

Splendid Supplement of National Melodies <sup>IN</sup> THIS Issue

# HORNER'S PENNY STORIES



## AN ANGEL UNAWARES *by Mrs Wellesley Smith.*

No. 1117.]

Read this grand complete story.

[February 13th, 1915,

# Our Roll of Honour



Brave Defenders  
of King  
and Country



Major J. S. Wright  
(Plymouth), 5th Devon Cadet  
Cmps.

Have you a son, or brother, or sweetheart, or relative in the Army or Navy or Territorials? If so, we should like to publish his photo in this journal. Please send us his portrait. You should enclose with each photo a slip of paper giving full particulars of his rank, regiment, or ship, etc. Then add your name and address, and state whether portrait is of your son, brother, or sweetheart. We will return photos when requested, but where possible would prefer to keep them. Address photos to: "Roll of Honour," HORNER'S PENNY STORIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.



Wilfred Griffiths (Aldersburgh), Signalman on  
H.M.S. Shannon.



Pte. B. Jenks (Barrowden),  
4th Battn. Lincs. Regt.



W. G. Barrett (Bungay),  
Stoker on H.M.S. Goshawk.



Quartermaster-Sergt. R.  
Rowe (Salisbury), 2nd Waits  
Regt.



Alfred White (St. Dominick),  
A.B. on H.M.S. Marlborough.



Pte. F. Stares (Gosport),  
R.A.M.C.



E. J. Barrett (Bungay), A.B.  
on H.M.S. Hibernia.



Pte. A. E. Potter (Grinstead),  
Queen's Regt.



Pte. E. Fry (Crandall),  
R.M.L.I. on H.M.S. Psyche.



Pte. R. R. Kidd (Ellisaw),  
Northumberland Fusiliers.



Arthur J. Dellew (Willesden),  
A.B. on H.M.S. Queen.



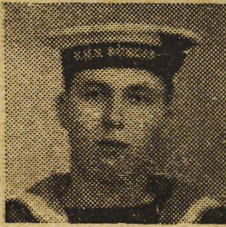
Lce. Col. J. F. Taag (Bew  
Common), 5th Wilt's Regt.



F. T. Barratt (Winchester),  
A.B. on H.M.S. Iron Duke.



Sergt. George Winchester  
(Ewhurst), training recruits  
at Cooden.



S. G. Hood (Wilmington),  
Stoker on H.M.S. Sutley



Rifleman W. Nesbitt (Belfast),  
R.I.R., Ulster Division.



Pte. G. Sparrows (Denham),  
2nd Suffolk Regt.



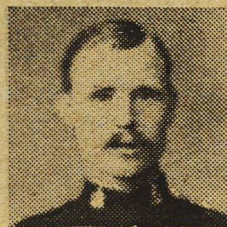
W. Goodchild (Winchester),  
Stoker on H.M.S. Iron Duke



Pte. A. J. Whiting (Ewhurst),  
Worcester Regt.



William G. Spurgeon  
(Lowestoft), A.B. on  
H.M.S. Hannibal.



Pte. W. J. Snow (Hamm  
Moor), R.A.M.C.



Pte. Louis Spurgeon  
(Lowestoft), 2nd Beds. Regt.



Pte. G. Treagus (Clanfield),  
R.M.L.I.



Pte. W. Roberts (Welling-  
borough), Royal Welsh Fusiliers.



Gunner E. J. Sharpe (Great  
Bromley), R.H.A.



Pte. C. H. Harding (Stroud),  
3rd Gloster Regt.

# MARY— The RED-CROSS SISTER.



A Grand Complete Story of a Woman's Part in the Great War.  
By **BESSIE REYNOLDS.**  
**THIS WEEK: BROKEN PRIDE.**

## THE VISITING CONCERT-PARTY.

**T**HE nurses passed the news along with smiling faces, and the men in the hospital on the East Coast pulled themselves up with an expectant air. A concert party that was going the round of the hospitals among the wounded was coming here to-day.

They were to sing first in one ward and then in another. The powers that be had known it for days, it seemed, but, wounded and sick men being very like children, and quite likely to make themselves ill with excitement, the news had been withheld until the very day, almost the hour, of the expected visit.

As it was, nurses ran to and fro tidying wards that looked already to the ordinary observer as tidy as hands could make them, and patients with uninjured hands passed their fingers over hair that was already smoothly tidied.

Perhaps the little group of girls and men who came presently into the long ward, where a small piano had been wheeled in readiness, had their reward when they looked round about the eager, watching faces. Someone raised a cheer and its very feebleness was touching to hear.

Sister Mary, the Red Cross nurse, serene of face and quietly watchful as ever, had established herself beside the bed of one patient. Apparently as absorbed in the proceedings of the singers as all the rest, in reality she was watching this one patient with keen eyes.

He had been badly wounded, and even now he was pitifully weak. Other men had been in that ward quite as badly wounded as this one, but they had made rapid recovery. But it seemed to Mary that this man had no desire to live, that he had been dragged back from the grave almost against his will.

Now he scarcely looked at the little group about the piano. It seemed that even the music held no interest for him. While the ward rocked itself delightedly over a comic song, and then listened with dimmed eyes to an old ballad sung in a man's sweet tenor, he lay with closed eyes, apparently indifferent.

There must be a story at the back of it all, Mary guessed, of course; another of the tragedies of which she had already learned so many.

But this man was reserved, a little hard and unapproachable even in his weakness; and Mary had learned long ago that hearts are not like oysters—to be opened by strength of wrist and a knife. Until he chose to give her his confidence, anything in the nature of a question would seem only a prying curiosity that was unjustifiable.

Yet she watched the man's pale face with kindly eyes that were very pitying. It was surely mental suffering, even more than physical, that had traced the lines beside his mouth and sharpened the outlines of face and jaw.

There was nothing sullen about the face, either, unapproachable though its owner was. His was the quiet distance of a dignity that is unassailable. As a matter of fact, the men liked him well enough, as Mary found. He was a well-bred, educated man—well bred enough not to claim for himself any distinction from his less-favoured comrades.

For the rest, he was just Private Ainsleigh, as the card over his bed announced—one of the great new Army that had sprung into being at the call of the man who knew what he wanted—and got it.

The tenor voice that had hushed the ward to silence ended, and a girl who had been waiting stepped forward immediately. The man at the piano struck a few chords, and her voice seemed to steal out into the crowded ward with a wonderful haunting sweetness that made the men almost hold their breath.

And, with a start, as the first words dropped one by one into the silence, Mary saw that Private Ainsleigh was suddenly aroused. He looked up with a start, passed his uninjured hand across his eyes as though to brush some vision of sleep from them, and half started up.

“The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,  
Are as a string of pearls to me;  
I count them over every one apart,  
My rosary, my rosary.”

Mary half moved to check him, but she thought quickly. Even if the movement caused him pain, surely anything was better than the apathy that had made him indifferent to everything, never even caring to try and struggle back to life.

So she resolutely looked away from the white, startled face, and the haggard, staring eyes that were fixed upon the sweet face of the singer, and looked herself deliberately at the girl.

“I tell each bead unto the end,  
And there a Cross is hung,”

the sweet voice sang, and it seemed to Mary that there came a groan from the listening man.

What memories had the song evoked? she wondered, and then some instinct made her turn quickly, in time to see him slip back into the bed in a faint that was like death.

With a swift movement she drew the ever-ready screen about his bed. No need to worry the singer or her audience. But as she bent over the unconscious man and began to apply the remedies at her hand, the words of the song, a little muffled now by the encircling screen, yet stole across to her:

“O memories that bless and burn!  
O barren gain and bitter loss!  
I kiss each bead, and strive at last to learn  
To kiss the Cross, sweetheart,  
To kiss the Cross.”

The wounded man came slowly back to a consciousness, and with the return came also a little veil of reserve. He made no remark about his fainting fit, not even to apologise for the trouble that he had given, as most of the men would have done. But something in the man's stormy grey eyes made Mary understand that here was pain too deep to enable him to remember the small things of life.

“I am all right now,” he said. “If you'll leave the screen round I can lie here and listen—you go and enjoy the music, Sister.”

The whispered words were somehow imperative. It occurred to Mary that perhaps he wanted to be left alone. She slipped round the screen, and took her place among a little group of nurses in the background.

A man with a merry face was telling a series of funny stories with gay, friendly patter in between, setting the ward into fits of laughter.

But though Mary joined in the laughter, at times somehow she could not forget the man in the bed behind the screen. Somehow the sad song had stirred him out of his apathy, something it had meant for him of emotion that had been almost too strong for his weak frame.

She hardly noticed that the short concert was over, and that the singers were making the round of the beds, until the girl who had sung "The Rosary" came up to her.

Mary saw then that she had been giving away bunches of violets from a great armful that she carried. There were violets thrust into the rough tawny coat that she wore, and her eyes were the same colour—violets drenched with dew.

"Why is there a screen around this bed, Sister?" she asked softly. "I—I hope the poor man is not very ill. Is the noise too much for him, do you think?"

"He fainted just as you began your song," Mary explained quietly. "He is very weak, but I am sure that he will be sorry that he missed the end of it."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" The violet eyes were lifted quickly, and Mary told herself that behind all their sweetness there was somehow a haunting sadness. "Do you think"—she laid a little slim, ungloved hand on Mary's grey sleeve—"do you think he would like me to sing something quite softly to him—something that would be just for himself, and that would show that I was sorry? And I have brought them each a bunch of violets—"

Mary acted absolutely upon impulse then, an impulse that had come suddenly, and that would not be denied. In her heart she knew that Private Ainsleigh wanted only to be left alone, but she led the way with a little nod of acquiescence round the screen.

The wounded man, looking up indifferently at the sweet-faced nurse, saw someone else standing suddenly beside her. His face seemed to blanch again as he caught sight of the little figure with her arms full of violets, and Mary heard her give a queer little gasp.

The violets slipped unheeded from her hands, and shed their sweetness upon the polished floor at her feet, and as though scarcely sure of her welcome, she stood there, the colour coming and going in her face.

"Stephen!" she said. "It is Stephen—and I never knew!"

Mary slipped away. Surely those two would come to a better understanding alone, she told herself. But when the concert party was ready the girl with the violet eyes came out rather pale and silent, and certainly not looking as though she had just happily cleared up some lovers' quarrel.

The group had gravitated towards the door, and stood there chatting with one or two of the surgeons. This was the last ward to be visited, and they were off now to the couple of big touring-cars that bore them from one hospital to another.

But this girl lingered a moment beside Mary, and spoke in a low voice.

"You are nursing Private Ainsleigh, I suppose?" she said. "Can you tell me whether any of his people have been to see him?"

"No"—Mary tried not to see that the pretty lips were quivering a little—"he seems to have no friends; or, at least, they do not appear to know that he is here."

"He has never asked for them?"

"No, he has not asked for anyone."

"I'm afraid he does not forgive easily," the girl said. "Or perhaps—perhaps— But I shall find that out. May I leave my name and address with you, Sister? And then if—if he should be worse, you would let me know."

"I will let you know how he is in any case," Mary said quietly, and earned thereby a look of half-tearful gratitude from those violet eyes that must surely haunt any man who had once cared for them.

She went back feeling a little angry with this patient who did not forgive easily, who had apparently proved unapproachable even by the little lady of the violets and the songster's throat.

Mary had read the card that the other had handed before she put it carefully away in her pocket, and she had recognised the name upon it as that of a well-known singer.

But when, feeling more than a little annoyed with this very tiresome patient, she went round the screen to him, she paused suddenly with something like a little smile of satisfaction upon her lips.

He had not heard her soft footsteps, and he was quite unaware that other eyes watched him as he lifted the little bunch of violets that had fallen, or been placed within reach of his hand. The man she had thought so grim and indifferent lifted the little bunch of violets to his lips, and Mary crept away before he should discover her presence.

He cared, then, for the girl of the violet eyes! That meant that things must surely come right. Mary had a very complete trust in the power of love. She had never known it to fail yet.

#### GOOD FOR EVIL.

AND Molly O'Hearn, of the concert party, sat very thoughtfully in the big car that drove them back to the hotel. They were staying in this particular town for a couple of hours, and going on in the evening to sing at a camp not many miles away. There were men there, drilling until they were wearied out, working day by day to fit themselves to do their "little bit," who needed cheering almost as much as the men in the white beds in the hospital that they had just left.

But over the dinner that they consumed hurriedly enough, Molly sat thoughtfully. She had pushed back the veil from her little close-fitting travelling hat, and, falling about her shoulders, it seemed to throw up the pathetic Irish beauty of her face.

And the result of her thoughts was that when the meal was over she sought the leader of the little party and asked to be released next day.

"I will, of course, fulfil our engagement to-night," she said; but to-morrow I particularly wish to go some miles away. I could join you again the next day if you will allow me to do so."

And since she apparently did not intend to explain any more he could only bow gravely.

"We shall, of course, be glad of your help," he said.

The journey when dinner was over was a good long run to that distant camp. The two cars went at a pace that would surely have brought them a fine in the old days. But there seemed nobody about on these dark roads to interfere until they were near enough to the camp to be challenged by the sentries.

Then they were out of the darkness presently into what seemed a blaze of light that fell upon hundreds of smiling, manly faces, and Molly found herself singing to surely the most appreciative audience that she had ever met.

But this time she did not sing "The Rosary"; it held for her the memory of a man's white, proud face, and a still, bandaged figure.

Through a pressing, eager crowd of khaki-clad figures the two cars crawled out of the camp, and as they gathered speed the final appreciative cheers seemed to follow them into the darkness of the unlighted road beyond.

Molly sat looking straight before her into the heavy darkness, while around her the laughing voices of the others rang out into the night air.

She was thinking of a proud woman who had bidden her go away and sacrifice herself for the sake of her love; of the man, equally proud, who had been so ready to believe the story that had been so carefully prepared for him.

How it was that he was lying in a hospital ward unsought by his home folks, she did not understand. Stubborn pride had held him even in his weakness, and he had refused to touch her hand or answer her timid little greeting. And she had not dared, somehow, to ask any question where even her presence was so evidently undesired.

But what had happened that the mother who had seemed to worship him had never been near him? Or was it that she did not even know that he was lying here wounded?

Somehow that was the solution that seemed to Molly to be most feasible. That was why she had decided to intrude upon a woman who had once insulted her. Because she knew that her son loved her, she would tell her the truth. She should at least know that Stephen

was lying in the hospital wounded, weak still, helpless. The rest she must leave.

The hotel where they were to spend the night was one of those old-fashioned places that Dickens would have loved. As a matter of fact, it possessed a "Dickens room" and a store of legends of the past.

There was a great fire burning in an open grate in the big, spacious hall where, late though it was, a few of the people staying in the house were still sitting about.

They looked up as the little party of motorists entered, girls and men laughing and chatting together in Bohemian comradeship.

A stately dame, who had been seated near the fire reading the paper, rose up with a dignified rustle of silk, and turned to go up the wide, shallow staircase exactly at the moment that Molly reached it.

The girl stood aside, and, with the gracious dignity of a duchess, the elder woman turned to bow. Then, catching sight of the sweet, sad little face, she paused with her foot upon the stair, and seemed to freeze into an attitude of cold, angry pride.

"Oh!" The colour swept in a hot tide over the girl's sweet face. Almost unconsciously she held out one little gloved hand to the elder woman, but it was coldly ignored. The colour swept out of her face again almost as swiftly as it had come, leaving her a white, pathetic little creature who might surely have moved the pity of anyone less bitterly antagonistic.

"I—I wanted to see you," Molly said softly, with a memory of the groups in the hall. "I was going to Ainsmere to-morrow. If you will give me an interview, please—"

The other woman gave her a cold, sweeping glance that seemed to travel contemptuously over her, from her little tawny suede travelling hat to the trim shoe that peeped beneath her skirt; and then, not even deigning to reply, she turned away.

Her thin, old hands dropped flashes of light from her rings as she lifted her black silk skirt ever so slightly, and went up the stairs without even a backward glance.

Molly bit her lip. It had been the snub direct, which perhaps was just what she might have expected. Stephen's mother had never made any secret of her dislike and even contempt for the girl who had won her son's heart.

Though now—now that Stephen no longer cared—she might surely be less bitter, Molly told herself ruefully.

But then, perhaps, she did not know that Molly had received the number of her own room before she turned towards the stairs. Now, feeling very much crushed and sad, she followed that proud old figure meekly and at a distance, yet near enough to see that the woman had disappeared into a room that was next door to her own.

Not that it made it any more likely that she would have a chance of speaking to her. Somehow there was no way of making a person listen to you if she absolutely refused to do so.

Molly flung off her fur-lined coat, and the little hat that she had been wearing so long. The others had been talking of a supper in one of the rooms, but Molly did not feel like supper to-night, neither did she feel like the talk and merry laughter of the little Bohemian party.

She was seeing again the white, thin, haggard face behind the screen, the face that had grown cold and contemptuous at the sight of her—like his mother, she told herself miserably.

And, of course, she was silly to expect anything else. Had she not gone away because, as his mother said, she would ruin his career, spoil his life? It had been a compact that she should let him believe her faithless, and she had played her part well, slipping swiftly out of his life.

She seemed to see again the proud old woman pleading

with her, by the love she bore Stephen, at least not to spoil his life.

But there had been very little softening about the proud old woman to-night, and, of course, all this was an old story, and had happened before fame came to her as a singer, though no amount of fame would be likely to make Mrs. Ainsleigh accept her as a possible daughter-in-law.

And now, in spite of her own withdrawal from the contest, it seemed that there was no friendship between mother and son, or why had she never been to see him while he was lying there?

Was it because he had enlisted and was just plain "Private" Ainsleigh? That would hit the old lady hard, of course, though it was just like Stephen, if there were not a commission to be obtained just then, to serve in the ranks.

Her own heart thrilled with pride in him, though he did not care now what she thought of him.



A MUCH BEWILDERED AND ENTIRELY INDIGNANT OLD LADY SAT STILL ON THE FLOOR IN A FAR FROM DIGNIFIED POSITION, WHILE MOLLY MADE A RUSH FOR THE WATER JUG, AND FLUNG ITS CONTENTS OVER THE FLAMING BED.

One thing was certain, his mother ought to be told the truth. It was quite possible that if they had parted bad friends she did not know that he was lying ill and wounded. It would be just like Stephen never to give the address of friends to whom the information might be sent.

If she knew—well, there had never been any doubt about her love for him, however little else of emotion that proud heart might hold!

Molly, sitting thinking hard, at last decided upon her course of action. If the proud old woman would not condescend to look at her, at least she might read a note. She found a sheet of notepaper and an envelope, and wrote a brief letter, simply conveying the information that Stephen was lying wounded, and giving the name of the hospital and the town where he was.

The rest might surely be left to a mother's heart!

Then, still dressed as she had been when she sang in the ward, save that she had taken off her hat and coat, she slipped out to the corridor. She must have

been sitting thinking a long time, for the hotel seemed wrapped in silence.

Molly bent, and slipped the little note beneath the door. In the morning Stephen's mother would surely see it, and she would have read it before she guessed from whom it came.

She straightened herself, and turned away—at least, she was about to turn away, when something arrested her steps.

A strange faintly stinging scent of smoke that seemed to come from somewhere quite near. For a moment she stood looking helplessly around, thinking that she must be mistaken. Then it came again, and as she bent down to the keyhole she realised that it was coming from the room within.

That strange, pungent smell of burning, the acrid, stinging smoke—she connected it quickly with Stephen's mother; and, like a flash, it came to her that the elder woman was in peril.

Mechanically, and with no real hope of obtaining entrance to the room, she turned the handle of the door. To her surprise it was unlocked, and it gave quickly at her touch.

The next moment she was in the room, and she gave a quick gasp of horror at the sight that met her eyes.

For at first it seemed that the whole of the bed was in flames, and she almost dreaded what might meet her gaze when she sprang forward, unconsciously kicking out of the way the letter that she had so carefully thrust beneath the door a moment before.

But they were rushing nearer—nearer; in another moment they would have reached her, when Molly ran forward and shook her by the shoulder; and then—not waiting for further ceremony—tugged at her desperately.

The next moment they were rolling together upon the floor, for the weight of the tall, stately old lady had been quite too much for Molly's slender arms.

And the moment after, a much bewildered and dazed, and entirely indignant old lady, sat still on the floor in a far from dignified position, while Molly made a wild rush for the water jug, and flung its contents over the flaming bed.

Then followed a few anxious moments at beating at flames with the rug that she snatched up, and a final victory that left her breathless, with smoke-blackened face and dishevelled hair, and hands that she gazed at ruefully, they were smarting so badly.

But by this time Mrs. Ainsleigh had gathered herself together, and realised the imminence of the peril from which she had been rescued.

"I suppose I owe you my life," she said then a little shakily. After all, she was getting on in years, and this was a scene that was enough to upset the nerves of the most dignified of old ladies.

"Oh, it's nothing!" Molly told her, which sounded a little rude, perhaps, but Mrs. Ainsleigh certainly did not notice it.

"I was reading with a candle," she said. "It is a habit that I have been cured of to-night. But I don't understand how you came here, or how you knew that I am nervous, and that I always keep my door unlocked."

"I—I didn't know it until I smelt the smoke and tried the handle," Molly said. "I had written a letter to you, and put it under your door," she explained. "It was in stooping that I smelt the smoke."

"A letter!" A little shadow passed over the fine old face. "Where is it?"

Molly stooped and found it, and handed it to her.

"It was because you wouldn't listen when I tried to speak to you downstairs," she said. "And I thought perhaps you would read the letter."

"What was it that you wanted to tell me?"

Old Mrs. Ainsleigh subsided into a deep chair with the letter still clasped in her hand. And Molly forgot her burnt, smarting hands in the eagerness of her reply.

"It was about Stephen—your son. I thought perhaps you didn't know that he is in a hospital not many miles from here—that he had been very badly wounded."

Mrs. Ainsleigh seemed to draw herself more upright. "No, I didn't know that," she said. "I suppose he wouldn't tell them my address that they might send to me."

"And"—Molly discovered a desperate courage, or perhaps she thought that what she had done had given

her a certain right to speak—"even though he has enlisted in the ranks, it is very splendid of him! And if you would only go to see him—"

"I think you mistake," Mrs. Ainsleigh said. "I did not quarrel with Stephen because of his enlisting. As a matter of fact, I knew nothing about that. It was he who flung himself away from me when he found that you had thrown him over. He always believed that I had something to do with it, as, of course, I had. I question whether he would see me even now, unless I can take you with me, and give you back to him."

"Oh, you mean—you can't mean—" It seemed to Molly that her heart nearly stopped beating.

Old Mrs. Ainsleigh caught the girl's hands in hers, and then as, in spite of herself, Molly winced and gave a low cry, she examined them keenly.

"You poor child!" she said. "We must get the nearest doctor along at once. You never told me that you had burnt yourself like this! Dear me, what will Stephen say?"

Which was such a taking of things for granted, that, bad though the pain was, Molly found herself smiling happily.

What Stephen and his mother really said to each other no third person ever knew. That ever useful screen concealed them both admirably, and they talked in low tones that were not to be overheard, even by his comrade in the next bed. But it was plain to see that old Mrs. Ainsleigh had been crying when she finally set out to find the girl who had been left waiting downstairs until "everything had been explained."

And perhaps it was because everything had been so fully explained by the elder lady that those two found nothing to say to each other for a moment when Molly came slowly and a little shyly round the screen.

Violet eyes, shy and drooping, yet revealing a great love when for a moment they were raised to his face—violet eyes that he wondered now that he could ever have doubted!

Stephen raised very gently one after the other two little bandaged hands, and then drew a sweet face down, and found a better place for kisses on lips that trembled at his touch.

"I suppose you'll forgive me—some time?" he said. "When I find out what there is to forgive," Molly whispered. "Stephen, when you are well—"

"I'm coming home for a time, and so are you," he said. "And the mater has arranged that we get married straight off the reel, and then, of course, you are to live with her while—"

He paused, but Molly lifted brave eyes.

"You knew I'd have to go back and do my duty, you know we are still all wanted, and you understand, dear."

Molly nodded. There were tears in the violet eyes, but she winked them away bravely.

"It wouldn't have been you if you hadn't," she said.

**Next week's complete romance will tell the story of SISTER MARY'S MARRIAGE. YOU MUST NOT miss this touching story.**

#### RESULT OF OUR 15th SOLDIER'S LETTER CONTEST.

Thirty-nine readers succeeded in sending a correct solution of this puzzle letter, and we are therefore dividing the total prize money of 25 10s. amongst them. They will each, therefore, receive the sum of 2s. 10d. The names and addresses of these readers are as follows:

W. Hindmarch, Stockton; Mrs. Jacobs, Handsworth; C. H. Thornhill, Sheffield; J. M. Young, Edinburgh; Mrs. I. Stamper, Louth; Mrs. Friday, Swansea; Miss D. A. Dodge, Greenwich; Mrs. T. Gurney, Tempford; Miss B. L. Munden, Kettering; W. Cunningham, Hornsey; J. Thomas, Devonport; Mrs. Smith, Brierfield; Miss Kent, Brighton; Miss M. Wealthy, Croydon; Mrs. Spaham, Alfreton; V. Chambers, Swaffham; T. Taylor, Gainsborough; Mrs. W. Tearle, Bleckley; Miss M. Foden, Eccles; A. Taylor, Lancaster; Mrs. G. Rule, Camborne; Elsie Whitehouse, Sparkhill; J. Crowther, Bursford; F. Deakin, Tamworth; Miss E. Varley, Gloucester; A. Phillipson, Retford; J. Laister, Rotherham; Miss A. Pddie, Longford; Mrs. A. E. Knighton, Reading; H. Millin, Cinderford; Miss M. Hutchinson, Leith; Miss M. E. Cooper, Peckham; Mrs. S. Clarke, Handsworth; Miss L. M. Anderson, Brighton; N. Boniface, Hove; Miss C. Morris, Finsbury Park; Miss I. Glover, Nottingham; Miss Hawes, Bowdon; and a reader from Adelaide Road, Leyton, N.E.

The correct solution of the puzzle letter was as follows:  
My dear Lily.—I am now getting on slowly, just able to use my fingers. It happened like this. With some other soldiers I was standing in the open, not far from the German guns, before we noticed them. They started shelling us and we got it hot. I was picked up by a Red Cross doctor and taken to the field hospital. I was found the tin plate that I was carrying, damaged, but it had stopped the bullet from entering my body and saved my life.—Your devoted brother, HARRY.



## A Delightful Complete Romance - By Mrs. WELLESLEY SMITH.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A TRYING HOUSEHOLD.

"THE Lord will provide," Ruth Gibson said with complete and simple faith. "I have no fear of the future."

"But, my child," the trained nurse protested, as she contemplated the trim figure in the plain black dress, "have you no one belonging to you? You are so young to be quite alone in the world."

"I have an uncle—my mother's only brother—but I have seen and heard nothing of him for many years. He is not well off."

"Your father's people——" Nurse Wells began suggestively.

"They cast my father off for marrying the girl he loved," Ruth answered. "I know nothing whatever about them—I am even ignorant of what their name may be. Father took his second name—'Gibson'—and neither he nor my darling mother gave me any information beyond what I have just told you."

"I see." Nurse Wells glanced round the cheaply-furnished but daintily-kept room doubtfully.

For a fortnight she had nursed Mrs. Gibson through the sharp and sudden attack of pneumonia that had proved fatal, in spite of all efforts; now she was remaining a few days to look after the grieving and stricken daughter, left behind to face the world almost penniless, for Mrs. Gibson's annuity ceased at her death.

Mother and daughter had occupied the pretty little cottage at Hindhead for many years. Though by no means well off, they had enough, and Ruth's exquisite needlework provided them with many small luxuries. They were all in all to each other, content to be together. Mrs. Gibson, always more or less an invalid, had never got over her husband's death.

The loss of her mother had nearly broken Ruth's heart, and Nurse Wells sighed as she noted how transparently white and thin the girl looked.

"I think, my dear," she said gently, "that you should write to your uncle and tell him exactly how you are situated. I am sure that your dear mother would wish you to do so."

Ruth's case struck her as particularly sad. She seemed the merest child—so delicate, yet so strong in her complete faith in God. Ruth's life had been a sheltered one. Mrs. Gibson had watched over her and protected her from all that was ugly and sinful, while teaching her always to help others less well situated than herself.

Presently, when Ruth, who was weeping at the mention of her mother's name, grew calmer, the nurse rose.

"We will have a cup of tea," she suggested cheerfully. "How would you like to come with me and help Mrs. Maloney, who lives in the village? The baby is nearly a week old; it would be so nice if you will wash and dress it for me—there is so much we could do for the poor woman."

"Indeed, I will," Ruth promised, filling the little kettle, and setting it on the fire. "I must bring two or three of the Maloney children back here for a day or two," she observed. "They would not be much trouble, and there is plenty of room—now," with a trembling lip.

"That would be very kind," the nurse agreed. "Biddy, the eldest girl, honestly does her best, but she is only a child herself, and there are so many of them in that tiny cottage," secretly delighted at the success of her suggestion. Ruth, roused and inter-

ested, ate a better meal than she had done since her mother's death.

"You know your uncle's address?" her companion asked presently, as she assisted Ruth to wash up in the bright little kitchen.

"Yes," soberly. "I will write to him to-night."  
"That will be the best possible thing to do. Now, shall we go on our errand of mercy?"

"I am quite ready."  
Together they set forth, Ruth carrying a big basket. "I love the country," she said wistfully. "We have been so happy here," with a glance at the lovely surroundings.

"It is a beautiful place," Nurse Wells agreed. "Here we are—I hear baby crying."

"All the children seem to be doing the same," Ruth said, stepping into the untidy room, where half a dozen small children were gathered, alternately slapped and coaxed by Biddy, a thin and anxious maiden of twelve.

An hour later, Ruth and the nurse returned to Rose Cottage, accompanied by Pat and Susie, aged five and three, who absorbed all Ruth's attention before they were washed and safely put to bed, hugely delighted with their change of quarters. Nurse Wells was not due at her next case for nearly a week, and had yielded gladly to Ruth's request that she should remain with her, for she had grown very fond of the girl during her attendance on Mrs. Gibson.

The letter to Reuben Trail written and posted, Ruth waited patiently for a reply. Several days passed, and she began to think that either her letter had miscarried or that her uncle wished to have nothing to do with her. When all the small debts were paid, including the funeral expenses, Ruth found that she would have a tidy income of twenty pounds a year, for Mrs. Gibson had saved and scraped to leave her adored daughter something.

"I can work," Ruth said to Nurse Wells. "Twenty pounds added to what I can earn is more than sufficient. I only wish I could afford to remain in dear Hindhead—and take paying guests."

"My dear, you are far too young and too pretty for that—and paying guests might fail to fill the larder. Here is the postman with a letter—perhaps your uncle has written."

"The postmark is Brixton," Ruth answered doubtfully. "I wrote to Hastings."

"He has perhaps moved; that would account for the delay in replying."

Ruth read the letter anxiously.  
"He has left Hastings—my letter followed him," she explained.

Mr. Trail wrote warmly and at some length. Ruth must, of course, go to them immediately.

"Your aunt is dead, and although we're poor enough, Heaven knows, there's always room for my sister's child. If you want money, let me know, and I'll try to send it to you. I would come to you myself, but it is impossible to get away."

"It is a kind letter," Ruth said, folding it up. "I do not mean to be an additional burden to Uncle Reuben—I shall work and help them."

"It will be a home," Nurse Wells said, "and your cousins will be nice companions. I have a proposal to make, dear. You will not want this furniture at your uncle's—let me use it. I am going to furnish a few rooms for myself and sister. We should be very careful

of it, and could agree what sum I shall pay you for the use of it. It would be better than storing it—or selling —”

“A thousand times better. I could not bear to sell it. My mother was so proud of our dear little home. You need not pay me a penny!” cried Ruth.

“Oh, but I shall! You are too unbusinesslike,” Nurse Wells protested. And after a little argument, Ruth agreed.

Her preparations for immediate departure were soon concluded; and with many tears, Ruth Gibson left Rose Cottage, to begin her new life.

“Remember,” Nurse Wells said, “I shall be in London, and we must not lose sight of each other. If you should ever want a friend, come to me.”

“My Heavenly Friend will never fail me,” Ruth said. “Thank you a thousand times, nurse, for your goodness. I shall be only too glad to be counted as a friend of yours.”

She kissed her affectionately, and the train steamed slowly out of the station, leaving the nurse waving her handkerchief on the platform.

Waterloo reached, Ruth, obeying Mr. Trail's instructions, called a taxicab, and with her modest luggage beside the driver, and a wide-eyed black kitten presented by Mrs. Maloney in her arms, the girl sat gazing in amazement at the teeming streets that were so foreign to her. Mrs. Gibson had preferred the country, and Ruth was quite a stranger to the great metropolis.

The rain pattered dismally on the windows; it was very cold, for a sharp east wind was sweeping round the corners, reddening the noses and spoiling the tempers of the hurrying pedestrians.

At last the cab pulled up with a jerk.

“Are you sure this is the road?” Ruth asked.

“Seven, Elmhurst Road, Brixton, miss—that's right, isn't it?” asked the driver civilly, pitying her obvious fatigue.

Elmhurst Road, with its twin rows of tightly packed semi-detached villas, looked its least attractive. Ruth got out of the cab, and pushed open the rusty iron gate, hanging perilously on one hinge.

Ruth's heart sank as she walked up to the door, and found the bell broken and no signs of a knocker.

“Take your brolly, miss,” the taxi man suggested, pointing as he spoke to her neat umbrella.

Ruth obeyed, and after a considerable interval the door was opened by a sulky-looking lad of fourteen, with a smudged face and grimy collar.

“Does Mr. Trail live here?” Ruth asked.

The boy nodded.

“Are you our cousin?” he asked.

“Yes. May I come in?”

He nodded again, and, moving aside, screamed:

“Polly! Polly!”

A girl's shrill voice replied impatiently:

“If it's the grocer, tell him to call again; father's out, and hasn't left the money.”

“It's Ruth!” the boy called, and down the stairs came a tall girl, with elaborately frizzled yellow hair, and much cheap lace and jewellery round her throat.

“Well, I never! I didn't think it was so late. Come along in. I'm Polly,” the new-comer explained. “I was just giving your room a tidy up. Are those your boxes? Put 'em in the hall. Tom and Steenie can carry 'em up presently.”

Ruth paid and dismissed the taxi. She had a forlorn feeling that her last friend had deserted her as she heard it whiz away into the darkness.

Polly, opening a door to the left of the narrow passage, ushered Ruth into a shabby, littered room.

On the table in the middle was a crumpled and dirty tablecloth and half a dozen chipped cups and saucers of different patterns. A loaf of bread, without a plate, and a piece of butter, still in its wrappings, and one or two bent knives and dull-looking teaspoons completed the arrangements for the tea for which Ruth was longing.

Another boy, introduced by Polly as Steenie, aged twelve, was doing sums at the corner of the table, and a fat little girl, with a mass of neglected curls, sat on the hearthrug, calmly drinking milk out of a spoutless jug, during intervals of crunching lumps of sugar from a sadly depleted basin.

“Tot, you naughty little imp, how dare you!” stormed Polly, smacking the culprit, who instantly began to scream. “Steenie, why don't you look after her?”

“Because I've got my lessons to do,” her brother retorted. “Go and get tea, Polly. Cousin Ruth looks tired.”

“So I will,” Polly said readily, exhibiting large holes in her stockings as she turned away.

Tom hurriedly cleared the lesson books off the table, and poked the almost defunct fire.

“We're at sixes and sevens, as usual,” he muttered. “Polly's always gadding about; it's no wonder father says he never has a comfortable or decent meal. Sit down, Cousin Ruth. Tot, stop screaming, and look at the kitten.”

Tot, rubbing her eyes, ceased her cries, and Polly hurried in with a dingy plated teapot.

“The kitchen fire was nearly out! Oh, dear, what a worry everything is! I never have a minute to myself!” the girl lamented peevishly.

Tea was a terrible meal to fastidious Ruth. She managed with difficulty to swallow a cupful of lukewarm liquid and eat a small piece of bread and butter.

“Aren't you hungry?” asked Polly, who was voraciously devouring slices of bread and jam, while she examined her newly-found cousin from behind the teapot.

“No,” Ruth returned. “I have a headache.”

“Supper isn't till nine,” the other girl explained; “then it's only cold. I can't be bothered to cook! I hate it! We don't have a servant; father says he can't afford it. A charwoman comes for half a day each morning, but she's dreadfully lazy, and won't do a thing. I think housekeeping is horrid, don't you?”

“No; I like it,” Ruth returned. “It's very interesting.”

“Well, I never! You do look a queer sort of old-fashioned one. Black is awful dowdy. I told father it was silly going in mourning for Aunt Janet, considering we've never seen her,” chattered Polly.

Ruth winced. Elmhurst Road seemed quite impossible. No charwoman had ever helped her at Rose Cottage; she had managed entirely alone, with her mother's occasional assistance and frequent counsel.

“Perhaps you'd like to come upstairs,” Polly suggested, rising. “It isn't quite straight. I was out all the morning, and at my dancing class in the afternoon, and Mrs. Murphy forgot to do your room; but I dare say you won't mind.”

“It is very good of you to let me come here,” Ruth returned, following her cousin up stairs decorated with much dust and ragged carpets.

She could hardly suppress an exclamation of dismay at sight of her bedroom. The curtains and blinds were thick with dirt; the uncertain progress of Polly's brush and duster was plainly visible on the worn linoleum and the odd pieces of dilapidated furniture.

“I'll soon finish it,” Polly offered.

“No, no; let me do it myself,” Ruth said hastily, knowing that slumber in such a room was impossible.

“All right; just as you like. I'll send Tom out for some tinned salmon for supper; it's tasty.”

“I have a cold roast chicken in my basket,” Ruth returned. “We used to keep fowls, and they had to be killed. There are two others I brought, not yet plucked, and some eggs.”

“Goody! That'll be nice,” Polly agreed. “Sure I can't help you? I'll just nip round to the library, then.”

She vanished, and Ruth, with a determination to vanquish her inclination to burst into tears, pulled an overall out of her box, and very quickly reduced her small room to passable tidiness.

“To-morrow I must clean it,” she murmured; and armed with the cold chicken and the eggs, marched downstairs.

Tom and Steenie quickly agreed to assist preparing a surprise supper.

A long hunt resulted in the finding of a clean cloth, and the table was as well set as the limited china and glass allowed. Ruth arranged a vase of the flowers she had brought from the garden at Hindhead in the middle, and having swept up the hearth and tidied the room, retired to the disorderly kitchen, and proceeded to make a delicious hot dish of savoury eggs.



"My word, father will stare! There he is!" Tom cried, vigorously polishing plates for Ruth. "It smells A1!"

Mr. Trail kissed Ruth kindly and affectionately. He was a tall, middle-aged man, with a handsome, worn face and nervous, irritable manner.

"You are very like your mother, my dear," he told Ruth. "What are you doing—cooking? Polly should not have allowed it. Where is she?"

"Gone to the library. I'm afraid I didn't ask, Uncle Reuben. Tom and Steenie helped me. I hope you don't mind?"

"Certainly not. I'm afraid you'll find things in a muddle. Those are fine apples," as Ruth piled the fragrant fruit on a dish unearthed from the back of a cupboard.

"We had a nice garden—mother and I—and the fruit was very plentiful last year. Supper is quite ready, uncle."

Mr. Trail exclaimed with pleasure over the table, and ate heartily of the nice fare. Polly, arriving when the meal was half over, accepted her father's reproof of her late return with a toss of her much frizzled head, and a glance of dislike at poor Ruth, who was, she decided, responsible for it—for Mr. Trail had given up taking any notice of what she did.

Ruth had a long talk with her uncle when the children had gone to bed, and Polly was sulking in the kitchen.

"Dear uncle, I do not intend to be a burden," she said softly. "I can work—"  
"You shall do just as you like," he said, stroking her hair. "I don't expect you to stay here. Heaven knows, discomfort and dirt are not attractive! Different to when your aunt was alive. She was a famous housewife; but Polly is flighty—"

"She is so young—hardly seventeen. If I might help in the house?"—timidly. "I am used to it; if Polly didn't mind."

"She'll only be too glad," put in Polly herself, who had entered then. "I get no thanks for doing my best. Take it over and welcome, so long as you leave me alone. I've plenty else to do than bother over a house and the children!" And the speaker flounced off to bed.

It was a long time before Ruth slept. It was plain to her that her duty lay in remaining with her uncle and doing her utmost for the neglected household.

"I will not be selfish," she murmured, kneeling in prayer beside her uncomfortably lumpy couch. "I must follow the example set by my Divine Master. Heavenly Father, help me to do my best," she added earnestly and reverently.

## CHAPTER II.

### TOT MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT.

"WELL, I never did! Not in all my life!" ejaculated Mrs. Murphy, the charwoman, staring at Ruth.

"I've been in the best 'ouses, an' always give satisfaction; an' now to be telled by a bit of a gal that I 'aven't done a thing proper! All I says is, do it yourself, Miss 'Aughty!"

And the angry woman placed her formidable red arms akimbo, after flinging down the dishcloth as a sign of defiance at Ruth's feet.

"Very well! Here is your money, and you need not come again," Ruth returned calmly.

"Wot! You'll do a pore widder out of a job—an' me with a sick 'usbins?"

"I have no desire to do that, Mrs. Murphy," the quiet voice answered, the grave eyes meeting the angry ones. "If you wish to remain, things must be done differently to this. I must have the house thoroughly cleaned, and kept so. I will give you ten minutes to think it over."

Ruth quietly left the kitchen, and returned to her occupation of taking down and washing the dirty and dilapidated Venetian blind in the sitting-room. Polly was out, the children at school.

Ruth had already worked wonders in the dingy little house. Daylight had revealed neglected corners and accumulated dust that took her breath away.

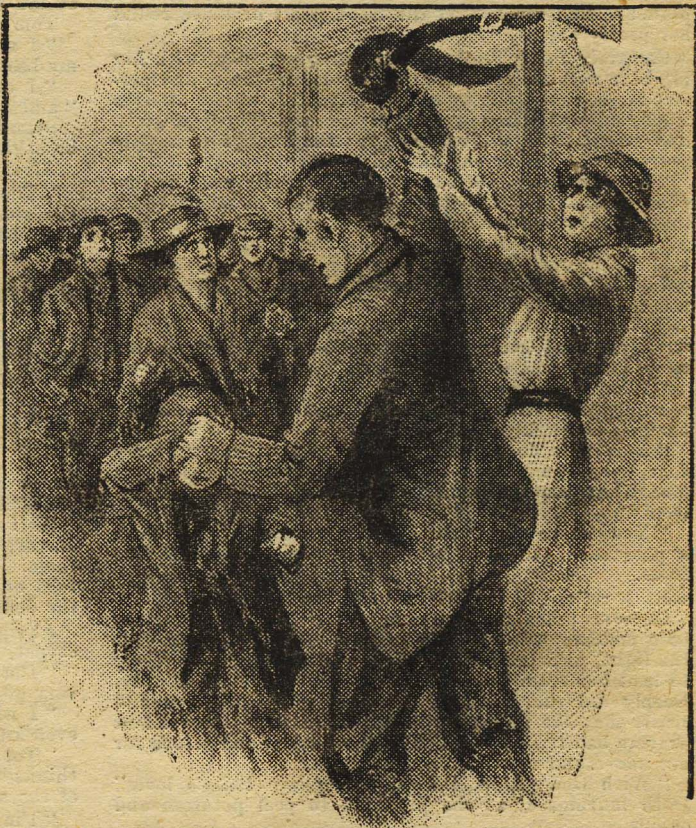
"Polly is quite a child," she murmured. "She will learn better presently."

When Ruth returned to the kitchen, Mrs. Murphy was vigorously poking the fire.

"I've pulled the damper out," she announced, "so we'll 'ave plenty of 'ot water! I'd best scrub them slats. They want it bad!"

Ruth handed them over, and for the rest of the day the two laboured together, the charwoman proving herself an excellent worker, readily agreeing to remain for the afternoon, for which Ruth paid her from her own store of money.

At the end of a week, No. 7, Elmhurst Road was transformed. Clean curtains, shining windows, and irremovable blinds replaced the disorder Ruth had found. Tom and Steenie openly rejoiced over neatly mended clothes, whole carpets, and attractive meals. The lines of fretful worry began to fade from Mr. Trail's face as



BILL EVANS, HIS EVIL FACE PURPLE WITH FURY, SUDDENLY FELT HIS UPRaised ARM GRASPED FIRMLY FROM BEHIND. "GIVE ME THAT STRAP!" RUTH COMMANDED, "AND LET THE BOY GO."

method and order replaced dirt and discomfort. Polly, alone of all the family, held herself aloof, and grudgingly gave her cousin as little help as possible.

"I'm going into an office," she told Ruth, "as shorthand typist as soon as I've completed the course. I've no intention of staying at home—especially as you're here. I want a little money of my own."

"Suppose I had not come?" asked her cousin gently.

"I'd have gone just the same"—defiantly. "I told father so. He'd have got a woman in."

"But, Polly dear, your duty—"

"Pooh, how silly you are!" Polly interrupted rudely. "Life's meant for enjoying yourself—not for such stuffy things as duty. You're always preaching, Ruth—worse than any parson!"

Ruth's lips quivered, and she turned away; but Polly, who was really good-hearted, threw a careless arm round her neck, and kissed her.

"I'm sorry I said that," she said. "You and me aren't a bit alike. I believe you really like going to church, and all that sort of thing."

"Of course I do. Sunday only comes once a week. Surely we need not grudge it to God's service."

"Oh, well, I don't pretend to be religious!" Polly said awkwardly. "I like pretty dresses and becoming hats—"

"So do I!" smiled Ruth. "It is only right to make the best of yourself."

"Then why do you dress so plainly? Of course, you're in mourning"—flushing—"but a bit of lace or some beads would brighten you up. You can get black beads. And your hair—why, you don't even curl it on Sundays!"

Polly patted her frizzled locks as she spoke with satisfaction.

"I like plain clothes better. It is only a difference of taste. I always think it is a pity you wave and curl your hair so much. It is such a pretty colour, and the irons spoil it—so a hairdresser told me."

"Did he?" Polly looked somewhat taken aback. "Oh, well, I'll use curlers! I look a fright with it plain!" And she settled the mock pearl necklace round her pretty throat.

Certainly Polly Trail was exceedingly pretty, with her big blue eyes and golden hair, regular features, and perfect teeth, that made up a most attractive whole. Beside Ruth, she was almost sallow, as are most City-bred girls, and occasionally she resorted to cheap rouge to supply her with the colour she lacked.

"How nice it would be to be rich!" Polly went on discontentedly. "I'm better-looking than lots of those toffs I see in motor-cars, all dressed up. I'd pay for toging, too, and some day I shall have all I want. A gipsy told me my fortune, and a very rich man, a real swell, is going to marry me. But she told me I'd never meet him if I stuck at home."

"Fortune-telling is all nonsense!" Ruth declared warmly, "and everybody cannot be rich. It is better to be happy and well and strong."

"What a queer girl you are!" Polly returned, placing a huge black straw hat, loaded with cheap flowers, on her golden head.

"Rich men do not marry poor girls like you, Polly dear, except in books. I hope you'll marry the man you love when the time comes"—shocked at Polly's sentiments.

"You can be quite sure I'll take good care not to love a poor one!" the girl retorted lightly, as she left the room.

Ruth retired to the bright and clean little kitchen.

Once or twice she sighed a little. Polly promised to be a constant care. Very quickly had she realised that the light, pleasure-loving nature of her cousin was likely to lead her from the straight and narrow path of duty. Deeply did she desire to gain the girl's affection and trust, that she might try to influence her. Many silent prayers had left Ruth's lips as she worked and strove for her new-found relatives.

"With God's help, I must surely win Polly's love," Ruth murmured, as she prepared to peel potatoes and onions.

"I'll peel them," Mrs. Murphy interrupted. "You'll spile your 'ands. Seems to me you slave yourself to fiddle-strings for folks who ain't a bit grateful."

"Indeed I do not," Ruth said, smiling.

She well knew that her uncle and the three younger children depended on her more each day.

"The children are late," she observed rather uneasily, when the stew was gently simmering on the stove. "It is just on dinner-time."

"The pudding's done," Mrs. Murphy returned, "and I've set the table."

At that moment a thunderous knock resounded through the house. Ruth, seized with a sudden fear of she knew not what, flew to answer it.

On the doorstep was a man clad in an expensive motor-coat. Just behind him was a stalwart policeman, carrying Tot, white and unconscious, while Steenie and Tom, both weeping bitterly, clung to his coat-tails.

"Oh, is she dead?" gasped Ruth, reeling for a moment against the wall.

"No, no," the stranger said reassuringly. "Don't be afraid. I think she is more frightened than hurt."

"Bring her in here!"

Ruth led the way into the now spotlessly tidy but shabby sitting-room, where Tot was laid on the sofa, while Steenie ran with all possible speed for the nearest doctor. Ruth bent over the little girl in an agony of apprehension, far too concerned to notice that the stranger was staring at her with the closest attention.

The constable rendered first aid as far as he understood it.

"How did it happen?" Ruth questioned, as she tried to force some stimulant between Tot's white lips.

The policeman straightened himself, and unconsciously assumed an official position.

"Gentleman was driving quite slowly," he said. "I was close at 'and. The little girl ran out into the road. I think the mud-guard struck 'er."

"She was playing 'touch' with Steenie and me," sobbed poor, frightened Tom. "We've always told her not to go in the road, but she was excited, and I 'spected she forgot. It wasn't our fault, Ruth—truly and really."

"I am sure it wasn't," she returned gently. "Don't cry, dear. Run up to my room, and fetch me the bottle of eau-de-Cologne off the mantelpiece."

Tom dried his eyes, and sped on his errand.

"I am awfully sorry," the stranger declared. "I did my best to avoid the child—"

"I can witness to that, sir," the policeman put in, "and I don't think as any bones is broken. She—"

Steenie burst in, followed by the doctor, concerned and breathless.

After a brief examination, he looked at Ruth.

"The child's arm is broken. She is suffering from the shock more than anything. Very fortunately her head has escaped injury. Put her to bed. I'll set the arm before she recovers consciousness."

"My chauffeur can fetch anything you require. He is just outside," offered the stranger.

"Thanks!"

Dr. Jones scribbled busily on a torn piece of paper. His message despatched, he turned to Ruth.

"Is she yours?" he asked.

"Oh, no; my cousin."

"I see. She must be kept very quiet; perhaps you had better have a nurse."

"It is not necessary"—quietly but firmly. "I have had a good deal of experience nursing my mother. If you will tell me just what you wish—"

Half an hour later, Ruth, coming downstairs with the doctor, found the stranger still in possession of the front room. Out in the kitchen Mrs. Murphy was pressing food on the two boys, while she listened greedily to all the details of the accident.

At sight of the tall figure pacing up and down the worn carpet, Ruth stopped.

"I'm so sorry," she said. "I quite forgot you. It is very good of you to wait."

"I wished to hear how the child was; and you do not even know my name."

"Tot is pretty comfortable, I'm glad to say. Dr. Jones thinks she will be all right to-morrow, with the exception of the arm."

"I'm thankful it is no worse," he returned. "I felt pretty sick when I saw her dash right under the car. I have never had an accident before. I am afraid it has upset and alarmed you, Mrs.—"

"Not Mrs. anybody," Ruth said simply. "My name is Gibson. Tot is my cousin. I live with my uncle—Mr. Trail."

"Ah, my name is Laneham. I will give you my card, and later this evening I will call and see your uncle."

"Very well; but I am quite sure that Tot's mishap was not your fault."

She raised her pretty eyes as she spoke, and encountered the steadfast gaze that Mr. Laneham fixed on her face. He was past middle-age, but still undoubtedly handsome, with piercing black eyes that formed a great contrast to his white hair. The motor-coat he had flung over a chair was lined with sable, and the car drawn up outside the gate was large and costly. Ruth, noticing all these details, accepted the card he offered, and told him at what hour Reuben Trail would be in.

"May I ask, have you lived here long?" he inquired.

"No; a week or two only." Ruth looked the surprise she felt at the question.

As she opened the door, Polly, flushed and pretty, came

up the path, staring curiously at the departing Mr. Laneham.

"My, what swell friends you've got, Ruth!" she cried, "You might have introduced me. You are jealous!"

"He is no friend of mine," Ruth returned. "I have never seen him before." And she told the girl what had happened.

"Well, I never did. It's just like a story-book. He's rolling in money. Father ought to get a good bit out of him, knocking over Tot like that. Perhaps he'll bring her something nice; he ought to. I'm glad she isn't much hurt. Shall I run up to her whilst you get your dinner? You're all trembly and white," offered Polly, struck by Ruth's pallor.

"We must thank God she was not killed or crippled for life. Will you not join me in doing so, dear Polly?"

"Oh—er—you can do it better than I can," Polly returned, very red in the face. "I never was much good at that sort of thing."

She ran hastily upstairs as she spoke, and left Ruth alone.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A PLOT BETWEEN FATHER AND SON.

"I CANNOT be too thankful that the child is not seriously hurt," Mr. Laneham said, sitting opposite Reuben Trail in one of the rickety arm-chairs. "I shall, of course, be only too glad to stand all the expenses of the accident, and when she is better, send the little girl to the seaside for a month that she may thoroughly recuperate."

Reuben Trail flushed, deeply resenting the patronising tone.

"Thank you!" he said stiffly. "Since the occurrence was not your fault, I do not expect or desire to put you to any expense."

"No offence, my dear sir," the visitor returned soothingly. "If I was too zealous in my wish to do the best possible, pray forgive me. Your very capable niece, Miss Gibson, is a born nurse—so Dr. Jones has just told me. She has not been with you long, I understand."

Ruth was a subject on which Mr. Trail waxed eloquent at the smallest provocation. In a very few minutes he had quite unconsciously given Hedworth Laneham the information he was most anxious to secure.

"She is a girl in a thousand—a treasure," Reuben ended. "I cannot hope to keep her long; some fortunate man will win her."

"There is no immediate prospect of her marrying, is there?" asked Mr. Laneham.

Mr. Trail shook his head.

"No—oh, no! What we shall do without her I do not know."

Mr. Laneham, attracted by a slight sound, looked up to see Polly standing in the doorway, her pretty face disfigured by a dark scowl of jealousy.

"Doctor wants you," she said to her father, who, quickly obeying the summons, left his daughter alone with the smiling Mr. Laneham.

"So," he said softly, "you do not appreciate your cousin as much as your father?"

"No, I don't," retorted Polly shortly. "One would think she was an angel! I'm sick of being made to take a back seat."

"Ah"—still more softly—"it is only natural."

"Ruth's not a bad sort," Polly said grudgingly; "dreadfully straitlaced and religious—thinks of nothing but scrubbing and cleaning."

"Not your sort at all," he suggested thoughtfully.

"Indeed, no. I believe in a jolly time, enjoying yourself, and making yourself look nice."

"You should not have much difficulty in doing that," he returned, smiling amusedly as Polly flushed with delight.

"I'm going to be a typist. Catch me sticking here everlastingly cooking and worrying about the kids! Not this child, thank you!"

"It happens," Mr. Laneham said slowly, "that I require a young lady for typing and shorthand. How would you like to take the post?"

"I'd love to! I've just finished my course of instruction. I only want a little practice," she exclaimed eagerly.

"We will see what your father says. It is not a hard post—twenty-five shillings a week to begin with. But I

demand, and see I get, implicit obedience"—with a sudden change of manner that alarmed Polly.

"I—I'd do my best to please you," she said, in a subdued voice, half frightened, half attracted by the piercing black eyes bent on her.

"That is all right. I never tolerate disobedience, Miss—er—Trail. I like smart and good-looking people in my office, and am prepared to treat them well if they suit me."

"Well, I'm not a dowdy like Ruth, and I'm no fool," Polly said tersely.

Mr. Laneham laughed cynically and turned away. Ruth a dowdy—with her delicate, high-bred beauty, gleaming hair, and wonderfully sweet expression! This little yellow-haired Cockney was not in the same street with her cousin for looks, he thought, as, with a few more careless words, he took his leave. Polly skipped excitedly upstairs to watch from an upper window the departure of the big, glittering car.

"Just fancy, Ruth; Mr. Laneham has offered me a post in his office," she told her cousin, later. "He's taken a fancy to me, and I shall get on like a house afire. It's a rattling good chance—twenty-five shillings a week; quite decent for a start. What are you looking so solemn about?"—resentfully.

"I was thinking," Ruth answered, gently sponging Tot's face and settling the little girl's pillow more comfortably. "Mr. Laneham is very kind."

"Isn't he handsome? And so distinguished-looking," Polly giggled. "Suppose he fell in love with me and asked me to marry him. I'm pretty enough"—defiantly.

"Mr. Laneham is quite old," Ruth said rebukingly. "You should not talk in that way; it is not nice, dear."

"All right, Saint Ruth," Polly returned flippantly. "What a spoil-sport you are! Don't you wish you'd got my chance, that's all!"

"Indeed I do not! I have no desire for such a post," Ruth returned firmly.

As she sat beside the restless Tot, Ruth sighed. She did not like Mr. Laneham; his face was not one to be trusted. Some instinct told her that he was not a good man. But she hesitated to say anything to her uncle. Ruth was eminently fair. It would not be right to prejudice Mr. Trail without proof positive that she was right in her surmise. So she said very little when Reuben discussed Mr. Laneham's offer with her.

"He is doing his best to make up for poor little Tot's accident," Mr. Trail said, "and it seems to be a good opening for Polly."

"She can always leave if it proves to be unsuitable," his niece agreed.

"Yes." Her uncle bent and kissed her fondly. "It was a blessed day for us, Ruthie, when you came here. Polly doesn't care for housekeeping; you are a born homemaker."

"I was always fond of domestic work," Ruth said, smiling.

"It is no good pretending—better face the music and have done with it."

The speaker, Hedworth Laneham, moved impatiently in his easy-chair.

The library at Laneham Towers was, if anything, a trifle gloomy, with its oak panelling, black with age, and diamond-paned windows; but a handsome crimson carpet and curtains to match struck a glowing and cheerful note in the big, luxurious room.

At the writing-table, piled with papers, sat the owner of it all; opposite him his son, a tall, fair-haired young man, with keen grey eyes and a firm mouth, whose relentless lines spoke of a strong—and perhaps, cruel will.

"You might be mistaken, pater," suggested Godfrey, throwing the end of his cigarette in the fire.

"No, I am not. The girl is Kenelm's daughter; and all this"—waving a well-manicured hand—"is hers. We are beggars, with our living to make. . . . After all these years."

"It doesn't sound very attractive," Godfrey Laneham said.

He had been prospective heir of Laneham Towers since his schooldays, never knowing what it was to want money, with plenty of leisure to enjoy himself; spoiled by all mothers with daughters, as a more than good match.

"Very queer coincidence coming across her in such a way! Has she any idea who she is?"

"Apparently no. She calls herself Gibson—your uncle's second name. My dear boy, you know as well as I do myself that my brother Kenelm made a fool of himself—marrying for love a poor girl called Trail."

"Yes"; nodded his son, "that is old history. Grandpater turned him out forthwith and declined to have anything more to do with him, but, relenting on his death-bed, left everything to the elder son he had not seen for years—or failing him, to his children, if any."

"Exactly; after allowing me to consider that all would be mine!" bitterly. "Had Kenelm been alive, I should have been dependent on his charity, but fortunately he was dead, and his low-born wife and one little girl were supposed to have perished in the flames of a conflagration at a boarding-house in Bloomsbury soon afterwards. A mistake, my boy; a ghastly mistake! Kenelm's wife is dead, but not his daughter."

"I don't see how such a mistake could arise."

"Nor I; but I am convinced that the girl is at this moment living in Brixton with her uncle."

"Even so, she may never discover who she is—it's years since grandpater died."

"She may find out any moment!" irritably. "I could not live with such a sword hanging over my head."

"What do you propose to do?" demanded Godfrey, rising and walking to the window. "Tell her?"

"No!" roared Mr. Laneham.

"What then?" The young man turned round and faced his father. "Short of actual murder, I am quite ready to fall in with any ideas you may have on the subject. I have no more fancy for poverty than you."

"The matter needs careful consideration," Mr. Laneham returned angrily. "Murder! Who spoke of such a thing?" glaring at his son.

"Well, things are pretty desperate, if she really is my cousin," Godfrey retorted.

"I have no notion of resorting to an unlawful or melodramatic cure!" curtly. "First of all, I shall make absolutely certain; that will be easy, for there is no mis-

Tell your musical friends that we shall  
publish another selection of

**National Melodies for the Home**

**NEXT WEEK.**

taking her; she's the image of Kenelm as a boy. I have offered to take her Cockney cousin as a typist—it will provide an opening for getting better acquainted with the Trails and gaining enough information to start my inquiries, which I shall carry out with your help."

"Yes—and then?" Godfrey played a careless tattoo on the window-panes.

"You must marry her!"

"What?" The young man swung round impetuously. "You are surely joking?"

"I was never more serious. It is the only way out."

"I fail to see it. But perhaps you will explain more fully. Do I woo her as a humble suppliant at the feet of the owner of Laneham Towers? And, admitting she consents to be my wife, what is to happen afterwards? Having saddled me with a common little upstart—"

"She is neither the one nor the other. Once your wife, it would be easy to prevent her finding out who she is; and, did she do so, well, nothing would alter the fact that you are her husband."

"No," drily; "nothing will alter that. Come, pater, what idea have you behind all this? Something, I know."

Mr. Laneham carefully avoided his son's eyes.

"The girl does not look strong," he muttered; "accidents are always liable to occur—with so many infectious complaints about—one can never tell. And remember, I am a full-blown doctor, though I do not practise."

"And a considerable authority on germs and bacilli, I see. Well, it's quite a neat scheme. Suppose your worst fears are realised; how do you propose to set about things? At present I do not even know by sight the girl that Fate seems determined I am to marry."

"We can arrange all that."

"It is rather hard on her," Godfrey opined, "but—it's each for himself in this world, and twenty thousand a year is worth fighting for. There is one contingency you have not thought of."

"Discovery, you mean? Why—"

"Not that. She may decline to marry me."

"Hardly likely. Women spoil you, Godfrey—she will be no exception to the rule."

Mr. Laneham, with an air of dismissing the matter, busied himself with some letters lying near, and Godfrey's eyes wandered to the big oil painting of the mother he had never known. All his life the young man had lacked the loving care of the woman who, dying at his birth, had deprived him of an influence which would possibly have made all the difference in her son. Brought up by his father to think only of himself, ignorant of what love of a mother could mean, Godfrey Laneham was selfish and worldly, and quite prepared to be unscrupulous in the methods he would adopt to gain his own ends.

Money and all it bought had been his gods almost from birth; the thought of poverty—even comparative—appalled him.

"All right," he said at last, "I'll do it—if you find she is really Uncle Kenelm's daughter. It seems to me hardly possible such a mistake could be made, considering the thousands that are at stake."

"Mistakes are always possible," his father answered gloomily.

"If you had not run into that wretched child, we should have been in blissful ignorance of the girl's existence all our days," grumbled Godfrey.

"Possibly—and possibly not. It is impossible to say," Mr. Laneham returned. "Once she is your wife, we have nothing to fear. No one would for a moment dream you had married for anything but love. She has no money—no position. You have only to play your cards carefully, Godfrey."

"A very big 'only,'" his son said. "I hope the girl is not an utter outsider."

Mr. Laneham smiled grimly as a mental picture of Ruth rose before him; but no fraction of pity for her intended fate softened his heart.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE LITTLE HOUSEKEEPER.

"WILL you be a good girl and go to sleep while I run out and do the shopping?" asked Ruth, bending over Tot. "Daddy will sit with you, and I'll be as quick as I can."

"Yes," replied the little girl, shutting her eyes. "I'll be good, Ruthie."

It was Saturday night. Polly was, as usual, out, and the necessary shopping for Sunday still remained to be done. Ruth had been far too busy to stir out all day; now she was conscious that her head ached, and the prospect of a walk was attractive.

"Don't hurry back, dear," Mr. Trail said. "Tot will be all right. You look pale with so much nursing—I only wish I could send you and Tot to the sea!" sighing a little, as he counted out the housekeeping money.

"I promised Tom Yorkshire pudding with the beef tomorrow," Ruth said meditatively, "and Steenie particularly wants a jam roly-poly. Yes, I think I can manage it—with a little contriving."

"It's wonderful what you do," her uncle said. "We spend less money and get more to eat."

Ruth smiled, and putting on hat and coat, slipped downstairs, leaving Mr. Trail in charge of the spotlessly neat and fresh sick-room. Armed with a serviceable string bag, the girl left the house and walked briskly towards the high-road. The shops were thronged, and it took her some little time to obtain all she desired. Ruth turned homeward at last, her purse very light and the string bag very heavy.

In a hurry to get back, she left the main road, and plunged into a narrow back street calculated to save her at least five minutes. A crowd just ahead attracted her attention; fearlessly she went on her way. From the centre of the interested idlers came heartrending cries that sent Ruth hot-foot into the middle of it, reckless of consequences.

An exclamation of anger burst from her as her eyes fell on a burly man, clad in corduroy, and evidently beside himself with passion. In one hand he held a thick leather

(Continued on page 15.)



# NATIONAL MELODIES for the HOME

## GREAT LORD OF HOSTS, ETERNAL.

A HYMN OF INTERCESSION.

Key E $\flat$ .

H. CULLUM.  
B $\flat$ .t.

:d | r :m | f :-r | l :s | -:s | l :-:s | f :m | f :- | -:r | m :m | l, | t, :d |

1. Great Lord of Hosts E - ter - nal, Be - neath Whose Kingly sway We live in close al -

f.E $\flat$ .

| f :- | m :d | r :l, | t, :r | d:s | - | || m | r :d | f :s | l :- | l :l |

- le - giance, Un - til that glo - rious day When Thou shalt call us high - er, To

| t :- | t | l :t | d' :- | -:d' | d' :- | d' | f'e :f'e | l :s | :d | f :m | r :- | d | d :- | - ||

reign with Thee a - bove, And share the joys of Hea - ven, Where war gives place to love.

- 2. *p* Here in Thy House, before Thee,  
Our hearts feel sad within,  
*pp* For soldiers brave are falling,  
'Midst battles' awful din.  
Ah! many a home is darkened,  
Which once was bright and glad:  
*p* Come, Lord, with loving pity,  
To comfort all the sad.
- 3. *pp* Speak tend'rest words to comfort  
Those mourners who to-day  
Shed scalding tears for loved ones  
Who've fallen in the fray.

- mf* Cheer those who, after battle,  
Lie wounded—'midst their pain  
Give gladsome thoughts of homeland,  
Heal Thou their wounds again.
- 4. *ff* When once again in triumph  
Our flag floats out in peace,  
Let ev'ry thought of hatred,  
All strife and vengeance cease:  
When war's dread fire's extinguished,  
Grant, for our Empire's good,  
All nations may be welded  
In one vast brotherhood.

Published in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund. Copies can be obtained from Mr. H. Cullum, 20, Willowbridge Road, Canonbury, London, N.

# THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE.

A POPULAR PATRIOTIC SONG.

Key G. :s<sub>1</sub> .,s<sub>1</sub> | d :d .,d r :s .,f |

*Maestoso.*

I. O Bri-tan-nia, the pride of the

D.t.

| m .d : | :s<sub>1</sub> | l<sub>1</sub> :l .s | f .m :r .d | d :- | t<sub>1</sub> : :s<sub>1</sub> | s :s .s | s :l .,t |

o-cean, The home of the brave and the free,..... The shrine of the sail-or's de-

f.G

| d'.s :- | :d' | t .l :s .f | m .r :s .,t<sub>1</sub> | d :- | :- :d's<sub>1</sub> | r .r :- .r | d .t<sub>1</sub> :l<sub>1</sub> /s<sub>1</sub> |

-vo-tion, No land can com- pare un- to thee! Thy man-dates make he- roes as-

| s<sub>1</sub>.d :- | :d .,r | m .,m :m .m | f .m :r .d | r :- | :r | s .s :- .s | f .m :r .d |

-sem- ble, With Lib-er-ty's bright lau- rels in view; Thy ban- ners make ty- ran- ny

| t<sub>1</sub> .l<sub>1</sub> :- | :l<sub>1</sub> .s | f .m :r .d | t<sub>1</sub> :l<sub>1</sub> .t<sub>1</sub> | d :- | - | t<sub>1</sub> .d |

trem- ble, When borne by the Red, White, and Blue! Three

cheers for the Red, White, and Blue, Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue; Thy  
ban-ners make ty-ran-ny trem-ble, When borne by the Red, White, and Blue!

2. When war spread its wide desolation  
And threatened our land to deform,  
The Ark then of Freedom's foundation,  
Britannia rode safe through the storm;  
With her garlands of victory around her,  
When so nobly she bore her brave crew,  
With her flag floating proudly before her,  
The boast of the Red, White, and Blue:  
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue,  
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue;  
With her flag floating proudly before her:  
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.

3. Then our liberties dear let us cherish,  
That to gain cost our fathers so dear;  
May the fame of their deeds never perish,  
But for aye be a beacon to cheer.  
May sweet Peace in her arms long enfold us,  
To our boast and traditions ever true;  
But Great Britain will ne'er shrink from conflict,  
While she boasts of the Red, White, and Blue:  
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue,  
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue;  
But Great Britain will ne'er shrink from conflict:  
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.

## REST OF THE WEARY, JOY OF THE SAD.

### A HYMN FOR THE WEARY AND DISTRESSED.

REV. J. S. B. MONSELL.

OLIVER J. JANES.

Key D.  $\text{m} : \text{f} : \text{r} \mid \text{s} : - : \text{s} \text{ m} : \text{f} : \text{r} \mid \text{s} : - : - \text{s} : \text{l} : \text{t} \mid \text{d}' : - : \text{m} \text{ m} : \text{r} : \text{d} \mid \text{r} : - : - \parallel$

1. *mf* Rest of the wea-ry, joy of the sad, *p* Hope of the dre-a-ry, *f* Light of the glad;  
2. *mp* Pil-low where ly-ing, love rests its head, *p* Peace of the dy-ing, *f* Lite of the dead;

$\text{r} : \text{m} : \text{f} \mid \text{l} : - : \text{s} \text{ fe} : \text{s} : \text{l} \mid \text{t} : - : - \mid \text{d}' : \text{t} : \text{d}' \mid \text{r}' : \text{d}' : \text{l} \mid \text{s} : \text{f} : \text{r} \mid \text{d} : - : - \parallel$

Home of the stran-ger, strength to the end,..... *cr* Re-fuge from dan-ger— Sa-viour and Friend!  
*cr* Path of the low-ly, prize at the end,..... Breath of the ho-ly— Sa-viour and Friend!

3. *mp* When my feet stumble to Thee I'll cry,  
Crown of the humble, (*f*) cross of the high;  
*cr* When my steps wander, over me bend,  
Truer and fonder, Saviour and Friend!

4. *mf* Ever confessing Thee, I will raise  
*cr* Unto Thee blessing, glory, and praise;  
All my endeavour, world without end,  
*f* Thine to be ever, Saviour and Friend!

# ANNIE LAURIE.

ONE OF SCOTLAND'S FAVOURITE SONGS.

Key C. | d :d .d |d' :- .t |

1. Max - wel-ton braes are

| t :l | :l | s :m |m :r .d r :- | - :m .r | d :- .d |d' :- .t | t :l | :l |

bon-nie, Where ear-ly fa's the dew, And it's there that An-nie Lau-rie Gied

| s :m |m :- .r | d :- | - :s | d' :- .d' |r' :r' | m' :- | - :s | d' :- .d' |r' :r' |

me her pro-mise true, Gied me her pro-mise true, Which ne'er for-got will

| m' :- | - :m' .r' | d' :- .t | l :d' .l | s :m |m :- .r | d .d' :- .m |m :- .r | d :- | - : ||

be; And for bon-nie An-nie Lau-rie, I'd lay me down and dee!

2. Her brow is like the snawdrift,  
 Her neck is like the swan,  
 Her face it is the fairest  
 That e'er the sun shone on,  
 That e'er the sun shone on ;  
 And dark blue is her e'e ;  
 And for bonnie Annie Laurie  
 I'd lay me down and dee !

3. Like dew on the gowan lying  
 Is the fa' o' her fairy feet ;  
 And, like winds in summer sighing,  
 Her voice is low and sweet,  
 Her voice is low and sweet,  
 And she's a' the world to me,  
 And for bonnie Annie Laurie  
 I'd lay me down and dee !



## AN ANGEL UNAWARES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10.)

strap, in the other a screaming, writhing boy, whose ragged clothes hardly covered his painfully-thin form.

With the buckle end of the strap the man was labouring his captive.

"'E'll kill 'im long afore the bobbies come along," a woman standing by Ruth said. "When Bill Evans 'as 'ad a drop o' drink 'e don't know what 'e do—'e's mad-ravin'."

"Why do not one of you stop him?" asked Ruth indignantly. "How can you men stand here and watch without moving a finger to interfere?"

The man she addressed shuffled his feet uneasily, blinking his eyes as they met the scorn in hers.

"We don't want to go to 'orspital," he said sullenly. "Bill Evans is a terror w'en 'e's drunk."

"Cowards!" Ruth's clear voice rang out loudly. "He shall not do it! Hold these, please!"

Into the arms of the nearest bystander she thrust all her parcels. The woman beside her seized her arm.

"Wot are you going to do? 'E'll kill yer."

"I mean to put a stop to this! He shall not kill that lad!"

Ruth shook off the dirty detaining hand, and sprang into the centre of the group.

Bill Evans, his evil face purple with fury, muttering curses and threats, suddenly felt his upraised arm grasped firmly from behind.

Utterly taken by surprise, he wheeled round to face Ruth—a slender, black-clad figure, white as death, but with no signs of fear in her eyes.

"Stop!" she panted.

"Wot!" he roared. "W'o's agoin' to make me—eh? I asks yer that! W'o's agoin' to make me?"

"With God's help—I am!" she answered.

For a moment he stood staring at her, measuring her with a glance of derision. Fully six feet in height, the bully was broad in proportion, with fists and arms that matched his great bulk. A formidable adversary at any time, now, mad with drink and anger, he was one to be feared. And yet Ruth never flinched.

"Give me that strap," she commanded, "and let the boy go. He is only half-conscious. You have nearly killed him, bully and coward that you are!"

"'I'll kill 'im quite!" bellowed Bill. "Stole my bacca, 'e did—young limb!"

He wrenched his arm from Ruth's grasp, and took a fresh grip of the limp and bleeding bundle of rags in his grasp.

Ruth flung both her arms round the lad's neck, sheltering him entirely with her own body.

"Bill," she said softly but clearly, and the silence in Dent's Court was intense, "would you hit a woman who has never done you any harm?"

Bill's mouth fell open. He had hit many women in his time, as the bruises of his patient little wife testified, but somehow he found it impossible to let the cruel strap fall on this brave girl with the steady eyes.

"Let go o' 'im!" he cried hoarsely, "lest I do yer a mischief!"

"No!" she replied. "You cannot hit him—it will be me you strike!"

With a curse, Bill Evans pushed his victim from him.

"She's got pluck," he said, "she 'as! Ain't there a man who will stand up to me?"

He spat on his hands and cast a belligerent eye over the fascinated spectators, his keen ears astretch for the laugh of derision he awaited.

"Wot, ain't none o' yer got this gal's spirit?" he demanded. "Come along—I'll take any one o' yer on!"

"I accept your challenge," came the drawled answer. "I will fight you, Bill Evans, and teach you a lesson."

Into the ring stepped a slim young man, clad in immaculate tail-coat and tall hat, with light kid gloves on his hands.

"'Allo, my bantam!" jeered the bully, dancing unsteadily round. "Yer own mother won't know yer w'en I've adone."

"That remains to be seen," was the unruffled answer.

"I've been watching you, my man, and if you had laid a finger on this brave girl, I'd have killed you."

"Ho, ho! Words is cheap, but deeds speak louder," Evans retorted.

Godfrey Laneham, a light-weight champion, smiled, and approached Ruth, kneeling on the dirty cobblestones to support the inert head of the boy she had rescued.

"Please," she said, "do not fight!"

"I must," he said; "and I assure you Mr. Evans will be all the better for it."

With that Godfrey removed his coat, hat and gloves, and moved forward with easy nonchalance.

"Ready?" he asked. "I will—er—ask these gentlemen to see fair play and keep watch for any policemen who may be about. Come on!"

The bully came—with a whirlwind rush, to be met by a blow that sent him sprawling. Of the fight that followed Mr. Evans has only the vaguest idea to this day. He still has an uneasy memory of iron fists that seemed to come all ways at once, of a slender, elusive figure, always just out of reach, of sickening thuds that made his head ring, and of a final utter collapse; and the re-awakening to the amazing fact that he was a badly beaten man, with no more fight left in him.

By the time the terror of the squalid neighbourhood had scrambled to his unsteady feet, completely sobered, and with an eye that was rapidly turning all the colours of the rainbow, Mr. Laneham had resumed his coat—just as the word "Police!" ran round.

The crowd melted like magic, leaving only Ruth and her charge, the unperturbed victor, and the groaning loser, painfully daubing his bleeding nose.

"It's quite all right, constable," Mr. Laneham said to the man in blue. "This—er—gentleman and I have had a little disagreement. Here is my card, and I should be obliged if you will summon an ambulance and take this lad to the hospital; he is rather badly knocked about."

The bewildered constable looked at the card—also at Bill Evans's variegated countenance.

"Very good, sir," he returned doubtfully, "but—"

"It's quite all right," Mr. Laneham insisted.

A coin exchanged hands, and the constable departed to summon the ambulance.

"If you will allow me, I will see you home," Mr. Laneham said addressing Ruth. "If I might, I'd like to say that you're the bravest girl I've ever met."

Ruth smiled. "I was in God's hands," she returned reverently. "This poor lad is coming round, I think."

"I fancy Mr. Evans won't be quite so bloodthirsty for the future," Godfrey said, with a glance at that gentleman, who, bloodstained and bruised, staggered across to them.

"'Twas a fair fight. I'd like to shake 'ands with the lady."

Ruth rose, and placed her hand in his huge hairy paw. "There is no glory gained in hitting those who can't hit back," she said.

The man looked at the boy, and for the first time a feeling of shame filled his heart. He mumbled unintelligibly, and slouched off.

When the ambulance had gone, Mr. Laneham prepared to escort Ruth home.

"If I hadn't lost my way," he said, "I should have missed a thoroughly enjoyable fight. Perhaps you can direct me to Elmhurst Road?"

"Of course I can. I live there with my uncle, Mr. Trail. My name is Gibson—Ruth Gibson."

The expensive cigarette-case in Godfrey's hands clattered on to the pavement. He looked at her, amazed.

She had re-collected her parcels by this time, and was well laden.

"Good Heavens! Is it possible?" the young man ejaculated; then, recovering himself, he took possession of the string bag. "I'll carry that. I'm Godfrey Laneham. My father did his best to do for a little girl—"

"My cousin."

"Yes. I came down to see if she was getting on all right and to give this letter to a Miss Polly Trail."

"We live quite close," Ruth said quietly. "And Tot is better."

They walked along for some minutes in silence.

"I say, Miss Gibson, do you usually go about championing the oppressed," he asked, "and endangering your own life? Do you realise that that man was entirely beside himself—not responsible for what he might do?"

"Yes, I saw that"—simply.

"And yet you never hesitated."

"My life was in God's hands, to do with as He pleased," she returned. "I do my best to serve my Master."

Godfrey Laneham whistled very softly between his teeth.

"Here we are," Ruth observed. "Will you please hold these?"

She handed him a bag of apples, and, producing a latchkey, opened the door and led him into the narrow hall.

"I will call my uncle," she said; "but before I do so I must thank you for—"

"Blackening a bully's eye," he put in. "I will not sail under false colours, Miss Gibson. I knew I was pretty safe in doing so; I'm a champion light-weight boxer. Bill Evans hadn't much chance against science."

"None the less, it was brave of you," she insisted, and vanished upstairs.

"Now, why on earth did I tell her that?" muttered Godfrey. "Why didn't I let her exalt me into a hero? It would have been an excellent beginning."

## CHAPTER V.

### AT LANEHAM TOWERS.

"I DECLARE it's a shame! Ruth has all the luck," said Polly sulkily. "Why should they ask her to take Tot to Laneham Towers? I'm her sister, and—"

"That's enough, Polly!" Mr. Trail, entering the room unobserved and overhearing his daughter's speech, frowned. "Ruthie wants a change. She's been working hard for us, and nursing Tot. Besides, Mr. Laneham invited her."

"While I remain behind and work myself to death in his horrid office," fumed Polly.

Laneham & Son were large provision merchants, and the girl for several weeks had been employed at the head office of the admirably managed and very successful concern.

Tom, busy on his lessons, laughed as his father left the room.

"Old Laneham's got eyes in his noddle," he said. "Ruth's worth half a dozen of you, my girl"—with irritating brotherly candour.

Before Polly could give utterance to the sharp speech that trembled on her lips, Ruth herself came in, looking decidedly disturbed.

"Tom, have you been up to my room and meddled with my things?" she asked.

"No," answered the boy instantly. "Why should I?"

"I thought perhaps you might. I cannot find an old desk in which I keep some papers and a few trinkets of no value whatever. I am sure it was in my box."

"I thought you were so orderly you never mislaid anything," sneered Polly, whose pretty cheeks were deeply flushed. "I dare say you've forgotten, and put it somewhere else."

"I am perfectly certain I have not," Ruth said. "It is very curious."

"Well, if the contents are of no value, none of us are likely to steal it," snapped Polly. "I'll go upstairs and have a look round. I dare say I shall find it."

She ran out of the room as she spoke. If Ruth had been able to follow her movements, she would have been considerably amazed.

First of all, Polly went to her own small and very untidy bed-chamber. Falling on her knees, she unearthed a packet of papers from the bottom of an over-full drawer; then from the top of the cupboard she produced the missing desk and hastily replaced the contents, locking it with a key of her own, for the little box was cheap and the lock of a very ordinary pattern.

"What an idiot I was not to put it all back last night!" muttered Polly. "I wonder what on earth Mr. Laneham wanted to see this rubbish for? Anyway, it's brought me five pounds, and I can have that new dress now. Wilfred will hardly be able to keep his eyes off me. He says my colour is blue, so blue it shall be."

Miss Trail crept to the door and listened a minute; then, seeing that her way was clear, whisked into her cousin's room and began to make a great search with much clatter and noise.

"Ruth—Ruth!" she cried presently. "Is this the desk?"

Downstairs went Polly, carrying her supposed find, and burst into the kitchen, where Ruth was making a pie.

"Why, yes, that is the desk," Ruth replied wonderingly. "Where did you find it?"

"Did it ever enter your head to look on the top of the wardrobe?" demanded Polly evasively.

"It certainly did not. I am quite sure I never put it there," Ruth said firmly.

"Whoever put it there, here it is. A fuss for nothing!" Polly dumped the old-fashioned box ungently on the table, and took possession of a chair, watching her cousin's busy hands.

A bright fire burned in the shining grate, the tins and pans positively shone. The kitchen was now the most comfortable room in the house, and Mr. Trail insisted on having his supper there, to Polly's disgust, for that young lady's ideas were growing more and more what she called "genteel," thanks to the influence of Mr. Wilfred Bates; Mr. Laneham's dashing manager, whose typist Polly had become. Already she built castles in the air of all she would do when she became Mrs. Wilfred Bates, with servants of her own, and as many clothes as she desired.

Now, idly watching Ruth, she turned up her pretty little nose.

"I can't understand you liking menial work," she observed loftily. "I mean to have plenty of people to do it for me some day; but I verily believe you'd rather cook and clean, buried in the country, than go to theatres and dances and enjoy yourself."

Ruth laughed.

"I like to enjoy myself," she said, "but not in that way. Theatres have no attraction for me. Mother and I used to have picnics in the summer; Hindhead is such a lovely place. In the winter we went to lectures the vicar gave, and belonged to a Reading Society. Oh, there was plenty to do. I was never at a loss."

"Things I wouldn't do—stale and dry. A picnic is all right, if there's lots of other people there; but lectures—pooh!" Polly snapped her fingers.

"I wish you'd come to one with me," Ruth suggested.

"I know you'd enjoy it." "Not I! You've made dad and the boys go to church, and started prayers night and morning—that's quite enough. You leave me to my own ideas, and I sha'n't interfere with you. I'm only surprised you consent to stay at Laneham Towers. I should have thought it was far too worldly for you," finished Polly loftily.

"I shall enjoy it," was the gentle answer. "It is very kind of Mr. Laneham to ask me there. Tot wants a change; she looks dreadfully washed-out after her accident, poor mite"—glancing at the little girl, who sat on the hearthrug playing with a costly doll bestowed on her by Godfrey, who had called several times at Elmhurst Road on various messages from his father.

Thanks to Polly's unscrupulous assistance, Mr. Laneham had satisfied himself that Ruth was no other than his elder brother's child—owner of Laneham Towers and several hundred flourishing shops in various parts of the Kingdom. The invitation to stay with them was the result of long consideration and deep thought. A distant relation of his dead wife was coming to act as hostess and to chaperone Ruth. Mrs. Belmont was an elderly widow, who, spending all her money on the pursuit of those elusive phantoms, "fortune" and "pleasure," was in a constant state of semi-bankruptcy, and only too pleased to accept Hedworth Laneham's invitation for an indefinite period of luxury and ease.

Poor Mr. Trail, while heartily insisting that Ruth should have the offered change, contemplated with private dismay a return to the dirt and discomfort of Polly's rule.

Two days later, Mr. Trail saw his niece and small daughter safely off. He was proud of Ruth, and decidedly flattered by this invitation, which showed a certain amount of condescension on Hedworth Laneham's part.

Laneham Towers was only thirty miles from London, and Ruth found herself on the clean-looking platform of the little country station in a miraculously short time. A smartly attired footman approached her.

"For Laneham Towers, madam?" he inquired respectfully.

"Yes," she returned, yielding her handbag. "Come, Tot!"

Tot, lifted into the big motor waiting outside, could contain herself no longer.

"It's a fairy-tale!" she cried. "Like Cinderwelia, Ruthie! What does that man wear gold for?"

"His livery, dear."

"Is he a king?"—much impressed.

The footman, stifling a grin, swung into his place, and the car started, making very little of the five miles to Laneham Towers.

Mrs. Belmont, acting on Mr. Laneham's express instructions that she was to be particularly nice to the new arrivals, came into the hall to welcome them. She knew nothing whatever about the girl, and, expecting someone very different, stared in surprise at Ruth.

"What a little dowd!" the lady thought. "She must be rich, or Hedworth would never have asked her here. He isn't the sort to waste politeness on a mere nobody"—shrewdly.

She smiled sweetly, and kissed both Ruth and Tot in her best manner.

"You would like tea at once, and to go to your room afterwards?" Mrs. Belmont suggested hospitably.

"Thank you. If she may, Tot will go straight to bed when she has had tea."

"I understand you have not brought a nurse. One of the housemaids will wait on the child, and look after her."

"What's a 'ousemaid?" demanded Tot ignorantly. "Ruthie puts me to bed, and dresses me, and makes the beds, and cooks and—oh, lots of fings!" finished the little girl.

Mrs. Belmont glanced uneasily at the footman, woodenly offering cakes and other good things, her keen eyes noting that Ruth was not in the very least disconcerted by the outspoken comments of her small cousin. She was perfectly at her ease, and her bearing was modest and charming.

"Hedworth"—Mrs. Belmont tackled Mr. Laneham the moment he came in—"who is this girl you have asked down? Is she rich—an heiress?"

He looked a little startled.

"Heiress?" he repeated. "What put that into your head?"

"Well, I thought she must be, and that you wanted her for Godfrey."

"Don't think, Hester. Just carry out my instructions. That is what you're here for," Mr. Laneham returned shortly.

Mrs. Belmont shrugged her shoulders.

"It's very funny!" she said peevishly. "The child talks as though Miss Gibson were a sort of servant. I can't understand it."

"Leave it at that!"—quietly.

"But you have a reason for asking her here?"—persistently.

"I have—and a vital one, be sure of that." Mr. Laneham turned away.

"I'm not quite such a fool as I look!" muttered Mrs. Belmont. "Of course it's money! It will pay me to be civil to her. He'd never throw such a pretty girl in Godfrey's way otherwise."

Ruth's arrival at Laneham Towers had taken place on a Friday evening. Saturday was spent very pleasantly in a long motor drive, with luncheon and tea at picturesque village inns, and on the Sunday morning Godfrey greeted their guests cheerfully.

"We'll motor out to Penhall after breakfast," he began. "There are some ripping ruins—"

"Not to-day, please," Ruth said, colouring.

"Why not? Are you tired after yesterday?"—very much astonished.

"It is Sunday"—gently.

"Of course it is! What of it?"

"I am going to church," she said.

"Oh, I see! Yes, of course. But afterwards we might start."

"I would rather not"—firmly.

"You mean you don't think it right?"

"I think, Mr. Laneham, that we must not grudge one day a week to the worship of the Master we serve. At home, when I lived with my dear mother, Sunday was the day we loved best."

Godfrey whistled under his breath.

"Do just as you like, of course. The village church is two miles away. You must take the motor. No! You would rather walk?" And an amused smile played about his thin lips.

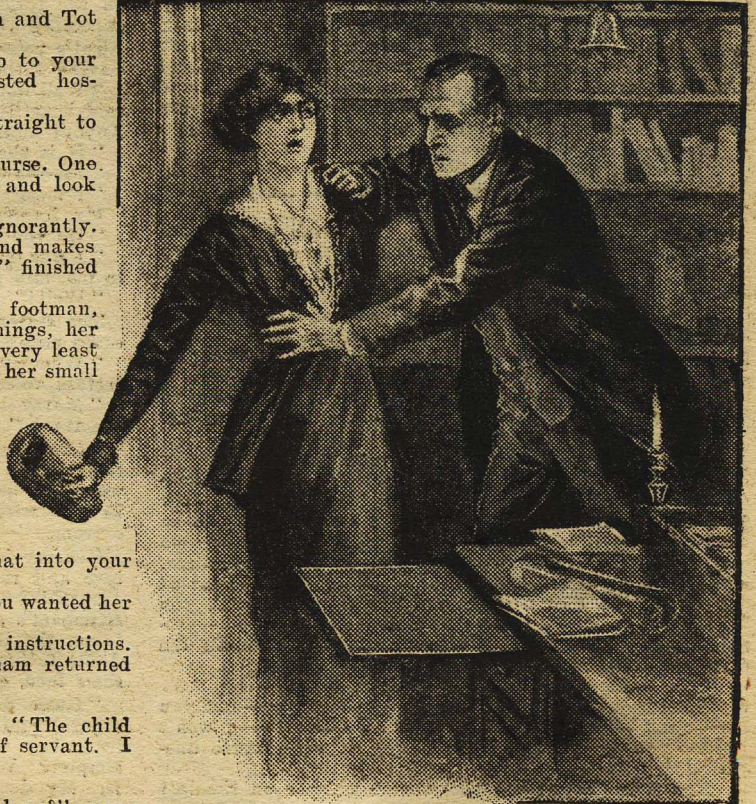
"I do not say I would prefer to walk, but the servants naturally wish to go to church, so you give them as little to do as possible."

Godfrey stared. Never in his whole life had he considered the wishes or desires of any servant. They were paid to wait on one, and there was an end of the matter.

He was lounging lazily in the hall when Ruth, accompanied by Tot, came downstairs, carrying her prayer-book.

"Will you not come, too?" she asked, and raised her lovely eyes to his.

As much to his own surprise as anyone else's, Godfrey



POLLY RAMMED ALL THE PAPERS INTO HER BAG, JUST AS MR. BATES TRIED FORCIBLY TO OBTAIN POSSESSION OF THEM. HE CLUTCHED HER ARM WITH CRUEL STRENGTH. "GIVE THEM TO ME!" HE CRIED.

found himself agreeing. It was years and years since he had been to church; save to occasionally attend fashionable weddings, he had not entered one since his schooldays. During the service he covertly watched Ruth. How pretty she was, and how sincerely devout! There was something about her very different from the smart girls with whom he was accustomed to associate.

The afternoon brought an influx of visitors. Laneham Towers was within an easy motor drive from London, and their friends found it a pleasant meeting-place.

After tea, bridge was proposed by Mrs. Belmont.

"The very thing!" a lively girl agreed. "You will play, Godfrey?"

"No," he said. "You forget, Lillie, it is Sunday. Another time! Come and see the orchid houses."

"But you've often played on a Sunday before!" protested Lillie, taken aback. "Why on earth—"

"There are six other days on which we can play. Surely it's not too much to give it a rest one in seven?"

Hedworth Laneham, overhearing, grinned.

"Splendid, my boy—splendid!" he muttered. "You're playing up top-hole to the girl. You'll get a walk-over."

Godfrey shook off his father's hand impatiently, and

walked away, ashamed to admit even to himself that the impulse that had made him speak was genuine, and that Ruth's quiet glance of appreciation had moved him strangely. Why this should be he did not stop to ask, but the vista of days stretching immediately ahead seemed suddenly golden. The sinister motive for inviting Ruth to Laneham Towers faded into the background, and his father, looking on, congratulated himself on his son's sense and cleverness.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE REFINING INFLUENCE.

**U**PON my soul, I'd no idea the boy had it in him!" Mr. Laneham stood at the window of his own particular study, watching Ruth in the garden, accompanied by Godfrey. "He ought to have gone on the stage. He is a better actor than many I've seen. Ha, ha, ha! It's funny—really funny—to see the supposed change in my son! Church on Sundays, all secular amusements strictly taboo, and now prayers—family prayers, morning and evening! And the girl is ready to drop into his hand like a ripe plum, thinking that her influence alone is responsible for this reformation of a worldly young man."

Then his face became graver.

"I sha'n't feel comfortable until she's safely his wife. After all, she is a nice girl. I am almost sorry to play such a trick on her."

Mr. Laneham glanced round, as though afraid such unaccustomed thoughts might by some extraordinary means be overheard. He was not in the habit of regretting his actions.

Meantime, out in the sunny garden, Godfrey, unwontedly pale, was putting his fate to the test.

"Ruth," he said gently, "you are as far above me as the stars, but—I love you."

The girl's lovely face flushed pink. She looked adorable, he thought—like a half-open rose. Into her grave eyes a great joy crept.

"You love me?" she repeated unsteadily.

"With all my heart," he answered. "Who could help it? My darling, do you not know how sweet and dear you are? Don't say 'No,' Ruth! I swear I'll try to be more worthy of you. Dear love, you have opened my eyes as to what I really am. I've neglected my religious duties. I fear I have almost forgotten the Master I am supposed to serve, and I've thought only of myself. Ruth, you have been, and will be, my salvation. Marry me"—passionately—"and I will worship and adore you all the days of my life!"

Ruth turned, her eyes were full of tears.

"Godfrey," she whispered, "I—I—love you—and you must not give yourself so dreadful a character—I won't allow you to speak in such a way of my—future husband."

Her voice dropped to the merest whisper on the last two words. The next moment she was in his arms.

"My own—my precious sweetheart!" the young man exclaimed; and drawing her close he kissed her. Timidly Ruth's lips met his—pressed them lovingly, blushing at her own temerity.

During the weeks of her sojourn at Laneham Towers she had learned to love him with all the strength of her nature; seeing his faults, knowing him far from perfect, yet unerringly detecting the good in him.

"Tell me again. Say 'Godfrey, I love you—I love you!'" he commanded her.

Ruth obeyed.

"Oh, my dear," she cried, her head on his shoulder, "I hope and pray I shall never disappoint you. Are you quite, quite sure you want to marry such a nobody? You have so much money—I have nothing!"

"Except your most lovely and precious self. Disappoint me? What nonsense! As to the money, why, Ruthie, until I knew you, I looked upon it merely as a medium for luxury, for enjoying myself. You have taught me differently—taught me that it can be used for others in want and distress. Ruthie, I shall never forget my first sight of you—so slim and so brave, facing that great bully bravely and fearlessly. Oh, you darling! I cannot live without you! You must marry me as soon as you can."

"I—we will see"—demurely. "Uncle Reuben wants me, too"—with a mischievous little smile.

"Not half so badly as I do," he insisted.

A considerable time passed, then Mr. Laneham, no longer able to control his impatience, strolled, apparently casually, in the direction he had watched them take. He discovered them at the extreme end of the garden, too much occupied with each other to have eyes or ears for his approach. He coughed loudly, and Ruth tore herself free of Godfrey's arms, and faced him with blushes and smiles.

"Well," Mr. Laneham said, "deeds speak louder than words—am I to congratulate you both?"

"Yes, please," his son said quietly. "Ruth has promised to marry me—as soon as I like"—audaciously.

"With your consent—and my uncle's," put in Ruth gently. "I hope you are not disappointed."

"Godfrey must please himself. Since he loves you, Ruth, I am quite ready to welcome my daughter." And Hedworth Laneham held out his hand and kissed her on the forehead. "I need hardly say that I've been expecting this," he added genially.

Tot's voice calling her drew Ruth to her immediately, leaving father and son alone.

"Well done, my boy—very well done!" the elder man said heartily. "Upon my word, you are a fine actor! Anyone would think it genuine—the real thing."

"It is the real thing," Godfrey said very quietly.

"Eh—oh—I see what you mean—art equal to nature."

"I mean that I love Ruth—really love her"—firmly.

Mr. Laneham stared at him.

"Do you mean this, Godfrey?"

"I was never more in earnest. She is the whole world to me, and always will be."

"Well!"

The statement deprived Mr. Laneham of breath. He could only stare at the speaker in silence.

"What are you going to do?" he questioned, in an uncertain voice.

"Marry her—if she'll have me—after I've told her the truth."

"Good gracious! The boy is mad—crazy! Tell her the truth? Ridiculous! Since she is to be your wife, it would be quite unnecessary. If you have really fallen in love with her, well—there is no necessity to go to extremes"—significantly.

Godfrey hesitated. He greatly feared to lose Ruth's love and respect; the impulse that bade him tell her everything was the outcome of her gentle influence. Mr. Laneham's suggestion tempted him; all his life he had taken the line of the least resistance.

His father, quick to read the expression of his handsome face, continued impressively:

"Ruth doesn't care about money, except to help others; and if by any unfortunate chance she should learn how matters stand, why, what could be easier or simpler? We are as much amazed and surprised as she is. My dear Godfrey, no man would be such a fool, under the circumstances, as to deprive himself of money—to leave himself dependent on the whim of a woman, as we would be, were I foolish enough to agree to your proposal."

Ruth, returning with Tot, interrupted their conversation. Her lover, dissatisfied and hesitating, took the little girl on his knee. The new impulses stirring in his heart were as yet very weak and uncertain shoots, choked by the long-established weeds of selfishness.

It was so easy—just to be silent. He would think about it, there was no immediate hurry, so he decided.

Mrs. Belmont heard the news without much surprise. Of course she had guessed as much all along. But what was the motive that led Hedworth Laneham to actually rejoice over his only son's engagement to a girl who apparently had nothing to recommend her but a pretty face?

"There's something in it," she decided. "But what?"

## CHAPTER VII.

### RUTH'S REWARD.

**I**T'S worth a fortune to us—properly managed." Wilfred Bates glanced sharply from Polly Trail to the papers before him. "How did you come across it all?"

"Never your mind," Polly retorted, unwilling to confess that in Ruth's absence she had opened her desk, and, reading carefully its contents, stumbled on a clue that

had made it possible for her to discover something very near the truth.

"Gee! Just fancy! Old Laneham will pay a pretty penny for silence."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that explains everything, silly! That stuck-up son of his no more loves your cousin than I do. Just going to marry her, so if she finds out he has at least a share in the cash—see?"

"Ruth thinks he loves her," Polly said, "and she thinks no end of him."

"Wonder if she would marry him if she knew? But it's my belief we'll gain far more by lying low and saying nothing to her. Just you leave it to me, Polly—I'll settle with him."

"It's blackmail, isn't it?" the girl asked fearfully, frightened now by the blaze she had started. "I thought, if Ruth were rich, she'd give us money."

"Don't bother your little head!" Mr. Bates was very well pleased with himself. "We'll get married, dear, and have a high old time—plenty of money and nothing to do for it. Laneham will see to that. Why, we're made for life!"

"No!" Quite suddenly Polly snatched the papers, her good angel triumphant. "I don't want to live on money got in such a beastly way. I don't know what I shall do. Ruth would be miserable if she thought Godfrey did not love her. I've often said nasty things about her, and been jealous and horrid, but it's only fair she should know."

"Don't be a fool! A pretty friendly trick to tell her the man she loves is a wrong'un—a nice way of appreciating her! She'll not give you a 'thank you'—and you'll never be Mrs. Bates."

Polly hesitated, a fury of indecision in her heart. Wilfred Bates was very handsome, she was quite sure that she loved him; and yet Polly's crooked little mind could not bring herself to agree to her lover's infamous proposal. Unconsciously she had been influenced by her gentle cousin, and had made quite a struggle to keep the house tidy during her absence.

She rammed all the papers into her bag, just as Mr. Bates sprang forward and tried forcibly to gain possession of them. He clutched her arm with cruel strength.

"Give them to me!" he snarled.

"I will not!" Polly struggled like a veritable fury. "Let me go!"

With a final wrench she tore herself free, and dashed out of the room. Panting and dishevelled, she rushed out of the office, pinning on her hat as she went.

"I shall tell Ruth the truth!" she decided. The tears rushed to her eyes. "Wilfred will never speak to me again! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Ruth had insisted on returning to her uncle's house to prepare for her wedding, and she opened the door herself when Polly, too agitated to remember her latch-key, rang and knocked.

"What is the matter, dear?" Ruth exclaimed, amazed to see the girl at that hour. "Are you ill?"

Polly shook her head, and led the way into the little kitchen.

"Ruth," she said vehemently, "is the truth always best?"

"Yes"—firmly.

"Then, Ruth, you love Godfrey Laneham?"

"With all my heart. Polly dearest, what is it?"

"He—oh, he's a sneak—a thief!" burst out Polly.

"He's marrying you for your money."

"But I haven't any."

"Yes, you have—lots and lots! It's yours; not his!" Ruth's fair face hardened.

"Polly, you are surely crazy! Do, please, explain. How can Godfrey's money be mine until we are married? Then it is different, of course." And Ruth's tender smile made her radiantly beautiful.

It faded, leaving her deadly white, when Polly blurted out her story. First, how her suspicions had been roused by Mr. Laneham's offer of a five-pound note if she—Polly—would get him a sight of all papers belonging to Ruth.

"Then I got hold of his keys," Polly went on, "and went through his drawers. I knew there was something in the wind, and I was right. Your father was Kenelm Gibson Laneham, the elder brother, and everything is yours."

Polly was naturally sharp; she had cleverly pieced the evidence together. Ruth, utterly confounded, stared at the proofs pushed triumphantly under her nose.

"There isn't much doubt," her cousin said.

"I'm afraid not."

"Afraid! Good gracious! Don't you want to be rich?" gasped Polly incredulously.

"Polly, go away, please. I want to be alone for a little time. I—I must think—think."

Polly stared at the set, white face.

"Ruth, I didn't want to hurt you—I didn't know what to do. Wilfred wanted me to be silent, but—but—"

"You have done quite rightly, dear. Take Tot with you, please!" Ruth spoke as one walking in her sleep, and Polly, much alarmed, retired with the indignant Tot.

Left alone, Ruth fell on her knees, and her head sank forward on her clasped hands.

"Almighty God, help me—help me!" she prayed.

For a long time she knelt there. No one came near her. Polly, beside herself with fear and pity, mounted guard over the door, driving everyone away.

It was growing dark when Godfrey, dusty and pale, demanded admittance.

"Where is Ruth?" he asked.

"In there," Polly replied curtly. "Oh, yes, you may as well go in—"

The young man hardly heard her. Opening the door softly, he called his beloved so tenderly that Polly's heart swelled. Was he really fond of Ruth?

"Ruthie, my darling, are you there?"

She rose quietly to her feet.

"Yes, I am here. Come in, Godfrey."

He closed the door behind him. The little kitchen was only lit by the dying fire. Another time Godfrey might have wondered why Ruth had no light; just now he was too full of his mission. Going straight to her, he drew her into his arms.

"Darling," he said, "I have come to tell you something. It is quite likely, when I have finished, you will never speak to me again. I thought I could keep silent. I meant to; but I find I cannot. Oh, Ruth, Ruth, what will you say when you learn how I have deceived you?"

"Tell me"—very low.

The whole story burst from his lips.

"I asked you to marry me because I love you. I could not help doing so when I knew you. Ruth, the money is all yours. We're only impostors, my father and I, and I have no excuse to offer. What are you going to say to me?"

He stood like a prisoner at the bar awaiting sentence, and Ruth laid her hand on his arm.

"Godfrey, I knew," she whispered.

"You knew?"

"Yes. But, oh, thank God, you told me yourself, my dear—my dear!" She broke into a storm of tears, and threw her arms round his neck.

"Do you mean you can possibly forgive me?" he asked, dazed and trembling.

"Am I to be less merciful than my Heavenly Father—less forgiving? You remember, Godfrey—'Unto seventy times seven.'"

"My little saint, you—you love me still?"

"I shall always love you"—with sweet seriousness. "And as to the money—why, we will share it, and do all the good we can for those who are unfortunate."

Polly was crouching on the stairs when at last the kitchen door opened.

"Well?" she asked breathlessly.

"It is all right, dear," Ruth whispered. "Godfrey told me himself."

"And you've forgiven him? Ruth, I wish I was as good as you are. I will try hard for the future." And Polly, kissing her cousin, registered a silent vow to take her as a model.

"My Ruth, how can I thank God sufficiently for your love and trust?" Godfrey said, in a moved voice.

"By loving Him with all your heart, dear, and trying to serve Him," whispered Ruth. "Let us thank Him now for all His mercies."

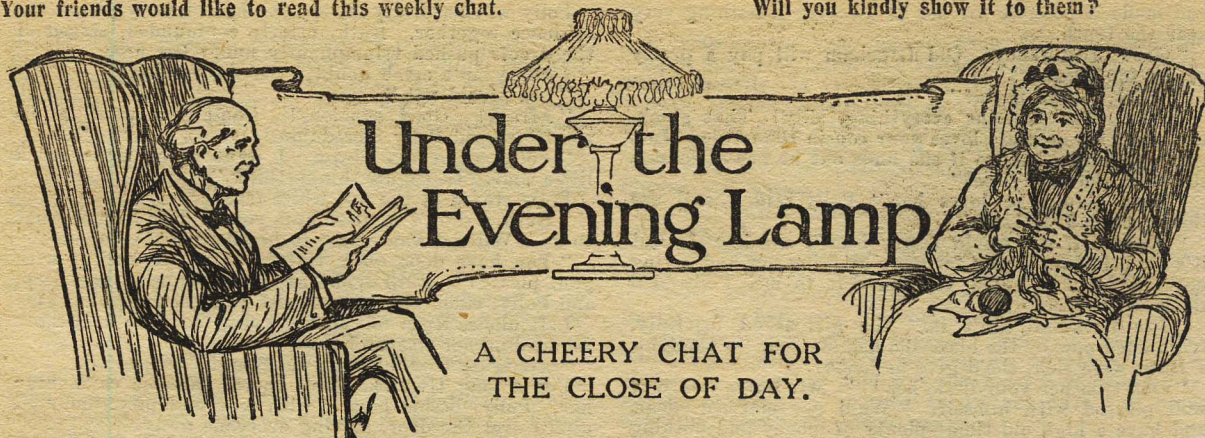
And Godfrey fell on his knees beside her, and uttered his first real prayer.

THE END.

Next week: *LOVE FOUND WANTING*, a grand complete story by *ELIZABETH M. MOON*. Ready on Monday next.

Your friends would like to read this weekly chat.

Will you kindly show it to them?



A CHEERY CHAT FOR  
THE CLOSE OF DAY.

### A BRIGHT BEACON AMID THE DARKNESS.

**M**Y DEAR FRIENDS,—In speaking of the good that men do, the poet has declared that it is "oft interred with their bones," and that it is the evil deeds which live on and by which men are remembered.

But surely this is a view which cannot be upheld. When the smoke and ashes and confusion of a great colliery disaster had all been dispelled, and things again began to assume, at all events in outward lives, their customary order, there remained an indelible memory fixed in the hearts of all those who had been bereaved and were connected with that colliery.

And the memory was just this: people remembered that it was a time when everyone was kind to everyone else. There were no harsh words, there was no lack of the divine quality of sympathy, but each one, although with heart-breaking grief and loss, went about doing what he or she could do to help the stricken friend and neighbour.

About such a sorrow, borne in such a spirit, there is something of the divine; it is as though it were the lesson that the disaster had to teach.

**I**N this greater calamity which has come upon us there has been evidenced the same splendid spirit of comradeship; and I want my readers to realise, if they cannot don the King's uniform and fight for the honour of their country, that they can go about wearing the badge and symbol of service in the ranks of the army of the King of kings.

There is work to be done binding up the broken heart, which can only be done by one whose heart knoweth its own bitterness and who has tasted of the cup of sorrow. Let those who are stricken find ease for their aching hearts in going to a stricken friend, taking a message of comfort and hope.

**I** WAS recently reading how, on one of the Orkney Islands, a great rock—Lonely Rock, it is called, and is very dangerous to vessels—juts right out into the sea. In one of the fishermen's huts on this island coast one night, sat a young girl, busy at her work at the spinning-wheel, looking out upon the dark, angry waves, and the skudding clouds.

All night she watched and toiled at her wheel, and when the morning broke one of the fishing boats had not returned to the harbour. It was missing out on the deep, and the boat was her father's.

A little way further up that rugged coast the fishermen found her father's body, washed up by the tide. His boat had been wrecked on the Lonely Rock.

The young girl watched by her father's body, as was the custom with the people of her lonely isle, until it was laid in its last resting-place, and then, when the night came, she arose and got a lamp and set it in her casement.

There it was, a little bright beacon amid the darkness, and out on the storm-tossed waters of the deep the fishermen could see the shining light.

After that, in the wild storms of the winter, and in the calm, placid summer nights, in the driving autumn mists, the light never failed. It was always there to guide the toilers on the deep who wrested their living from the angry waves.

Her act of love was prompted by the sorrow she felt at the death of her father. Out of the seed of her great grief there sprang up a lovely tender plant of sympathy and love for others in peril. Her eyes were opened by the anguish she

suffered. That is the lesson which I know is being learned in many a home in these sad days. It is the gleam which is shedding radiance beneath the dark cloud, a radiance which will shine when the cloud has passed; and by it we shall see more clearly and understand.

**I** REMEMBER a true story which is told of Phillips Brooks. He had a dear friend, a little girl of five years of age, and the two were often together. When Phillips Brooks died and the little girl was told that she would see him no more on earth, and that he had gone to Heaven to live with the angels, she said to her mother:

"Oh, mother, how very glad the angels will be."

I think that remark was a wonderful tribute to the saintly Christian character of Phillips Brooks. If, during these days, we can so live that when we die people will think that the angels in Heaven are to be congratulated on having our company we shall have done our duty to our nation and our fellows at a time when every bright Christian man and woman had great need to exercise his and her helpfulness.

**T**WO boys were heard laughing together, and a gentleman, meeting them, was curious to know what made them so happy.

"Happy," answered the elder of the two. "Why, I makes Jim glad, and gets glad myself."

And I think there is no truer word than this for all who are sorrowful and despairing now. Never mind your own grief, put it aside for the moment and go and endeavour to make someone else happy. Consolation and that peace of mind which comes from the Giver of all good, will be vouchsafed to you. Making others happy is the surest way of helping yourself in a time of trial and difficulty. It is the road by which we shall be led away from our own numbing grief and loss.

*"Catch and radiate the sunshine,  
Pass along the word of cheer;  
Give a tender smile or token  
To the sad ones far and near.  
Scatter sunshine, brother, sister,  
Sympathise with smile or tear;  
Make this sadden'd world the brighter,  
For your tender words of cheer."*

I think the verse above is the one you have in mind, R. D. M. (Cleckheaton). The very kind thoughts you have expressed, tell me that you are endeavouring to carry out the message that it speaks. Thank you! The whole army of encouragers—and a noble army they are—were never more needed than to-day, and I hope that you will go forward in the good work that you have undertaken at no inconsiderable sacrifice to yourself. Service for the young, such as you are doing, is of the greatest value, for it is to them that we must look to carry on the work when for us the Angelus has sounded.

I am always glad to hear from my readers. Please write to me, "Under the Evening Lamp," HORNER'S PENNY STORIES Office, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Your sincere friend,  
JOHN EARNEST.



# THE MAN I MARRIED.

The pathetic story of a rector's daughter, who married against her father's wish. Told by herself.

## HOW I MET MY HUSBAND.

**M**Y father, who was the rector of Great Burgrave, gave most of his meagre salary to his parishioners, so we led a very quiet life.

My dislike for my humdrum existence was lessened when I met Sir Howard Burgrave, and fell in love with him. My father forbade me to see him, on account of some foolish act which Howard was said to have committed about seven years before, when he was living at Burgrave Hall. Sir Howard proposed, and then one night we stole away to London, where we were married. My father and sisters soon forgave me.

One day I came home from a reception to find my husband raving like a madman. He had had a slight accident, and my sister Peggy, who was staying with us, had given him brandy, which, the doctor said, had brought about this state; but I knew he was not telling the whole truth.

Howard was almost well again when a loud, vulgar man came to see him. I overheard them talking.

"You've got to come. She's been asking for you."

I was passionately jealous, and this widened the breach which had been growing between us. Then I met Hartley Rashwell, and Howard disapproved of my friendship with him. We had a violent quarrel and I decided I could not go on living like this, so I ran away. Assuming my maiden name, Joyce Hallington, I managed to find a respectable lodging, and obtained a situation as a model in Holland's drapery establishment.

One day I was recognised, and, feeling I could not stand the scornful looks that were cast at me, I left, and went to live with a Miss Palmer, one of Holland's assistants, with whom I had become very friendly. Through her I learnt why people looked so scornfully at me. They thought I had run away with Hartley Rashwell!

## PEOPLE CONDEMN ME UNHEARD.

**I**T was a crushing blow, terrible because so unexpected, so undeserved. For the first few minutes it left me scarcely able to comprehend, scarcely able to understand; then, when this numb feeling had passed, I was only conscious of a burning sense of shame, of a furious, mad anger against the people's stupidity, against injustice!

The girl was looking at me quietly all the time. I knew that she was sorry for me. Perhaps she believed, as she had told me that others believed, that I was a wicked woman—a woman not fit for her to speak to.

And father and Ruth—Peggy! Ruth and Peggy! I covered my face with my hands suddenly. I knew that my cheeks were burning with shame. Now I understood Essie Robertshaw's shrill, screaming laughter; now I understood why Mr. Smithson had dragged his daughter away from me, and had refused to let her recognise me. Everyone knew of this burning shame that had fallen on me, and everyone condemned me unheard.

Howard himself—Howard! I clenched my teeth. I felt at that moment that I hated him.

Elsie Palmer came and put her hand on my shoulder.

"What will you do now, Lady Burgrave?" she said.

"Don't!" I said stormily. "Don't call me by that hateful name. I am not Lady Burgrave now; I gave up that name of my own free will. Are—are you sure—sure about this—sure about what you have told me? Oh, of course you are," I went on, without waiting for her answer—"of course you are! Mr. Smithson knew of it, Mrs. Robertshaw, that horrible Holland—they all knew of it! Think—think! He wanted me to stay—stay there at the showroom as a sort of attraction. He offered me more money to stay there so that people should come and see me!"

I laughed shrilly. My laughter ended with a sob, and then I felt this girl's arms around me. She was holding me tightly. She tried to sympathise, tried to calm me; but suddenly a thought came to me and I wrenched myself free. I stood before her, looking her in the face.

"And you," I said, "you—you have heard of this shame that has

come to me. Do—do you—did you believe it, too?"

She did not answer me.

"Answer me!" I cried furiously. "Do you believe that I am what they say I am?"

"I did believe it. I saw no reason to doubt it," she said. "I thought of you as a young woman, a girl married to a man much older than you were. I thought of you as tired, chilled perhaps by his lack of love for you, and turning to another man—"

"Oh, don't—don't—don't!" I cried. "Don't! It is not true! It is all a lie! I never cared for any other man but my husband in my life—never! I loved him—loved him—loved him! You—you don't understand how I loved him. I would have given my life for him willingly. It would have seemed a poor thing to have given, so great my love for him was. And—and that other man—that other man—" I laughed bitterly, I know, yet still I laughed, for I was heart-whole so far as Hartley Rashwell was concerned; I who had only thought of him with a pitying contempt could afford to laugh. "That other man, I helped him. He came whining to me for help. He was in fear for his liberty. He had done some wild, foolish, wrong thing; he had come and asked me for money to help him. And because I was sorry for him, because I felt a contemptuous pity for him, I helped him. And now—now they think—you—all the world thinks—"

"I don't—I don't!" she cried. "I don't! I believe in you! Tell me that you are not guilty of wrongdoing, and I will believe in you!"

"Why should you?" I cried. "I am nothing to you. You know nothing of me. Even the little time we have been together we have not even been friends. Why should you believe in me on my bare word?"

"Because I know that no guilty woman could look as you look," she said; "because I know that mine were the first lips that told you of this suspicion against you!"

"I left my husband because he no longer loved me, because—because our marriage had been one great, one terrible mistake," I said. "I left him because I thought he would be glad to know that I had gone for ever. But I left him alone. I left him with a few pounds in my pocket—enough to keep me for just a few weeks. I went straight to the place where I have been lodging ever since. There I heard of the opening at Holland's. That is the truth; that is all I know. Hartley Rashwell and I parted on the day before I left my husband's house. I have never seen him since, have never wished to see him again, and never shall!"

"I believe you; I do truly!" she said. "I believe every word that you tell me, Lady Bur—"

"Hush, I tell you!" I cried passionately. "I will not be called by that name now. I hate it! I hate every memory the sound of it brings back to me. I—"

I paused. I felt that the room was swimming around me; lights seemed to shoot up before my eyes. I saw Elsie Palmer's face as in a mist; then I saw nothing. Blackness followed—blackness that must have lasted for hours. When I woke I found that I was lying on a bed. I was still fully dressed, but a blanket had been drawn over me. There was a lamp burning in the tiny bedroom, and in a chair, with a blanket over her, was the girl asleep.

I awoke in full possession of my senses and my memory. I remembered clearly everything that had happened, all that she had told me. I must have fainted, and by some means she had managed to carry me to her bed, and now, worn out, she had herself fallen asleep.

And so my name was a byword. I was a creature of shame. So all those who had known me as Howard's wife shrugged their shoulders, and laughed or sneered

when they spoke of me. And my father—my sisters! What of them? What did they say—what did they think? What should I do now? How should I set about defending myself? Should I defend myself at all? The thought came to me suddenly. Everyone had condemned me unheard. Why should I care what the world said and thought of me—what my husband thought of me? He thought me evil, and he had told the world—and the world believed! Why should I stoop to defend myself?

A new hardness, a new bitterness, came into my heart. I was innocent. Why should I humble myself to prove that I was innocent? I was innocent. I knew it; God, Who was my judge, knew it. What mattered what others said and thought? Howard—I clenched his hands. The man who had loved me once—was this his love, his faith, in me?

I was glad of this opportunity to think. As I lay here in the dim light, watching the sleeping girl, I reviewed all my past life. I had never done a really wicked thing in my life. I had been weak and foolish in many ways, as other girls are, but I had never been wicked. I had never entertained one wicked thought—one thought unworthy of me. Yes—yes, I had! I had suspected Howard of what I knew not. I had been bitter because he had refused to trust in me, had refused to tell me, his wife, the secret connected with his life of which so many others were aware, that had made me bitter. It was his fault, not mine. He should have trusted in me; he should have felt secure in my love for him. But he had not. The fault was all his, I had told myself. What other wife would not have suspected a

husband who had admittedly some terrible secret in his life which he resolutely kept from her?

And that was the extent of my wickedness—lack of faith in the man I had married, suspicion of him and of the past. And now how had he revenged himself on me for those suspicions? He had made my name a byword, had heaped shame and ignominy on me, had brought me to this—that people scoffed at me and laughed at me, and looked down on me as one fallen so low as to be beyond hope—beyond the pale.

No, I would never defend myself, never seek to prove the

truth, let him, let all the world think what it might. I clenched my teeth. Father, Ruth, Peggy—I thought of them; but they would have condemned me, too. Not even to clear my name with them would I stoop to prove my own innocence.

And then I fell asleep and slept soundly, strange as it appears to me now that I could have slept at all, and when I woke I found Elsie Palmer standing beside me and smiling down at me.

"You are better; you have been sleeping so well," she said.

"You should not have given your bed up to me," I said.

"Oh, it did not matter. I could have slept on Ethel's bed if I had wished; but I didn't, as I was anxious about you, Lady——" She paused, remembering that she must not call me by that name. "What name can I call you by?" she asked.

"My name is Joyce. Call me by that," I said.

"Yes, I will, Joyce," she said. "And now, dear, you have had no time to think. You have not yet made up your mind what you will do?"

"I have had time to think, and I have made up my mind," I said. "I am not going to try and prove my innocence. Think of it; I am innocent, and yet might fail to make people believe in me. That would be harder than I could bear. Let them think what they like. I know the truth!"

She put her arms around me suddenly, and held me tightly.

"This morning, while you lay here sleeping, I stood watching you, and you looked like a child, an innocent child!" she said. "You are not a wicked, guilty woman, I know that!"

"Why should you believe in me?" I asked her.

"Why should I believe in all that I do believe in?" she said. "In Heaven and God's mercy. But I do believe in it, because something tells me to believe in it. And that same something tells me to believe in you."

"Elsie, you are very good to me," I said.

"I am not. I have done nothing. I am not capable of doing much good to anyone," she said with a sigh. "But you want friendship, companionship, and sympathy; and, poor as I am, I can give you that, Joyce, and I will. And I can give you faith and trust, too," she added.

I rose and put my arms around her and held her tightly. It was good to hear this from her lips; it did me good; it melted some of the ice away from around my heart; it made me more human.

She left me now to rise and adjust my clothing and wash myself. And presently I went out into the tiny sitting-room, and found breakfast laid for two. She was just boiling a kettle over a spirit lamp, and looked up at me with a bright smile.

"Breakfast is just ready, Joyce," she said.

"Elsie," I said, "let us come to an understanding before we go any further."

"What?"

"I know you are not rich. I know what you earn at Holland's. It is hardly enough for you to keep yourself on. I am not going to live on your charity. I have a little money. So long as it lasts, if you will let me stay here with you and pay my share, I shall be grateful to you. When that money has gone, and if I have not found other work, then we must part!"

"And where will you go?" she asked.

I shook my head. It did not bear thinking about.

"I am talking of the present, not of the future," I said. "My money will last a few weeks. Tell me that you agree we share all expenses?"

"If you wish it, Joyce," she said.

And so it was arranged. We had our breakfast together and then she left me soon after seven to go to her work at Holland's. She would be away for twelve hours; and for those twelve hours I should be left to myself and my own thoughts.

But I would not be idle all that time. It was for me now to find fresh work, to find work in some place where I was not likely to be recognised. If I could have had my own wish I should have left London for ever; but leaving London would mean parting from Elsie, and I didn't want that. In these last hours the girl had become very dear and very necessary to me.

Plans came into my mind and went. I thought of writing to my father and telling him the truth. I even sat down and took my pen up, and then a sense of burning shame came to me. I felt that I could not do it. Surely, surely, in spite of all that others said about me, father would still believe in me. Ruth would still believe me to be true and pure and good. No, I could not write to them yet, not in the frame of mind in which I was now.

I busied myself about the rooms. I made the bed and washed the breakfast things. I found plenty to do, and I was glad to do it; it occupied my mind and filled in my time. It was ten o'clock now and I went and put on my hat. I remembered that I must find other work since I had left Holland's, and in no case could I ever go back there again to that horrible man, to the fear of any moment, of any day, meeting some of those whom I had known in other days.

I made up my mind that I would look for work in some of the less frequented streets, in some of the small shops, where, though the pay would probably be less, I should be free from the risk of meeting some of the people I had known.

But work was difficult to find. I went from shop to shop, asking if they had employment to offer. But I met with no luck all that morning. Nowhere was I wanted. It was nearly two o'clock now, and I felt weary and dispirited. Surely no girl in all the world, I thought, had to bear what was thrust upon my shoulders; a weight



of undeserved shame, poverty, hardships. I felt as if tears were very near, then suddenly all desire to weep went from me. I would have turned had there been time to avoid her, but there was no time. Suddenly I had come face to face with Essie Robertshaw!

She was not alone. Another woman whom I dimly recollected having met once, was with her. Mrs. Robertshaw said something quickly to her companion, and then both turned and stared at me. There was a smile on Essie Robertshaw's face. Distinctly I heard the other woman say:

"Surely you cannot think of such a thing, Essie?"  
 "Why not? I'm curious; I'd like to know where they are!"

Suddenly she came towards me. I quickened my step, eager to pass her by, but she put herself directly in my way.

"Well, you silly little thing," she said, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"To you, nothing," I said. "Nothing. Let me pass."

"Oh, of course, if you want to. You're a little fool, though, to throw away the chance of my friendship. I can assure you there aren't many women in London who would even speak to you now!"

"I do not wish them nor you to speak to me," I said. "Let me pass."

"Oh, pass," she said. "You've passed!" she laughed sharply. "A nice hash you've made of your life. I didn't think you'd have been such a fool. Well, you've only got yourself to thank. Where are you living? How came you to be in that shop, Holland's, yesterday?"

"I have told you I have nothing to say to you, Mrs. Robertshaw!" I said.

"Very well; I'm not interested. You're down and out now," she laughed, and repeated the words "down and out." "Everyone in London knows about you; that poor fool of a husband of yours was one of the last to know. But he'll soon be rid of you now. I suppose there will be no defence?" She looked at me as she spoke.

"I do not understand you, and I do not wish to talk to you!" I cried.

"Where is he? At least you might tell me that."

"Please let me pass," I said. "You are standing in my way—"

"Oh, very well, insolent little fool!" she said. "You'll be sorry one day that you didn't accept my overtures. You won't find many women who will have much to say to you now. You've done the wrong, the unpardonable, thing. You might have amused yourself, but—you you did the wrong thing. Nothing can excuse that! Little fool," she added, "I thought better of you!"

Then she turned aside, and with blazing cheeks I walked on. I heard her shrill laugh following me. I knew that both women were staring after me, and I walked on with a feeling of utter desolation and misery at my heart.

All London knew, she had said. Everyone was talking about it. My husband had been one of the last to know. Then it had not been he who had spread my so-called shame. I was glad to think that; I felt a little less bitter towards him.

I went back to the little flat and threw myself down on a sofa. I would not go out again. I was almost afraid to go out in case I might meet someone.

I had failed to find work; another search this afternoon would only result in failure, too.

What did the future hold for me? I asked myself, and the answer was easy to find. Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!

What happened to women like me? Women who had been shamed, justly or unjustly. Women who were "down and out!" Those were her words. How bitter they had sounded, yet they were true. "Down and out." I was that. "Down and out!" "Down" at least now, perhaps "out" soon. I laughed bitterly.

"Out!" Yes, there was one way of being out. I smiled at the thought. I was yet a girl. I, fond of life, beautiful, as I knew without vanity I was, I could think of death in this careless, easy way, as something to be wished for, hoped for!

It grew dark in the little flat. The sound of traffic came, muffled by the distance. I suppose I dropped asleep. I know that I woke suddenly, listening to the

(Continued on the next page.)



That's why I enjoy my walks so!

Wearing Wood-Milne Rubber Heels, the roughest, hardest road seems like rich, soft carpet. I take long walks without fatigue, finding pleasure and health untold—so may you — if you'll wear "Wood-Milnes." There are no other rubber heels so resilient, none that wear so well



**Wood-Milne**

**RUBBER HEELS**

repay ten times their cost; one pair of "Wood-Milnes" outlast three soles. Made in Black, Brown, or Grey rubber, at prices to suit all. Be sure to see the name "Wood-Milne."



The sturdy British Tea planter, toiling in the Tea Gardens of our great Indian Empire, realises with satisfaction that his labours are appreciated by his countrymen—that Indian Tea is firmly established as the popular favourite in every home in the United Kingdom.

So insistent is the popularity of Indian Tea that every grocer in the land must sell it. The British Housewife, quick to recognise the delicate and subtle flavour of Indian Tea, will have no other.

Insist on Indian Tea. Then you know what you are getting.

**Indian Tea**

**Britain's Best Beverage.**

sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs, then a tapping on the door.

I rose quickly as the door opened; a man came into the room. It was so dark that I could not see him, and my heart beat heavily for a moment. I thought—I dared to think it might be Howard; but it was not.

"Why, you're all in the dark here, gel," he said.

I could have laughed almost. I had thought this was Howard.

"I will have a light in a moment," I said. "You wish perhaps to see Miss Palmer?"

"Ay, I did!"

I turned up the light and looked at him. He was a middle-aged man, stout, good-tempered-looking. He looked like a prosperous farmer or well-to-do tradesman from the country.

He stared at me hard for a moment.

"I ain't seen you before," he said, "but I know who you are, all right. You're Miss Newcombe—Elsie's friend!"

I would have denied it, but he went on without listening to me:

"I'm 'er uncle. I am George Beasle, up from Burtenham. I dessey she's spoke to you about me sometimes. Well, 'ere I am. I always promised to give 'er a look up when I come to Lunnon, which ain't often. Can't bear the place! Your life ain't safe, not two minutes together, with them taxi-cabs boosting round every corner, and they motor-omblibuses rushing down on you like—like I don't know what. Give me the country, and a quiet death in my bed, I says. But 'ere I am, and I expect Elsie'll be glad to see me. I've got a proposition

to make to 'er, I 'ave. I been thinking it out a powerful long time, and the chance has come. We don't often 'ave any shops to be got in our town, we don't. Burtenham's a busy place, I can tell you; a rare trade's done there, small as it is. Why, you'd laugh comparing it with London now. Still, as I say, there's a rare lot of business done in Burtenham, and this 'ere chance 'as come, and I been thinking it over and talking it over with Aunt Ann—that's the missus—and she and me come to the conclusion it'll be best for Elsie to be out o' London. I don't 'old with young gels being alone in London by theirselves. Down there—"

"Won't you come in and sit down?" I said. "Would you like me to make you a cup of tea? Elsie won't be in till seven."

"Till seven! Bless me, and it ain't no more than half-past five! Well, I can't go without seeing her, anyhow. Yes, I'll come in, my dear, and thank you, and the cup of tea quiet will be grateful and comforting, as the saying is."

One could not help liking his rustic simplicity. He reminded me of old Josephs at home. Home! The very thought of home brought bitter tears into my eyes. I knew that he was looking at me—looking at me for a long time while I spread the cloth and boiled the water in the little kettle over the spirit-stove.

"My dear, are you, like Elsie, 'ere alone?" he asked.

"Yes," I said; "quite alone."

"Then it didn't ought to be," he said. "A girl like you didn't ought to be left without friends and protectors, as the saying is."

(Continued on page iii. of cover.)



**CAN YOU READ THIS SOLDIER'S PUZZLE LETTER?**

**1st PRIZE, £2. 2nd PRIZE, £1. Ten 3rd Prizes of 5s. each.**

Can you read this soldier's letter "from the front"?

Thousands of our readers are enjoying these entertaining weekly contests. Are you? If not, enter this week. All you have to do is to solve the soldier's puzzle letter, write your solution out clearly on a piece of paper, then cut out the puzzle picture, pin it to your solution, and forward it to the Editor.

You should keep by you, for reference, an exact copy of your solution.

Show your friends the puzzle, and ask them to help you. They will be very much interested in it. Remember, a picture may represent a phrase of one, two, or three words, but not more than three.

Our handsome prizes will be awarded as follows

The First Prize of £2 will be awarded to the reader whose solution is correct, or most nearly correct, in accordance with the original in the possession of the Editor. The Second Prize of £1 will be awarded to the reader who comes next in order of merit, and the same rule will apply in the case of the Ten Third Prizes of 5s. each. The Editor's decision is final.

The Editor reserves the right to add any or all of the prizes together should the number of readers qualifying render this course advisable. No reader can receive more than one prize.

This contest is being conducted by HORNER'S PENNY STORIES, "Horner's Weekly," "Sunday Circle," and "Golden Hours," and all readers of these journals may take part. All members of families may compete, but each must send in a separate solution. Readers can send in as many complete solutions as they like, but each solution must be accompanied by a puzzle picture taken from either of the journals named above.

Remember, each week's contest is complete in itself. When you have solved this week's picture puzzle, do not wait until next week, but send your solution at once to: Puzzle letter "from the front," HORNER'S PENNY STORIES Office, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. All solutions for this week's contest must reach us not later than Friday, February 19th. The result of this contest cannot appear in this journal for five weeks.

You will find the result of our 15th Contest on page 4.

Cut this out and send it with your Solution, as directed. Competitors should keep a copy of their solutions for reference.

"I have no friends in the world now but—but Elsie, and I don't need a protector," I said.

"That's what you say, but you're wrong." He put his hand suddenly on mine. "My dear, I'm an old man, old enough to be your father, and with a few years to spare, and you won't take it amiss from me if I tell you you're the loveliest thing I think I've ever seen!"

I flushed, but not with vanity nor pride. I had almost grown to hate my looks.

"You don't take it amiss from me, my gel," he said gently. "But I say it, and I'm right. A girl with your looks didn't ought to be alone in this 'ere London. It's a bad place, London is. I'm oneasy in my mind about Elsie being 'ere. She's a pretty gel, if ever there was one, though not to come up to you. And a very nice cup of tea it is, my dear, which proves as you know 'ow to make it. I see you warm the pot. That's the secret. It's evident you've been brought up in a good home."

We had tea together, and it did me good to listen to his honest country talk, and somehow the time seemed to slip away very quickly, and Elsie came in on us long before we thought she was due.

"Why—why, Uncle—Uncle George!" she cried. "You here!" She flung her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Yes, I'm 'ere, gel," he said; "come on business, and couldn't natcherly go without seeing you. It's this way—" He paused. "Old Buttons' retired—made a pot of money, 'e 'as—and there's 'is shop. I've got first offer for it. Thirty-five pound a year it is. You remember Buttons, the little 'aberdashery as they calls it, just on the market square? There ain't a better site in the town. Well, I thought of you, and me and Aunt Ann, we talked it over, and—and things 'as been a bit better these last two seasons, and she says to me, 'George,' she says, 'why, not give Elsie a chance 'ere? With what she's learned of the business in London she ought to be able to do well, and there's a rare lot now—tradesmen's wives and smart lady's-maids and like that—as'll be only too glad to 'ave somewhere where they can get their things on the spot—all London fashions.' And so I've been thinking—" He paused. "'Ow would it do to 'ave the shop and, say, five hundred to start with? I could manage that."

I sat in a corner listening, taking no part in this which did not concern me; but I envied Elsie the chance that I knew was coming her way—the chance to get away from this hideous, hateful London for ever.

"You mean you propose to set me up in business in Burtenham, uncle?" she cried.

"That's it, my gel! Buttons' shop is to be 'ad, I've got first option on it, and I come up to town to-day a-purpose to see you. Say you're willing to come, and I'll deal with it at once. It's for you to say."

"Of course I'll come," she said, without hesitation. Of course she would. I pictured the little quiet country town to myself, the market square, the green fields, and my heart ached for the country I had once hated, and called dull and uninteresting.

I rose and went out of the room. I thought they would sooner be alone. I went and sat down in the little dark bedroom.

Elsie would go, and I should be left. I felt heartsick and sore, terribly—terribly lonely.

I could hear their voices in the adjoining room; then after a time the door opened.

"Joyce, uncle is going, and would like to say good-bye to you!" she said.

I went out and shook the old man by the hand.

"My dear, I hope we'll meet again before long," he said. "You've been very kind to an old man—very. It isn't every beautiful young woman as would have thought of making the old chap a cup of tea. Well, good-bye, my dear!"

He shook hands with me, and then he went, and Elsie lighted him down the somewhat dark and narrow stairs with a lighted lamp in her hand. When she came back into the room her face was flushed and her eyes dancing with excitement.

"Joyce, it is almost too good to believe," she cried. "Fancy getting away from this hateful, dirty, foggy London—getting back to the clean country and having a business of my own—my, very own! I shall always keep the latest fashions, and I'll attract people to the shop. I sha'n't be satisfied with the tradesmen's

wives and the lady's-maids uncle talks about. I'm going to get all the best customers there, or know the reason why.

"We'll make the place smart, not like a small country shop at all, Joyce," she said. "You will receive the customers and—"

"I—I!" I cried. "Elsie, what do you mean? I am not going!"

"You are," she said. She looked up at me. "You are coming with me. I told uncle, and he seemed more than pleased. I know you want to get away from London; I know you hate it, and with even more reason than I do. Joyce, you will come with me?"

"You—you don't mean it; you can't want me. Besides, it isn't fair. There is your other friend, Ethel Newcombe."

"Ethel is to be married in two months," she said, "so she couldn't come with me in any event; but you can and will, Joyce, won't you? Say 'Yes'; I count on you. I long to have you with me down there; I shall need you, too. If you don't come I shall have to find someone else; but I want you."

"Elsie," I cried—"Elsie, do you mean it? You—you are not taking me out of pity—out of charity?"

"No, I am taking you because I really want your help. A girl like you would be more than valuable there. You will come?"

I looked at her. For me suddenly life changed. The greyness was gone. Yes, I would go; I longed to see that little country town, where I might perhaps forget all this misery.

"Then you will come, Joyce?" she said. She came to me and put her arm around me."

And I burst into tears and hid my face against her breast.

(Another long instalment of this grand serial next week. Do not miss it.)

**DO YOU WANT  
A  
£1 A WEEK?**



Reliable persons will be provided with profitable home work on **Auto-Knitters** by knitting War Socks. Experience unnecessary; distance immaterial. Write for illustrated prospectus containing full particulars and enclose 1d. stamp for postage.

**THE AUTO-KNITTER HOSIERY CO., Ltd.**  
(Dept. 63, 50 & 52, Belvoir Street. LEICESTER.)

**Camp  
Coffee**

You make just what you want in the cup and drink it all. No grounds. 'Camp' made with boiling water makes rich, fragrant coffee—at once. Try it.

**A child can make it  
A queen may drink it**

You will know more about 'Camp' when you taste it. Taste it to-day.

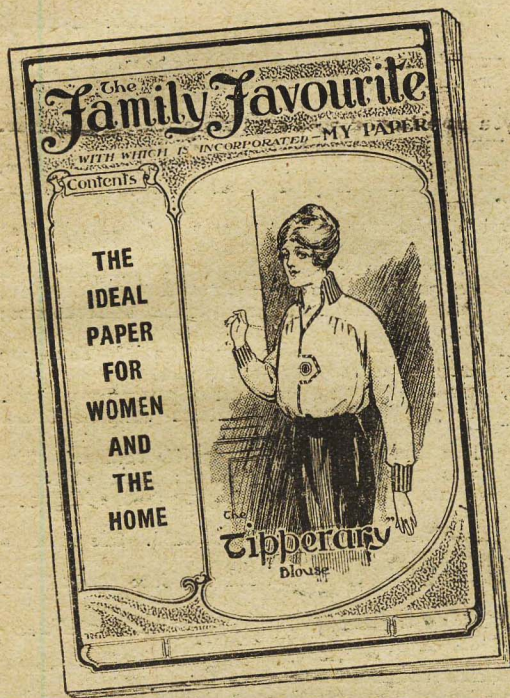
R. Paterson & Son  
Ltd., Glasgow.

**NOBLE'S SALE**

Great bargains in smart dresswear and household rapery. Chances not to be missed. Illustrated Catalogue FREE with particulars of handsome presents. Write:

**JOHN NOBLE, Ltd.**  
12, Brook St. MILLS MANCHESTER

# The TIPPERARY BLOUSE



The daintiest  
ever designed

## FREE PATTERN

with No. 1 of this

## GREAT NEW PAPER

With No. 2

## FREE WISHBONE BUTTON

specially designed  
to go with the blouse

**No. 1. READY MONDAY 1d. ORDER TO-DAY**

## Advertisers' Classified Offers.

Exceptional Inclusive Rates for these advertisements in "Woman's Weekly," "Horner's Penny Stories," "The Family Journal," "Penny Pictorial," "Forget-Me-Not," and "Home Circle" can be obtained from: The Classified Advertisement Manager, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. Telephone: Central 1.

### MEDICAL.

**HEADACHE, NEURALGIA, CURED** in a few minutes by "Q.E.D." Perfectly Harmless. Certain Cure. Boxes 1/- and 2/6. Send stamp for two trial powders. — "Q.E.D." Manufacturing Company, 17, Heddon Street, London, W.

**INDIGESTION, HEADACHE, FLATULENCE,** Biliousness, Feverishness, quickly and permanently cured. Over 30 years' successful results. — Write INSTITUTE XL, 17, Bury Street, Bloomsbury, London.

**WHAT EVERY WOMAN** ought to know. Post free, 1/-.—Nurse Meldrew, 17a, Dale End, Birmingham.

### REMNANT TRADE.

**ENGLAND'S CHEAPEST WHOLESALE WAREHOUSE.** Make money selling Remnants, Ladies' Overalls, Underclothing, Men's Shirts, General Drapery, British Manufacture. Catalogue FREE.—Cochrane's Unlimited, Victoria Bridge, Manchester.

### EDUCATIONAL.

**STAMMERING** perfectly and permanently cured by Correspondence-Tuition. Full particulars from—The Headmaster, The College, Clacton-on-Sea.

### PHOTOGRAPHY.

**PHOTO POST CARDS** of Yourself, 1/- dozen. Samples and Catalogue FREE.—Hackett's Works, July-Road, Liverpool.

### HOUSEHOLD.

**BEDSTEADS! BEDDING! WHY PAY SHOP PRICES?** Newest patterns in Metal and Wood, Bedding, Wire Mattresses, Cots, etc. Furniture—Bedroom and general. All goods sent direct from Factory to Home IN PERFECTLY NEW CONDITION. Send postcard today for Illustrated Price List (post free). I allow DISCOUNT FOR CASH or supply goods payable in Monthly instalments. Established 20 years.—CHARLES RILEY, Desk B, MOOR STREET, BIRMINGHAM. Please mention "Horner's Penny Stories" when writing for lists.

**CENTURY CHINA BARGAINS.** Household and Individual Orders at Factory Prices. Separate Dinner, Tea, Toilet Services, beautiful designs, from 3/-. Complete Home Outfit, 21/-. 30,000 satisfied customers. COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE FREE. Presents offered. Write to-day.—CENTURY POTTERY, Dept. 330, BURSLEM.

**DURING THIS CRISIS** we are offering families an opportunity to earn money at home. Simple work and good pay. Particulars.—Helping-Hand Stores, Manchester.

### BOOTS.

**SAVE NEARLY 50 per cent.** buying Factory direct **AGENTS WANTED.** Write for list, particulars.—British Boot Co., Bristol.

### CHILDREN'S CLOTHING.

**BABIES' LONG CLOTHES.** 50 pieces, 21/- Value, style and finish unequalled—wonderful value. Approval.—Mrs. Platt, 15, Grayling Road, London, N.

### DRESS.

**MATERNITY SKIRTS** from 9/11. Robes made to measure. Patterns—Catalogue FREE. Baby Clothes, 21/- parcels. Single articles sold.—Madame Hardie, 49, Deansgate, Manchester.

**DRESS ECONOMY.** Superior Clothing, slightly worn. Great Bargain Catalogue. Stamp.—Madame Adela, 77th, Stoke Newington Road, London.

**LOVELY DRESSES, etc.,** slightly worn. Bargain List, stamped envelope.—Madame Dupont, 42, Upper Gloucester Place, London, W.

### TOILET.

**FREE TO LADIES!**—Towle's Toilet Towels with Elastic Loops. Never fail to give satisfaction. Sample sent **GRATIS.** Prices 6d. to 2/6 dozen.—Towle & Co., Ltd., 17, Long Row, Nottingham.

### VARIOUS.

**DRUNKARDS CURED SECRETLY, FREE,** Trial privately; guaranteed quick sale, certain.—Venns 1, Station Road, Brixton (S.W.) London.

**DRINK HABIT CURED SECRETLY,** Quick Certain, Cheap. Trial FREE, privately.—Fleet Drug, 12421 Co., Dorset Street, London, E.C.

**ANY PERSON** can earn £1 to £10 spare time with Chocolate Clubs. No Outlay. Particulars.—Samuel Driver, Beeston Road, Leeds.

Printed and Published weekly for the Proprietors at The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, England. Subscription, 7s. per annum.

Saturday, February 13th, 1915. Office, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Agents for Australia: Gordon & Gotch, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Wellington, N.Z. South Africa: The Central News Agency, Ltd., Cape Town and Johannesburg.