog stood at a kennel of Blenheims. The dog wagged his bit of tail pompously and looked at the Blenheims much as you've seen a smouldering anarchist look at the pageant of an emperor. Bates looked at the exhibit and their blue ribbons and

then at his own dog with quite the same eye of inventory that a rich land owner looks at his perfect rose gardens and then glances at his caretaker's cabbage patch. But it was in the Blenheims he saw the cabbage patch.

"Why don't you buy a real dog, Bates?" I said. "Your nearly dog is about worn out, isn't he—he looks a little moth eaten."

Have you noticed a hen puff out warlike and defiant when you gave any attention to her chicks? So did Bates.

"Is a dog's value set at what one pays for him?" Bates questioned me. I felt small and unworthy somehow as one feels when he has presumed to enter a confidential ground. I knew positively at that moment that Bates was no fool.

"That is what the majority supposes," was my very weak answer.

"Then I suppose the majority should know by this time that I paid twenty thousand dollars for mine." Without another word he went on, the dog beside him.

I went back to the club after the show. Some men in the lounge were discussing the evening event when I came in. It had been Bates' anniversary dinner to his dog.

"Dog's birthday?" I asked, "or marriage?"

"No," said the oldest member—"The day he bought the dog. And that was the day he and his wife were divorced."

"Where and why did he buy that dog?" I asked. I am a lover of real dogs and I resented that animal being up in the thousands value for I knew that for dog flesh it wasn't worth a two cent stamp. Harding, the oldest member, grew reminiscent over my query and as very old men often do was soon talking almost to himself of an affair we all knew was very near his heart, for he loved Bates. It had been said that there was something of the "I-told-you-so" manner in Harding's view of the divorce. Perhaps he is a woman hater. In fancy he had his youthful smash-up, for his old face holds the embers of a fiery youth, dream filled and daring. Perhaps in the Bates affair he saw his own consolation, for he had never married.

"Yes," he went on as if I had not spoken, "he paid twenty thousand dollars for that dog."

"Real money for that hemp covered sausage link he had with him tonight?" I persisted.

"Yes, he bought that dog from his wife the moment they were divorced. Gave her a check in the court room for twenty thousand," the old man chuckled and added laughing: "You see, there were no children so Bates got the dog—even if he had to pay for it. Guess he hasn't ever regretted either one of his bargains."

Harding stopped speaking. He had told me as much as he cared to. But that dog story had set my curiosity wires at work. I ordered some cordials and I soon had old Harding rummaging in his memory shelf again. It had only been four years since it happened, "the rich man's divorce without alimony." the pa-

pers called it. I was in Europe at the time and even though I knew Bates and his wife and all their coterie, the thing had been one of the unsolved mysteries of the universe to me.

The talk that followed that night at the club was not gossip, even if it echoed a prodigious scandal, for the Bates divorce had been the "choice morsel" of all the four o'clock affairs that winter and the next.

Bates was fifty when he married Muriel Van Reade. She was twenty-two. It was Bates' second marriage. Naturally he was well acquainted with women, or thought he was and was rather distrustful of them, covertly perhaps. He adored his wife and indulged her expensive whims.

On their second trip abroad he had given up his usual month at Baden and stayed in Paris even though he had long ago out-grown the siren city so that Muriel might continue her French with a wonderful hidden genius she had discovered, Monsieur Piquot.

When they came home that year there were rumors of discontent. Bates neglected his business. Wall Street missed him and his income missed Wall Street. His best friends shook their heads and said Bates resembled a marathon runner who had run out before the goal. And they saluted his beautiful wife as she motored past them to and from the country clubs and smart road houses with a certain rapid set that was correst but daring—if one chose to misunderstand. Or we feasted our tired eyes on her youth of beauty at the opera or across a dinner table and wondered where Bates was. But each one of us had censored himself for the thought and remembered that Muriel Bates was a brilliant, high-minded woman; a leader in all new thought movements; a devoted suffragette and a lead-

ing philanthropist. "Such women don't flirt," we said to ourselves. She was a partoness of the Alliance des Parisiens and the Societe de Beaux Arts Salons and one of the sponsors for the newly imported Monsieur Piquot. One saw the footed Frenchman at all affairs worth while. He sang French love songs with not much voice but with adoring glances to his feminine audiences. He had study classes in Bergson and Brioux and was quite an uplifter of struggling poets.

Bates must have heard something for he put the shrewdest detective in New York on watch. But the daily reports told nothing. Mrs. Bates was devoted to no one apparently but her dog! Surely a man can't be jealous of a ragged little dog urchin named "Patsie." And she was really devoted to Patsie. Every day the dog had a fashionable walk or ride with his beautiful owner. If she did neglect him during the day she would at night no matter how late the hour take him for a little ramble. It was not an uncommon sight to see Muriel Bates saunter forth at midnight for a half block anyway with Patsie barking ahead in high glee.

Poor Bates. He looked haggard and worn. We all knew he was unhappy—he loved her—but he was not sort of a man with whom one could get chummy. He was big enough to carry his own troubles and throw off his waste thoughts without talking about himself.

The detective in various guises shadowed Muriel but nothing even indiscreet could be found in any of the lady's pastimes. You have noticed how the clever pretty woman—married—always manages to have a protecting audience when the satellites fawn.

Muriel Bates might have been Recamier for her avoidance of suspicious *tete-a-tetes*. She was sufficiently sure of herself to let men appear ridiculous in other

women's eyes while their own sang impassioned love sonnets to hers. And so it was not unusual for anyone to see men give her smiles, weary with longing; to kiss her hands and to place her wraps with elaborate care.

Monsieur Piquot, the idol now of the smartest sets in town, may have been seen many morning to linger after a lecture, but no detective could report, "Your wife talked with an insipid Frenchman this morning for ten minutes at eleven o'clock." Surely a man's wife may talk to a man of any nationality providing he be insipid.

Finally Bates declared himself wrong—a basely suspicious beast. He called off his watch dog and looked upon Muriel again much the same as Caesar upon Octavia. He started in to make up for his rash judgment of his wife and showered new jewels on her till there were rumors of Bates having gone crazy. They went on a second honeymoon and hid away in his lodge in the mountains and cooed with the doves that hovered about.

They came back to town resplendent with happiness. The day they arrived Bates cleaned up fifty thousand on corn. We were all mighty glad for the old Bates had come to life again. He telephones his home that day at five to say he'd dine at the club and play bridge, which meant that he would be home at the servants' breakfast hour.

He asked what Mrs. Bates' plans were for the evening and Thomas brought back word that Madame would entertain the committee to consider reorganizing the French club.

"Very well, Thomas," he said. "You might lock my study if there are strangers coming in. My desk is in disorder and I don't want it disturbed. Lock it before they come."

But the bridge game was tiresome and

Bates got home about eleven. He let himself in quietly, forgetting it was early, and tiptoed upstairs. The house was very quiet and dark. Evidently Muriel's committee had gone and she had retired. He would not disturb her. As he stood in the shadow of his own door fumbling for the switch he saw Muriel come out of the guest rooms down the hall and slip noiselessly into her own room. Muriel in her silk clingy draperies was a vision! His door slammed as he closed it and switched on the light. Muriel's door opened and closed again softly. Bates lit a cigarette and smoked it while he took off his shoes. "What an infernally bad player Davis was anyway. If a man couldn't play cards any better than—"

Muriel's door opened again. She was talking to her dog. "Come along Patsie—musn't bark. Yes, we're going out—Keep quiet—Nice doggie." They were down stairs by this time, Bates heard them at the front door. How characteristic and childlike of Muriel to put a coat over her *neglige* and take her dog for a stroll. Surely Muriel would never

really grow up. She was coming upstairs again as fast as ribbon sandals would let her, still calling endearing nothings to her dog.

"Naughtie Doggie—Patsie must go to sleep now." Her door closed again and Bates saw in his mind's eye her habitual tucking Patsie in his wicker basket. What a dear little mother she would make. He looked for another cigarette but his case was empty. He'd go across the hall to his study for some of those he had brought down from the lodge. The door was locked! Sure enough he had told Thomas to lock it at seven. The room was very warm and close—drowsily comfortable. The reading light revealed an intimate state of disorder and he sat down to look over some papers he had left that morning. Some newspapers in the big chair opposite him moved. Presently his eyes became riveted on a living, moving thing slowly rising from the cushions. It stretched itself from a very long sleep, arched its ragged looking back and barked. *It was Patsie!*





OLD FASHIONED GARDENS

~ By Ethel Summers

THE gray stone house set back from the road and was covered with a thick mass of clinging ivy vines.

The large cobble stones which adorned the front yard, were painted an unpromising white as were the lower trunks of the surrounding trees.

At night, sundry Japanese lanterns, swayed idly in the breezes, and sounds of music and high pitched laughter echoed from within.

But now, all was silent.

The hot afternoon sun poured pitilessly down upon the old gray structure, as though to scorch it and all its inmates, and bees hummed drowsily among the clover blossoms in the backyard.

"Madame" was that day attending the races, accompanied by a fair bevy of her girls.

But three remained at "The Farm." Gwendolyn, the indolent, Julie, the vivacious, and Deidre, the petite and most favored member of Madame's household.

Gwendolyn lounged luxuriously in the hammock, a huge palm-leaf fan idly waving the flies from her large, placid face.

Julie, sunk in the depths of a deep wicker chair, drummed nervously with the heels of her small slippers.

Deidre was not in evidence; doubtless she was lying down in her room.

"Y'know, I can't get it through my nut why she ever came here," said Gwendolyn, referring to the absent Deidre.

"Soch a young sing," sighed Julie, sentimentally. "Eet ees verree strange. Bot

eet may have been wat one calls ze on-lucky lofe affaire."

"Yes, or it may have been a dozen other things. We all got our excuses. Now there's you, that came tuh Noo York tuh get work. Yuh didn't land nothin', an' yuh didn't like the idear of starvin'. There's me. I usta hold a swell job in a Fifth avenah shop fer imported gowns. I got tuh hatin' muh black serge coat an' sailor hat. I looked better'n the gowns than most of the customers, an' I hankered fer 'em. The manager got wise tuh muh feelin's. There was a flat in a Riverside Drive apartment house for three months—then he tied the can tuh me."

"Men—zey are beasts," snarled the French girl.

"Worse'n that," agreed Gwendolyn, heartily, "but what I'm wonderin' is, what's that swell guy Brewster's intentions in regard tuh Deidre? Ain't you noticed him lately? An' her, why she's in the clouds fer twenty-four hours after he's been here."

"Maybe he lofes her," suggested Julie.

"I'm beginnin' tuh suspect as much myself," said Gwendolyn. "Hello, who's comin' in here?"

"Eet ees ze peddlaire wiz fine negligee," replied Julie, "bot you had bettaire not buy zem. Madame, she says you spend all ze money for ze clothes—"

"Well, say—what the—, well, fer the luv o' Gawd who's coin is it I spend, I'd like tuh know, tell me that?" cried the exasperated Gwendolyn.

The French girl preserved a discreet silence, and the peddler drew near.

Shifting his heavy pack from his shoulders, he sat down upon the steps of the verandah, mopping his perspiring face with a capacious bandana handkerchief.

"All the latest things in silk hosiery, chemises, kimonas and scarfs, ladies," he

said suavely, opening his pack and disclosing a marvelous collection of rainbow colors to their delighted eyes.

"Me fer that red rag with the purple daisies," cried Gwendolyn, pouncing upon it. "Ain't yuh goin' tuh buy nothin'?"

"Oui, ze black scarf, wiz ze silvaire spangle," replied Julie. "Take eet."

"Say, we better call Deidre. Mebbe she's like tuh take a slant at them things," said Gwendolyn.

"Indeed, I would," returned a soft voice, as a slender girl with masses of dusky hair, and wistful blue eyes fringed with heavy black lashes, stole out upon the porch.

"Aren't they pretty," she exclaimed, childishly, sinking down upon the steps beside the man, then—"Oh," she gasped, as the peddler, burrowing into the depths of his pack laid something in her lap.

It was soft as a summer zephyr to the touch, and shimmering, like moonlight upon the water, and the color was like the heart of a sea-shell, softly, delicately pink.

"It is wonderful," she breathed, softly. "How much?"

"It's worth three times my price, Miss, but bein' a second-hand garment, you can have it for fifteen dollars."

"One moment, please," and Deidre sped swiftly up the stairs, the coveted treasure in her arms.

II

Later, she sat in her little low rocker, the shimmering glory in her lap—and dreamed.

Horace Brewster loved her. Her, out of all the women in the world! The joy, the wonder of it, frightened her.

In fancy she felt his strong arms about her, in fancy she rehearsed his words of but a few short hours before.

"Deidre, girl," he had said, "I love you. It matters little that I met you in this

place. Madame has explained how she found you half fainting over the counter of a department store, and prevailed upon you to accompany her home. The only thing that really matters, is that I did meet you. You already know that I am married, that I intend to ask my wife for a divorce in a few days. Later, when it is over, I shall marry you. I want you always, dear."

Always. How heavenly it sounded. To be loved and tenderly cared for—always.

Of the other woman she gave but scant thought, she was but a hazy obstacle in the background; a woman whose very coldness, probably, and incompatibility had driven her husband from her.

Ah, well, what was one's loss was another's gain in this world.

Tenderly she stroked the silken folds of the treasure in her lap. It quivered like something living.

She would wear it tonight. Horace should see her in something worthy of her delicate loveliness.

A faint, elusive fragrance emanated from it, a subtle, alluring odor, like something—something she had smelled—when? She buried her face deep down in its meshes and inhaled slowly.

It smelled like—what was it—roses? Lilies? Violets—no, not the same at all. What was it? Not like any one flower, really—why, she had it—a bouquet of posies from an old fashioned garden, a garden of love and tender memories—her mother's.

At the thought of that well-loved comrade, the tears started. She wept softly for her dead.

Then, rising presently, she bathed her eyes carefully, but pushed the make-up box to the far end of her dressing-table.

The room grew dim. She pulled the shades and switched on the electricity,

gazing critically at her reflection in the mirror.

The dusky hair was piled high upon the delicate head, the blue eyes were starry with happiness, the cheeks deeply flushed.

With beating heart she thrust her slender arms into the silken garment, fastening it at throat and waist. Smiling, she pulled out a hairpin, allowing two dark rebellious curls to escape in ringlets upon the snowy whiteness of her neck.

She heard the noisy return of Madame and the girls, and later, Chloe's voice sang out, "Dinnah am ready, Miss Deidre."

In a rose-colored mist, she at her meal, munching mechanically, oblivious to the remarks, envious and otherwise, from her surrounding companions.

"I guess there ain't class tuh her," whispered Gwendolyn to a short-haired girl sitting next to her.

"Some doll," replied the one addressed, eyeing her admirably, "only," she added, tersely, "it's asleep just now. Won't wake up till Brewster comes."

A titter of laughter ran around the table. Deidre, wide-eyed, smiled happily back at them.

III

A well-known step upon the stairs, and Deidre, her heart bursting, flew to the door.

A tall, boyish looking man in spite of the gray at his temples, started to enter the room, then stopped as though stunned.

His face grew ghastly, his eyes fastened in a fascinated stare upon Deidre's shimmering raiment.

The girl drew back in alarm.

"What—what is it?" she faltered.

He moistened his dry lips.

"Where did you get that?" he said, huskily, pointing at the silken thing that enveloped her.

"I bought it today from a peddler. Why? What is the matter?"

"Er—nothing." He was plainly not himself. "I—that is—you see—well, the fact is, it reminded me of one that Mary wears."

The name slipped unconsciously from his lips.

"It almost seemed that she was standing there," he continued, "and—well, it upset me for a moment."

"I'll wear another if you'd rather," she said, wistfully anxious to please him.

"No, no, don't bother, I only stopped for a moment. Awful rush of business on," he added, nervously, backing toward the door.

"But you will come again—soon?" she questioned, anxiously.

"Soon? Yes—" abstractedly—"unless business presses. Goodnight."

Not a kiss. Not a word of endearment. Deidre stood in the center of the room, with a puzzled air, then as her clenched hands picked at the folds of silk, something crackled.

Plunging her fingers into an undiscovered pocket, she drew forth a folded paper. Opening it, she read:

"Dear Horace:—

"Many times of late I have tried to bring myself to talk to you upon a subject which means more than life itself to me. And each time I am cowardly enough to shirk it at the critical moment, through fear of being misunderstood.

"The subject I refer to is our mutual love for each other. Dearest, has it never occurred to you of late that we are gradually drifting apart?

"You seem so cold and preoccupied most of the time, so unlike the lover-husband I used to know.

"Have you forgotten those wonderful nights in the garden at home—I mean our first little home, before you made the money? It seems that I can smell the heady sweetness of the dew-drenched lilacs yet.

"Perhaps it has been my fault, dear, but I shrank from questioning you before. I felt ashamed that it should seem necessary.

"But lately, a terrible fear has clutched at my heart, compelling me to at last speak to you—the fear of a possible rival.

"Horace, can you never realize the pain that thought has given me.

"You are young, young in spite of your graying temples, while I, I am forty-seven years old today, dear—and madly in love with my husband.

"Does it sound ridiculous? Or can you see the pathetic side of it?

"Horace, if you still care, let me know it. I can bear the uncertainty no longer. If I have lost your love, I must also know. Suspense is killing me.

"Will you not give me one of your evenings soon, and tell me just how we stand? I must know, I must.

"Your loving wife,

"Mary Hawthorne Brewster."

The girl's eyes widened, then closed, and two tears trickled through the lashes.

"Poor little lady," she whispered softly, then—"Forty-seven. That would have been mother's age, too."

Carefully drawing a line beneath, she wrote under it:

"Please give her her chance of happiness. She cares more than I ever could.

"Good-bye."

"God forgive me for the lie," she sobbed, piteously, "but one of us must suffer, and she is good."

She placed the letter in an envelope and directed it to Horace Brewster at his downtown office. In the corner she wrote the word "personal."

"Chloe, see that this letter is posted at once," she told the negro maid.

Then, switching out the light, and pulling up the shade, she leaned far out of the window into the night.

Black clouds had gathered overhead, obscuring the moon, and angry little gusts of wind slapped her face sharply. She drank in deep gulps of the sultry air.

A thunder storm was brewing, for tiny forks of lightning played about the inky sky.

Once, a blinding flash, followed by a deafening crash, caused her to withdraw her head involuntarily, and she heard Madame's strident voice commanding Chloe to close the doors and windows, and switch out the electric lights.

Could it be that Madame was afraid? Afraid. She laughed drearily—a little heartbroken laugh that ended in a sob.

Oh, to ease the ache of the lump in her breast that had been a heart—to forget—just forget.

The clamor of the elements grew appalling; the raging winds shrieked shrill invitations to come outside, the shaking branches of the trees bowed and beckoned.

Yes, she would go; to stay within was to stifle.

Groping her way to the wardrobe, she reached far back upon the highest shelf, and drew forth the old black woolen dress she had worn in the department store, before the advent of Madame.

Unfastening the shimmering silk at her throat, she let it slide gently in a soft heap to the floor, and drawing the wool dress over her head, she buttoned it hastily as she peered out in the darkened hall.

No one was about, the girls and Madame being huddled in the great front room.

She slipped hurriedly through the big door, running swiftly across the lawn. The white trunks of the trees looked uncanny, like gravestones in the yards of the dead, but she did not falter.

On, on, she ran. Picked up in the very arms of the storm, buffeted by the winds, but conscious of only the tumult in her own breast.

A half hour later, a small, panting

figure stumbled doggedly along the docks of the East River.

The gale tore at her hair, loosening the pins and blowing it into her eyes; it tugged at her skirts, and snatched wickedly at her hurrying feet.

On, on out onto one of the docks she sped. At its end she paused, a wild little storm-blown figure; then, a vivid flash of lightning revealed a rude ladder leading down to the friendly waters.

Without hesitation, she descended, the cool waves lapping hungrily at her frail body, that body which seemed on fire, her poor head most of all.

Ah, the waves were kind. So refreshing, so cool, so—but she had loosened her hold upon the ladder, and sank down—down—swallowing, struggling, strangling horribly. Then suddenly a peaceful calm stole over her—she rested. A sweet, familiar odor assailed her nostrils, and she was—why, she was back in mother's garden at home, the dear old garden of love and tender memories—and the honeysuckle and mignonette were in full bloom. And, yes, there was mother at the little wicker gate, darling mother, with her Madonna face and loving arms outstretched. Mother—mother—

IV

The electrical storm was over.

Madame had ordered a round of drinks to steady their quaking nerves. Only Deidre was absent.

"She don't ansah mah rap," said the round-eyed Chloe.

"I'll go up an' see," said Madame.

Ponderously she climbed the stairs and knocked upon the door.

Receiving no reply, she turned the knob, pushing it open.

The moon rode high in the heavens, flooding the dainty room with its white light. but the bed, the chairs were empty.

"She's beat it," said Madame, tonelessly.

Something seemed to move and quiver under the rays of the moon.

Madame bent above it.

It was as a summer zephyr to the touch, and shimmering like moonlight upon the water, and the color was like the heart of a sea-shell, softly, delicately pink. A faint, elusive fragrance emanated from it, a subtle, alluring odor, like something—something she had once smelled long ago—the odor of old-fashioned flowers.

She buried her face deep down in its meshes, and inhaled slowly, gazing down through the passing years.

She saw herself standing in an old-fashioned garden. Hollyhocks and sunflowers nodded their stately heads. Pansies, forget-me-not, larkspur and four-o'clocks vied with the cocks-combs and poppies that flaunted their gay colors—a fascinating jumble.

She stooped and gathered a spray of mignonette, as a smiling, sun-burned young giant joined her, kissing her tender curving lips.

The picture faded. Once again she stood in the old-fashioned garden, but it was with another—a "city chap" the neighbors said. With whispered words he drew her to him. The falling dew drew forth the intense sweetness of the blossoms, intoxicating her senses. She returned his kisses gladly.

Another picture: A drab room in the city and a letter. Just the same old story—alone. Followed days and nights and weeks and months of bitterness greater than death.

Then the advent of Dan Ryan into her

life, the East side politician who had "set her up in business." She had felt a genuine fondness for Dan, and it was with deep regret that she learned of his death.

Tears, long withheld, filled her hard bright eyes.

"God, God," she whispered, her plump shoulders heaving as she rocked to and fro, "tuh think of what I usta be, an' now look at me."

Presently the sobs subsided; she grew more quiet.

A hand timidly touched her shoulder. It was Chloe with a glass of amber fluid. Stretching out her hand, Madame received the glass and drained its contents greedily, then—

"There's no fool like an old fool," she quoted slowly and distinctly.

A moment later—"Chloe," she said sharply.

"Ya-a-sm."

"I guess Deidre's flew the coop all right, but I ain't surprised none. I been expectin' it. Here, take that pink kimono an' get rid of it. Sell it, or give it away, but don't never let me set eyes on it again."

"Ya-a-sm."

"An' you," turning to the crowd of girls that had gathered gaping around the door, "don't never let me catch none of you usin' nothin' but oriental perfumery. Them old-fashioned scents don't go in this joint. Get me? All right, then."

"An' now," turning briskly to Chloe, "start up the 'lectric piano, turn on all the lights, then bring me another glass o' that moonshine booze. An' no loafin' on the job. Make it snappy."

Madame was herself again.



The Dirty Guy

A Story of the Track

BY EDWIN HEIMBACH

JERRY DUGGAN rolled into Butte from Salt Lake on a horse train. Marty Olds, who superintended the shipments of the Goldfield stables, was his good friend when in need. The curry-roost isn't the class of a Pullman, but when a pony-follower is shy of healthy kale he has to run pride off the field. Anyhow Duggan's main idea was the getting to Butte.

The train pulled into a siding out near the flat, and Duggan groomed for his entry into his old haunts, sought out Marty Olds for a touch. Marty was a good listener but it took all of Duggan's eloquence to secure the raise of a ten-spot.

"Remember, Jerry," Marty admonished, "don't fall for the chance of me furnishing the trimmings for your lay-over in Butte. You're a shadow and it ain't running to form for a guy to have you stalling around. Now beat it, and pray for a mud-horse and a winning long shot."

Duggan pocketed the greenback, lit a cigarette and set off for uptown. He boarded a north bound street car and alighted at the corner of Park and Main, and from that point bore south several blocks to a small restaurant named the Turf.

Duggan entered the establishment, seated himself at the lunch counter and gave a big healthy order, the station hand-outs that he had managed to pick up while on his way up from the Lake,

having developed within him an insatiable desire for good hot food.

While Duggan was busily engaged in eating, a tall, flashy dressed individual entered the restaurant. Duggan saw the man from the mirror in front of him and recognized him instantly. He laid down his knife and turned in his seat, stretched out his arm and brought the man to a halt.

"Hello! Red," exclaimed Duggan. "How's the boy?"

The man sort of stooped to look into Duggan's face.

"Howdy, Jerry," he replied. "Back with the nags again, eh? How's she cutting?"

"Riding high or hoping to," returned Duggan. "Say, Red, I've got a line of talk for you to listen to. See you in the back room in ten minutes."

"All right," said Red, who, by the way, was proprietor of the cafe, "I'll be waiting for you."

Ten minutes later Duggan was seated in Red's private office.

"Now what I've got to say, Red," started Duggan, "ain't no dope sheet made out over night. I've got it straight and I'm telling it straight. My brother Bud happens to be with the ponies this trip, riding with the S. & R. stables, and he's up on the best dust flingers of the bunch. Got to the Lake in time to ride two of them under the wire. At that time I was down to zero, so the best I

could do was to lay a couple of borrowed bucks down on his mounts. They won out. But watch him here and follow him up. You cleaned up, Red, when I threw my chance at the game and here's your chance to clean up again. The kid is class, the peer of them all, the bookies' nightmare."

Red drew leisurely upon his cigar and played with the charm on his watch chain.

"What do you want out of it Jerry?" he asked.

Duggan laughed lightly. The question pleased him.

"Ain't you wise?" he inquired. "Just line me up so I can get my meals regular, and if your roll needs peeling, peel me off a layer when I need the jack. I'm going to play the kid this time from start to finish. Any dope I gather goes to you and me."

"What do you need now?"

"Oh, pass me fifty, Red. I've got to hang up for a room, and I need a barber to work on me."

Without further talk Red took out a small roll of bills, gave Duggan four of them, and made up the difference in silver. Then he took Duggan out to the front of the restaurant and made out a couple of meal tickets in Duggan's name.

"Take care of yourself," he said as he handed the tickets to Duggan, "and play me easy, Jerry. Things haven't been breaking so lovely for me the last eight months."

Duggan paused in the doorway. "We'll shark the bookies," he murmured in a low voice, "and much obliged, Red, for the lift. I'll try to doctor it up and pay you back. So long, Red." And with a wave of his hand, he closed the door and made haste on his way up town.

That afternoon, having secured himself a room in a first class lodging house,

Duggan set out to make the rounds of the hotels in an effort at locating his brother. He was successful in finding B. A. Duggan registered at the Thornton. He took elevator up to his brother's room, but there was no one in, at least his rapping was not answered. So he returned to the lobby and took a seat to wait for Bud to put in his appearance.

Toward five o'clock, in the afternoon, the younger Duggan entered the hotel. A young woman came in with him. They were both laughing over something or other, and this sign of happiness and good fellowship made Duggan feel so lonely and forsaken that somehow the ghosts of his past all came back to him, taunting, oppressive.

Suddenly Duggan caught a good look of the woman's face, and he recognized her at once. Polly McBain! Old man McBain's girl, born and raised in a thorough-bred state, by a thorough-bred gentleman and father, and a lover of thorough-bred horses and men! She here with the kid. There must be something behind it all. Maybe the kid figured on hooking up with her. Well, Bud would sure be one lucky Romeo if he tied up with Polly. He watched Bud take the girl into the writing room, where he left her, returning to the lobby and making toward the elevator. Duggan followed Bud and entered the elevator behind him.

"Hello, Bud," he greeted.

Bud looked him over in surprise. "Hello, Jerry," he answered.

They got off the elevator together, not another word having been spoken between them, and went to Bud's room. Once inside Bud turned on Jerry.

"Why the sleuth work?" he asked.

"Sleuth work?" retorted Jerry. "Hell! Can't a guy look up his own brother without getting a call-down? I'm Duggan and you're Mr. Duggan, eh? Well, let

it go at that. It don't break up my sleep any. Now how about dope during the Butte meeting? How about letting me in on the paddock frame-ups?"

"If I get 'em you get 'em," replied Duggan's brother.

Jerry looked his brother over suspiciously. His request had been granted too quickly, without enough side-play.

"How?" he asked.

"I'll leave letters at the desk down stairs."

"And, if instead of a cleanup I'm cleaned, what then?"

"Oh, I guess I can stake you to a little."

"Then I won't bother you any more," Jerry ended up. "I'll be going. Hope you luck with the ponies and the bookies. Only wish you'd let me play your money in the ring for you. Buck Lynn treats you fair, but he'll rob you blind some day. I know him. Shoots square with a new boy until he gets a big chance. Then he rides him to the rail and gets a charity roll for his old age. I see that Polly McBain is in town?"

"You saw her?"

"Years ago—and today. Looking better than ever. She's a good kid. You could do worse. Well, so long, Bud."

"So long, Jerry."

Upon reaching the lobby, Jerry paused for a moment. His mind was half made up to enter the writing room and to pass greetings with Polly McBain. But upon second thought he turned away.

"I'm a shadow," he muttered to himself. "She's a thorough-bred and I'm a dirty guy. They don't match up."

Ten minutes later found Jerry seated at the counter in Red's Cafe kidding a hasher with blonde hair and blue eyes, whose looks belied her name, most people taking her to be of Scandinavian extraction, whereas her name was Sadie

Nathan, in whose veins ran the blood of a scattered race.

"Still handing out indigestion?" kidded Jerry, giving the girl his order. "Getting pretty old, Chickie. Better settle down for the finish."

"When you were here last year," returned the girl, "I thought that you would help me break loose. But you didn't. Harness shy yet, Jerry?"

"A little. I might take a chance for a bank roll, though."

"You're in the wrong society. All the women you know save up their pennies."

"All except you. You'll own a bank before you die. Go ahead. A big roll makes a big noise in the world, Chickie."

When Jerry finished eating and made ready to leave, he drew Sadie aside.

"How about doing a little stepping to-night?" he asked.

"What doing?" questioned the girl.

"A show and a dance or two after."

"All right. I'm off duty at nine."

"I'll meet you here at that time."

"I'll be waiting, Jerry."

That evening around eleven o'clock Jerry and Sadie sat in an up-town cabaret taking a bite to eat.

"You look older, Sadie," Jerry was saying. "There's a tired look in your eyes. Things haven't been coming right for you, eh?"

"Oh, it isn't that, Jerry," Sadie answered. "I'm tired of everything, that's true. The trouble is that I'm looking ahead too far and that all goes to make me sad and unhappy. But it's my nature."

Jerry was drawing pictures on the table cloth with the point of his knife.

"The trouble is with our living," he asserted. "This kind of a life don't get you anywhere. A year from now I'll be back here again, down on my luck, and playing for a clean-up. Ain't that right? Two years ago when I was riding at the

head of the class I promised you something. Then the frame-up. I fell for it and they shadowed me. That knocked my promise out cold. But I ain't forgot it, Chick, and I ain't forgot you. The day that I can walk up and hand you a thousand bucks, that day you and I will mate up. And I've only got about nine hundred and seventy more to get."

"Oh, Jerry," whispered Sadie with misery in her voice, "why can't you hold onto money?"

Jerry laughed. "Well," he said, "money is round to us rounders. I can't get a half-Nelson on a dollar long enough to get mixed up with the rest of the dollar family. But some day, maybe Monday, some pony will turn over my gold mine."

"Somebody?" repeated Sadie. "Is it always to be someday with you, Jerry?"

The first week of the Butte meeting netted Duggan a clean-up of three hundred dollars, all won through bets placed on horses that his brother piloted past the judge's stand, in the lead of several good fields. Bud kept good his promise to Jerry, and any time that he had a good live tip on a race, a letter was always waiting for Jerry at the Thornton. These tips were faithfully transmitted to Red, whose winnings for the first week were truly magnificent, to say the least.

But the second week was disastrous for both Jerry and Red. Prime choices were nosed out, unplaced. Their money flowed like water into the pockets of the bookies, until one morning Jerry awoke to the living world dead broke, ostracized also from further touching up of Red for a loan, Red being down to bedrock, his loose money all gone, his bank account confronted with total obliteration.

And then there was Sadie, whose hopes were all fixed upon Duggan winning a thousand dollars, a little bridge of gold

to bridge her work-a-day life to a life of happiness. It was pain for Duggan to think of it, a sort of a cutting pain which left him disgusted with his own manhood, and with a deep seated loathing in his heart toward himself. He had played the churl with her for so long a time, whispering false promises in her ear, as empty as was his life of worthy ambitions. She had been so brave during all those years, so kind to him in spite of his failure to live up to his word. Her heart was gold, her life a burning torch of love and sacrifice.

But Saturday, Kinfolks was up in the third race with a bunch of truck horses to beat. And Bud was up on Kinfolks, and to Duggan as he lay there in bed, the third entry for Saturday looked to him like a cinch, a regular get-away.

Around ten o'clock Duggan got out of bed, dressed and went down to Red's for breakfast. He did not bother to look up Red to talk over Kinfolk's chances for Saturday. He wanted to get Bud's tip first. He wanted safe ground for their last play for a recoup.

Sadie happened to be behind the counter that morning, having changed to day-shift Sunday. Duggan breezed with her for a while, and after breakfast he went up to her. The cafe was empty. They were all alone.

"Well, Chick," Duggan said, "I'm broke. All I've got left is my lucky penny and my nerve. I want you to stake me to three hundred. Now, listen. Let me talk. Don't edge in. There's a phantom going to run Saturday in the third race that will make the other nags look like sign advertisements for horse liniments. If I can lay on her for the stated amount of coin, I see my way clear to make good my promise to you. Three hundred is a big chunk, but if I lay it on Kinfolks when she's selling good I'm

in for a run of a thousand or more. That's the proposition. You're the doctor and the nurse, all in one. You can keep me in bed or put me out in the sunshine parlor. What do you say?"

Sadie was a good little sport. She took Jerry's information as she had taken his promises, whole hearted, sacrificing because of her love for him.

"You'll have it in the morning, Jerry," she answered, her voice shaky, her throat dry. "But there'll be one thing I'll want done. I must go to the races with you Saturday. I want to see a ticket for three hundred dollars down on Kinfolks to win."

"I get you, Chick," said Jerry. "You're square. I'll do it for you."

"And if you lose, Jerry?" asked Sadie. Jerry bent over the counter. "I'll pay," he murmured. "I'll go up to a judge with you and say the word. I'll see it through money or no money. How's that suit you, Chick?"

"I'll hold you to your word this time, Jerry," the girl replied.

"There won't be any holding—except hands," said Jerry.

That afternoon Duggan dropped into the Thornton, asked for mail and received a letter. He walked over to a deserted corner of the lobby and opened it. It read as follows:

"Don't play Kinfolks Saturday. Play Janet 1-2-3."

Duggan crumpled up the letter and stuck it into his coat pocket. He sat down in a seat to think, to figure out whether Bud was playing him for a flim-flam, or whether the race was to be crooked with the bookies in for a bunch of easy money. There was no way to figure it out as far as he could see. Janet beat Kinfolks in a square race? Where'd Bud get that stuff? Nothing but a pad-dock frame-up, so raw that it ran blood.

Jerry finally decided to see if Bud was in his room. He might be able to explain matters, put a light upon the affair.

He took the elevator, found Bud's room and rapped upon the door. There was no response. Duggan tried the door and it opened at his touch. He stepped into the room and closed the door behind him.

The room was in a horrible state of disorder. Towels, newspapers, clothing, everything imaginable scattered about the floor. In his wildest days Duggan had never disfigured his room in the manner in which he found his brother's.

He walked over to the dresser to get a cigarette, a dozen or so of the little white pills being scattered about the top. He chose one, lit it and as he was placing the burnt match upon a tray, his eyes caught the wording of a sheet of writing paper lying there. He picked it up and found himself reading the following:

"You get your money Friday night. We don't want any double crossing Saturday. You keep Kinfolks out of the big money. Let her come third or fourth but hold her back, and make it look O. K. to the judges. We'll tip you off to play Janet straight down the board."

Duggan had just finished the note when he heard someone at the door. He sprang away from the dresser, stopped near a window of the room and busied himself looking out upon the street. He heard the door close softly, and then turned around. It was his brother Bud.

"Hello, Bud," greeted Jerry.

"Hello," answered his brother. "Just stepped out. How long have you been in?"

"A few minutes. Took leave to enter."

"What's worrying you?"

"Nothing much. Just that Janet dope you gave me. It's a frame-up, ain't it?"

"I'm just as wise to it as you are."

Duggan tossed his cigarette away and

sat down on the edge of a center table. He eyed his brother calmly with calculating eyes.

"This third race Saturday," he stated slowly, "is the kind of racing that kills the game with the public. When you play the public for a fool you always get fooled. Janet isn't in it with Kinfolks, speed, wind or endurance. You can handicap her with the needle and weight and it would be pickings for Kinfolks to romp in a winner, to put daylight between her and the rest of the field. I know. And I know this much. With you up on Kinfolks, and if you ride fair, Kinfolks is the purse pony."

Young Duggan grew red in the face as the anger in his heart mounted upward.

"You don't think that I'll ride fair?" he questioned.

Duggan looked his brother square in the face.

"Do you want the truth?" he asked.

"I do, if you can tell the truth," was the reply.

"Well, then, no!" burst forth Duggan. "You can ride fair but you won't tomorrow. The race is fixed. You and the boy up on Janet are in for some velvet. You're mixed up with a bunch of cut-throats who are going to hang you higher than a kite. I read that note over there on your dresser. A swell lineup of English for a white man to read."

Bud ran over to the dresser and gathered the note into his hands. Then he turned to Duggan, face white, body trembling.

"What have you got to say?" he cried hoarsely.

"There's nothing to say," answered Duggan. "A good horse loses a race and the public is out of a square deal. Four or five guys are dirty and one of them is my brother Bud Duggan. Don't come

near me! I ain't use to dirty guys for some time."

He paused for a moment, then went on.

"Listen to my little story?" he asked. "A couple years back I was considered some rider. I was light. I always kept my head. I could guide a mount through a crowded field with the pick of the best. I was slated for a job abroad, with enough jack attached to it to buy diamonds for all the Duggans living and dead. One day I had a good horse to ride, a swell dish, a winner at good odds. The night before the race three track followers came to my room to talk business. They fixed up the race with me, for money, not for a thousand like you're to get. I took the coin and I threw the race. I was thrown out of the racing association. I was barred from riding on the best tracks of the country. I was the dirty guy, known wherever a race meeting was held. Everybody steered clear of me. A dirty guy ain't a human. I'm a dirty guy, Bud, but I'm white. Do you get me? I don't go much on the piker class that travel around with the ponies and make soft money by pulling good boys out of the running for the rest of their lives. I'm going to ask you one question. What are you going to do with the blood money? Are you going to keep it or hand it back to the shysters who staked the affair?"

Bud Duggan turned on his brother, advanced a few feet, then paused. There was a sneer written upon his face, a sneer as cutting as a knife. But his anger was potential, his fear of his brother holding him in leash, his attempt at showing nerve a comedy of indecision.

"Why the lesson of the Golden Rule?" he asked. "Why the sob-act over my wind-fall? Your ideas are as funny as an undertaker's convention. I'll give you a hundred to play Janet. If you're wise

you'll do that little thing, unless you like bunking with a bunch of curry-combers back to Mexico for the winter."

Duggan laughed scornfully.

"I'll not take your dirty money and play it on a dirty race," he answered angrily. "I'm broke, but I ain't got any loose change to make me feel like a Judas whenever I touch it. Any man who takes money is a Judas. Good God! Don't I know that? Haven't I had a chance to know how dirty money feels?"

Bud winced at his brother's words, stood like a culprit before a judge to receive sentence. There was no stopping the elder Duggan now. All the pent up bitterness of his heart gushed forth in words, engendered by the years of exile suffered through one false play.

"Throw the race!" he cried. "You'll learn. They'll make you learn. You'll learn what it is to be a dirty guy, to be pointed out to people as a race thrower. The public ain't so slow as you think they are. There'll be an investigation and the judges will set you down. And then where will you be? And how about the old gent back home? What will he say when he hears about it all? It will break his heart, Bud, that's what it will do. He banked on you always to ride clean. To have two boys go down in dishonor, why, that's too much for any clean gentleman to live through. Two boys who wanted to find out what it means to be a shadow around race tracks, outsiders."

At this point of his talk, Duggan stepped over to Bud and placed his hands upon his brother's shoulders.

"How about the girl?" he asked softly. "How about Polly, Bud? Do you want her to know you as the dirty guy, with dirty money and dirty hands? Or do you want her to keep you in her heart a clean lad, a thoroughbred worthy of a thor-

oughbred girl's love? That's it, Bud. A dirty name and dirty money. A clean name and clean hands, and love. God! If I had had some one to speak to me like this when I fell. If it had only been one little word to put me back straight, wouldn't it have helped me to stay clean in the eyes of the world? Stick to the right way, Bud, the clean way. Send the money back. Ride square for a square deal and a square little shooter."

It was his brother's employment of Polly McBain in his supplication that brought Bud to his senses, broke the strong resolution in his heart to do wrong, made him promise at that moment to stay clean for the sake of the woman he loved.

"I'll be clean, Jerry," he cried, tears showing in his eyes. "I don't want to be a dirty guy. The money sort of went to my head and I fell. I'm ready to do anything you say as to getting back right."

A smile broke forth on Duggan's face. He grasped his brother by the hands and looked deep into his eyes. He read the truth that was shining there.

"I knew that you would come out in time, Bud," he cried out happily. "It wasn't in you to be dirty. You ain't wise to collecting shark teeth. When it comes to dirty guys in the Duggan family there was only one and that one's me. Thank God, I'm clean now, Buddy, and if you ever get home put in a good word to the old gent for me, tell him that I've changed my breed, that I play square whenever a square deal counts."

"I'll do that," promised Bud.

"Thanks!" murmured Jerry. "And now I'm ready to do a little writing. I want to show up a bunch of dirty guys in a dirty guy's style!"

And Saturday came, the last day of the

meet, with a record crowd in attendance. The grand stand was filled to overflowing, clear out to the track railing and down to the paddock gates. The winners were there for a final cleanup and the unfortunate disciples of the game for a recoup of their losses.

Far up in the stand in a choice seat, on a line with the finish post, sat Jerry Duggan with the girl who was seeing him through. He sat at her side, silent and imperturbable, but hardened follower of the track that he was, Duggan's blood ran as wild as that of any pony that ever pranced before a starter's tape.

Everything or nothing this afternoon. A winning and the keeping of his word to Sadie, or losing and putting her off again. It was up to Bud. The money returned and the boy put square. A square boy, a square race, and Kinfolks as sure as death!

Duggan nerved himself through the first three races, but when the time for the fourth race drew near he was unable to hold himself any longer. He bent over to Sadie.

"You haven't changed your mind, Chick?" he questioned. "Now is the time to get down to the bookies for the best odds."

The girl's eyes met Duggan's straight and true. Then her hand closed over Jerry's and a small roll of bills was pressed into his fingers.

"I'm seeing you through," she whispered, "and I'm trusting you."

Duggan's eyes worshipped her.

"I'm worth all your faith, little girl," he answered.

The money was placed on Kinfolks at 4-1, three hundred dollars of wrinkled and creased greenbacks, and at a vantage point near the judge's stand, with his hand clutching a small piece of card

board, Duggan waited for the paddock gates to open up for the entries.

And shortly they all pranced out, groomed and mettled for the race, eight superb horses, clean of lines and the best of breeds. In the fore came Kinfolks, with Bud Duggan up. As Kinfolks passed by, Jerry felt like calling out to his brother. But he held from it, knowing that he was familiar to many eyes, and that familiarity upon his part with a boy riding to the stand might breed suspicion and reflect back to the rider.

The horses lined up for the start. A few minutes of dancing at the tape, and they were off! Kinfolks got away bad, but Jerry watching saw that Bud was nursing the pony along, cutting in toward the railing at every chance, riding as he had never rode before. It seemed but a few seconds to him when he saw the horses make the last turn for the straight-away. Kinfolks was third at the turn and in the lead came Janet.

Duggan's heart almost stopped its beating. Janet in the lead with Kinfolks a good five lengths behind with a short distance to go! After all was the kid riding for dirty money? Was the turning back of the bribe a blind to keep him under cover until the race had been run? A dirty guy at the showdown playing loose with his honor and his name!

The horses came thundering down the track, Janet still in the lead. And then, all of a sudden Duggan's hands dragged at the pickets of the railing, his mouth dropped in amazement, his eyes—he couldn't believe what his eyes looked upon. Kinfolks was neck to neck with Janet and Bud was laying her low! The boy's mouth was at Kinfolks' ear, pleading with her, urging her on. And the fine horse understood its rider, and closing in with a world of speed. Kinfolks

crossed the finish a winner by less than the twelve inches that it takes to make one foot.

It was like a breath of sweet life for Jerry to turn in his card to the bookies for his money. And yet it wasn't the feel of the money that pleased Duggan almost to heaven. It was the knowing that his brother Bud had held to his word, had vindicated himself, had scorned the title of a dirty guy.

Jerry hurried back to the grandstand, and far up in the crowd he saw his girl seated. In his happiness he waved to her, and she, catching sight of him, waved

back in return. He could hardly wait to reach her side, and once there he gave Sadie no chance to say a word, but taking her by the arm he rushed her down out of the stand to the entrance, where he hired a taxi to take them up-town.

"Where are we going?" breathed Sadie holding tight to Jerry's arm.

"Where do you suppose?" smiled Jerry, in love with the little worried look written upon her face. "I'm keeping my promise. I'm about to mate up with the best little girl that ever saw a man through to the finish. I've won my last bet—and you!"

THE LISTENER.

"Neysa's 300th performance on Broadway has just come to an end. The audience is milling slowly past me through the exits. I am glad the doors are small and every night it takes so long for people to go out. Little does this chattering section of society, that brushes blindly by me think that I, the theatre manager, am the husband of the famous Neysa. It is our little secret guarded now for six months for business reasons. Every word in praise of her beauty is food and drink to me. These millionaires, who would give a king's ransom for her company to dinner, could never suspect that Neysa is probably at this moment planning our usual midnight meal which she will soon prepare at home. A prosperous drummer-like person approaches, speaking in low tones to his double-chinned friend. Another compliment to add to my store. 'You said it. That woman Neysa has the figure of a goddess. I know. But say, just between you and me, an appendicitis operation left her with the ugliest scar I ever saw.' For one moment more I gaze wildly at his satyr-like face. How simple to reach out my hands and throttle him. Then the crowd surges ahead and I am wedged in so tightly I cannot follow him.

Two weeks have passed and I've cooled down a lot since then. Sober second and third thoughts tell me there is nothing unreasonable about a physician looking like a drummer. If I ever happen to think of it I'll sometime ask Neysa to describe to me the surgeon who performed her operation."—*Harold Harvey Comins.*

The Immutable by Law

William M. Conselman



HE had given up everything worth while for this woman. His wife had left him; his friends, whose number once was legion, now studiously avoided him; and final blow of all, his fortune had taken wings. Which was not remarkable, since during the past three months he had paid but scant attention to his buisenss.

A fine, virile man, with bronzed, hawk-like features and hair whitening at the temples, he scrutinized the woman who lay idolently on the lounge beside him. She was worth it all, he half decided and his mobile lips relaxed their tension. She was indeed a great, wild flame of a woman, with her copper-gold hair and jade green eyes, a woman whose love would be fierce and consuming, but never sordid or petty. Her creamy arms and bosom, with their underlying golden tint were bare, and as she lazily moved one hand to cover a yawn, a sunbeam struck the huge cabochon emerald on her finger and was drowned in a lake of sparkling green. That had been one of his gifts. One of many, he reflected. And though the thought brought no qualm of regret, he felt a sudden savage anger at her, lying there so complacently,

she who had taken his all and given him so little in return. He wanted to take that soft smooth neck between his hands and strangle her until the sinuous, reptilian grace of her was still in death. But the mad thought passed, and he found himself wondering how he was to tell her that she would have to give up the apartment. He could almost see her shrug her shoulders contemptuously, and order him out with as little compunction as though he had been less than nothing to her.

That was her way—cruel and imperious. And should he get violent, there was the little pearl and ebony revolver that she always kept in the escritoire.

He surveyed the apartment with appraising eyes. It would bring a pretty penny under the hammer. The walls and floor coverings were a dull green, relieved by high lights of yellow and turkey red in queer, fantastic designs; an Egyptian frieze, a bas-relief of dancing girls and bird-headed gods, ran waist high on the walls; here and there scrolls of papyrus, embellished with colored hieroglyphics, were hung; a large crystal sat on a three-legged stand near the door, and idols of stone and terra cotta, chipped

and battered by ages, lined the mantel. Even the teakwood furniture helped to carry out the Egyptian motif of the place.

He felt a new appreciation of her cleverly-chosen setting for the barbaric beauty that perfectly matched the place. It would be hard to give it all up now. But she must be told of it and soon.

Frowning, he picked up a slim, vellum book, and idly turned the pages, as he strove to improve an opening with which he could easiest break the bad news. His eyes fell on the printed pages, and a sentence seemed to leap suddenly out at him:

"* * * That one is rewarded for one's good works, or punished for one's sins, even though the retribution take a thousand incarnations to be fulfilled—this is the immutable law of Karma * * *

The thought stirred his fancy. What a great deal of punishment would be his. Then his eyes fell on the woman. She, too, must answer. She smiled at him seductively, but he slowly turned his head until he faced the door. A pencil of sunlight lingered caressingly on the crystal, intensifying its smoky, mystic depths. He gazed at it fascinated, until an overpowering drowsiness tugged at his eyelids. The walls seemed to recede.

* * * Outlines became vague and misty. * * * Then everything seemed to fade. * * *

It seemed as though he stood behind the trunk of a large palm in the corner of a vast courtyard. He was clad in a single, ragged garment, and his feet were bare. His hair, long and black, was bound by a sort of fillet. He was young and lithe, but his limbs trembled; his mouth was hot.

And then he saw her.

In the center of a circle of splashing fountains, sat this wondrous being, object of his adoration, alone. The giant eunuchs who always stood at her side had departed and she was absolutely unat-

tended. It was high noon. Innumerable, multicolored lizards basked in the heat or darted nimbly about, while from the distance came the resonant, measured chant of priests and acolytes.

He could contain himself no longer. The hidden, hopeless passion he had cherished burst into flame, making him reckless and daring. For many days he had watched her from his hiding place, but never had she been alone. Now—He loped swiftly toward the dais where she sat, chin on hand, and flung himself at her feet, covering them with kisses.

She started in quick displeasure that deepened to terrible anger as she saw the ragged, prostrate figure.

"Presumptuous slave," she said, in her deep contralto, "how dare you profane the body of your queen with kisses from your vile lips?"

His breath came in sobbing gasps, and he trembled violently. "O Cleopatra, divine queen and mighty ruler, pity!" he cried. "Loose not the vials of your wrath upon a wretched slave whose only sin is loving you!"

"For that your life is forfeit," she said calmly.

"Ah!" he said, in mad despair, "I would go to my death with a song could I but press your hand! I would smile at torture unspeakable, could I but know the glory of your lips!"

"Do you, then, love me so greatly?" she asked, softened, and the woman in her touched and flattered.

"I thirst for you, Shining One! Your beauty fills my dreams with longing!"

"Would you die for me?" she queried, half curious, half contemptuous.

"For one night of love with you, I would give my life; aye, my very soul!" he vowed, grown bolder by her tolerance.

In her enigmatic, green eyes, a slow gleam, cruel and mocking, crept. The

sun blazed on, brightening her copper hair with refulgent wonder, staining her bare bosom with its yellow light.

"I give you one night out of eternity," she said slowly, "and in return, you give me your life. One priceless night of magic—but with the first faint streaks of dawn, you die!" She leaned toward him. "Slave, come to me here tonight before the moon shall rise."

"Majesty!" he said, awestricken, "You deign—

"I deign," she said, lifting her head. "But remember—at dawn you die! Now go!"

He went, quickly as he had come. All day long he was in alternate transports of shaken terror and passionate longing. But surely a queen so gracious as to bestow herself upon him, could not be so cruel as to have him killed afterward. Heartened by the thought, he impatiently watched the sun all too slowly sink to rest. Night followed after the brief tropical twilight, and in the garden he restlessly waited her coming. From the marshes by the Nile came the antiphonal chorus of frogs; countless little sounds heightened the mystery of the night—the rustle of lizards; the murmurs of fronded palms; the tinkling splash of fountains and heavy perfume of flowers—

She came.

He caught her in a fierce embrace, passing his hands eagerly over the smooth satin of her skin; her arms went 'round his neck and she returned his kiss with ardor equal to his own.

Once during the night, he awoke, and raising himself on his elbow, gazed on Cleopatra, sleeping at his side. She looked wistful and innocent as a girl, her profile cameo-like in the gray moonlight. With a thankful glance at the purple sky, still spangled with stars, he laid himself to rest.

When he woke again, the sky was no

longer dark. Long filaments of delicate pink and tender green, shot with gold, streamed from the East. He looked down. She was no longer there. Terror-stricken, he sprang to his feet; and as he looked wildly about him, two giant eunuchs, black and solemn, came to his side.

He stood in the long line of the condemned, while Cleopatra passed among them, attended by her train of courtiers and sycophants.

She halted before him and inspected him coldly. He stretched out his arms imploringly, while his eyes looked into hers with dumb appeal.

But into her eyes came no answering recognition, no light of sympathy.

"To the crocodiles!" she commanded imperiously, pointing at him.

He was seized and borne away." * * *

He woke with a gasp. There, on the couch she lay, her jade green eyes contemplating him curiously. He stared at her long and hard, for the dream was still strong, and the resemblance was startling. It was more than resemblance! She *was* the woman of his dream.

His eyes fell bewilderingly to the open book on the floor and again the sentence seemed to leap out and confront him: "That one is rewarded for one's good works or punished for one's sins, even though the retribution take a thousand incarnations to be fulfilled—this is the immutable *law* of Karma."

She rose and trailed indolently to the next room where presently he heard her throaty contralto raised in a queer, chanting song, while he sat lost in strange thoughts.

Then he quietly went over to the *escritoire*, opening it silently and taking out the little pearl and ebony revolver.

"Though it take a thousand incarnations," he murmured softly, as, revolver in hand he stepped across the threshold.



Truth ~ Crushed to Earth



by Lewis H. Moulton

IT was mid-morning when Kittie Petersley flared into the dining-room, plumped herself down in one corner, and eyed her father vindictively.

Josiah was undisturbed by his daughter's spiteful glances. Before him, on a square, oak table, were many papers. With a stubby pencil, he figured upon a soiled and crumpled pad.

"But, Pa, I've just got to go tonight. The girls will be simply wild. Just this once with—with Mr. Carter."

He was in the midst of a column. "Four an' eight's twelve, an' twelve's twenty-four, an' four's thirty-two—" It was just here that Kittie intruded.

He snapped at her. "Didn't I tell ye once that ye couldn't go? Moreover, I want ye to keep away from that there soldier beau of yourn. He aint got nuff sense to know the war's over, an' still runs round keepin' the show an' the unyform of militarism."

To this Kittie made no reply. Her father, apparently satisfied with his assertion of authority, resumed his adding. When his calculations had finally yielded results, he pawed desperately at the disorderly pile of papers, and finally abstracted a folded sheet which he scanned earnestly.

"Let's see now. The furnicher must be wuth bout two hundred. An' that there pianny—that the old woman got me into buyin' the year she died an' Kittie was

born—it cost me nigh onto seventy-five dollars. An' the silver, an' the linens—I reckon I better put down 'bout a hundred dollars.

"Kittie, bring me that there bottle o' ink an' a pen. Step lively, will ye. Git some gumption to ye."

Kittie obeyed. In despondent mood, she did not come back with her usual spirited rejoinder.

Josiah scratched away vigorously with a pen even less compliant than his daughter. At length he rose, stretched himself like one who has faithfully performed an arduous duty, and made for the kitchen. From the doorway, he threw back:

"Now, gal, take that there paper, it's the skedule of our pussonal propetty tax—over to Lem Clay's. He's a notary. Tell him to stamp it and mail it to the city hall."

He clomped through the kitchen on his way to the woodshed, where he had left his smoking tobacco.

The ink upon the paper had not dried. In the tempestuous heap of documents upon the table, Kittie rummaged for a blotter.

Whatever his virtues, one thing is certain; Josiah had little respect for Heaven's first law. When ready, he would gather up that masterly confusion, and toss it back, still unarranged into that cabinet with which Kittie had been forbidden to tamper.

He was coming back. She heard his step upon the porch. Of course he would snarl at her for her slowness, or would make some sarcastic comment. She clutched the paper, and hurried away without stopping to put on her hat.

From Petersley's to the notary's office is four blocks. As Kittie walked the first of these, she allowed her disagreeable reflections to have full sway. Her father treated her shamefully for a girl seventeen years old. It seemed as though he had grown crabber than ever since they had lived in the city. They had come from a small town; before that, when she was quite a little girl, from the country. She had no aunts nor uncles; no brother or sister; and Mother was but a name to her.

These unpleasant reminiscences occupied her mind until the end of the second block.

Realizing that she was walking rather rapidly, she moderated her pace. "Wonder what Pa figured the old piano was worth," she mused. She slipped her hand into the pocket of her dress, and took out the schedule.

She unfolded it and began to read it as she walked along. Suddenly she came to a full stop. Her brows contracted. Upon her face was an expression of amazement.

Then light broke in upon her. "So that's what he's been doing," she exclaimed indignantly. All at once she burst out laughing.

She did not go directly to the notary's.

Across the street in a drug store, was a telephone booth. For full fifteen minutes, Kittie kept the wires buzzing.

Josiah always took a nap after dinner. While he was peacefully reposing, the door to Kittie's room opened, and forth tip-toed that young lady—her eyes shining with excitement.

A few minutes later she was in that very drug store from which she had telephoned in the morning.

She looked very pretty as she sat at a table ordinarily dedicated to sodas and sundaes—her eyes dancing—her smooth, round chin uptilted saucily.

Through the window she glimpsed a young fellow in khaki. It was Phil Carter. He beckoned to her.

She turned south, and walked along, chatting briskly.

"Who could have believed it of him?" marveled Kittie.

"I call it mean," responded Phil. "But all's well that ends well. Do you think he'll find out—too soon?"

"Not unless he wakes up, and gets in touch with Lem Clay."

"There's a taxi," interrupted Phil, and they ran toward it.

They got out in front of a brown stone building that stood, grim and weather-beaten, in the heart of the city.

They went in, and made their way to the nearest elevator, from which they stepped into a wide corridor, along whose sides, glassy-eyed, were offices. They turned into one of these.

Along the wall, were chairs; for the most part, occupied. Behind an oaken paling, stenographers clicked busily at their machines.

Everyone looked up when they entered. Phil blushed; but the gentle pressure on his arm encouraged him; and, at the fateful window, through which peered a bespectacled official, he announced quite casually:

"We want a license."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the office door again swung open, and toward them strode Josiah Petersley, bristling with pacifistic rage.

"Hold on there. Yer not goin' to marry

that soldier feller. Don't give him no license. I object."

All eyes were centered on them. Phil flushed, and his lip trembled. "What have you against me, Mr. Petersley?"

"Yer a soldier. Ye've toted murderous weapons. Come, Kittie." He grasped her arm as though to impel her in the direction of the door.

But Kittie drew back.

"Well, Miss Independence! Aint ye my daughter? Aint ye got to obey me? Come now."

Kittie turned to Phil. "Hadn't I better put Pa wise, dear?"

Carter smiled. "I'm sorry about this, Mr. Petersley. If you'd been on the level with us, things might have gone smooth-ly."

Josiah became apoplectic: "You pert young smart alec. That girl can't get married 'less I say so."

"You tell him, dear," sighed Kittie, "I can't."

Phil hesitated.

Kittie Petersley slowly shook her head from side to side. Then she regarded her father with judicial severity.

"Pa, all my life, you've kept the truth from me. To better keep me under your thumb, I suppose."

"Why—what—how's this?"—stammered Josiah.

"Don't stall, Pa. Didn't you find the tax schedule this morning? I got the papers mixed. Do you know what I took for the notary? It was my birth certificate. I'm eighteen."

SIMPLY THIS AND NOTHING MORE

She told me frankly that she wanted to get married, and as she was young and pretty I became interested. "I also would be glad to wed," I remarked. "Now suppose we form a life partnership. My salary is rather small, and I should be unable to keep a cook, but I know you would be glad to—"

She looked at me in horror. "Oh, I don't want to do any cooking!" she exclaimed. "Mercy, no!"

I reflected a moment. "Well," I said, "perhaps I could squeeze out enough for a cook, but I could not possibly hire a maid, too. Of course you would not mind doing the housework, outside of cooking. There would, of course, be very little—"

She gave a little cry of terror. "Housework! Why I wouldn't do any housework for anything—not for the whole world!"

This caused me to reflect for several moments. Finally, I said, "Well, perhaps I might get a small raise in salary, and by also giving up cigars, I might manage to pay for a maid, too, but I couldn't pay dressmaker's and milliner's bills. Now I feel sure you could trim your own hats and sew—"

She looked at me in complete disgust. "Sew! Why, I just detest sewing. I wouldn't sew a stitch to save the country from ruin, and as for trimming a hat, why, I wouldn't do that if all the queens in the world offered me their crowns."

"But," I cried, somewhat aghast, "what do you want to do?"

She arose with a yawn. "I thought your hearing was good," she remarked, "I told you I want to get married!"—*William Sanford.*



CHARLES VAN TYNE and his young friend, Harry Witherspoon, were enjoying an after-dinner cigar in the sumptuous drawing-room of the Alcibiades Bachelor Apartments. They were discussing that ever interesting and ever puzzling subject, the approach of old age. Not that they themselves were getting old, exactly, but they had a good friend who really was getting along in years.

"How do you suppose it would feel," asked Witherspoon, "for a man to lose all charm for women; a man who has formerly enjoyed their admiration, I mean?"

"Can't express my idea of what that would be like," replied Van Tyne, "but I have heard of hells on earth; that's one of them, I suppose. Take the case of our good friend, Thad Gwinnett, here; he runs himself crazy trying to get a woman to make a little fuss over him. And they all laugh at him behind his back; some of them almost to his face. I am really sorry for him."

"I've noticed that, too," said Witherspoon, "and it struck me as rather amusing."

"Amusing, the devil!" snorted Van Tyne. "Let me tell you something, boy, it's tragic. You're only thirty now and it's hard for you to realize it. But I am fifty and I can feel the dread of that time, if I should live to be in the late sixties, as he

is. I wish though, boy, from the bottom of my heart, that you could see it in the right light; perhaps you would accept some of these fine opportunities you have to get married and in your after years escape this damned *Frauen lust*. I suppose there's such a word. Any way, you get my idea."

"Nix, nix, Charlie, nothing like that for mine; I want the free and easy."

"Yes, and go to hell before you die, you young imp. Frankly, Harry, I wish I had a loving wife and a home to call my own; but I am too old now. The same old tragedy of neglected opportunity."

"Jenkins is looking for some one," said Witherspoon; "I wonder who it is."

The butler was coming toward them even then.

"It's a telegram for Mr. Gwinnett, gentlemen. Do you know where he is?"

"I haven't seen him for two days," replied Van Tyne. "How about his room?"

"It hasn't been slept in for two nights, sir."

"That's funny," mused Van Tyne. "Have you seen him very lately, Harry?"

"Not since the day before yesterday morning, since I come to think of it."

"Well, we'd better start something, then," said Van Tyne. "Give me the telegram, Jenkins. Now, Harry, let's go up to his room and see if we can find any

clue. Keep this under your shirt," he concluded, addressing the butler.

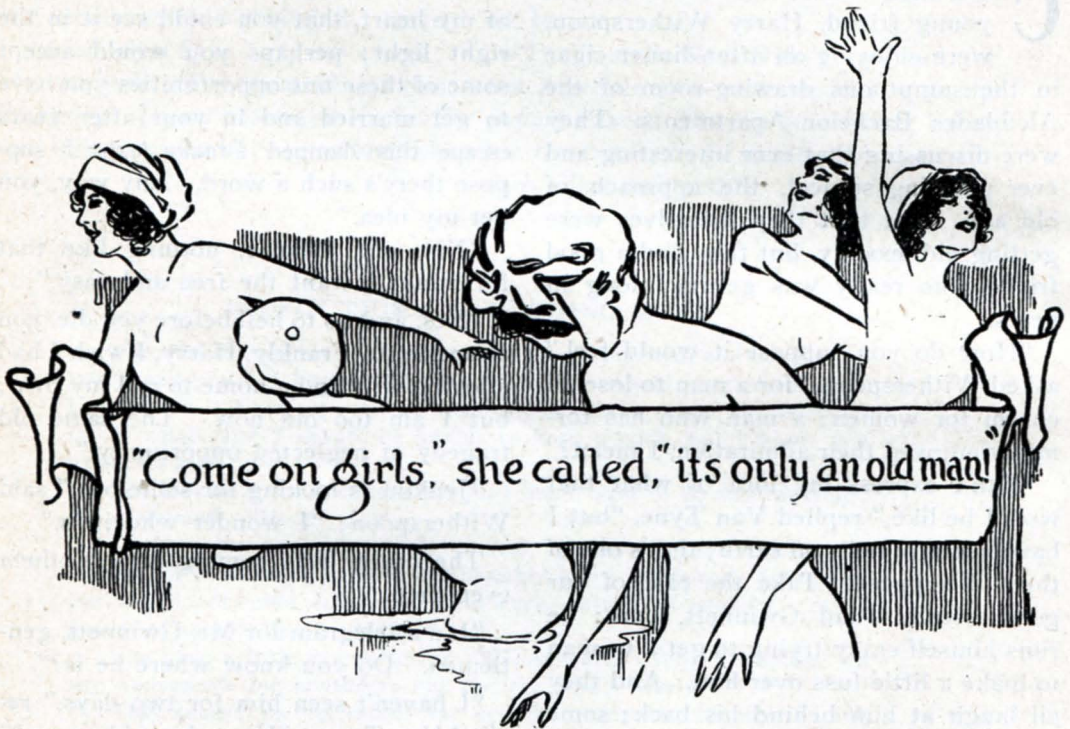
Quietly the two men went to Gwinnett's room and went through his effects. Presently Van Tyne discovered in a sack-coat a note, signed Flo. The woman, according to the note, had agreed to an appointment for the evening of the last day that either of them had seen Gwinnett, two days before.

"Where does he usually go?" asked the younger man.

Garnett and wife. They noted the number of the room and started to the elevator.

"How about the key, Charlie?" asked Witherspoon. "The door will probably be locked."

"Don't worry about that, boy," replied the older man; "I've got a key that will open any inside lock. If his key's in the hole, why I'll put you through the transom. We've got to be careful about this; if there's anything real bad, why we want



"To the Elbermarle," replied Van Tyne. "The next thing for us to do is to look for his name on the register. Earl Garnett is his *noe do* mischief, I happen to recollect."

The suggestion had hardly been made when the two men were on their way to the hotel of shady reputation in hopes of finding a trace of their missing friend.

Van Tyne had not erred. Gwinnett had registered with the woman as Earl

to cover up as much as we can before we turn in the news."

Van Tyne was pleased, apparently, to find that his key entered the hole without any opposition. With a strange feeling of foreboding Witherspoon watched him as he opened the door. In a moment they were both inside, and Witherspoon found that his feeling of impending disaster was justified, for lying on the bed he saw the staring face of his former

friend. One hand lay free, the other under the bed-covering. With a gasp of dismay, he saw Van Tyne rush forward and pull the sheet over the man's face.

"We must investigate a little before we disclose our discovery," said Van Tyne, pushing the door shut. Witherspoon appeared a little pale and upset, but he agreed to do as his companion suggested. But Van Tyne noticed that he did not approach the bed, seeming to prefer his place on the far side of the room, where he had come in.

"What's this?" came from Van Tyne.

He was pulling a crumpled piece of paper from the man's hand. On it he found three words: **TIME TO DIE**. The paper had evidently been torn from a magazine, for the type was such as is used in captions of stories. Van Tyne looked around the room. On the table, beside which his companion was standing, he perceived a copy of the June number of a well-known magazine. He walked over to the table and opened the magazine at the table of contents and ran his eye down the column. A moment later he spoke.

"Look here, Harry," he said in a hushed voice, and showed him the scrap of paper. "And here," he continued, "must be where it was torn from." He pointed to the third title in the column. The name of the story was "THE TIME TO DIE."

Taking the scrap of paper from Witherspoon, he began feverishly to turn the printed pages until he came to the number directed in the index. Just as he expected, the upper right hand corner of the sheet was torn off, and the crumpled piece he held in his hand fitted the place exactly. Then the two men read the story together; it was only a page and a half.

It told of a man filled with the urge of springtime love, who went out one beautiful day for a stroll. All the omens pointed to an eventful jaunt. First he picked up in the road the Queen of Hearts; second, he came across the ace of hearts and finally the ten of hearts. To cap the climax he came upon a shining pin and followed its glistening point. Going a little farther, he lay down on the side of a brook to enjoy the beauties of Nature. But he had chosen his location better than he knew. He soon heard girlish voices, and raising himself on his elbow, he saw the maidens remove their clothing and approach the water. They did not see him until at the water's edge; then they screamed and became overcome with confusion. But one of the girls, the boldest and most beautiful, looked at him fearlessly. Then she laughed, and beckoning to the stream, stepped into the water.

"Come on girls," she called, "it's only an old man!"

Van Tyne closed the book and replaced it on the table. He looked at his companion.

"The girl must have thrown him down," he suggested.

With that he walked over and peered under the sheet. Witherspoon could see that he had found something. From the other hand he pulled a small vial, labeled cyanide of potassium.

"He took the easiest route, Harry," he said softly, showing him what he had discovered. "But what has become of the woman; that's what gets me."

He looked around again and for the third time, his search was rewarded with success. On the dresser, partly hidden under the hairbrush, was a note. It read:

Dear Old Codger:

I ain't got the heart to take the money, here it is. You're a good old sport, but your sun has set. You oughter be spending your time in a old folks home.

Farwell,

"FLO."

Van Tyne placed the crumpled note and the cyanide vial in his pocket, then taking from the magazine the scrap he had left in its place, he put it with the other evidence.

"We'll make it as easy for him as we can," he said in a low voice. "Take the magazine, Harry. When we get back to the Apartments, we'll call up and inquire about him. That will start an investigation."

"All right, Ch-Charles," stammered Witherspoon. "But you take the magazine too. This is enough for me, old man."

I'm going to catch the ten o'clock train for home. There's a little girl back there that's cared for me a long time now, and I'm going to ask the big question the minute I hop off the train. None of this kind of an ending for me. Good-bye, Charlie. When I come back I'll introduce you to the Mrs."

With that he was gone, white-faced, leaving VanTyne behind in the room with the man under the sheet.

Van Tyne walked over and pulled the sheet down.

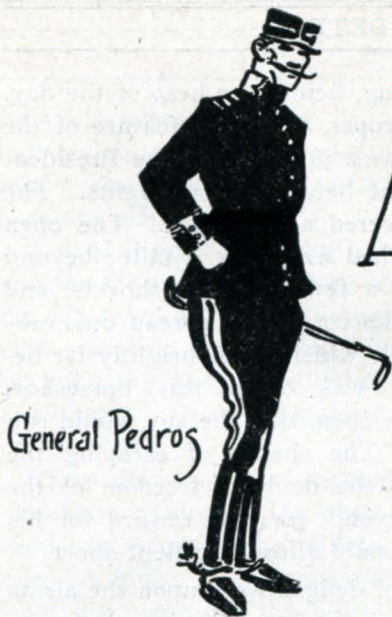
"Wake up, you anaemic old fossil!" he called to the supposed corpse. "And wash that powder off your mug. If Harry Witherspoon isn't married inside of a week, it won't be our fault, will it, Old Codger?"

I know a woman who wears a dozen diamond rings on her great, fat fingers, and who rides in a ten-thousand-dollar limousine behind a chauffeur in livery. Her gowns are the amazement of the social circles in which she moves, and the reckless abandon with which she conducts her lavish entertainments fairly takes away the people's breaths.

I can forgive her shrill voice, her harsh, rattling laugh, and the disgusting manner in which she exposes her great, ponderous bosom in some spectacular evening atrocity. I can even forgive her for thinking she is something more than a commoner, because I know that her new and monstrous fortune has streotyped this erroneous idea in her brain. I can forgive her all these things.

But, Oh God! I wish she would wash her neck!

—William Sanford.



At the Court of Rio Petro

by Archie Joscelyn

THE hot tropic night was unusually sultry, having forced the President and his counsel of brave generals out under the spreading branches of a huge tree, where they had reveled together until a late hour, discussing the threatened uprising. Morton had remained, perched in the tree tops above their heads.

Morton strove to slip quietly away to the roofs, under cover of a burst of ribald laughter. They were about to retreat to the palace, therefore, it was time for him to retreat. The wine glasses tinkled, and one fell to the ground with a crash, all of which Morton duly appreciated, but, as the clinging vines of his support gave evidence of breaking, necessitating a reaching for the securer branches above, he gave his only thanks when General Pedros swore. Under cover of this confusion Morton made his way along in the tree tops, while the president and his generals walked beneath, unconscious of the weight above them.

As those below reached the palace door, Morton reached for the edge of the palace roof above. When the rotten coping broke in his hands he realized that he had

miscalculated. In the intense darkness it was also difficult to choose correctly upon which he should alight, therefore, it was the General Pedros rather than President Filipe who broke his fall. Morton picked himself up in the glare of the lower lights and extracted his last stick of chewing gum, listening with faint amusement the while to General Pedros, who outdid his former efforts. The president shivered at the death which had passed him by, but Morton, the spy, yawned when he thought of the death which would come with the sunrise.

Neither did Morton resent the prick of the soldiers' bayonets. With the information he had overheard, and given by a considerate fate a few days more of life and freedom—then, the soldiers would have saluted him and done *his* bidding as cheerfully as they now did President Filipe's. But the coping had decided, and Morton was not one to argue with fate.

The reception room of the palace was made the court room. It was close by—much handier than the regular court, now closed by night—and the witnesses were now all present; more important, the sunrise was but three hours off, and im-

portant business should be transacted on time. General Pedros, being the chief witness for the prosecution, gave all the facts necessary, which were duly corroborated by the others. The spy of the Revolutionists was guilty of an attempt on the life of the president. That alone was sufficient, without the added crime of flattening the honorable general to the dust. Morton smiled wearily and waited, chewing slowly.

The President, as Judge, listened attentively to the case as stated by his brave generals. Undoubtedly the case was plan enough. To be shot at sunrise was less than the prisoner deserved, but it must suffice. A spy of the Revolutionists—traitors! But the prisoner might wish to say a word in his own defense. The justice of the Court of Rio Petro was just.

The judge turned to the prisoner: "Whatever you wish to say in your own defense is a lie. It will not be believed; say it."

Morton shrugged. The idea that he was not a spy for the Revolutionists made no difference. He was a spy for himself. A spy was enough. "At sunrise," said the Judge. Morton turned at the prick of the bayonets.

"But one word before you retire, Senor Filipe, on a subject of trifling importance," spoke General Pedros thoughtfully. "Tomorrow is the celebration. The people would relish a bit of extra sport. Why not a race between the spy and the bullets from our guns?"

"As you will, my brave General," agreed President Filipe, and thus it was that Morton was vaguely surprised to find the sunlight in his cell. It was a high cell, above the water line; a comparatively good cell. He had time to consider the bones which littered the floor.

The celebration would be held during

the morning, before the heat of the day. As was proper, the novel feature of the entertainment provided by the President would come before the bull fights. The stands covered a horseshoe. The open end stretched away for a mile; beyond that were a few scattering hovels, and then the denser forests spread out, robbing the hills which shone brightly far beyond. It was down this horseshoe, toward the open, that the spy would run his race. The chance of escaping the bullets, to the doubtful freedom of the jungles beyond, was the reward for his race. It would afford excellent sport.

Cheers of delight were upon the air as Morton took his stand, facing the open, his back to the crowd. A hundred paces behind him stood the firing squad, six men with rifles.

Morton turned and glanced at the sunlit stands. A bullet sang by his ear, and he turned and walked toward the open. It was the signal, but it was a poor way to die, to be shot in the back. But he would not be running. The bullets came spattering around, unpleasantly close, yet always, intentionally, just missing. The rifles were effective up to a range of three-quarters of a mile. Just before he reached the limit, the bullets would come in to wound—then to kill. Until then, sport—! A few kicked up the dust at his feet. He viewed with mild toleration the path of one directly beside his foot. It would be more sport if he would run, and zig zag. But Morton took life calmly; death the same way. Soon now they would be shooting to wound. Then, when he was not far from the open, the bullets would come spattering to kill. It was unpleasant, the whining zip, and the thought that at any moment the lead would go scorching through the flesh. . . Morton walked on, chewing reflectively. The

gum was losing its flavor. . . . He still had his papers. They had not searched him. Time enough for that later. A live man might resist.

A shot clipped a wisp of hair. It fluttered to the ground before his eyes. Morton mastered an overwhelming desire to run. Another stung a bit of skin from his left arm. They were better shots than the average—these retainers of the Court of Rio Petro.

Then—he saw her beckoning. She stood at the end of the open space, directly in range of the bullets that were fired at him. Tall, as beautiful as the blue sky crowning the hills beyond, as light and of the open places as the wind that danced through her hair—else, she would never have been out there. And she was beckoning to him.

Morton ran—away from the bullets that were singing at his back, toward her who stood beckoning. The shots fell thicker, but the sharp-shooters were evidently startled to see how an inter-collegiate champion could run. Morton remembered his last big race. It had been before filled stands, also. It had not been his last. This one might be—might not. Fate led through strange paths.

The bullets were beginning to fall

short. The old rifles were not up to the range. He came up to her, not panting, though the sun was increasingly hot. She smiled. Morton took her hand in his, and turned—back toward the rifles and the well-filled stands. Together they walked back, and the silence was broken by cheer. He could do anything with these people now. He had won their admiration. Their respect did not matter.

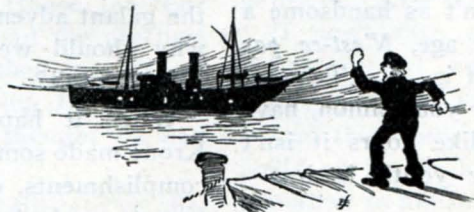
President Filipe beckoned them. Morton walked slowly. Life was pleasant. The girl at his side still smiled. Much might yet be accomplished.

"I told them to stop shooting when I saw what a brave man was before us," said President Filipe. "Such men we can use well at the Court of Rio Petro."

He lied. Morton knew it, but he smiled. This fact he accepted calmly. If he was surprised when he learned that the girl was the President Filipe's daughter, nobody knew it. It was at the dinner that evening that he turned to the president:

"I was not a spy of the Revolutionist President, the man whom nobody knows, Senor Filipe. I was my own spy. I am the Revolutionist President."

The girl smiled into his eyes.



MADAME KRONE'S REVENGE



From the French of Maurice Pottecher
by George Godron

“**D**RINK your coffee, Simon, and listen to me,” said M. Krone, as his wife refilled his glass with Old Cherry. “It is necessary for once that I speak seriously to you. I think Mama will approve of what I am about to tell you. *N'est-ce pas*, Mama? Mama says it is . . .

“You are nearly twenty-four years of age, Simon, and it's high time for you to think of marriage. I have no fault to find with your past conduct. To the contrary; if you were a bit gay sometimes, I wouldn't esteem you less for it. A man can give himself over to some innocent distractions without his business suffering. Indeed, his business may improve. *N'est-ce pas*, Mama? Mama says it is . . . For example, I— But all men do not wear the same clothes. You are my son, Simon, and it isn't for me to flatter you or to disapprove of you. With your red hair and your glasses and your running nose you aren't as handsome a lad as I was at your age, *N'est-ce pas*, Mama? Mama says it is . . . Temptations haven't run after you, Simon, have they? With a face like yours it isn't astonishing that your youth is less—more serious.

“Well, then, Simon, I want you to look around. While you aren't a beauty spot, you possess, thanks to God and to your

father, plenty of cash, so that the girl whose hand you seek won't shut the door on your nose, even though she finds it a trifle long . . .

“Now, when you have discovered a nice little dove to suit your taste, come to me and tell me about her, Simon; and if your taste pleases me, why, I'll give you my benediction and maybe something else to gild the bars of the cage. *N'est-ce pas*, Mama? Yes, Simon, Mama says it is.”

Thus spoke M. Isidore Krone to his son, Simon. And, Simon, as became a dutiful son, answered to everything:

“Yes, Papa.”

And Mme. Krone approved.

* * * *

M. Isidore Krone was a jovial and prosperous merchant who in his ripe age only possessed one weakness. There was nothing in the wide world that M. Isidore Krone enjoyed more than to recall on every occasion, both in and out of season, the galant adventures of his youth. But why should we complain when Mme. Krone didn't? . . .

When it happened that M. Isidore Krone made some allusion to his past accomplishments, or when some malicious tongue—and there were plenty in the Jewish Quarter between Porte-Basse and Metzgerthurm—told her of one of the old pranks which M. Isidore Krone found so

hard to keep to himself, she would merely smile strangely, and, perhaps, bite her lips. . . .

Now, a short while after this family discussion, on a beautiful spring morning, Simon Krone went to the office of his male progenitor and said to him:

"Papa, I believe I've discovered the girl who suits me."

"I knew you would, Simon. Always obey your father and everything'll be all right."

"She has the prettiest figure, Papa, and I—"

"Her name, Simon?"

"Mlle. Rosa Haase, the daughter of M. David Haase, the Hair Dealer. She pleases me very much, and I—"

"What are you saying, Simon? The daughter of David Haase? My, oh my!" said M. Isidore Krone.

"Her father is rich."

"I don't say he isn't."

"She's well educated. She has taught at the *Pension* of Colmar."

"Possibly. But, even though she had been raised in the Convent for noblewomen at Strasbourg, she could never be your wife."

"But, Papa, the reason?—"

"Don't ask me, Simon. I can't tell you. It's a family secret. . . . Now, Simon, be a good boy and look for another lady as Papa wants you to"

And Simon, obediently, did not insist upon having Mlle. Rosa Haase, the Hair Dealers' daughter who had the prettiest figure. He merely rubbed his glasses carefully and went looking for another.

One month later he thought he had found her.

"Papa," he said, "I believe I've discovered the girl who suits me even more than the first one."

"Ah, Simon, I told you so. Always

obey your father and everything'll be all right. Come, Simon, kiss your Papa . . . And what's her name?"

"Mlle. Ida Landsberg. She's an awfully charming young girl, and she has the prettiest blue eyes—I think—"

"Ida Landsberg, the daughter of Jules Landsberg, the Keeper at the Nouvelles Galleries?"

"Yes, Papa."

"And you want to marry her, Simon?"

"Yes, Papa."

"But, it's impossible."

"Impossible?"

"Ah, my boy," cried M. Isidore Krone with a single half tragic, half, farcical, "you haven't a chance. Don't ask me the reason. But Ida is not for you."

"Is that also a family secret?" asked poor Simon.

Nevertheless, he bowed to paternal will, rubbed his glasses once more, and began his search magnificent for a wife against whom Family Secrets harbored no grudge. . . . But, when he thought he had found her at last, this time in the rotund personality of Lisa Nachtigall who included in her impressive expansiveness all the charms and advantages of the two preceding ladies, and announced to his father that he had made his selection; and when he heard M. Isidore Krone assure him that Lisa couldn't be his either,—the young man lost his patience, he rebelled.

"I don't care a whistle about your family secrets!" he cried. "I will marry Lisa! You shall see."

And this time his father saw that he could no longer keep the necessary explanation to himself.

"Simon," M. Isidore Krone said to his son, "listen to me and understand. You are a man after all. But don't repeat this

to your mother. *You can't marry Rosa, or Ida, or Lisa because—because they are your sisters!*"

Then Simon ran, he ran like one obsessed. And the first person whom he encountered was his mother. And he said to her:

"Mama, Papa is a man I respect very much. But sometimes he aggravates me awfully. He told me to pick out a wife. I have obeyed him because he is my father. And now when I propose to him Rosa Haase and Ida Landsberg and Lisa Nachtigall, he say to me: "You can't marry them. They're your sisters!"

As he confided to his mother, he wiped his glasses, for his eyes were filled with tears.

But his mother—the heart of a mother is capable of soothing any hurt, and a mother's mind is ingenious—consoled him.

"Your father has spoken to you like that, has he? Then, I will tell you more. You can marry without fear either Rosa, or Ida, or, if she pleases you more than the others, Lisa."

"For," she went on, with the same smile that M. Isidore Krone had displayed "*you are not his son!*"

(Continued from page 7.)

a Chinese in the mission or to associate with one occasionally, but to live in propinquity with one was quite sickening.

It was interesting to have a Chinaman propose, however. It would be great fun to show his letter to Ralph and tease him about his rival. How he would laugh. She sat alone for some time in the grass. Every Saturday afternoon she had been meeting Ralph here. The hours had been so pleasant. Of course, Ralph was a man and had to be curbed occasionally in his ardent love-making, but she was not afraid of him, as she would have been with Hung Fung Wang. The country road was lonesome where she waited, but that was because she did not want to be seen and neither did he. Both were in college and both had parents who would have objected seriously had they known of these clandestine meetings, innocent as they were.

At last he came. How good he looked with his broad shoulders throwing a shadow on the dusty road and his sun-burned face aglow with an honest passion. Ethel read the face and knew that it answered some peculiar chord in her own being.

"It's going to storm," he said as he reached her. "I was afraid that you would not be here."

Ethel looked at the sky. She had been so interested in her letter that she had eyes for nothing else. A sickly green covered the dome of Heaven; a bank of black clouds was moving down out of the north.

"We must find shelter," she answered anxiously. "Where shall we go?"

The lad looked around helplessly for a moment. To go back to the city before the storm struck was impossible. It was equally impossible to stay where they were. In ten minutes the elements would be unleashed.

"Here, Ethel, I know where to go." He took the girl's slender arm and started for the woods. "Near the river is a little shack where we fellows go when we come out here to fish. I have been there a number of times. I think I can locate it. It is a dirty little place, but it will keep us dry."

"Then hurry," Ethel returned. "It's growing darker."

Together they broke into a run. They arrived at the hut just in time to evade the storm. It announced itself with a terrific peal of thunder and then the rain came and the wind opened upon the landscape with a velocity that shook the little building like a card house.

Ethel was frightened. It was terrible. She crouched in the corner of the place oblivious to the dirt and the white summer dress that she was wearing.

Ralph spoke a few words of encouragement. They were fruitless. With a stride he crossed the little room and took the frightened girl in his arms. She did not object. She was too frightened to remonstrate, and it was good to have so valient a protector.

The storm continued. With sun-down it had not abated in its fury. Darkness fell around them like a blanket. The rain poured in torrents. An occasional flash of lightning lit up the hut. Ethel stayed in the strong arms. Once she compelled herself to forget the storm, but then another fright seized her. She was in a lonely house and in a man's embrace. She managed to get away, but with soft, coaxing words of love she was soon back again. There was something in the very atmosphere that made it impossible to resist such love as Ralph was making. She had never dreamed that his kisses were so exhilarating.

* * *

"Ralph," she said, as they stood together outside the door, "let us start back for town now. We can be married at noon. She paused. "Won't the folks be surprised, dear? But they will all forgive us when they know that it is over and there is no help for it."

"Married!" The man exclaimed with scorn, as he turned and looked at her. "Why you're crazy, Ethel. I'm not going to enter into such a thing." He laughed nervously.

"You—you're not?" Ethel stammered brokenly. "Why—after last night—what else can we do? I—I never dreamed of anything else. Oh, Ralph, we must, we must. Remember—I've spent an entire night away from my people."

Angrily he threw her aside as she put out her arms imploringly.

"Last night—last night," he said, "well, what of it? Tell 'em—tell 'em—tell 'em anything. But nix on marriage. Do you think I want you hanging around my neck at my time of life? Forget marriage. Nothing doing—ab-so-lute-ly!"

With dry eyes Ethel saw and understood. "You can go," she said quietly. He left hurriedly, as though glad to avoid a further scene. She did not faint, but watched his form as it trudged out of sight down the muddy road. Then she smiled cynically. So this was her high typed white man, the man of honor!

She didn't get sick over the event, nor did she suffer with nervous prostration. She didn't even throw herself into the turbulent stream at her feet. What she did do was to go home and write a letter to her pupil. This is what it said:

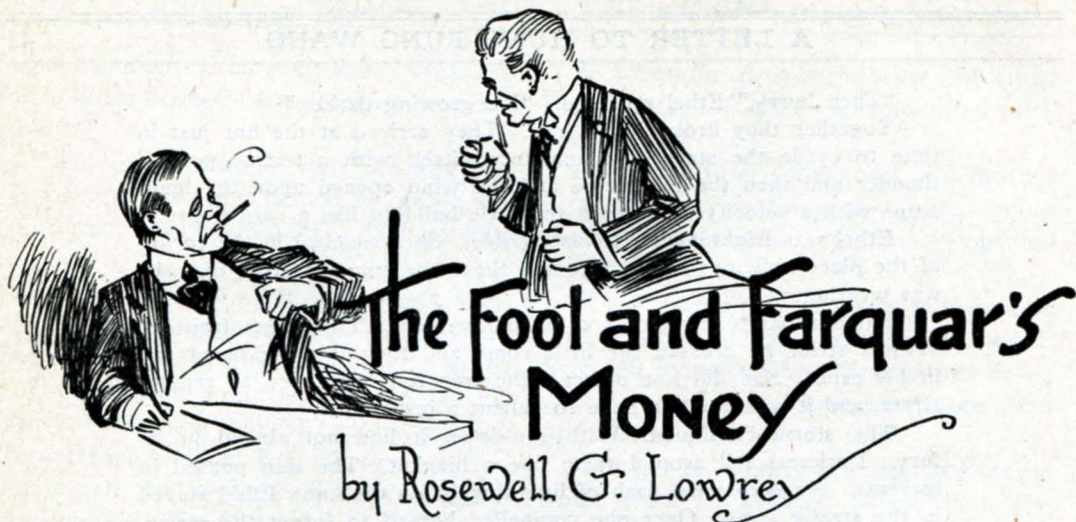
"Dearest Hung:

Of course I love you. You have honor. Meet me to-night at 7 p. m., with a marriage license in front of my home and we can be made one by a minister.

Your own little girl,

Ethel.

—Franklin Lee Stevenson.....



IF Patrick Landon, Ph. D., Th. D., D. D., had been more sophisticated it never could have happened. Tall and gray he was, and trustful. He, who thought that the whole world was honest, had fallen into the hands of the master wolf of all west Texas.

Dr. Landon, after holding the Professorship of Bible in St. Mark's University for fifteen years, had suddenly been ordered by his physician to seek a high, dry climate. He had landed in Saltillo, where the flat, purple prairie stretched away to the breaks of the Canadian river, as dull and uninteresting as the professor's past. Saltillo was a strange town. The scorching, sand-laden winds had no power to wither its green hopes and glittering promises. Its sun-baked streets were filled with jostling throngs of cowboys and homeseekers. It boasted nineteen paper millionaires, fifty real estate offices, a daily paper supported by their advertisements, and a clanging, flat-wheeled trolley car which ran from one end of Polk Street to the other twice in an hour.

King and creator of this dusty land, the one among them whose fortune was not built on paper, L. Q. C. Farquar sat in his plate glass office in the Farquar National Bank. It was to him that Dr.

Landon went. Because the Professor must make a living, and because he knew no business except the school business, he dreamed a dream and made a proposition.

The wolf inwardly licked his chops, as a true wolf should, but outwardly he was the prey of qualms and fears. He stroked the gray mustache that dropped from his fat jowls, and gave the blue-eyed savant who sat across the table from him ample time to contemplate the ornateness of the lodge emblem which graced the white front of the financier.

"I do not know, Dr. Landon. I have my doubts about that. I think the lots in Farquar Heights will sell well enough without your seminary for young ladies, though it might add somewhat to their value. I am unwilling to take the whole risk. Now, if you were in position to share it with me—"

Farquar's plan for the robbery, as finally outlined in that interview, would have satisfied the most exacting highwayman. Yet to Dr. Landon it seemed harmless enough. Stretching for a mile to the north of the city was a vast expanse of laid-off streets and vacant lots which was known as Farquar Heights. The banker was to deed to his victim three barren blocks of this property, which he

had purchased in the old days at five dollars an acre. One of these blocks was to be the campus of the new school. The sale of lots from the other two was to furnish the money for putting up the first building. Enter, the breath of the wolf. Dr. Landon was to sign an agreement by which he forfeited the school property if he ever sold any lot for less than five hundred dollars. To bind the bargain he was to pay to Farquar the sum of ten thousand dollars, his savings for fifteen years.

It was after the trade had been made that the savant met the Fool for the first time. The Fool, dressed in greasy gray overalls, waited at the corner of Polk and Third Streets for the car. He too was tall, and somewhat heavier than Dr. Landon. His wavy black hair was beginning to be grizzled with gray, but his face was the face of youth. The Doctor, who had never known a stranger, waited beside him. Silence in the company of a fellow mortal became intolerable. He turned his eyes heavenward.

"It looks as if it might rain," he said.

"You are a newcomer, ain't you?" said the Fool.

"I have been here just two weeks."

"I thought so. Nobody ever predicts the weather in this country except fools and newcomers. You are wrong about the rain. I am looking for a long dry spell."

"Have you been here quite a while?" asked the Doctor.

"You got me, all right. I belong to the fool class. Been here just two years. I did some business with Farquar when I first landed, and been too poor to get away ever since."

"Is he close?"

"Close? He lost a half a dollar once at this corner right here. It lay out over night before he found it, and he spent

two hours scraping around in the gutter looking for the interest."

But the car was coming. On it there was a boy selling papers. Dr. Landon purchased one and read:

FARQUAR SECURES COLLEGE
FOR SALTILLO

Dr. Pat Landon, Noted Eastern
Educator to Found School
for Young Ladies

Farquar Heights Gets New Institution

He further learned that through the generosity of Mr. L. Q. C. Farquar, who was contemplating the immediate construction of a fifty thousand dollar residence on the Heights, a large number of lots were to be placed on sale, the proceeds to go entirely to the new school. There was a full page advertisement stating that the Farquar Realty and Loan Company would handle the sale of the lots.

They sold. Farquar took ten of them himself. The boom was at its height, and there were speculators enough in town to take the others. They milled like cattle around the door of the Farquar Realty and Loan Company office. The terms were fifty dollars down, and the balance in five equal annual installments. With this backing Dr. Landon borrowed eighteen thousand dollars in order to finance the construction of the school building. He got it from friends in the east, and pledged his reputation, his friendship, his honor as security.

Then Farquar offered to do a really magnanimous thing.

"You should have a residence on the Heights. I'll lend you five thousand to build. For security you can put up such lots as may come back to you when the first installment falls due on the land you have sold. You will be protected, then.

So in May ground was broken for three buildings on Farquar Heights. The resi-

dence of L. Q. C. Farquar faced the Landon Seminary. Half a block down the street was Dr. Landon's home. The initial unit of the school was designed to accommodate twenty-five pupils.

The Fool helped to install the plumbing in the schoolhouse, but when the crew was shifted to the home of L. Q. C. Farquar, he quit.

"I am not working for my health," he told Dr. Landon, "and there ain't any money in anything connected with that man for anybody but him."

The school opened in September with its twenty-five places taken. Dr. Landon was gratified. It was evident that he would make operating expenses and a fair living. There was only the borrowed money to worry him. After October fifteenth, when the first of the five payments on his lots came in, he would be able to reduce his indebtedness considerably.

Then the wolf showed his fangs. The Farquar Realty and Loan Company announced in a full page advertisement repeated three days, that on October first the Farquar Heights Addition would be opened to the public. Lots were to be placed on sale at two hundred and fifty dollars each, easy terms, ten per cent discount for cash. This time it was real homeseekers who blocked the sidewalk at the office door.

But Dr. Landon, being one of the innocents, saw no harm in the situation for him.

"It was thoughtful of Farquar," he told his wife, "not to place his lots on the market till mine were sold." For Dr. Landon was of the old school who believe that the righteous man sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.

It was not until the fifteenth that he realized the error of this view. Every purchaser of a lot from him failed to meet

the payment. Why should they give him four hundred and fifty dollars for what could be had elsewhere for two hundred and fifty? He might foreclose when he wished. In the afternoon he called upon L. Q. C. Farquar. That gentleman kept him waiting an hour in the anti-room before he was admitted to the plate glass office.

Dr. Landon went straight to the point. "I am sure, Mr. Farquar, that when you fixed the price on your lots you did not realize in what a predicament I would be placed."

"Most of them would have let their land go sooner or later anyway," said Farquar. "They are not worth five hundred. Winter is coming, and homeseekers will be scarce for a few months. By the way, you will find that I have issued the order that no payment be made on the lots I bought from you. My building operations have taken my ready cash."

"But—"

"If there is nothing I can do for you, Doctor, you will excuse me. I am due at a board meeting."

The president of the Landon Seminary passed through the gleaming transparent doors into the marble iciness of the bank. He spoke no word, but his hair seemed suddenly whiter, and his step seemed slower. In December the interest would be due on the eighteen thousand dollars he had borrowed back east. He had nothing with which to pay it. In January the wolf would foreclose on the entire two blocks which had been given to start the school.

It happened that in the street the Doctor met the Fool.

"You were right about Farquar," he said. "He has my money and most of my property. Beside that he has used me to turn the tide of growth in Saltillo

toward Farquar Heights." His voice was not bitter, only devoid of expression.

"Are you looking for thunder showers tomorrow?" asked the Fool, and the Doctor had the heart to smile, a little sadly.

"Professor Landon, what is the most deadly explosive?"

"Trinitrotoluine, I suppose."

"That's it. How much of that would it take to blow the Farquar off the Heights? Say, have you noticed how he names everything for himself?"

But Dr. Landon was in no mood for persiflage. He passed on down the street with a heavy heart.

That evening when his front door bell rang he still had found no way out of his difficulty. He was displeased to find the Fool waiting on his veranda, dressed in a neat black suit.

"Good evening Dr. Landon. I have come over to see you about blowin' Farquar off the Heights."

"Come in, Sir."

The two talked long into the night. Mrs. Landon, working at her mending in the next room, thought that their voices were like the distant muttering of the surf, but she caught occasionally the words of the Fool.

"What if it does not pay? The school is gone, ain't it? You won't be any worse off. . . ."

"You don't need to worry about where the money is coming from. I tell you I'll furnish that. I have a friend who will be glad. . . ."

"Of course I know. I have tried it. I had the process patented. . . ."

When the visitor departed she heard his words more plainly at the door.

"All you have to do is to handle anything that comes up with Farquar. This friend of mine who is putting up the

money does not want to be known in it. You ain't to do a thing but sit around and keep your mouth shut, except when I tell you what to say."

December came, and acting on instructions from the Fool, Dr. Landon borrowed three thousand dollars from Farquar, paying it on his debt back east. The time of the loan was ninety days. He put his home up as security. In January he lost his two blocks, and in March the wolf took his home. He moved into a rented house.

In an idle moment that spring, Farquar thought of Dr. Landon. He took pencil and paper and drew a line down the center of the page. On one side of the line he wrote: "Gained: A boom on Farquar Heights. One five thousand dollar residence. \$10,000.00 cash from Dr. Landon. Commissions on the sale of forty thousand dollars real estate for Dr. Landon." On the other side of the line he wrote: Cost: \$8,000.00 cash. The block on which the school stands." The wolf was well pleased. The spring rush of homeseekers had started, and Farquar Heights was holding its popularity. He would be able to unload before the bubble burst.

In June, after the school had closed, a brief statement appeared in the paper.

LANDON SEMINARY NOT TO REOPEN

Owing to the loss of some property upon which I had depended for funds to enlarge my school plant, I shall be unable to open the Landon Seminary for the coming session. The building, however, will not lie idle. Arrangement has been made with eastern capital for the immediate opening of a factory for the manufacture of deadly explosives. Since Farquar Heights is outside the city limits, and residences are few in that vicinity, the location is considered ideal, as loss of

life and property would be small in case of an explosion.

(Signed) PATRICK LANDON.

Shortly before eight-thirty the following morning the Professor's telephone rang.

"Is that you, Doctor? . . . Ah-a! This is Farquar, L. Q. C. Farquar at the Farquar National. Can you call to see me this morning? . . . No? Then would you be at leisure to discuss a little matter with me if I should come to your residence, say at nine? . . . What? You are leaving town! Then I'll see you at the train."

The east bound flyer departed at ten-thirty. Shortly after ten o'clock the Fool called at Dr. Landon's house. At ten-twenty he and Dr. Landon left the house together, but upon reaching the street they turned in opposite directions. Dr. Landon arrived at the station after the train had pulled in. He found L. Q. C. Farquar pacing the platform impatiently. The banker followed him to the ticket window.

"I wanted to see you about that ridiculous announcement in yesterday's paper, Doctor Landon."

"What announcement?"

"The one about the explosive plant. Of course it is a mistake, and——"

"Ticket to Wichita, please."

"You realize what an injustice such a thing would be?"

"Eleven, eighty. That is right. Thank you."

Farquar followed the Professor to the train. For once he lost his temper. "I'll sue you for getting out a false report! Why did you let them publish it?"

Dr. Patrick Landon turned upon him. "False report? It is absolutely true. I borrowed eighteen thousand dollars to put up that school building. It has got

to be paid back, and the school will never pay it. Since I have lost my other property I have no recourse but to use the building in some line where the profits are large."

Farquar saw his mistake. "Ah-a, of course. Now if something could be done to make it possible for you to continue to run the school——"

The train had begun to move. Dr. Landon swung up on the steps. Then he turned back and called, "Such a thing would be impossible, Sir. The contracts are signed. I must go through with my agreement."

On Friday the Farquar Transfer Company was called upon to deliver to the deserted school building a large consignment of heavy boxes, addressed to the Saltillo Expositive Manufacturing Co., Farquar Heights. The shipment had arrived from Kansas City. The Fool, in his greasy overalls, appeared at the school that afternoon with a small band of laborers, and began the work of removing the desks, furniture, etc. He explained that Dr. Landon had employed him.

About five o'clock there was a small explosion in one of the rooms facing toward Farquar's residence. The Fool was the only person in the room at the time. No damage was done. The cause of the explosion could not be determined, though the Fool gave it out that a bottle of something from one of the boxes had been left sitting in the sun. There were broken pieces of glass scattered about the room when Farquar arrived, hot and out of breath, from his home across the street.

By Saturday, when Dr. Landon returned, the banker was almost frantic. That evening he called upon the Doctor at his home.

"Look here," he said, "this thing has gone far enough. It has already cost me

five thousand dollars in sales. If I should lend you the money to pay——”

“No,” snapped the Doctor.

“Ah-a. If I, personally, should pay your indebtedness, would you then be willing to forego this mad scheme, and continue the operation of your school?”

“That, with the restoration of my home, would satisfy me, Mr. Farquar. However, as I told you before, I have signed contracts which do not leave me a free agent.”

“You say your debt is eighteen thousand?”

“About that.”

“Then listen to this. It is my final offer. I will give you my check for eighteen thousand dollars, and a deed to the house you built. To the man who is backing you I will pay three thousand dollars. You are to spend one thousand dollars in advertising through the papers to kill the impression created by this explosive business. What do you say?”

“I shall be pleased to communicate with my partner, and give you his answer.”

On Monday afternoon Dr. Pat Landon called at the Farquar National Bank. He was immediately ushered into the presence.

“Glad to see you, Dr. Landon,” said the Banker. He indicated one of the heavily upholstered mahogany chairs. “Have a seat. I hope you have come to tell me that the Landon Seminary will be doing business at the old stand next year.”

“I have come,” said Dr. Landon. “to give you my partner’s terms.”

Farquar rubbed his hands together. “Ah-a. Let’s have them.”

“For himself he demands twenty-five thousand dollars. He says that he has let an option go on a piece of property which he was considering before he saw

me, and that he has already been to considerable expense and trouble. He thinks that the opening of the plant will be delayed two months by his going elsewhere at this late date.”

“You wire him,” said Farquar, “that I will pay him ten thousand. Not a cent more.”

Tuesday and Wednesday passed and Dr. Landon did not again call at the bank. The Wednesday paper announced that a car load of machinery had been ordered by the Saltillo Explosive Manufacturing Company, that it would be installed immediately upon arrival, and that the company expected to begin the manufacture of trinitrotoluine within six weeks.

Wednesday night Farquar called the Doctor over the telephone.

“What did your partner say?”

“He has not answered.”

Thursday at noon Farquar called again.

“You still have not heard anything?”

“Not a word.”

“Suppose you wire him again?”

“All right, I’ll do it if I do not hear today.”

On Friday Dr. Landon stopped at the bank.

“I talked to my partner over the ’phone last night. He called to discuss the advisability of accepting an order from Japan for September delivery. I asked him about your proposition, and he said he had named his bottom figure. He said that he would not consider any proposition after the machinery has gone forward.

“Ah-a! Dr. Landon, I have been thinking the matter over. Your school is a much needed institution in this part of the world. I am willing to make a sacrifice to keep it going. I have decided to grant your demands on two conditions.

“First, you must take pains to get it

immediately before the public that you have gone out of the high explosive business. Second, your institution must be known from this time forward as Farquar Seminary."

"Of course I cannot answer you without consulting my partner. As I have explained, I am tied by contract."

Farquar stroked his mustache.

"With your partner, I am sure, it is simply a matter of dollars and cents. He will agree to any proposition I may make to him that will give him a profit in excess of what he might otherwise expect. But with you it is different. I am asking you to make a great sacrifice of—ah—a—pride, shall I say, in changing the name of the institution. I would not ask it, except that it has been a point of honor with me never to put money into a thing without leaving my name upon it, as a sort of a memorial. If you will give me your assurance, Dr. Landon, that you will agree to that part of my terms, I shall feel little doubt as to the final outcome."

"I should be glad to have my school operating under a name, which, like your

own, is a symbol of success," said the Doctor.

A week later there was another conference between the savant and the Fool.

"I closed the deal today. Farquar gave me his check for forty-three thousand, and I deposited it at the Guarantee National, according to your instructions. We are moving back into our home on the Heights tomorrow. Now, if you will tell me to whom to make it payable, I'll write a check for the twenty-five thousand that goes to our financial backer."

The Fool grinned a little sheepishly. "Doctor Landon," he said, "you can just make that out to me, for ten thousand dollars with interest at eight per cent for three years and one month. That is the amount L. Q. C. Farquar lifted from me when I came here, and he has had the use of it for just that time. Put the rest in the school.

"We did not have any financial backer, or chemicals, or secret process, or machinery, or orders, or anything. You will find those boxes are full of books. I hope they will be of some use to you. Anyway, I am having the bill sent to you."



THE GONDOLIER OF BOOMSBURG



By Howard Philip Rhoades

HERE seemed a great change in my old friend, Oliver Quimby, when I met him for the first time in six months at the club. Although warm friends, we had somehow kept up no correspondence during my trip to the coast, and now, having gotten back only the night before, I was delighted to have run upon him. When we had said the usual things, I looked at him closely, and started, in a faltering way, "Why, Ollie, you are—"

"I am married," said Oliver Quimby.

"You! The fellow who said—"

"To that blonde girl dancing with the fat fellow." He pointed through the door of the smoking room, where we were alone.

Before she was jerked away by the tug-boat movement of the fat man, I saw her: a slight, blond, bright-eyed girl, a girl of grace, despite her present handicap.

"She dances divinely," I praised. "You dance, I suppose, Ollie, since you married?"

"No," he answered.

"What? You don't dance, and she does?"

"Yes."

"Well, that isn't much fun for you!"

"I don't mind. We trade off. Twice a month we go to the other club, and she waits for me while I bowl. She don't bowl. But there's always a dance that night. So, while she waits—she dances."

"Ollie, do you remember what we promised each other that night of the big party, the time you called up the weather man to have him make it rain Pilsner;—remember what we promised each other?"

"Yes, but as far as that goes, I'm happy every day—at least till 8 p. m., and that's enough." "But don't you remember how strong against marriage you were the last time we met, and all you said?"

"Well, if there is a story, Jim, it's about how it came to happen, and not about what's happened since. You can blame it on the Middle West, old pal, the place that produces dry goods orders and broilers for Broadway. What one does she sit out with me"—he consulted a very vacant dance program—"yes, it's the fifth from now. Let's get out on the porch away from this gang!"

When we were in comfortable chairs, with new smokes, my friend reflected: "Let's see. You were about the last person I saw before I started on that last trip on the road?"

"I met you at the Pennsylvania station," I verified. "You said you'd had trouble with your girl, and that you'd never be married."

"Yes," he said, "she wanted me to leave the road so we could be together more. I wanted to be with her, but I couldn't see anything for me in the house just then. She had her work, and would have it until we were married, when I

planned to leave the road. She was determined and so was I; so there we had it. She said if I wouldn't respect her wishes before marriage, I never would after. I sassed back that if I let her boss me then, I'd be as full of henpecks as a barnyard, later. We enjoyed mutual rage, and she tossed the ring at me. I picked it up, and started on my spring trip West.

"Have you ever found out how the girl you've been going with is all a mistake, and that the quarrel you've had with her proves it, and sets you free to reach out and grab something fine, now that you know just what you want? That was one—crossing the New York line? I purchased a copy of *"His Many Loves"*—written doubtless by some male veteran of fifteen years in the same set of double harness—but signed with the very Frenchy name of a woman. The writer expressed the opinion that a man should occasionally shake off the old fetters, and, in the spring time of new love, wave an orange banner at the fresh, young blossoms along his primrose path. I was with him—or her. I lived that thought! Then and there I decided that on this trip I would find my dream girl—as the popular songs have it—on this trip West. I was sure of it. Listen, and I'll tell you what happened:

"Every fat-faced lunch counter girl, and every damsel who lispd off the meats to me at the different 'Commercial Houses' was scrutinized. I wanted a woman of the people. Away with your effete society dolls! I had decided on a clear-skinned, wholesome—you furnish the adjectives—anyway, such a beautiful, intelligent girl, as is found in bunches, west of the mountains. I was so busy looking for a girl that I didn't notice it had rained for three days. You've seen a flood? Bah! What does your New Yorker, who never

steps in more water than the porter spills around the hotel lobby, know about floods? You read that they're subsisting on dog biscuits in the third floor of the Neil House, Columbus, watching the state capitol float away; or that seventeen people, including the mayor, are hanging by their hands from the steeple of the first M. E. church at Cairo, but what does it mean? Nothing to you, because the Hudson river behaves. I was through a flood last spring, Jim, and what happened then had everything to do with my marriage."

II

"I got out of Pittsburg by train," Quimby continued, "but by the time I was west of Wheeling, the tracks were nothing but canals, minus boats to ride in. When I got close to Boomsburg, where the climax of this was staged, I wasn't selling goods any more, but giving flood sufferers my expense money to ride me around ridge roads, in buggies, to see the water. They had moved the whole Yellow Sea over there. Is the Yellow Sea yellow? This was. Such a country full of swirling dairy lunch coffee, that had got cold, you never saw? Everybody was on high ground watching other people's house float by. Their own houses, you know, were being watched pass by other folks fifty miles down the river.

"I heard that Abe Cohen, who made the territory for our rival house, had gone on toward Zion, and I thought I'd better get down that way. So I gave a young fellow who had lost his great-uncle and a smoke house full of hams a dollar to set me over a lot of back water, on a raft. About four in the afternoon I got into Zion. The deluge had overtaken it as well as the other places, and the hotel keeper was sick of soul because his place was full of hungry, muddy refugees, who

had lost everything, including cash. He said Abe had gone on to the town of Boomsburg.

"'He hiked a john-boat and went over to offer the merchants ten per cent discount, and sixty days time,' said the sad host. 'I'll go in a motor-boat, and give them twenty-five per cent. off and the rest of their lives to pay,' I told him, and asked for the leading boat house. The only motor in the town was in a Ford car owned by the rich man of the place. They'd never seen a gas boat, for Skunk Creek, when normal, would hardly float a four-inch sun-fish. I got a john-boat, one that Abe had turned down, I judged, from the way it leaked. I hired a likely youth who said he could swim enough to save not only himself, but me and my cases, and we started.

"We went along a lot of river bottoms, where you could boat among the trees, occasionally getting snagged on a submerged fence, or stopping to look at drift that shamed a department store for the variety of its contents. The boy wielded oars shaped like ball bats, and I bailed. On a conservative estimate, I must have poured the whole flood over the edge of the boat at least three times. When the sun dipped into the yellow fields of water, we rounded a bend and were in Boomsburg.

"The inhabitants of the Middle West flood valleys are the best little stand-by-the-shippers we have. When the flood comes, they just move upstairs so to be handy to clean out the mud when the water falls. A roll-call of the blue book of Boomsburg would have netted about ninety-five per cent. at home that day, and I think the other five per cent. was away when the flood came. There were two stores in the burg. I saw nothing of Abe. Later I learned that he had stopped off where there was a poker game up-

stairs in a silo. I got two orders which were easy to take. I was simply to give them two entire new stocks, in view of the fact that the levees had broken at night without warning.

'The town band was giving a twilight concert on the roof back of the biggest store. The leader told me that the boys needed the practice for their Decoration Day engagement, and besides—the people enjoyed it. I think they were wise to reach that decision for, if they didn't like it, there was nothing to do but jump out a window and drown the sound—and themselves. The band didn't play. "*We Will Gather at the River,*" but a fine lot of 1902 ragtime, and as dark came down on the last piece, I felt something like those poor souls must have felt who heard the sinking band on the Titanic—only for a different reason. It moved me to pass out samples of liquor which my friend the whiskey drummer had given me in Wheeling.

"As they had only one boat, I volunteered to help some of the band boys home. I was to return and dine with the leading storekeeper in the lodge room over his store. The regular table d'hôte, twenty-five cents, was under eight feet of water, and the store-keeper's menu was as varied as the goods which his small son brought back from wooden-tub voyages into a rear window of the store.

"The next-to-the-last band boy lived quite out of the metropolis. At his house his mother was demonstrating what a savory meal can be coaxed off a second-floor heating stoves. This next-to-last musician urged the last one, who was the bass drummer, and my boat boy to stay for supper. He knew them both and mentioned a game of checkers. My boy wanted to stay, but the bass drummer objected. 'I promised my grandfather—he's my understudy in the band, you

know—that he could practice on the drum tonight, and he'll be awful put out if I don't get home with it.'

"'Wait,' I told him. 'I can manage that boat. Can't I take him the drum, on my way back to the store?'

"It was decided I should take grandpa the drum and come in the morning for my boat boy, when we would start back to Zion. They described the house where I was to take the drum—a yellow house standing back about halfway to the store.

"I was not more than out of sight of them when I got in bad. Crossing a space between two houses a strong current seized the boat, whipping it around and causing me to pull the oar through the air about five times as fast as it would have been pulled through the water. At the business college where I graduated they never had a crew; so what did I know about rowing? When I picked myself up, glad that the boat hadn't capsized, both oars were far away. The boat was lumping against a stable, and I had only time, before it too was washed away, to grab the last resort.

"This last resort, carried by the foresight of my flood-chauffeur, consisted of two long, stout, bean-poles, lashed together at the middle. I grasped it and managed to get the boat away from the suction of this treacherous current. Alive to the knowledge that propelling a john-boat demands temperament, I proceeded with caution. Presently I got so I could make a couple of rods a minute, balancing myself as I had to in my upright position. Then I looked around at an unusual scene."

III

"The moon was spilling silver on the water," Quimby went on, "and back of me spread out a glistening trail of ripples. It was nearly as light as day. Here and there a light twinkled, but many of

the houses lay still and dark on the face of the yellow-silver expanse. There I was, standing at one end of that heavy boat, poling like you see those fellows in the movie—what was it?—made after one of those old successes, '*Romeo and Juliet*,' or '*The Maid and the Mummy*?'

"You mean '*The Merchant of Venice*,' don't you, Ollie?" I suggested.

"Yes, Venice; that's the place. It's in California, isn't it? Well, I kept pushing this boat, and pushing, and feeling all the time like there ought to be soft music, and a lady to ease a red rose out of a balcony. But there was no balcony in that town. They hadn't even an opera house.

"But old Boomsburg wasn't such an unresponsive place at that. All at once, instead of hearing the musical voice of a lady, as they say on occasions, I heard a *girl* give a scream. It was off this street I'd been following toward a house in a field. There was a light there, and the screams were repeated. I turned the boat and began to gondole over that way. Then, very suddenly, I grabbed a barn and pulled into the shadow to look. Out of the second story window a man was climbing into a boat. He was a mean devil, I could just feel that, and somehow I knew he had a lone girl in that house. He shook his fist back at the window; so I thought best to stay in the shadow until he got behind a couple of houses.

"My romantic intentions which had been dropped since the flood started, were back. What was there to do but drop over and find out what the matter was? But that moon, and that street of water, and me the gondolier, and the lady! What do ladies ease roses for, in Venice? As I get it, it's because they like the serenade of their lovers below in their gondolas. I could hardly expect this lady to have a rose. But there was nothing to

keep me from doing my part. If only I had an instrument! I picked up the base drum and stick. You wouldn't have? Yes, but you weren't there to feel that moon, and the mystery of that yellow sea! I've heard they have music for bass drummers to play from! So I tried to imagine a bass drum accompaniment to *'Traumerer'* and, when I was close to the girl's house, began to boom away.

"It must have reminded her of a bombardment, for she stuck her head out of the window, and before she could see just who I was, cried:

"'Billy Hicks!'

"'No, it's Bill's drum,' I said, "but it ain't Bill. Where did Simon go?"

"'Simon?' she kind of asked.

"'Yes, old Simon Legree, the lady beater,' I said. 'Where did he go in his boat?"

"'After whiskey,' she said.

"'Whiskey!' I said, looking out over that world of water, 'I thought it was a fry town!"

"'He'll be back soon,' she said, kind of frightened.

"'When he comes he won't find——' I started to say, then I thought, and asked, 'Say, you're nobody's wife, are you?"

"'No,' she answered. 'He—he married my mother.'

"'Get ready, quick,' I said. 'You're going away.'

"The girl was such a slim thing, with bright blue eyes surrounded by tears, streaming yellow hair, and awfully slight and delicate and pretty. Just such a kid as gets a high school education in one of those little places, and wastes her good horse sense and sweetness on some forty-dollar-a-month guy, while we over here usually marry a fashion-plate, which needs three French maids. Gad, as I looked at her there in her plain little dress and her tears, I'd already begun to figure

how she'd look in an evening gown, laying it over those effete Easterners.

"She didn't seem backward about leaving. She packed her things into a paper suitcase in a jiffy, and we were ready. Then here comes Simon Legree! He was still some distance off, his back to us, rowing. 'Quick,' I said. 'In that boat.' She did it. We sneaked around the corner of the house before Simon turned to get his bearings. I wasn't feeling strong, for Simon's back looked awful broad as he rowed. I figured that Simon would kick up a fuss when he found his daughter had left her gilded cage. I remember thinking that if this is the way heroes feel, I was doing my first and last heroing.

"As I manoeuvred to get as many trees and things between us and him as possible, I heard Simon calling. When we got tangled in some brush, which I got us out of only by sheer force of language, the girl said, 'Hurry, I can see him coming!' and when we stopped on top of a post of some sort, she continued, 'He's got his shot gun.' And there I was like a slim turkey on a rail fence, just waiting to be riddled. Yet I couldn't sit. One must stand when one gondoles!

"Soon we were out of the trees and away from the houses. I heard Simon yell like mad. Then a cannon fired. I guess it was Simon's gun, but it sounded like a cannon. Splash! went the shot around us. Simon fired only to stop us, I know now, but I didn't think so then. I heard the girl say, 'Don't! Don't go that way!' but I paid no attention. I was poling like a horse in the stretch. Then, all of a sudden I poled just at the bottom. I couldn't find it. It was gone. We were in very deep water. I looked at the girl and found her crying, and looking back at the shore. What can you expect of a sailor who got his nautical training

as a passenger on the North river ferries? I had poled us right out into a swiftly-flowing tributary, at the point where it was about to land us in the big river! There we were in that boat with nothing but our hands, and a pole two inches wide, for oars. There wasn't a board that could be torn off to row with. Thoroughly scared we watched the two banks of the tributary fade, as we went out into a perfect sea of dim yellow water.'

IV

"The current didn't seem to be moving so fast," Quimby continued slowly, "and soon I was more cheerful. We were away from Simon, anyhow, I thought, and would eventually drift ashore. But the girl was straining her eyes at something in the moonlight. Then she pointed, and her face was white with fear. Away off ahead was a dim line of uncertain color across the river. Then it seemed to be a line of grayish-white, with a dark lattice over it. I couldn't guess; so I said, 'A dam!' and she answered, with a voice that was faint, 'No, a railroad bridge!

"'Fine,' I said, 'We'll grab it and walk ashore!'

"'We'll go through it and be drowned,' she said. 'The water's over the tracks. It's running right through the bridge. This boat will——' She stopped to sob, and I, too, felt that it isn't nice to die when one is young, and no better acquainted.

"Every moment that black line, with the white one beneath, was coming on in the moonlight. There was a roaring, singing sound, which was getting louder. About us were closing the fingers of a giant, not less terrible than that which draws one over Niagara. Then fortune smiled. In the water, beside the boat, came a thin, broad board. I grasped it

and began paddling wildly. She seized my arm and pointed ahead.

"'See—where the spans join!' she cried. 'Try to get through there!'

"I saw what she meant and worked madly to bring the boat over that way. Through that slim slit I could see that the water passed swiftly and quietly, while elsewhere it whipped through the girders, slashed to foam.

"To rush into that terrific whirl was like shooting rapids through which the whole ocean was pouring. To miss the one opening, which was like the inside of a great letter 'V' meant to be drowned in a maelstrom, punctured with steel girders to beat out one's brains.

"She sat gamely, a little queen in her barge. Her courage, and the fact that I had an allotted task, kept me from jumping overboard, a madman. As we swept down on that titanic sieve, I straightened the boat with a fevered stroke, and we went into that crush of waters. One side and by hand scraped the gigantic span, as I pushed hard on the paddle steel. A moment the bottom jarred on the rails, and we were through in a sea of froth. I thought the good ship Mortar Box was bound for the bottom, but she righted and we were safe.

"I had no desire to cross more railroad bridges in a boat, so I started paddling for the shore. 'Not that side,' she directed, and pointed the other way. 'I know the whole district over there.' For a long time I paddled laboriously. She seemed to recognize the moonlit shore, and as we came nearer, urged me to paddle harder. 'Get in right below this bend,' she said. From the first that girl had me on her list of servants. By raising the blisters on my hands from four to six, I managed to make the place and the old john-boat scraped ground—high ground.

"With an arm about her neat little waist I helped her from the boat. My cases were there, but all at once I realized that Billy Hicks' grandfather, understudying to the bass drummer, was disappointed that night. The drum had gotten lost, as we whirled through the bridge. In the big moments of life one doesn't think of bass drums.

"The bank was high where we landed. Up we started in the moonlight. I helped her a good deal, and stopped once or twice to kiss her. I didn't know her name yet, but she clung to me close, and it wasn't a time for words. We'd been through a lot in that last half hour!

"Finally we were at the top, and could look off across the water for miles. She didn't stop. She continued to lead me, and I went willingly. Now comes the part where we acted out the old fairy tale. Maybe you had read to you when you were young and innocent, the story of Goldilocks and the Bears. You remember that it recites how Goldilocks, a young person from one of Jesse Lasky's or Menlo Moore's blondy acts got in with three bears from Wall street, or something of the sort. Anyway, presently we stopped in front of a dark house in the woods and Goldilocks reached right up over the door as if she knew the place, and took down the key. She turned it in the lock and we entered. She found matches and lighted an oil lamp. There were two chairs, so it seemed there were only two bears in this case! I looked for the porridge, but the bears had left none. In the corner by the window was a bed. Here we side-stepped best-seller stuff. I know fellows who would play the situation of myself and this girl in a strange house, with one bed into ten thousand words, at ten cents per word," Quimby declared, "but this isn't that sort of fiction. I'll tell you what happened."

V

"She flung herself wearily down on the bed," Quimby declared, "and looked at me in the lamplight. There's ten miles of woods between here and the next house," she said, blushing beet-red; "so I guess we'll have to camp here until morning. But don't be foolish and try to sit up all night. We've been through a terrible experience together and you must be worn out. Come." She made room for me. "You may lie down here by me."

"Poor child. Her studies in modern literature had been sadly neglected. To have produced a telling situation I should have lain all night outside the door on the cold ground, or walked in the forest for hours muttering: 'She sleeps—ah, how I love her!—she sleeps.' But I didn't. I was dog-tired after all the excitement. So I blew out the lamp and lay down in the darkness beside her.

We must have both dropped off to sleep at once. A little later, after the first exhaustion had worn off, I awoke. I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was two o'clock in the morning. I heard her stirring. Her hand touched my cheek. She snuggled over to me. We commenced to talk. She told me a little of herself and her life with her drunken father. I told her something of myself. It wasn't long before our lips met—and her kisses were warm and wet. And then—" He paused and sighed.

"Good God, man," I said, "it sounds like Robert W. Cambric trying to write for *Supply Stories*. Go on. I'm all attention."

He laughed grimly. "The dawn came, and we both dropped off to sleep, my arms about her. I awoke with the sunlight streaming into the room. She was fast asleep. Someone was fumbling at the doors of the shack. I sat up on the edge of the bed. The door opened and to

revert to the old fairy tale, in walked the bear. When I saw his size I didn't look for the little bear or the middle-sized bear, for I realized that this bear represented the whole bear family. He was a very human bear, too, for he had a shotgun under his arm, and he brought it up and drew a bead on me. I began some sort of a prayer or apology for not being able to say anything, when the bear growled: 'You—she—'

"Don't shoot, mister," I grasped. There's an explanation."

"Get over there," he said, very rough, and backed me toward the opposite wall.

He shook her awake. Slowly her blue eyes opened, were startled, and then were filled with joy. She jumped from the bed like she was on springs, and ran for the bear. He held her off, looking at me mean. She saw that and, taking him by the arm, in a cooing voice, introduced me. 'Hughie,' she said, very makeupy, 'he stole me away from Pa last night. We came here in his boat to wait on you.'

"Yes, mister," I said, letting on, you know, 'it's a modern romance. No matter how bad it looks, there's no harm done.' She explained some more, leaving out all about the kisses in the night and about them, you bet, I didn't remind her. I learned then and there that I had been the means of uniting this damsel with her swain, after her ogre of a father had taken her away. The house she knew because she used to visit Hughie and his mother before the mother died. Hughie

acted very white, and helped me on to Louisville.

"But Ollie——" I began.

"Wait," he said, "Don't bust in on my technique! When I got to Louisville there was a wire from my girl 'Come home at once. Better job open with my firm. The evenings are so lonely. I forgive you. I want you.' I wired kisses and started. That flood had finished the road for me.

"But I thought you married the girl you rescued," I interrupted.

"I'm a rotten story teller," he said. "Didn't I explain that? They did look alike. No, tonight she and the bear are sitting around studying Sears & Roeluck's catalogue, unless the river's high enough to start moving the furniture up-sairs, and here I am— Say, Jim, do you suppose if that girl would have been brought to the city she'd have been crazy about dancing? . . . Let's see, this is the dance my wife was to sit out with me. Come in and meet her, Jim. Before eight p. m. in the day she's a wonder."

As she passed into the dance room, the music struck up and I caught a glimpse of her.

"Why, Ollie, she——"

"Yes," he said, "she's dancing my dance with somebody else. But that's all right . . . 'The evenings are so lonely,' and 'I forgive you,' etcetera. Pass me a smoke, Jim. It's another long hour till quitting time."

The Handmirror



Something to Read at Your Leisure

THE NEW TEACHER.

THIS is not the story about the beautiful teacher who arrives to the little mining town out West to find herself the center of attraction for the whole male population, and who in the course of events finally chooses life with the noble but poor youth after he has heroically prevented the oldish and villainous millionaire to outrage the innocent beauty by kissing her, and was rewarded—the youth was—by a just providence by stumbling on an assembly of the largest gold nuggets in the world, after which he undertook to do all the kissing that was to be done in the story.

No, this teacher is not that teacher at all, at all. She is not even related to her.

This teacher came to Limon with the mixed train that arrived only on Wednesdays anywhere between four and seven in the afternoon. She was not exactly beautiful, but she was tall, lithe, and "somehow different." The gentlemen of leisure—and they were about 90% of the entire population—who weekly gather to gaze with amazed eyes at the miracle of genius that the world calls a train were somewhat pleasantly surprised at the sight of the new schoolmarm. She was not expected before next week, when the school opened. Her early arrival promised much to their diversion—hungry hearts—perhaps she knew about tango and would condescend to teach them.

Calm and with easy bearing, in spite of the many eyes that were glued to her, she stepped up to the faded individual who served mankind in the capacity of station master at Limon. Her voice was soft and ingratiating:

"Please tell me where the schoolhouse is. I am the new teacher."

Tippling Dick, who was Limon's Don Juan, and therefore had a reputation to live up to, stepped forward and said in his most engaging manner:

"Say, Miss, don't bother with that last thorn o' summer. Come with me, Mr. Richard Hoard, Esq., and I'll take you safely through the dangers of this here sinful town to the beauteous bower that is to be your dwellin' in the schoolhouse."

The new teacher just turned around and looked at him. That was all. That was enough. Mr. Hoard's assembled friends had the pleasure of seeing him blush, and make a hasty retreat behind the station house.

She immediately rose sky-high in their regard, and went unmolested to the schoolhouse.

Mr. Reuben Hendlemeir Jones, cashier in the "Rancher's and Farmer's Bank," was the town's gentleman by virtue of his celluloid collar which he wore even on weekdays. He felt it incumbent upon him to represent the small but thriving community in its grateful welcome to the new teacher.

When the teacher heard who he was she seemed to feel a pleasing awe for his person and when she heard what he wanted she smiled in a way that melted his far from adamant heart. The half hour he spent with her was the most pleasant he had ever spent in Limon. She was so bewitching that he made up his mind then and there that life was not endurable without her.

When he that night reached his respectable bachelor apartment he felt all of a sudden the need of a woman's hand to give that touch of things that made furniture and rooms feel like home.

But he dreamt gloriously that night.

The next evening he went for a walk that accidentally led past the schoolhouse. And, think of it! at that very moment the new teacher happened to come to the window. With flourish and a bow he would have passed on, but with an infinitely gracious gesture she motioned him to come in.

So bewitching, so understanding of man's needs he had never dreamt it possible for a woman to be. The somewhat large though shapely and well-kept hands moved so swiftly and dexterously with the tea things that it actually ached within him to have those hands always prepare his meals for him.

They talked a while understandingly and well. Then, encouraged by her kindness he reached out for her hand.

And she let him take it.

Then he pulled her gently to him. She did not resist.

And overwhelmed, he suddenly clasped her to his wildly beating heart, and she yielded with unspoken tenderness, placing her rosy cheek upon his vest pocket while her hand crept to his neck. She listened willingly to his burning protestations of undying love.

But when he tried to kiss her she wriggled herself free and looked at him a little reproachfully.

"Reub—Mr. Jones. This won't do. I am a good girl."

"I know it," breathed Jones. "But I love you so."

"But we hardly know each other yet. Later, perhaps."

"Why perhaps?" asked the now again ecstatic Jones.

"Well, then, perhaps, not perhaps," she whispered, blushing.

Jones did not walk home that night. He danced. He fell asleep happily and dreamt the sweet dreams that are usual on such occasions.

He awoke a little groggy from the dreams the next morning. But he sobered suddenly when he found that he had lost his pocketbook. A lost pocketbook in Limon is really lost, for the citizens there are too practical to let money lie idle long. And you could not get it from them by any foolish appeals to right and justice.

It is true that there was not much money in the pocketbook, but there was in it also the combination of the bank safe. He knew it by heart, but he would have to change it, for the Limon citizens have been known to use any means at hand to seek out the filthy lucre.

Because of this the cashier was a little profane this morning, in spite of his young happiness.

When he approached the bank a little later he was surprised to see a large crowd there. He soon found that cause for this unusual interest was that one of the window panes had been removed.

Jones was content with being only a little profane as he with trembling fingers opened the doors. He was somewhat reassured to see everything in its usual order, and the safe door locked. But he wanted to make sure and so began to spin the dial—to the left once, to the right twice, and so forth—until the door swung open.

All the currency and all other cashable papers were gone. Instead there lay his pocketbook. In one of its folds he found a perfumed little note in a very beautiful woman's hand-writing:

"DEAREST REUBEN:—
"I AM MUCH OBLIGED FOR THE LOAN OF THE COMBINATION FORMULA. IT
SIMPLIFIED MY WORK GREATLY. YOUR OWN,

"JOHN ALBERT."

On the next train that came in came "Bill" Morgan and "Gus" Loula, two detectives from Chicago, looking for a young actor, whose specialty was woman-impersonation, wanted for a few little things that do not matter here.

On the same train came the new teacher.

ERNEST HOLMER.

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED

As the curtain went up on the first act of the Merry Maids From Paris the sportily dressed young Johnny in 209, C, left, centre, turned to the older and rather blase looking man on his right.

"The leader of the chorus in a pippin, isn't she?" he remarked enthusiastically. "Looks and figure in the same class—perfect!"

The older man glanced at his companion. "Yes," he replied, in a calm, even voice, "absolutely perfect," and then added: "I've seen you somewhere. Can't just place you at the moment."

The other flicked a bit of lint from his coat-sleeve. "Oh, I'm with Barrett & Company—assistant treasurer. You live in New York?"

"Yes—I'm in business here."

"I see. * * * There she leads them off again. Lord, isn't she a bear! I come almost every night to see her. We had a little junket at the beach last week-end. No harm done * * * you understand * * * we can't be young but once! By the way, I didn't catch your name."

"I didn't give it—but I'm the lady's husband!"

"My God, sir, I didn't—"

"Oh, that's all right. I'm your debtor. Been longing for the single life again, for months, and your little information will just about grant me the papers. I think I'll go out now. My lawyer will see you in the morning. Good night!"

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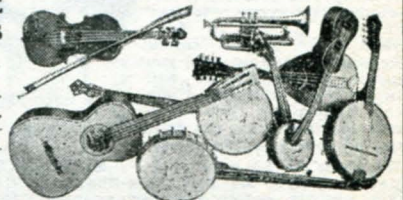
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