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The Editor will be pleased to consider stories suitable for publication in this magazine. Where stamps are enclosed, every effort will be made safely to return unavailable manuscripts.

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$1.80

SINGLE COPIES 20 CENTS

Monthly publication issued by

THE NEW FICTION PUBLISHING COMPANY

35-37 West 39th Street

NEW YORK

W. L. DANIELS
President.

W. P. VOORHEES
Treasurer.

Entered as second-class matter October 24, 1914, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

LIVE STORIES

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Obviously, August LIVE STORIES, on sale July 1st, is a magazine you cannot afford to miss.

THE EDITORS.

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "Live Stories," published monthly at New York, N. Y., for Apr. 1, 1919, State of New York, County of New York. Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared W. P. Voorhees, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of "Live Stories," and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The New Fiction Pub. Co., 35 W. 30th St., New York; Editor, Lillian Bennett-Thomson, 35 W. 30th St., New York; Managing Editor, Grove E. Wilson, 35 W. 30th St., New York; Business Manager, W. P. Voorhees, 35 W. 30th St., New York. 2. That the owners are: The New Fiction Pub. Co., 35 W. 30th St., New York; W. M. Clayton, care of Franklin Trust Co., 46 Wall St., N. Y.; A. M. Clayton, care of Franklin Trust Co., 46 Wall St., New York; W. L. Daniels, 8 Linden Court, Jersey City, N. J.; Mary A. Loeber, 17 Trenton Ave., White Plains, N. Y. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. Signed, W. P. Voorhees, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this eighteenth day of March, 1919. Gust. Frenzel, Notary Public, Rockland County. Certificate filed in New York County, No. 139. (My commission expires March 31, 1919.)



“A Souvenir from Captain Butts”

By Robert Campbell

MAYBE you've heard of Captain Ephraim Butts. It is just possible that you've met him if you've ever done any scouring of the Seven Seas. Dig back into your memory for a wiry, choleric, ruddy man about five feet eight, with snapping gray-blue eyes and the general air of being about to blow up; always as trig as a model in a Fifth Avenue shop, and always with his blue cap set at just a little of an angle on his lean, terrier-like head. Slip on his chin a slightly grizzled fringe of a goatee, giving him a fierce and impulsive look, cock his head at an inquiring angle, and add a sharp, raspy voice, holding tones that made you jump to hear it, and you have a fair picture of Captain Butts. I say, dig back into your memory; but if you have ever seen Butts you won't have to dig far, for Butts is a man whom no one ever forgot, and many have cause to remember.

Captain Butts had been to sea ever since he could remember. Before the war began, he had earned his reputation all over the wet wastes where ships travel, because no emergency ever found him helpless. He drove his ship here and there, and when the seas would take toll of him and his ship, Butts snarled at

them, set his tough little frame to the job, and whipped them. Since the war, he had had three ships torpedoed under him, had an Admiralty record of sinking three “tin fish,” as he most impolitely called the submarines, and was possessed of a secret sorrow. So much for the past history of Captain Ephraim Butts. Now for the newer things; newer and stranger—so strange that to no one except Butts, who made the circumstances, could they have occurred.

The *Asheville* lay in the Erie Basin, waiting orders to join a convoy. In her capacious hold reposed something like eight thousand tons of copper. It was to be delivered at the Albert docks up the Thames. Captain Butts walked swiftly up and down the *Asheville's* bridge, and now and again cast a cocky eye up at the wireless antennæ, as if he expected to see the message for which he was waiting come skittering down the aerials. Up the bridge ladder climbed Angus McPherson, the grizzled, but wholly capable chief engineer of the *Asheville*. McPherson and Captain Butts knew each other to the last eyelash. They never agreed on any single subject, apart from the fact that they had the utmost confidence in each other; re-

fused to be separated, and knew each other to be so competent that each was willing to trust the other with his life on a mere nod.

"What's keepin' us, wad ye say?" asked McPherson contemplatively, as he stepped onto the bridge.

"Some o' those blasted lazy supercar-goes, or whatever they are pleased to call their dashed selves, over at the Yard, I suppose," snapped the Captain, as he wheeled short and paced back to the other end of the bridge.

McPherson draped himself over the bridge rail.

"Man, d'ye ken we've got summat aboard that makes us wonderfu' attractive for a certain pairson in Berlin?" he inquired slowly.

Captain Butts stopped short.

"Meaning the copper?" he inquired brusquely.

"Just thot," answered the engineer. "I'm thinkin' there'll be a bit of veesit an' sairch before we scrape paint fra' oor plates agin th' stone o' th' Albert docks."

Captain Butts stepped close to his engineer.

"I'll thank you to keep your frightened clacking to yourself, you dissolute mechanic," he snapped. "It's my job to take this packet across the pond, and I'll not have your old maid fears instilled into the minds of the sheep we've got aboard that call themselves sailors."

McPherson waved a hairy hand that contained a cutty pipe.

"It's no my fault ye're an ostrich," he commented, with a sour grin. "Stick ye're head in th' sand o' yer foolish and unregenerate methods, but I'll thank ye to be no callin' me oot o' me name."

And then began a wordy wrangle that delighted the steward who stood with his ear cocked against one of the open chart-house windows, and smiled a pleased and happy smile. The wrangle ended as it always ended.

"Get down where you belong, you split-trousered incompetent," snarled Butts.

"Go down and mingle with the ashcats below, and see that when I give you the bell, I'm not kept waiting."

"Man, if I had a temper like yer ain, I'd pray th' guid Lord to curb my worrds," returned McPherson. "Still, I'm supposin' ye're too auld to change much now."

Which last always brought forth an angry sputter from Butts, who poured out further decorative phrases while McPherson let himself down the bridge ladder. Below, he confided to his assistant that the skipper was even more irascible than usual, and he feared greatly that he'd been crossed in love, or something equally unseamanlike or deadly.

The plain facts were, though McPherson knew it not, that Captain Butts was at present greatly peeved at the cruel manner in which the grim Fates who run the card index of human affairs had been treating him. Butts nursed a secret ambition. One might think that the destruction of three of the Kaiser's submarines in fair fight would be enough for any reasonable man, but, between you and me, it was by no means enough for Captain Ephraim Butts. He had a further ambition, and one that he had not yet whispered to a soul save his own reflection in a mirror. He wanted to get another sub, but he wanted to take it intact, or nearly so, into an adjacent port, and hand it over to the authorities.

Now, I have no means of knowing just how many naval men had the same ambition, nor for that matter how many of them were able to gratify their wish, but I'm inclined to think they were few. Most of the young men who raced destroyers up and down the sea lanes were modest chaps, and they were quite satisfied with their lot when granted the authority to paint a white star on their ship's funnel, thus signifying the destruction of one "tin fish."

Captain Butts was of a greedier mold, I am afraid. In the first place, it was not his job to go hunting subs; that was for

the navy folk. His work was to take the new *Asheville* from port to port, and spend as little time as possible in doing it. Nevertheless, I suppose it is a weakness of human kind to want to do some other fellow's job for him, and it is a fact that Butts had, in two or three specific cases where he had gotten his fish, gone out of the way to do that job. On one of the occasions, he had chased the scandalized sub for fifty miles or so, having had the fortune to drop one shell into her inner works with such effect that her submerging pumps were knocked out of kilter, and consequently she had to depend on her speed in getting away. The sight of a heavy, thirteen-knot tramp steamer savagely chasing a somewhat erratic and badly frightened submarine about the Western ocean so shocked a certain lieutenant commander who happened on the scene in time to see Butts plug a four-inch projectile into the sub with such effect that she blew up in the middle and sank in two sections, that he complained to the Admiral ashore at Queenstown about it as an infringement of privilege.

"I don't mind seeing a freighter fight if she has to, sir," he objected, "but I do think this chap needn't have gone out of his way to run the fish down and to chase it. It's taking chances, after all, sir, and anyway, what are we out there for?"

Being a human being first, the Admiral chuckled.

"I've heard of Captain Butts before," he said. "If you take my advice, young man, don't tell him your opinion, and, above all, don't get between Captain Butts and the next fish he goes after. He's likely to ram you."

Whereupon, the lieutenant commander came as near a snort as is permissible in the presence of an Admiral, and went off in a huff.

So Captain Butts walked up and down, gnawing on his ungratified desire, until the wireless operator handed him a slip of paper on which were penciled the or-

ders for which he had been waiting. Assembly in the lower bay was next, and then a procedure of six ships, accompanied by two destroyers, to the rendezvous off the Banks, where they were to meet the main convoy. The doughty Captain gave the necessary orders and watched his big ship work her way slowly out of the basin with the help of two fussy but efficient tugs. When she had passed through the Narrows, Butts glanced again at his orders and called Briggs, his mate.

"We may have to drop the hook down the Bay," he said. "Maybe they'll give us the clear signal to keep on out, if the others are ready. Anyway, here are the orders. We're to join the rest at the Banks, take our orders for formation from the *Essex* and, in the event of an attack in force, scatter and get to port on our own the best way we can, while the snakes look after the subs. Got that?"

Mr. Briggs signifying that he had, Captain Butts snorted and went below to the chart room, where he wedged himself in a corner and read three pages of Plutarch's *Lives* as a sedative. But at the end of the third page, he sent the steward for McPherson, and when that calm person appeared, wiping his hands on a piece of waste, Butts motioned him to a seat.

"I've been thinking about our cargo, Mac," he said. "I'm inclined to think there's more in what you said than perhaps you've any idea of."

"Ye surprise me, now," remarked the engineer with a wry grin.

"Possibly," replied Butts with a frown, "but as that happens so often you'll not mind if it doesn't excite me. Now, listen. You know they're horribly short of copper in Germany, of course, and that they'll take desperate chances to get some. I'm not foolish enough not to know that they come pretty close to getting a line on every cargo that steams out of these ports, and that we can't do anything to stop it. What's to prevent them having a try for us?"

"Only yer ain deadly reputation, skipper."

"Stow that!" ordered Butts. "The orders are to separate and run for it, if we're attacked in force. It sounds to me just like the sort of thing the beastly Huns would want. If they can cut us out from the convoy with a scare, and then run us down, there's a chance to grab this cargo."

"It'll be takin' more than one fish to carry it," commented the engineer.

"But not more than one to take us into port. Oh, I know it's an off chance for them to put it over, but it could be done. Or—" The Captain stopped and his eyes took on a light of interest.

"Or what, now?" demanded the engineer.

Butts looked at him with a thin smile.

"Mac," he said, "you know me better than any living man, and I think Mrs. McPherson would be surprised at the way I know you. Look here!"

The steward, who was passing along the deck and paused for an instant outside the open chart-house door, was startled at the vehemence with which that door was slammed in his face, and, an instant after, was jolted by the bang of the window beside it.

During the days after they had joined the main convoy, and while the dozen ships progressed across the gray-black wastes, there were repeated and prolonged conferences between the captain and the chief engineer.

"You'd think them two was courtin' each other," remarked the second mate to his superior, Mr. Briggs, on one occasion.

"Maybe so, young man," replied the other. "Maybe so, but I've got a mighty queer hunch that those two you mention are fixin' to cause somebody an unholy lot of trouble."

"Queer old scout, the skipper," mused the other.

"Better not let him hear you say it," observed Briggs. "I've seen him take

three like you and break them up all together."

The younger man laughed and flexed his arm. Then he picked his hundred and seventy pounds up on his toes and teetered back and forth.

"Not that I mean to," he said, "but I'd just about crack that old man in two parts in the first half minute."

"Then the Lord grant that you never run foul of him," chuckled the mate. "Why, boy, I've seen that skipper of ours take two that could give you five pounds each, crack their heads together, knock them out, and then throw them down the fo'c's'le hatch just to tidy up the deck. Don't ever start with him, for he's a fighting, tearing bunch of wildcats. And another thing, what he can't finish, the chief can and will. Man alive, but I well remember seeing the skipper with nothing but his two bare hands, and the chief with a ten-inch spanner, tear into a long-shore gang of fifteen, and inside of ten minutes whip the entire outfit so that it needed two ambulances to clear the dock. Don't start anything, boy."

During the next few days, down in the privacy of his own particular corner of the engine room, McPherson conducted activities that seemed queer and unnecessary to his assistants and the black gang changing watch. The chief was carefully manufacturing a half dozen contrivances out of thin metal, and, toward the finish of his operations, handling them very tenderly indeed. It may have been but a coincidence that the Navy ensign in charge of the gun crew complained to the skipper that a case of his four-inch shells was strangely missing, and that Captain Butts winked at the chief engineer as he promised to look into the matter.

Day and night for six days, the great ships steamed forward in orderly double column with the cruisers and destroyers on their flanks. Occasionally, one of the sea snakes would dash five or six miles ahead, and then, with the white combers

spinning from her bows, swing a wide arc and come tearing back to cut a complete circle around the convoy, to report to the *Essex* by code. They were not using the wireless unnecessarily, for Fritz is a curious being, and is constantly listening to the gossip of the seas. At night, the ships felt their way as best they could in the pitchy darkness, with only the binnacle lights on deck; and when one of the gray shapes would loom perilously near to another shadowy bulk, explosive and highly specific language would result, for running a convoy at night in war time is a matter for hunch and intuition. And then, on the seventh day, just as the blackness was beginning to yield to the daily miracle of the dawn, and the coast of Ireland but some six hundred miles away, four dirty gray conning towers, with the water dripping down their sides, rose out of the sea almost at the same instant. The shriek of the sirens and the crack of guns were simultaneous.

"Here they are!" cried Captain Butts with a yell, as he called a hard-over order to the quartermaster at the wheel. "Jam her over, you blighter!" he roared, and anxiously watched the *Asheville* heel over to starboard as the great steel rudder gripped her. Briggs raced up on the bridge and took his station with the Captain.

"Here's where we find out whether they are after us," cried Butts in the ear of his mate.

The convoy had spread out to offer as poor a target as possible to the fire of the submarines, and in the growing dawn, the cruisers and destroyers were banging away with every thing they had. The *Asheville* headed into the north, and the skipper grinned as they began to leave the convoy astern. And then he grinned a wider and more grim grin, for one of the submarines ceased firing at the convoy and, swinging about, shaped a course in the wake of the freighter.

"It looks as if Berlin wanted that copper after all," muttered Butts to himself.

It is an old sea axiom that a stern chase is a long chase; and a tramp steamer that can dig fourteen knots out of her engines can give even a supersubmersible a long run when the latter is four miles astern, and has a surface speed of but a trifle over fifteen knots. Captain Butts walked aft to where the ensign and his crew were training their four-inch gun.

"That gentle soul astern there has a six-inch rifle mounted on his fore gun platform, if I'm any judge," he said. "And I have a very private belief that the one thing he doesn't want is to sink this packet; but he will surely make it a lot interesting for our upper works, so if you can drop one of your pills anywhere on that six-incher of his, it will be regarded as a merciful dispensation of Providence."

The ensign looked up with a scowl.

"I'll blow his blasted tub out of the water and let it fall back again, if I have any luck!" he growled.

Perhaps the sub's engines were carbonized, perhaps his oil was not up to grade, or perhaps McPherson managed to get another knot out of his engines; but on that point there is no definite information. Ordinary arithmetic would indicate that the sub should have ranged alongside the *Asheville* within five hours at the least, but the facts are that she didn't. It is even true that the *Asheville* managed to draw slightly away until the little skipper scowled and interviewed the chief engineer. It is also true that evening began to draw on and there was almost no perceptible change in the situation, save that the shells from the fish had knocked the chart-house into a mass of splinters, cut away one half of the funnel, and ripped up enough deck plates to build two extra large box girders. The ship's gun had effected no damage that could be noted, for it was practically outranged. And when the night began to fall, the *Asheville's* way diminished.

The mate looked anxiously into the ditch alongside; then glanced at the pur-

suing submarine. He began to see pictures of an open boat exposed to shell fire, or of a German prison; and he had a vision or two of Captain Butts facing a firing squad in a German prison yard. He turned to the skipper, who was humming a little tune.

"He's overhauling us, sir," he remarked.

"Looks that way to me," was the answer. "In fact, Mr. Briggs, I rather think he'll be alongside by eleven to-night."

Briggs looked at his captain and frowned. The imminent danger of capture by a German submarine did not usually produce smiles and doubtful harmony in the merchant seaman of those days, and yet Captain Ephraim Butts was smiling and harmonizing through his teeth.

"Keep her as she is, Mr. Briggs," the skipper said. "I'm going below."

Down in the Captain's cabin there was a consultation. The consultees were Captain Butts, McPherson and Ensign Starret.

"The facts are, Mr. Starret," said Captain Butts, "that we're letting that hound astern overhaul us. Mac here tells me he could outrun her if he wanted to."

"Then what's the idea?" asked the ensign.

"They know we've got copper, and they want it. What they'll do to this crew is another question, but they won't sink the *Asheville*. They want her intact, and they'll try to get her into a German port somehow. That's why I doubt a great deal if they'll knock us about much. The old hooker must be capable of being run by a prize crew."

"But you don't intend to let 'em get away with that, surely," protested the ensign. "My orders are to—"

"Steady there," counseled McPherson.

"If you are thinking about turning this ship over to the enemy without putting up a fight, I'll have you know I'm not in on it," snapped the young officer. "My

job is to knock out every German I can, and if we get done in while doing that, why it's our job, that's all!" The young man's face grew red and his eyes snapped. "I didn't expect to get mixed up with a bunch of curs on any ship that ever flew our flag," he finished.

Captain Butts jumped to his feet and his tough little frame stiffened as he stepped forward.

"I'll thank you to keep a civil tongue in your head, Mr. Starret," he snapped. "You're in charge of your gun, but I'm in charge of my ship, and I don't mind telling you that I don't take talk like yours from any man, from the Admiral both ways. By the hokey, young man, but I've bashed the face off many a man for less than that!"

McPherson introduced a pacifying accent into the situation.

"Ye'll be recallin' that ye've not yet been tellin' our young friend here, what ye're plan is, skipper. I've not th' least bit o' doot but that he thinks ye have in mind surrenderin' th' hooker, now."

He looked inquiringly at Starret, and the latter growled:

"It looks a lot like it to me."

"Then I'll be tellin' ye that there's nowt o' that in th' wind. Man, we're contemplatin' reversin' th' polarity o' that plan, an' doin' a bit o' diplomatic skulduggery o' oor own."

The result of the ensuing conference was that Starret was taken into the skipper's confidence, and the incipient storm abated. When Butts had finished outlining his plan, the young officer shoved out his hand.

"I'll apologize and take back everything I've said, Captain Butts," he remarked. "And you can count on me to the last ditch. I'll admit I ought to have known you better."

"Then we understand each other," said the skipper. "The bulk of the crew will abandon ship as soon as the sub comes up; your men and some of the pick of my own will remain hid aboard here.

Of course, they'll send an officer and a prize crew, and they may try to force some of our men back aboard to work the packet in. I've banked hard on my belief that they wouldn't dare try to tow us, and consequently that they wouldn't risk smashing our engine room or steering gear by a chance shot. When they come aboard, it'll be up to this incompetent mechanic here and myself to do the rest."

By eleven-thirty, the submarine had closed in enough for a megaphoned order in perfect English to reach the *Asheville's* bridge.

"Heave to, or we'll clear your decks with shrapnel," said the harsh voice; and gradually the *Asheville's* way ceased until she was rolling gently in the swell. There was enough light to see a collapsible boat put off from the submarine as she lay a scant hundred yards away. As the collapsible pulled over, the rattle and creak of blocks and the hurrying sounds of departure announced that the *Asheville's* crew were abandoning ship, and the sounds reached the commander of the sub.

"The *schwein* are leaving the ship, Heinrich," he observed. "They'll pull south at first, and when we have done what we are to do, we will run down to them and teach them to wait for orders."

The *Asheville* lay rolling gently on the swells, with a low roaring coming from her exhaust pipes, and clinging to her a deathly silence that spoke eloquently of a helpless and abandoned ship. It seemed to the German officer rowing up to her tall sides that she was a sentient thing, wondering what her masters had done to her, and waiting patiently for some hand to guide her. The depression of abandonment clung to her like a pall.

The German swung himself up into the ship's forechains, cast a hasty look about the deserted decks, and called up five of his men.

"Return and bring the others," he ordered; and, like a vague shadow, the

small boat left the side of the *Asheville*. Once more the silence shut down, and then came a splashing from the side opposite to where the submarine lay. The German officer listened intently and peered over the side, but could see nothing, and he returned to the hasty survey of the ship. Ten minutes later, he hailed the sub, reporting that no one remained aboard. And from the darkness there came, very faintly, a sound that might have been a very large pair of porpoises out for a late supper, or a couple of mermaids on a little job of sirening. The difficulty with these two possibilities was that either the mermaids had learned to swear most accurately, or that one of the porpoises had been raised in Greenock.

The collapsible boat from the submarine had just spilled her complement of five men upon the *Asheville's* deck, when a hairy hand reached out of a port-hole and drove a spare grate bar into it. The boat immediately bore out its name and collapsed completely, leaving the two occupants with nothing but some steel plates at which to clutch.

The German officer had his men on the deck, and was assigning them to their duties. There were eleven altogether. Five of them promptly went below to take over the engine room. As they stepped upon the floor plates, they were none too gently seized by some extremely husky naval men and trussed up with a speed that left them wholly unfit for protest of any valid sort.

The remaining proceedings were a trifle more violent. On deck were six Germans, and before they were quite conscious of what was afoot, there was a rush of men, and they were scientifically knocked on the head and laid in the scuppers to reflect upon the folly of counting the contents of the hennery before the eggs have reached maturity. And, in the meantime, in the oily, heaving sea alongside the submarine, lying with her hatches open to the star-dotted sky, the porpoise-mermaids, or mermaid-porpois-

es, or what you wish, clung to the rungs of a light ladder that reached from the deck platform down over the side. Four seamen in their yellow dungarees and an officer in overalls stood on this platform, watching idly the swaying hulk of the *Asheville*. Suddenly a flash lamp showed aboard the freighter, and simultaneously there was a slight exclamation in the water alongside.

"*Was iss das?*" queried the officer sharply.

"None o' yer blighting business," was the harsh answer, and therewith followed the swing of an arm, and the momentary glint of a metal object as it described a short arc and fell upon the platform. The resulting explosion, while not violent, was sufficient to blow the group of five into the sea, and cause a torrent of language inside the hull of the "tin fish." An agile figure, grizzled about the chin, and with a terrier-like head, hurriedly climbed the few rungs of the iron ladder and leaned over the conning tower hatch.

"Just divide this among you, you skunks," the figure yelled savagely, and forthwith dropped a most effective hand grenade into the staring group below. This time the submarine rocked to the explosion, and Captain Butts yelled a volley of language that would have barred him from theological circles.

There was another muffled explosion from the sub's stern, and she lifted perceptibly, to sink back again. A few moments later, there was a pattering of bare feet along the vessel's deck, and Captain Butts was joined by an almost wholly naked McPherson.

"I'm thinkin' she'll no progress vairy far wi'out yon propeller wheel," he chortled. "Man, ye're a bonny schemer. Hoo many o' th' Hoons d'ye ken ye fetched wi' yer surprise party?"

From an oilskin case fastened about his neck, Captain Butts methodically took a very business-like automatic pistol, and slung a leg over the hatch.

"I'll be able to tell you that in ten minutes, Mac," he answered briskly. "In the meantime, do you keep a keen eye down there and a grenade handy in your hairy mitt. If I'm not back in what you think is good time, you know what to do."

McPherson looked at the skipper admiringly.

"I'm no concealin' fra' mysel' that you've got a keen nairve, skipper," he remarked. "It's ma dooty to warn ye, hooever, that yer takin' yer life in yer hands. Ye ken th' Hoon is no a square player."

"This gang will be when I get through with them," returned Butts truculently. "I find myself capable of a few atrocities on my own account, and may the Almighty help the dirty scuppercat that starts anything below there!"

The little Captain dropped down to the interior of the submarine and gazed at the effects of his bomb. Then he shuddered slightly, and passed along to the stern, his fierce little goatee stuck straight out ahead of him, and his automatic at the ready. As he passed behind the dynamos, a blackened figure struck savagely at him with a short iron bar, and Butts shot instantly. Three others came forth out of the darkness with uplifted hands and a cry of "Kamerad," and these the Captain conducted to the foot of the ladder.

"Get on deck!" he snarled at them, and they wasted not an instant.

"Overboard wi' ye," ordered McPherson. "I'll no object if ye cling to yon bit ladder, but mark me, one squint of yer een, and Davy Jones wi' be havin' a few new boarders."

Captain Butts climbed smartly out on the sub's deck.

"All clear, Mac," he said. And then, cupping his hands, sent a hail over to the steamer. "Lay alongside here!" he ordered.

Twenty minutes later, Briggs, with his men once more aboard the ship, had

worked the *Asheville* close aboard the submarine. A steel hawser was broken out of the ship's lazaret, and this was made fast to the forward gun stanchions on the submarine's deck; it was then paid out slowly while the freighter forged ahead, and hitched to a bridle that was laid out over the vessel's stern.

Captain Butts and the chief engineer went aboard the steamer and resumed their clothing. Briggs, with a crew of four, was sent aboard the submarine, and after they had pitched the dead overboard and patched up the wounded as well as their facilities permitted, the *Asheville* again took up her voyage toward the Irish coast.

It was two days later that the lookout on a destroyer reported to his commander:

"Supersub in tow of tramp steamer off port bow, sir," he bawled.

"In what?" roared the commander.

"In tow, sir," replied the lookout.

The commander ordered the destroyer's course to be changed, and she raced down to the steamer at thirty knots. Crossing the freighter's stern, she ranged up on her port quarter.

"What ship's that?" howled the commander through his megaphone, while the gun crews kept their rifles trained on the steamer.

A grizzled and somewhat fierce face leaned over the bridge rail.

"Steamer *Asheville*, from New York to London," was the answering roar.

"Where did you get that submarine?" was the next question.

"Went out and shot it for ourselves, if you must know," came the reply.

"Who's master of that ship?" demanded the commander, with a somewhat uneasy feeling in his breast.

"Ephraim Butts," came the answer, and the commander groaned.

"I might have known it," he muttered. "Good Jupiter, what luck some chaps have!"

Queenstown harbor was treated to an

edifying spectacle some hours later. A large and somewhat rusty tramp steamer came into port towing a highly dejected submarine in her wake. The steel hawser connecting the two rose and dipped again, and, bringing up the rear, was a destroyer with nearly all its crew on deck staring curiously at the procession in front.

An Admiral viewed the spectacle through a pair of glasses and turned to his aide.

"If I'm any judge, there's been something happening out at sea that was never on any naval plan. I wish you'd run down to that steamer and ask the skipper if he would mind coming up here to see me. Mind, don't order him. Invite him. Otherwise, if I know my man, he's very likely to tell you to make a long, long visit in a much warmer climate, and then come up here and kidnap me."

Captain Butts, just a little truculent at first, accepted a cigar from the Admiral, and answered the polite query.

"There's nothing much to tell, sir," he said modestly. "I've been wanting a tin fish for quite a little while. Thought the allied navies would like to look over the latest model. So I just brought one in." He gazed out through the open window to where the harbor glittered in the sun, and a softer light shone in his keen little face. "There's—there's another reason, perhaps, sir," he went on. "I've got a little girl ashore, and she's been pestering me to show her how a depth gauge works. We've been studying navigation, you see, so I figured it was up to me to show her the real made-in-Germany article." He reached for the brown leather satchel at the side of his chair, hoisted it up to his lap, opened it, and carefully lifted out a nicked pressure gauge. "I just knocked this off, and I'm taking it home to the little girl, sir, for a souvenir." Once more he stopped, and now he blushed.

"I've got her picture here, sir, if you'd like to look at it," he said quietly, holding out an open locket.

The Admiral gravely took the locket, examined the young face within, considered it appreciatively, and closed the locket again as he handed it back.

"It's rather a fortunate thing for von Tirpitz, or von Hindenburg, or perhaps the Kaiser, that the child hasn't expressed a wish to examine their collar buttons," remarked the Admiral to a group of officers later, after telling them the story. "If she does, I feel reasonably sure Captain Butts will get them for her. Oh, of

course he'll get a D. S. O., but I'd wager a gold stripe that he'll think more of the 'Thank you, Daddy' he'll get at home when he turns over his souvenir."

And out at sea, on the way around Lands End, Captain Butts was saying to Chief Engineer McPherson:

"I'll say this much for you, Mac, you're a rare good hand in a pinch. By the way, we must tell Starret that you used his case of four-inch shells to make those hand grenades. Have a smoke?"



CHINOISERIE

By Archie Austin Coates

WHITE lilies, brimmed with gems of dew
 And river mist, I bring to you;
 Green water-plants with shining leaf
 And golden bells whose songs are brief
 I gather for you, Almond Eyes. . . .
 And from each bloom, my passion sighs.

Through scented dusk, I pole the boat
 O'er muddy streams where lilies float
 And sway by night. My paddle dips
 And wakes faint echoes from tall ships
 That lie, gray-painted in the haze,
 Like ghostly wraiths of elder days.

Heavy with blossoms, fragrant, white;
 With lilies drooping in the night,
 I come to you in white moon-sheen
 And bring you sleep, and dreams serene.
 In waxen lilies, cups of dew
 And river-mist—but tears to you!

The Dollar

By Vincent Starrett

SEXTON cynically tossed his hand into the discard, and rose to his feet.

"I didn't fill," he said, "and as I happen now to be broke, it is impossible for me to lose any more money."

"Like a little loan, Billy?" Fortune carelessly shuffled a handful of green bills, and grinned wickedly at his friend.

"Not for play," replied Sexton. "You pirates have all of my money you're going to get, this week. You can lend me a dollar, if you will, though; I haven't even carfare."

Fortune selected a crisp one dollar bill from the sheaf in his hand, and tossed it across the table.

"Sexton's too wild," remarked Kinross, when the unlucky player had left the room. "He lacks judgment. He ought to be made to walk home, once or twice; it would teach him a lesson."

"He'll walk, all right," grinned Fortune significantly.

"Eh?" The table looked mildly interested.

"That was a phoney bill I handed him," chuckled the lender. "He *may* pass it, of course, not knowing it to be bad; but nobody but a blind man would take it."

"He may get himself pinched," remonstrated Kinross.

"Serve him right!"

The other newspaper men at the table grunted approval. Popular as Sexton was, the notion of his arrest appealed, subtly, as something of a joke. The game was resumed. It was just two o'clock in the morning.

Sexton, after leaving the Press Club, headed for the nearest car line. He cursed himself roundly for having lost his week's wages; but the emotion was transitory. In a moment, he profoundly congratulated himself on having thought to borrow the dollar. The night was disagreeable, and walking home would have been an unpleasant and wearying task.

As he approached Wabash Avenue, head bent against the blast, a form moved in the deep shadows of a shop doorway. A sob succeeded the movement; then there was a sharp, intaken breath as the reporter stopped.

"What's 'strouble?" Sexton inquired professionally.

A girl detached herself from the shadows; a white face was raised to his. Neither hope nor curiosity was in the glance.

"What is it?" asked Sexton again, impatiently. "Can I help?"

"No—thank you," replied the girl.

The low voice was that of a gentlewoman.

"Look here," said Sexton persuasively, "don't be afraid. I'm a newspaper man, and I'm used to talking to strangers. I hear more trouble every day than you ever had. Sometimes I can help. Let's hear about it!"

The girl had stopped crying.

"You say you are a reporter?" she asked nervously.

"*Times-Star*," said Sexton proudly.

She looked at him more closely.

"I am going to give you something to write about," she suddenly announced.

"I am going to—I am going down to the lake!"

"Great Scott! What for?"

"Everything—nothing!" said the girl. "I can't tell you."

Sexton hesitated.

"Do you need money?" he asked, after a moment.

"No," she said. "I haven't any, but I won't need it where I am going."

"Well," said the reporter, almost regretfully, "I'll have to call a policeman. I can't let you jump into the lake, you know."

She grasped his arm quickly.

"Please don't!" she begged.

"If you'll give me your name and address, and go home, and promise not to do anything until I've seen you to-morrow, I won't!"

"If you don't promise," continued the reporter, "I'll call a policeman at once!"

"I can't get home," she said weakly.

"Of course, you have no money. Here's a dollar. It's all I've got. Now, you hustle along, as fast as you can. Get something to eat first, if you can, then go home, and don't stir out of the house till I come to-morrow. What is your name, and where do you live?"

The girl told him. Suddenly she seized his arm again. She was crying.

"Thank you, oh, thank you!" she sobbed. "I don't think—I don't think I shall now!"

"Good girl!" approved Sexton. A moment later, he said: "Good night!"

The walk to his room was long and cold. . . .

As he turned into the office next morning, he encountered Fortune, who grinned at sight of his victim.

"How did you enjoy the walk home last night?" inquired the second reporter, sinfully joyous.

Sexton was surprised.

"How did you know I walked home?" he demanded. "Did you follow me?"

"Didn't have to," chuckled the other. "I knew you'd never pass that bill."

A weakness came over Sexton; he caught his breath.

"Wha-at!"

"You mean to say you didn't get wise that it was phoney?"

Sexton leaned heavily against the nearest counter. He shook like a man with a chill.

"My God!" he said.

There was a silence, while the second reporter looked anxious.

"Fortune," Sexton said slowly, after a moment, "you are a damned scoundrel—and probably a murderer!"

Quickly he turned and dashed out of the doorway. He snatched a morning paper from the newsstand at the corner, and began hastily to scan its columns. Page after page he turned without finding that for which he looked. It was not in the paper.

He took the elevator to the second floor, and burst dramatically upon his city editor.

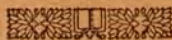
"I want the morning off," he said. "Good story, I think, and possibly—"

"Sorry, Sexton," said the gray-haired young man at the littered desk, "but I have other plans for you. I want you to hurry down to the lake, at the foot of—"

The reporter wavered. Then he calmly interrupted his chief.

"A girl's body has just been pulled out," he said. "She is young and rather pretty, although poorly dressed. There is no clew to her identity. In her purse, there is a counterfeit one-dollar bill."

"How did you know?" asked the city editor. "It happened early this morning, and the police report has just come in. How did you know?"



The Harbor

By Nancy Shore

SLOWLY the gleaming, floating, tossing whiteness changed into shapes. The gleaming whiteness became frozen dunes, the tossing whiteness revealed the winter sea, and the floating whiteness drifted over the land in sprays of whirling mist.

Dark rows of pines marched to the water's edge, curving like protecting arms about slender, gray crescents of sand. Along the beaches and the cliffs were houses, with boarded-up windows, staring blindly at the sea. Deserted boats, half buried in the sand, turned useless, broken sides to the waves; drift logs gleamed in the light of dawn, the sun, searching them out against the dark sands, turning them into shapes like dried bones of prehistoric animals.

Behind the closed summer cottages, where not even the ghosts of summer lovers remained, a narrow railroad track, ties wet and gleaming, slid like two dark streaks across the frozen meadows. A train, a toy amid the surrounding immensities, hurried along, casting a new shade, yellow of smoke, to mingle with the other floating veils that hid the deserted beach.

Three gray threads, banners of hearth and home, rose swaying in the clear morning air. Smoke from a cozy cottage on the cliffs, smoke from a tiny house among the pines, and smoke from the tall, crooked chimneys of the old Hansen House.

Out of the mist came a peculiar sloshing sound, and after the sound came a strange sight. A girl appeared leading a cow, and about the cow's neck was a

great wreath of roses—big, tattered flowers with silver stems and glossy leaves.

The wreath was formed of several separate bouquets, and where the artificial flowers did not quite meet, sweet-smelling strips of evergreen had been woven into connecting loops.

Undoubtedly, some one young and beautiful had once worn those silver-stemmed posies. They radiated memories of bare, gleaming throats, of velvet gowns, of ermine, sable and glittering jewels. They suggested the throbbing notes of an orchestra tuning up; the mystery of lights turned low; the expectancy of an upward-sliding curtain. They spoke of camellias and soft pink ears, gleaming rosily with the breath of a whisperer of sweet words against them.

They were beautiful flowers, and even though the cow that wore them was very glossy, she was most indifferent. She came swinging along over the frozen earth, licking her long, sad face with her long, damp tongue and swaying her wreath with a certain air of annoyance, as if she felt that the only suitable decoration for a respectable cow was a neat copper bell—not a great heavy gewgaw of a wreath.

The girl continually jerked the cow forward as if she were afraid some one might come along and witness the strange exhibition.

However, no one came. But if any one had, he would have been surprised to discover that the girl was not young, that she was not a girl at all. There were lines in her face put there by that sharp chiseler Time; there were marks

put there by pain and sorrow. Noticeably, also, there was a certain look of desperation.

She was tall, magnificently tall, with a white throat and a shielding depth of breast. Her clear gray eyes were shaded by dusty, golden lashes and her brows curved away like slender wings. Her cheeks gleamed with the cold air, and her drooping, discouraged mouth was surprisingly crimson. Low on her neck was a great twist of pale hair, dead and lifeless—the color of wet haystacks.

The woman led the cow along the pathway, pausing at a gate which sagged between moss-marked gate posts. Chains gave forth a rusty jangle of welcome, and the gate swung crookedly open. Between gnarled, wind-bent trees, a pathway of ancient clamshells led away to a gaunt house. The girl paused before the rickety steps, straightened the wreath about the cow's neck, a shadow of joy slowly lifting some of the discouragement from her face, and called softly, her voice breaking the silent morning air into a thousand echoic halloos.

A red door, startling against the whiteness of the house, like a seal on an old letter, opened, and two figures appeared. Two tiny, bent creatures, with shawls over their heads like fairy-tale witches, came creeping out, clinging to the porch railings for support, their sunken eyes fixed in amazement on the girl and the cow.

"But Karen, the cow—and milk for winter, and milk for summer, and butter," one of them croaked, dropping her shawl and showing her ageworn, work-bent figure. "Karen—the money in the box?" Her voice was raised suspiciously and her faded eyes gleamed with anger.

"Oh, no, no, Auntie, I did not touch the funeral money. You can have the tall plum cakes as you always planned and all the trimmings on your coffin, too. I earned the extra money for the cow last month when I was up at Oysterville taking care of Captain Swenson's wife

—don't you remember—I told you about the wife of the man who had the clam factory up there? She had a baby, too, and the doctor got caught by the tide at Hug-the Coast Point, and did not get there, and I did everything for her! Her husband was frightened, it was their first baby, and he paid me well—and we have the cow!"

Karen talked as if it were hard to make the old women understand. Her sentences were stilted and her voice pitched high. It always wearied her to try to explain things to them. She paused and then added like an indulgent mother:

"Mrs. Davis did the cow up in the wreath. She said that when people are as old as you are, it is time to have festivities upon their birthdays. She named the cow 'Rosebud.'" Karen laughed and jerked the wreath into place again. "Once Mrs. Davis wore those flowers at a grand party—once when she was young and rich!" the girl added softly. It seemed very wonderful to her that one could part with anything that had meant joy and happiness.

"Karen, Karen, but you are good!" the girl's mother croaked. "Karen, my one good child!" She pronounced the name gently, making the letters form a single syllable, but putting any amount of affection into the word.

The two old women crept along the broken steps, coming nearer to pat the nose of the cow, to caress the velvet flowers, to pinch off evergreen needles and chew them between mumbling lips, glancing up every few seconds to smile at the girl, to blink kindly and contentedly at her through the strong morning light, which showed thousands of tiny crisscrosses on their leathery skins—and revealed the animal-like sadness of their shifting, rheumy eyes.

"Go back into the house now, little women, and cuddle down by the fire. Karen will take Rosebud over and milk her and very soon you shall have milk."

The old Auntie sidled away across the porch, to return carrying a rusty bucket which she was polishing on her red flannel petticoat. Her exposed, thin, old legs looked, somehow, childish in their white, hand-knit socks, above heavy, muddy shoes.

"No, no, Auntie; can't start in with a rusty bucket; have to be clean, have to try to run a dairy now, see?" Karen said, as if she were trying to teach a lesson to a child. Auntie hung her head and muttered about the old days, her shaking chin a forerunner of tears. "Here, dear, you may carry in the wreath and Mother may bring out the shining new pail," Karen went on, desperately trying to keep peace by a great show of fairness. In a second, the little mother brought out a new and shining pail.

"Karen, on my birthday, I have news for you—on my birthday," she announced in a harsh, excited whisper, slipping along over the frozen grass towards Karen. The girl paused, a bar of sunshine polishing the pail on her arm, and bent nearer, the better to hear her mother. "But *he* has come back—he on the hill. When you had gone for the cow—which then we did not know we had—*he* came, he came by calling for you, just the same, just the same."

The pail fell to the ground with a crash. The cow, forgotten, wandered off over the frost-stiffened flowers of a deserted garden. Karen stooped nearer and nearer to her mother.

"Mother, no—it cannot be. Kent could not come again, not now. Oh, he was too slow!" Unbelief filled her voice. "I am old, oh, I am old," she added so softly that even her mother did not hear her nor know why her eyes wandered away over the dismal garden, only to return and settle on her mud-covered, work-broken boots. "Oh, and I am ugly!" she said, slowly raising her eyes to her red hands, as if it took physical things to make her understand how truly time can change beauty.

2—L. S.

"I can not help it—he came." Only the disjointed arrangement of her sentence marked Karen's mother as a foreigner. She started for the house, but once more came teetering back.

"I said to Auntie that it was but more trouble, but more trouble. I said to her that it was to be expected, that even more may be put upon us. I told her; you will not have to speak with her about it, too!" The old lady sighed sharply, taking her breath into her lungs with a rattle, as if even the effort to breathe hurt. Her sentences were permeated with fatalism; she seemed to be announcing a proved fact.

"Listen, little, foolish Mother. Long, long ago we decided all about the man on the hill." Karen spoke as if she had become a child to please a child. "We settled it all; don't worry over him and the people here in this *square* house. Look! we have the cow, and the square house, the beautiful square house, and Auntie, and the meeting with the spirits of your youth. Why, you are in great luck, little Mother. You know just what you believe—so, after all, you have your heart's desire!"

Karen enumerated her mother's treasures as one does a child's stock of toys. She stooped above her, gave the sunken gray eyes a sweet, courageous look, pulled the shawl closer about the bent shoulders, trying against her own will to put her mother's mind at rest.

Her mother's only answer was a far-away look, and with another rattling sigh, she turned from Karen, muttering over and over: "Heart's desire, heart's desire!"

Karen led the cow across a frost-hardened meadow to a sagging roofed barn, which leaned crazily away from the buffeting winds of the coast. She pulled at the door, tramping down the encroaching meadow grass to allow it to swing open, and jerked the cow into the deserted, shadowy place. Seated on a three-legged stool, she began to milk.

Hay over head, earth beneath feet, a peaceful cow, a tiny stool, and a deep-chested woman, made a picture of the far Northland, not connected with the wind-swept beach and its rows of summer cottages and its toy railroad. Karen, glancing about the old stable, sensed the picture she made, and allowed her thoughts to be led away, down strange pathways of the distant past, bringing weird visions before her, making forgotten scenes creep forth to haunt the remote corners of that dusty, straw-stuffed barn.

Years before, there had been a wedding feast in Norway. There had been fiddlers and many guests—girls in great caps and men in gayly embroidered vests. Old women cooked incessantly while a priest waited in a mountain chapel to perform the ceremony. The groom, a tall boy with a great shock of unruly hair, stared avidly at a little thing in a stiff, jeweled lace cap, who, for all her shy glances, was so soon to be his wife. There had been singing all day long.

Just before the wedding hour, another group of guests arrived—cousins from a far-off mountain hamlet. The last guest to dismount from the coach was a girl, who peered up at the groom-to-be, a trifle amazed at the great size of the man her cousin had decided to marry. From her black bodice the sleeves of white, misty muslin stood out like airy, fairy wings; her flat gold braids were wound round and round her capless head; her shoulders were crossed with silver chains, from which fluttered tiny red and blue tassels. She did not hurry about with her cousin admiring the linen chests, or tasting the foods for the feast. She never stirred to mingle with the dancers. She merely sat, her little hands, unmarred by work, folded in her smooth, silken lap, her slippered feet swinging, and stared at the boy with the unruly hair. The boy, feeling a good bit ignored in the mad preparations for his

own wedding, believing that the linens and the food were entirely too attractive to his bride, glanced once too often at the little mountain girl, whose eyes had never left his face. All of her dream-filled mind seemed to shine out of her gray eyes as she answered his smiles. She was a dreamer, a spirit maiden of the North, and she did not know that the tall boy was merely a healthy young animal with a sudden desire to crush her pale, flat braids beneath his lips. Abruptly, just as the wedding peals were sounding, the boy picked up the little stranger, and much to the alarm and horror of the wedding guests, ran down the mountain with her in his arms and disappeared.

After days of hard work; after months of want and suffering; after times of hunger, times of remorse, the couple, she with her fluffy sleeves droopy and dirty, he with his wedding vest torn by toil and his face blanched by hardship, went on board a great ship bound for America.

Karen had been born in the steerage of that ship, which after a storm-bound, miserable voyage, had spewed a strange cargo of humanity upon an unwelcoming, bleak pier.

A Norse fishing village on Long Finger Point had sheltered the tall man, with the mussed, unruly hair, the wee, frightened girl, with the tousled, pale braids, and the squalling Karen. On a meadow behind the Point, the man built a hut, a mere mud hut, with a flat stone before the door, and the hut had been the home of the man, the girl, the baby, and the cow.

When Karen was eleven months old, a little sister arrived, and when that atom was two days old, her mother, with Karen tugging at her skirts, had gone forth to milk, to plow, and to hoe the potatoes. She had discovered, among other startling facts which marriage had forced upon her, that the boy who had carried her down the mountains, who

had whispered the meaning of love into her eager ears, was in no way related to the silent, selfish man who smoked all the hours of the day before his mud hut, and growled ceaselessly about the work he never did.

Time passed.

Prosperity followed a railroad from the city to Long Finger Point. Summer time became three long, busy months, crowded with serving people who built summer cottages on the meadow, or hung little places, like gay bird cages, half way up the cliffs along the beach.

The Hansens (now a cross man, a work-bent woman, and five dirty children) overflowed the flat stone before the cabin and stared at the gay summer people who passed and repassed the place—a procession of drooping hats and gay sweaters.

"What are you thinking, little Mother?" Karen would often ask, wondering at her mother's dream-filled eyes.

"The square house, the beautiful square house, white, perhaps. I want it!" Of all the dreams in which the mother of Karen wrapped her brain, this was the only one that ever came true.

Karen, eagerly watching how other people lived, learned that many of the cottagers and campers desired a hotel on the beach. A cheap hotel, where no one dressed for dinner, where children were not taboo, where a vacation could be enjoyed for very little money.

Standing one evening before the flat stone, she expounded her plan to the family of Hansen. Because she was the child of her parents' strength and first passion, she had inherited a certain amount of beauty and brains, a combination not possessed by any of the others. Her father entirely overlooked her possession of brains, but he remembered his own great body, and felt a certain pride in her strength. Aye, she was strong, and without a doubt, it would be well to heed her.

So, the outcome of Karen's speech was

that by the next spring a gaunt, square house had been raised upon the spot where, for years, the Hansen hovel had bowed its grimy head. Needy relatives, imported for the building of the house, stayed on to help run the hotel.

The square house, the beautiful reality of the dreaming little mother's desire, was in truth nothing but a grave for her hopes. Cheaply built, it reared itself among some wind-bent trees, behind a wish-bone shaped gateway of dried whalebones. The dreamhouse was white, bluish white, with yellow trimmings. At one side, a beehive-shaped summer house supplied a spot for sleepy granddads by day and spooning lovers by night. Beside the gateway were some bath houses, untidy spots with wet sand oozing up under broken floors, and dirty towels hanging like flags over the doors. Behind the house was a great garden where, early and late, the little Hansens toiled—stooping over their beds, weeding, weeding! After a few successful seasons, a troop of cows stood patiently before the whalebone gateway, tinkling their bells and calling to Karen to come and milk them. With the cows came a smoke-house, and a peculiar old country ice-house. In strange contrast to the ever-growing string of unlovely out-houses was the flower garden, beds neatly bordered with clam shells, a waving, fluttering daub of fragrance and color.

The Hansen Hotel was crowded year after year with little clerks, cheap store-keepers, mostly foreigners, who turned troops of children into the yard behind the whalebones. Tired grandmothers were sent to the beach to enjoy a two weeks' vacation and guard a herd of saucy grandchildren. One room at the Hansen Hotel could accommodate a whole family, and the rates were adjustable to suit any pocketbook.

In winter the Hansen family lived in the kitchen, the rest of the house being shut away, dark, damp, echoic. In this time of rest, Mrs. Hansen generally de-

voted a few days to the uninteresting, unadventurous task of having a new baby. Sometimes, strange old-country celebrations were held, much to eat, much to drink, many people crowding into the kitchen, steam dripping off dirty clothes onto dirtier babies. After the eating and drinking came a long, superstitious, religious ceremony—for they were all old-country spiritualists.

With summer, all thoughts of celebration were lost in one long orgy of work.

Karen was up at dawn, setting tables, planning meals, boiling crabs, making tasteless butter—grinding out her youth for money which poor management wasted.

Her brothers were jerked out of bed at dawn to wade in cold water for crabs, to dig in wet sand for clams, to tramp through dewy forests for berries. Little, cold kiddies trooping into the kitchen to lay the spoils of their efforts before their father and then to rush away in the same wet clothes, to work all day in the garden.

Karen and her mother spent hours over the great range—while the husband and father marched proudly about watching his guests play croquet.

The whole Hansen family slept in one room behind the kitchen. Of course, if there were too many children, they could sleep just any place, dining-room tables, back stairs, or in a wet haystack.

Then, one day, baby Selma died—one busy day in June, when the summer rush was just beginning—and because no one had time to mourn for her, a new light of desperation crept into the gray eyes of the mother.

Time passed.

Karen finished the coast school, and her sister was married to a huge saloon keeper from Olwaco. A little later, Karen, a tall girl of seventeen, slender and sweet to look upon, went to take care of her sister when she had twin babies. When Karen came back to the square house, her eyes had a new look—wonder. She was changed, indefinitely

changed. If words had been her portion at that time, she might have said, a trifle sadly, that her soul had been born simultaneously with the birth of Christine's twins.

One day in early fall, Karen's mother was in the wood-girt meadow cutting, with an old fashioned scythe and long, swishing sweeps, ferns for winter bedding for the cattle. As she swung along, her body following the scythe, her eyes on her work, she became aware of a sound other than the rhythmical *swish, swish, swish* of the long knife against the brown, sweet-smelling ferns. Standing in a hidden opening in the woods was Karen. Her chin was raised to an angle of listening, her wide gray eyes peered ahead with a strained expression. Her voice, which reached her mother's ears, seemed not only to be questioning the bird and the trees and the open sky, but to be imploring help in time of great need.

"I know that they are different—but how are they different? Oh, how are they different? If I knew, then I could change us. They don't have dirt and pigs and babies in a heap; that I know!"

The girl paused and her mother pushed one end of the scythe into the ground and crept nearer her strange daughter. The girl had raised herself on her toes as if trying to peer over an obstacle.

"They are like a hill, Father and all of them; and the way they live, and I am just under the hill—but I don't know the pathway over it! Work, work, work, dirt, babies, ugly things! I think I shall die. But how am I to find out if there is anything different in the world?"

Higher and higher the girl pulled herself up, as if by sheer physical strength her splendid body might be forced to cast some gleams of light into her searching brain.

Her mother, standing beside the great scythe, suddenly realized that she was watching the punishment which had be-

gun at Karen's birth—the punishment for that one act which had ruined the mother's whole life, in that race down the mountain with her cousin's lover. The whimsical mind of the woman of the North, although blunted by disappointment and dulled by work, felt blindly that this girl would go on paying for years to come—paying for all that the girl in the fluffy sleeves—and silver chains had done. Suddenly, the bent woman beside the scythe felt a tumultuous desire to hurl herself upon that great curved knife—to hack and gash and tear at her own body in a futile attempt to punish that body for leading her astray. Instead, she crept out and ended Karen's reverie by hurrying her back to the gritty sink in the square house—the gritty sink heaped high with greasy, white chinaware.

That same fall Karen received the impetus that sent her flying up the hill which had hidden her from the lives of other people.

One night she was walking along the beach, gathering dead fish which were to be used as fertilizer. Instinctively, she was ashamed of her occupation, and hid herself away from an approaching group of summer people. She crouched in the shadowy sand behind a shielding boat, while the group of laughing people paused nearby and, unconsciously, told her just what real people thought of such an establishment as the Hansen Hotel. She heard them giggling about the food prepared in the dirty kitchen; she wondered why it was a joke to have one bathtub for forty people; she questioned ignorantly why other people spoke of herself and her brothers and sisters as "little slaves." Quite filled with wonderment, she realized that these people from the beautiful summer houses on the cliffs were more than laughing at her family. But with scalding cheeks, she heard her own name mentioned in connection with the advent of her sister's babies—and she made the alarming discovery that her father had

done a criminal thing when he had taken money for Christine from the fat saloon-keeper.

With a gnawing fear at her heart and her breath cold and rasping in her throat, she learned that the name of Hilma—the little, slim, blond Hilma—was a disgraceful by-word among the summer colonists. From that moment, Karen began to connect perfume, ribbons, cheap jewelry, and the hearing of little, slipping footsteps creeping into a house in the dawn-time, the feeling of a slender, cold body sliding into bed beside an older sister—with a tragedy peculiar to innocent girlhood. When her tortured mind was once more able to hear the voices of the knowledge bringers, she realized why her brothers coughed so much.

For hours Karen lay there behind her shielding boat, turning, twisting, moaning, biting her hands—like a tormented wild creature. Then, with the calmness of the peaceful, blue night, some of the forgotten visions of her mother's youth crept down over the beach to bid her be up and on her way. Far into the night, Karen planned the salvation of the Hansen family.

Karen did not spend the next winter in the square house. She had gone home with a family from the cliffs—to work for her high school education. The next summer, she honestly tried to improve matters at the hotel, and just as honestly she failed. The next winter Karen spent in a doctor's home in Port Greenflower, and the next year saw her wearing a probationer's uniform at the hospital in that town.

She was summoned home from the hospital by an urgent message concerning Hilma, and upon her arrival, she called the family together in a conclave which she planned as a beginning of great changes that would affect the whole establishment.

To Karen, sitting in the deserted barn, milking the birthday cow, the vision of that family conference came back with

alarming clearness. Her tragic disappointment made it a never-to-be-forgotten event. Crowded together were all the members of the family, frightened like dull animals at the solemnity of the occasion. Frain, Emma and Hulda gathered in a group near their eldest brother, Egbert, who looked as if he were listening to words spoken in a strange, fascinating language. Mother Hansen sat a bit apart, as if *she* had no right to take an active part in the quarrel. Beside her was an empty little rocker where Hilma had spent many hours, humming as she rocked, like a little girl. Even Karen did not suspect that her mother was ceaselessly caressing, in the darkness of her pocket, one of the girl's beloved ribbons.

Auntie stood a little in front of a group of agreeing relatives, and before them all, Karen and her father paced up and down, like speakers in a debate—talking, talking, talking!

"No one shall lizzen to her! Shut up!" her father roared, and then flew into a torrent of angry speech. The family did not have to clean up or change its way of living. Did not people pay them well for boarding them? The coughing boys were merely lazy—they could work if they cared to. The girls were not bad, never; they were smart. Smartness removed all sting of evil. Hilma was the fool. She had gotten into silly trouble. Karen was another fool—coming home, spending money, because her mother, the great stupid, had sent her word about Hilma. What if the man to whom they had just married Hilma did come from a hut beside the cranberry marsh—he of the humped back? Had not the city boy's father paid the crooked man to marry Hilma? It had cost them nothing! Why fuss? The thing might happen to anyone. Lucky there had been a crooked man handy. What if Egbert were thin? What if his chest did pain him? All could not have plenty in this world! Why howl always of the

dirt? The good Lord made it, did He not?

The mother, staring backward at her brood, had slipped away to call back the spirit of baby Selma, to plant childish flowers in a warm, sheltered corner of her garden—candy-tuft, pink poppies, and forget-me-nots.

Karen never forgot the first result of the family meeting. Someone had awakened her in the middle of the night. Someone with gray, visionary eyes, had sat upon her bed and asked her question after question. A cold, thin hand had pressed hers gratefully, and lips that seemed old despite the softness of youth, had kissed her, and the next morning her father had ranted about Egbert, the wise fool who had run away in the night, he with his fine talk of education, with nothing but a cough and a pair of worn shoes to his name.

Suddenly, sitting in that dusty barn, Karen stretched her arms eagerly out toward another shadowy vision. With a little cry, she dropped them, shuddering to think that memory could be so potent, for, after all those years, she thought she was holding Emma in her arms again, Emma who had died, coughing, in the midst of the boarding season, while the old father stuffed and padded the walls with horse blankets to keep the tumult of her sickness from the rest of the hotel. Karen's heart had ached far worse than the lungs of the poor girl who had been cheated out of all the world—even out of life itself.

After that, life at the Hansen Hotel was just an orgy of doctors and nurses and beefsteaks and cream and eggs—with death, who refused to loosen his grip, leering in at the windows of the square house of dreams.

For three years, Karen, with a determined expression on her face, scrubbed; but alas, she scrubbed too late.

One spring, Egbert returned. In March, with the wind howling in the trees, with rain beating in the windows,

he lectured to a jeering populace on the undiscovered subject of eugenics. Later, the whole village taunted the "cityfied Swede" when he opened the school house, and tried to teach. Came the night when Egbert, the visionary, Egbert the dreamer, died—he who had only loved one thing more than wisdom—and that one thing a cruel, scornful woman.

"Karen, Karen, don't give up. Make it give you something, life, I mean, because we have given it so many lives! Oh, win something, you poor, poor child!" he had moaned, clinging to his sister's hand and tossing to and fro on the shoddy mattress of what had once been the bridal-suite bed of the Hansen Hotel. "Karen, they pushed us here, they pushed us into hell! My mother, what did she give me? Weakness and a dreamer's brain filled with taunting visions! God in Heaven, what have I not wanted to do!" He turned away, his thin hand clutching his throat, his saintlike face filled with memories of the beauties of the world which he had been allowed but to glimpse, not possess. "And he, my father, what did he give me? He made me an animal, a grovelling animal. Now I am dying, and that is their fault, too. In all my life, never have I been warm and never have I had enough to eat. Now I implore you—make life give you something—to—to love!"

After Egbert died, no one came to the Hotel—the fear of death had won out over even cheapness.

The beautiful square house of dreams was deserted except for Karen, her father, her mother, and one old aunt.

Karen scattered her memories to the winds of the past, and peering up into the shadowy depths of hay above her head, asked again the question that for years she had been repeating: What was Life giving her, what was she giving Life? The answer came in terms of work, work and study, kindness to people who, all along the beach, sought her out in times of sickness. Work and study

—not such a bad way to spend life, she reasoned, if only the first lessons had not been so bitter, if only the work were not so unending!

Now *he* had come back!

Karen shook her head, as if by the mere movement she could do away with truant thoughts. She wanted no taunting visions of the one happy time in her life. Her gesture was futile—memories, sweetly insistent, crowded into her brain.

She saw the deserted summer houses with boarded-up windows, blinking blindly at the winter sea. Then she saw one house where a light had gleamed like a friendly beacon through many a winter night. She knew every nook and cranny of that house on the cliffs. And though for years she had not set foot within it, she felt the sensation of home steal over her as she thought of it. It was there she had gone to nurse the broken, ill-treated body of Kent Dutton back to some semblance of life.

"Hello, Norse Queen!" he had mocked, when he had recovered from weeks of delirious stupor, following an injury received in a disgraceful motor wreck. "Hello, Norse Queen," he said, recognizing his nurse, "how is the tribe of Hansen? Still gathering dead fish for garden sass?"

Karen longed to despise the man for his very weakness. He had possessed everything that she had so desired, and he had wilfully cast his life up in broken bits. This man who had all the genius denied to Egbert, merely lay counting the hours, until he should be strong enough for new dissipation.

That same Fate which had handed Karen only worthless remnants of life out of which to make a thing called existence, grinned and played a strange joke on Kent Dutton. Fate shuffled the cards called Propinquity, Strength, Dependancy and Love, together with one marked Karen—and spread them before his listless hands.

Karen was to learn strange things from that hand which Fate dealt for Kent Dutton. She learned that the full moon might mean something besides a promise of crabs in the morning; she realized that the glowing coals in the fireplace might bring thoughts of something more than an empty woodbox. Taking food in a companionable manner meant more than mere memories of a greasy dishpan. To walk in the pine woods with Kent was a trifle different from a rush to find a spot where blackberries grew. Her old enemy, the sea, which for years had only meant cold and damp and howling winds, come to sing a soft and crooning lullaby.

Then the shadow born in that far away flight down one of Norway's mountains, began to cast bleak darkness over Karen's time of love. She realized that this wonderful passion of hers was but temporary pleasure. There were things in her life, things that had scarred her brow, which she could never desert. There were things in Kent's life, things with which he had scarred his brow, that she feared he could never conquer. Beaten firmly upon her mind was the knowledge of her peculiar heritage, her strange governing antecedents. The fears that had marked her life, made Karen afraid to undertake anything for herself. Kent's delirious ravings were shadowed in her mind by Egbert's dying commands. Kent was the one thing she wanted Life to give her and she was afraid to take him. Even Love had come to her life with a broken body and a scarred face.

"I can't marry anyone, Kent. I have to care for Mother and Father." Karen could still hear her voice, she could still hear Kent pleading with her.

How he had begged her to desert them, to come away with him, to allow him to show her life! With his very words had come a bitter realization that, in his heart, he held no responsibility sacred. She realized that all her explana-

tions were in vain. Kent's own selfish inadequacy had raised another barrier between them.

"We shall go away, leave the terrible beach. I shall go on writing stories, Karen. We shall love and live."

"I can't marry any one who is selfish, Kent darling," Karen had wept. "Father was selfish—and look at all of us. It would only mean that I should be cheated more and more! I can't be responsible for anything else, dear. Love means kindness and care to me. Egbert told me to hang on until I was sure of something. Oh, Kent, dear, *dear* Kent, I am not sure of you, not sure at all."

"Why, you are strong enough for two of us. Think of your wonderful mind and your great splendid body; think what you have done for me. Why, I can't help being strong and growing stronger, if I am with you!"

"Think of the strength in my father's body and what it did for us," Karen had whispered. Then she proceeded to strip all the glory of love from her life by painting to her lover the sordidness of that life. She left out nothing—the stolen bride, the baby in the steerage, the dirt, the disease, the hordes of children. The whole tragedy of her existence fell from her ashamed lips.

"My father was like a giant who lay sleeping all day and feasted all night upon the tribute his slaves brought him—but these slaves were his own flesh and blood. I can't marry any one like you, Kent. Don't you see? If I marry, it must be someone who will help me wash the dirt marks off my soul, not someone who will smear on more. It must be someone who will raise me, me and my babies, not someone whom I shall have to shove along to make him decent. My shoulders are broad, but they can't carry any more. I am not quite of goddess size, you know!" She laughed drearily at her poor, battered bit of humor. "I shall go on carrying those old people on my shoulders, while you go away and

try to make life count big for you. If it does—come back. But the fight is too big for any hope of those dreams coming true, my dear, my very dear!" In spite of her fatalistic disbelief, he had left her, swearing that some day he would return—filled with the strength she craved.

To Karen, sitting in the straw-stuffed barn, was granted one more tragic picture—her father's death. Like a wicked old king, he called together his few faithful retainers and repeated on his death-bed tales of splendor and pomp. Karen knew that her mother was wondering if that cruel, drooping mouth had ever beguiled her with sweet, sweet words, or if that gaunt, leathery cheek had ever burned against her own through nights of youthful love? Strangely, as she looked at the old man, Karen wept, and realized that she was thinking of Kent. Could that broken, withered creature ever have been her great, strong father?

At last it was over. In state, the owner of the one-time prosperous Hotel Hansen rode away in the ornate automobile hearse from the village—and left three women alone in the poverty-stricken house of tragedy. Auntie clicked her teeth ceaselessly against her tongue, in an age-old sound of woe. Suddenly Karen's mother broke the silence, croaking forth a sentence which, unconsciously, told her daughter that she, too, knew that life had cheated her.

"Always did I want to ride in an automobile—and he did it first, he did it first!"

Karen picked up her pail and started for the house. Again she shook her head roughly as if she were trying to break in upon her thoughts. She wanted no more memory visions; she had torn her heart with enough.

The two old creatures by the fire gave no sign of greeting as the girl came into the kitchen. Finally, the mother spoke.

"On my birthday, more trouble!" All

memory of the gift of the cow was stifled in her present grief.

"But, Mother, why do you fret so? I have not even seen him, nor has he seen me. He will not want me. I am old!"

Tiny openings along the front of the range gleamed like little windows in a dark house. Flames curled up behind them, casting a ruby light about the old kitchen, tinting the girl's cheeks with rose, wiping all the weary lines of discouragement away from her fine brow. The lights of a real home would never have the power to make Karen radiant. She stood mutely watching the old women, realizing that, for their childish peace of mind, she must put her greatest sacrifice into the surety of words. Their silence demanded it.

"He comes to take you—he comes! Who will care for us? The money long since is all gone. He takes the bread from our mouths, the blood from our hearts!"

With her hands over her ears Karen fled to her own room. She was dealing with children—children who were filled with selfish temper.

Through the intense silence of the old house, the nagging personalities of the two old women followed her, and seemed to invade the room where she sat, her head buried in her arms. She knew those two old creatures so well that she could almost *hear* their thoughts. Her shoulders sank hopelessly, her mouth trembled, and her breath came in one long, desperate sob. She had made her decision.

From the foot of the long, dark stairs, a voice complained of hunger, reminding Karen that the world still went on—the world, and work and service.

While her two charges ate the simple meal she set before them, she was conscious that their looks invited her to unburden her thoughts to them. Finally, in desperation, she paused on her way to the store-room, to say:

"Mother, dear, and little Auntie, you

are not to worry. Even if he has come to take me, I shall not go. I shall stay here with you—always. As long as you need me, I stay. That I promise!”

Karen's eyes showed great surprise and pity when her mother teetered to her, and standing on tiptoe, pressed her flabby cheek against the girl's glowing face.

“One good child left to me—one good child.” The words were a croon of sheer contentment.

Karen, her mind filled with a strange mingling of joy and peace, stooped and patted her mother's head. Then she turned away, seeking air, freedom, peace, which she knew she could find if she went forth alone.

From a tiny house among the pines, she heard a wavering voice singing softly: “*Oh, happy harbor of God's Saints; Oh, sweet and pleasant shore!*” Mrs. Davis, who spent all her time in what had once been merely a summer home, who had lost position, wealth, family and friends, could still sit at her tiny organ and praise God for the place wherein she spent her days.

“It is a harbor, isn't it—this beach of ours, where if we only look for it, we can find every form of contentment?” Mrs. Davis said, coming to her door, and smiling at Karen's look of unbelief and sarcasm. “Did the little old people like the wreathed bossy? Did you tell them that the flowers themselves had a history?”

Abruptly, without the slightest warning, Karen, who had never sought solace on her own mother's bosom, found herself weeping her heart out in another woman's arms. The whole pitiful tale tumbled forth, and as Mrs. Davis kissed the poor, starved lips, she murmured over and over again:

“Aye, a harbor of God's saints—of God's saints!”

Strangely comforted, Karen went once more on her way along the cliffs. From the moment when she had given her

promise to her mother, she knew that she must seek out Kent and tell him. She had thought to put the task aside, but Fate hurried her on until she came in sight of the familiar cottage and once more called the call which she and Kent in the past had used so often.

Kent answered, and stood staring at her, as amazed to see her as she was at his appearance. He was a new Kent, a man re-born, the eternal light of life shining from his steady eyes, the strength of manhood vitalizing his straight body. He raised his arm in a sign of joyful greeting. Karen, the girl for whom he had gone on such a strange, stern journey, stood before him, her hair, flecked with mist, falling about her face like a silver halo.

“Karen, Karen, look at me! I'm back, I'm good. You can trust me now. I don't need your strength, I have my own. All that I need now is your love,” he called, as if he were merely finishing a sentence started years before. “I tried to go to the very depths, but every place I went you went along—to pull me back. I could never forget you! I'm through with the mess of life. I'm sane, and beloved, I am worthy of you—worthy.” He turned into the house, to return with a sheaf of writings which he displayed as a child might show to a teacher a completed lesson. “People like them, I can't write enough, but they were all just for you.” He stared at Karen a moment and a frown slid into a groove between his eyes. “You are too thin, and you are too sad, but I shall change all that, my beloved.” He laughed a bit, as if he were remembering things he thought she had forgotten; things concerning the man he once had been. However, in his mind was but one vital question. They were too old, he knew to hide their emotions. They did not have to sham as their time for make-believe was long since passed. The beach, in winter, was a thing without finery and trimming, a thing fundamental, and their love was of the winter

beach. "We shall marry and live here safely on the cliffs. We shall bring up our children to be good, to see good, and to do good!"

"Kent, I can't come. I came to tell you that. After all, Life cheated me, Life cheated you! You came too late! The waiting was all for nothing. My children are but two old women who sit beside the fire thinking of the spirits of their lost youth—in the square house of dreams."

"I'll take care of the old women, I'll take care of every one," Kent almost screamed at her retreating figure.

"I can't come; I promised," Karen sobbed back, as she stumbled along the cliff pathway. "I promised, and it nearly broke my heart— Oh, Kent, don't break what little heart is left—don't break it all!"

Karen ran blindly along, sentences and words beating at her brain, harsh thoughts forming into expression on her lips. Suggestions of things she had been thinking ever since she was a tiny girl burst from her mouth. The world was a dwelling place of selfish monsters! Monsters that sapped and fed upon her life and heart's blood! As long as she could feed those who demanded food, nothing else mattered. After all, what was a lonely life? What counted a bruised heart?

Beneath her feet curved the harbor, a place of shelter for voyage-worn ships. Pines crept to the water's edge and the blue sky arched high its unheeding head

like a great, smooth bell. Above tossing, green waves, sea gulls, pink legs tucked under shining wings, wheeled and shrieked in everlasting freedom. From an old house of dreams, smoke drifted across the world—a gray flag of memories and from a little house in the pines some one sang on and on about a harbor—for God's saints.

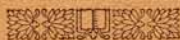
Karen laughed aloud at the song. What a taunt—when two old women could mar and torture life year after year.

Suddenly, her tear-blinded eyes became aware of a familiar little be-shawled figure standing mutely beside her, listening to the music. The girl turned abruptly away.

The little figure crept nearer and, a bit timidly, placed her hand on Karen's arm.

"I'm a saint. Ain't I suffered enough—to make a saint? Will giving happiness give peace? Aye, it does! Karen, I know—at last! Punishment is over. you are a saint, I am a saint. Me and Auntie—together we shall make out. My good child has done no wrong: She is a saint in the happy harbor. Run, oh, run—let some one make it a happy harbor—here where we all died from sorrow. Oh, make it a happy harbor, at last!"

Gently at first, and then sternly, using all her failing strength, the old woman pushed Karen back toward the man who had earned her, and who waited for her in the house on the cliffs above the harbor.



WORLD, FOR ALL OTHER CRIMES—

By Harry Kemp

WORLD, for all other crimes forgiven,
This can never be atoned;
The braying jackass is rewarded
And the singing bird is stoned.

A DREAM OF HEAVEN

By Morgan Ireland

LO, I was lord of heaven
With all its windy streets.
And all its lost, dead women,
In silver winding-sheets,

Came singing by before me
In an unearthly choir
Beneath the flaming minarets
Of opalescent fire ;

Came singing by before me
Upon the windy street,
Ladies with ghostly, windblown hair
And silver-sandaled feet.

The while I searched among them,
In hope to find again
The lady I had loved and lost
When I was but a man ;

A lady of most touching grace,
Of most contagious mirth,
A lady I had loved and lost
When I was on the earth.

Alas! The search was futile,
Futile and vain, because
My love was not among them :
I know not where she was.

Studies in Saffron

By Thomas Grant Springer

III—"CAN DO—"*

FOO CHOW was one of the humblest participants in Armageddon.

As in civil life there must be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, so in war there must be those whose weapon is the pick and shovel, whose part of the glory lies too far behind the lines to receive mention.

Foo Chow was one of these. With thousands of his coolie brethren, he had crossed two seas from the Flowery Kingdom to play his part in the Foreign Devils' great war. He was of the battalion of labor. It was for him to give his sweat while others gave their blood. Viewed from the standpoint of the heroic, he was not a figure for the casual eye to focus upon. His teetering gait, the result of generations of burden-bearers, his round, placid, inscrutable face, the result of centuries of a stagnant civilization, seemed to have no outstanding place in the great martial picture.

He was merely one of the infinitesimal drab threads that Mars had picked up to weave into the background of the gigantic pattern of his greatest tapestry. He and his fellows were as necessary as the army mule, but far less picturesque. Imported from far Canton with thousands of other Chinese coolies, they worked like galley slaves at anything from stevedoring to acting as camp police for a wage that was no more than our private soldier's pay, and were content without the soldier's bid for glory. Bombed by aeroplanes, shelled in back

areas, sniped at while trench-digging, they toiled on with all the philosophic calm of their kind, braving even the leaving of their bones in a strange, wild land, from which they would never be recovered and returned to mix at last with the dust of their ancestors in the far Flowery Kingdom.

It must be admitted that Foo Chow and his companions had joined the "Most Foreign Legion" from purely mercenary motives. The why and wherefore of the titanic struggle affected them not. It was a Foreign Devils' affair, in which they had but a financial interest. Tartar, Manchu, and internal strife their own country had known, and at last a final struggle from which it had emerged a republic; but, through them all, the coolie had passed as a pawn moved by unseen hands. War to them had been the sport of kings and rulers, from the Emperor to the Taipings. Better the pick and shovel of a Foreign Devil laborer than the sword, pike, or musket of a masterly mandarin whose only pay was the trivial loot of their own people after he had skimmed the cream. Here were rice and tea and mounting pay, so that if one came safely through one might return to a houseboat of one's own on the Yangtze River or the honorable position of a merchant in a bazaar in one of the crowded, twisted streets of Canton City. One must join one's ancestors some time. Better in an adventure that would win an honorable future than

* Founded on a news item in the *London Post*.

to linger behind and drop at last like a dead lily pad to the muddy bottom of a logy canal. Behind the coolie, his wife and children floated on a man-made water way, eking out a bare living with a flock of ducks the boy tended and a few cormorants, those falcons of the rivers, which fished for their masters as philosophically as the submissive coolies delved for the mandarins for their meagre food. Either they would remain thus, on a coolie level, or he would raise them, with the assistance of many Foreign Devils' yen, to admire him in a merchant's cap when he should return triumphant from the Dragon's Field. Thus he dreamed behind the imperturbable mask of his face, the faint, set smile of which won many grins from the Foreign Devil soldiers, who made him the good-natured butt of their rough jokes.

Foo Chow they particularly singled out because of his willingness to do anything that came to his hand. No matter what was required of him, his unvarying reply was "Can do." If the short-handed cook at the mess tent wanted brought over from the commissary a load that looked too much for two men to handle, Foo Chow somehow got under it with his cheerful "Can do," and teetered off. If the doughboys wanted their clothes washed, they naturally singled out Foo Chow for the imposition, and though he might have toiled like a galley slave through a long, trying day, he would smilingly accept the added burden with his invariable "Can do." If, with the filth, mud, and grime of a long session in the trenches, the rest billet got into the condition of an Augean stables, the cleaning of it was always assigned to this diminutive yellow Hercules, who accepted the unenviable commission with his philosophical "Can do," for Foo Chow had the sort of faith in himself that moves mountains, and if someone had asked him to go and fetch the moon, habit no doubt would have prompted him to reply without the least hesitation,

"Can do," and immediately start upon the mission, confident of his ability to get the satellite.

Now, the doughboys resting after a stretch of active service have a rough and unintentionally inconsiderate humor, and they very naturally turned Foo Chow's super-willingness to their pleasure as well as profit. He became a sort of serious, unconscious comedian for them. So long as there was nothing to which he would not answer "Can do," they took the keenest delight in putting him up to the impossible.

When a refractory mule went on a strike and refused to submit to the galling trappings of labor, one of the teamsters insisted that even Foo Chow could not harness him. "Can do," replied that individual with his usual alacrity and the stubborn courage of an inborn pride in his ability to accomplish anything. He was rescued from the rash attempt with some difficulty, but, several hours later, he appeared with a chastened and subdued quadruped and a triumphant "Can do!" though how the task had been accomplished was something that forever remained a Chinese puzzle to the would-be jokers.

The engineers in dull moments were given to sending him on long trips back to the supply station to get left-handed monkey wrenches, back-cutting saws, and all the other supposedly humorous impossibilities that have done such time-honored service; and many were the arguments in spluttering pidgin English in which Foo Chow indulged, while trying to live up to his much vaunted "Can do." The camp cooks, looking to escape labor, would insist that Foo could not cook this or that, and he would indignantly refute the allegation to his nickname by an immediate demonstration, no matter how much extra time he put in at the expense of his own meagre leisure. In vain his shrewder countrymen would point out to him the folly of his ways. Foo Chow had his pride

to sustain and accomplishment seemed to him the clearest form of silencing denial.

But pride goeth before a fall, and Foo Chow's confidence in himself at last proved to be his own undoing. A series of smashing blows had advanced the front lines some distance, and the rear moved up over the retiring foe's devastation. It was a busy time for Foo and his fellow-workers. Roads were to be rebuilt, old trenches leveled, ruined walls pulled down, and the litter and clutter of the battlefield collected for salvage. As order began to come out of chaos and the troops settled down into their newly won positions, those returning to the back areas for rest naturally relaxed and were ripe for mischief. It was on Foo Chow that they immediately picked. Finding him alone, digging out a dismantled field gun from a wrecked trench, one of them, winking at his brothers, insisted that it was too bad that the gun could not be gotten back to their billet for a souvenir. As was intended, this proved to be a challenge to Foo Chow.

"Can do," he insisted promptly, though the gun was far too heavy, once it had been detached from the smashed carriage, to have been carried by two, or even three, men.

"Like hell you can!" remarked the joker in a purposely doubting tone. "We'd take it back ourselves if we didn't have our packs. No Chink could ever get it in alone."

"Can do," insisted Foo Chow stubbornly, at the same time weighing the gun with a speculative eye.

"Yes, you cannot do," persisted his tormentor, and the others laughed a derisive echo.

That was enough. While the group grinned and giggled, Foo Chow tugged and strained, hunched his shoulder under the metal tube and, with legs that wobbled protestingly, managed to heave himself up beneath his burden and teeter off over the rough ground, all but stag-

gering, but goaded on to his goal by the laughing doughboys trailing behind him. Every moment they expected him to drop it. The sweat stood out in bright beads on his yellow face, merged into streams, and trickled down his cheeks, off his nose, and across his bent neck. His breath wheezed and whistled, his burdened back bowed lower and lower, and his legs shook painfully, but, urged on by the doubting comments of his tormentors, he struggled on, finally arriving at the stable that served them as a billet. With a mighty sigh of relief he eased his load to the ground and turned to them with a triumphant grin.

"Good old boy!" they yelled in encouragement. "You're the original old 'Can do,' all right."

But the habitual grin faded slowly from Foo Chow's face. Into his eyes crept a dull look of growing pain. He tried to straighten his bowed back, then his features twisted, and he put both hands to his stomach.

"Belly pletty much jumpie," he remarked in a puzzled tone. Then his legs gave way, and he sat down unsteadily on the gun, doubling over on his knees.

The boys became at once concerned and bent over him with rough, kindly sympathy.

"Gee! the Chink hurt himself, I'll bet," remarked one of them with a guilty note in his voice. "Hurt much inside, eh, Foo?" he asked, while the others looked sheepishly at one another.

"Belly heap jump," replied Foo Chow, holding the offending member, the lines of pain that distorted his features twisting now to more of a look of indignation.

"I'll bet the poor devil busted something inside. We better get him to the surgeon right away," and with worried haste, in spite of his vigorous protest, they bore him away where there would be no danger of his doing anything for some time to come.

Though Foo Chow had more inherent

faith in the dried beetles, powdered snake skins and weird herb concoctions of the charlatan practitioners of his native province, he submitted himself to the Foreign Devil doctor, who sent his patient to a base hospital in the far back area to lie tightly bandaged and fretfully inactive behind the smiling, inscrutable mask of a face that showed above the coarse nightshirt like a yellow full moon peeping over a white cloud-bank.

The hospital was filled with severe casualties, but those who were approaching convalescence found much to amuse them in Foo Chow's set grin and humorous pidgin English. With the nurses and doctors, too, he made himself a great favorite. Stoically patient, habitually good-natured, blindly obedient, his "Can do" marked him even here in his enforced inactivity, for, if it were a case of waiting for his dressing to be changed, his food to be served, or even a drink of water when the fever parched him and the hurried, worried nurses would ask, "You wait just a little while, Foo Chow?" his answer, though it often taxed him more than anyone, least of all the nurses, suspected, was always, "Can do."

The hospital was an old château, seemingly far enough from war's ghastly activities to be safe. But the enemy birdmen, like carrion vultures, must needs pay it their usual attention. Every now and then one of these winged sneaks, escaping through the Allied patrol, marked it for his target. The ears of the patients, quickened by danger, grew to recognize the hum of friend or foe, and the nurses and attendants stood ready at almost any time to herd or carry their patients into the deep cellar when occasion required. The hospital, like all others, being pitifully shorthanded, the less severe cases helped or carried their more unfortunate brothers in affliction to the comparative safety of the far downstairs. Just before Foo Chow's arrival there had been several scares

that had strung the nerves of all the inmates up to the highest tension. A playful airman had sown the flower beds with bombs, and it was a settled conviction among the patients that he would come back some day, or night, and rectify his error in judgment.

The sorely worried nurse warned her Oriental patient of this danger and gave him minute instructions as to reaching the cellar, his ward being on the second floor. Foo Chow listened with his usual respectful attention, but no apparent interest.

"We have so much trouble with the patients who can't walk," she concluded. "If the airman he come, you think you can get down there alone?"

"Allee light," replied Foo Chow quietly. "Can do," and apparently dismissed the matter entirely from his mind.

But as the uneventful days went on with no return visit, the ward grew less apprehensive. Foo Chow, comfortable as long as he lay in one position, but not being able to read and handicapped by his lack of fluent English, grew restless. The nurse had some difficulty in keeping him to his bed and from getting up and wandering about the ward, quiet being the one thing now necessary to overcome the strain he had undergone.

"Now, Foo, you must promise me you will not get up and try to walk. You know, inside all broken up—you try to walk now you break him all more. Then you never walk at all again," she warned.

"No, no, can do now. Belly, he no more jump um," Foo would insist, but the nurse and the doctor were obdurate, and so Foo Chow, obedient by nature and custom, lay outwardly still, but inwardly planning the many things that he still thought he could do.

It was just about this time that the Hun birdman took to play a return date. There was a full moon to aid him in his dastardly work, and he came humming over like a gigantic dragon-fly. The patients, recognizing from afar the drone

of a hostile engine, began a scrambling out of their beds, marshaled by the nurses and assistants, and made what haste they could to the semi-safety of the cellar. Those less seriously injured began picking up their helpless comrades, some in their arms, others on mattresses. Some assisted others to hobble or stagger, and the sorry procession made what pitiful haste it could to avoid a double disaster. Short numbered, the nurses rushed frantically here and there, striving to help as many as possible, but for all they could do there were too few to remove the helpless without several trips, and so many had to be left to pray silently in their beds that they might be missed.

At the first sign of confusion, Foo Chow woke to sudden life. His small slitted eyes began to twinkle with an almost joyful excitement. The faint, set grin that was his habitual expression widened into a full smile. He was out of bed on the instant, a ludicrous figure, had there been but time in that trying moment to notice it, his brown feet padding along the bare floor in vivid contrast to the coarse white nightgown that hung above them at a ridiculous angle.

"Walla malla?" he inquired almost excitedly of the one-armed occupant of the next bed, who, gray of face and cursing violently between clenched teeth, was holding his bandaged stump with his one hand as he made for the door of the hall.

"Damned boche aviator," he growled, casting a baleful eye aloft. "You better beat it, Chinkie, before he begins to drop his cursed load on us." He staggered hurriedly away as the humming above them began to grow viciously louder.

Foo Chow did not hurry. He knew that sound well. This was not the first time that the Foreign Devils' Dragon-Flies had showered him with their bombs and stink-pots. But here there was work to do, men, more helpless than himself, to help to safety, and, without hesitation, unmindful for once of the nurses, and

doctor's orders, he made for the nearest bed and gathered up a soldier into his arms.

Just then the nurse caught sight of him.

"No, no!" she cried, rushing to him as he started for the door with his burden. "You can't do that, Foo. Put him down and get away yourself!"

"Can do, can do," insisted Foo. Without waiting for farther argument he started out into the hall and down the stair for the cellar with his now unconscious burden.

Just as he gained the ground floor the first bomb fell, missing the building narrowly, but shaking the place to its very foundations as it exploded in the yard. Foo Chow was in the cellar almost before the vibrations ceased. He deposited his burden and made a dash back up the stairs. Circling, the Hun now tried again. This time he struck a wing, shattering it, but missing the main building. Through the smoke and confusion, the groans and cries of the men left behind or being borne below, Foo Chow tottered, selected his second burden, and had the man in his arms before he was noticed by any one in authority. This time it was the doctor, himself laden, who yelled impatiently at him.

"Here, Foo Chow, put that man down, you fool! You're in a bad way yourself!"

"Can do," Foo Chow insisted, toiling out without a thought of pause, although by now he felt the strain, felt the sudden giving way of something inside, just as it had done on the day that they had brought him to the hospital. But there was work to be done. He was back upon the job, and though his legs tottered weakly under him, he managed, with great effort, to get his second man to safety and start back.

The Hun had circled again. Almost directly above them now, the engine was humming louder, as if he had dived down to make sure of a direct hit. In

the far corner Foo Chow noted a bed, the white-faced occupant of which was vainly trying to rise. Just as he made for him the bomb struck fair, plunged through the roof and exploded in the room with a blinding flash and a crashing scattering of deadly fragments. There was a moment of paralysis among all of them while the smoke cleared. One of the nurses who had been thrown to her knees rose unsteadily and noticed Foo Chow standing upright and perfectly motionless amid the tangled wreckage. Upon his usually imperturbable face was an expression of puzzled incredulity, and he looked down with amazed eyes at the spreading stain soiling the immaculate whiteness of his coarse night garment. Then he raised his head, looked with a sudden smile at the waiting white face in the corner bed, and toddled toward it.

The nurse, realizing he had been badly hit, was after him as fast as she could go, but before she reached him Foo Chow had his third burden in his arms and was moving with it, somewhat unsteadily now, toward the hall door.

"Foo, Foo Chow, put that man down!" the nurse commanded. "You're hurt yourself; you must not—"

"All light, all light—can do," he insisted and teetered out and down the stairs, wavering somewhat uncertainly, but gathering all his strength to reach the cellar with his burden.

The nurse had to turn back. Others demanded her immediate attention. There was the crash of another bomb and yet another, and through the smoke the wreck and the confusion, the groans and cries of those stricken demanded her aid. Above them the venomous humming faded into the distance as the cowardly destroyer sped off under the stars that blinked as if to shut out the shameful sight of him from the eyes of his victims.

Again Foo Chow entered the room. Now his steps lagged. The stain upon his nightshirt had widened and spread. The yellow of his face had faded to a pasty gray, and over his dull eyes a film was spreading. Clearing it away with a backward brush of his hand, he looked about the room for another of his comrades to be carried below. He started unsteadily toward a still occupied bed. Just as he reached it the nurse turned to see him sway, crumple, and collapse, with groping hands that still stretched out in their work of rescue. As she gained his side, he made a pitiful effort to get upon his feet, but weakness conquered the impulse. He looked up into her face for a moment with something of the old smile upon his now colorless lips. Then his gaze fell to the slow, spreading stain on his breast. He shook his head weakly, the tired eyes closed, the lips struggled to frame the last words: "No—can—do."



THE RETURN

By Harrison Dowd

THEN love, that dry as dust old thing,
Came kneeling by my bed.
"Though you've renounced me many times,
I'm here again," he said.

And I, whose tears were scarcely dry
From the last angry pain,
Reached out and grasped his withered hand—
And found him young again!

Illusions

By Roger Hartman

NOTHING had ever seemed so completely absurd to Porter Cresson, as Marcia Playre's reiterated statement that years had built a barrier between them which love could not brush away, forget, ignore, obliterate. Her strangely passive attitude toward what seemed to him an obstacle utterly contemptible was the one flaw he found in her amazing power of clear reasoning, the swift, sure, straight thrusts of her thought, which were an endless delight to him, schooled as he was to consider women, in the mass, as creatures of emotion and impulse—beings whose nearest approach to intelligence was an intuition compounded nine parts of desire and one part of hope, with a trace, perhaps, of fear.

It was because Marcia really thought, as he thought, really dissociated herself and her prejudices and desires from her mental processes, that he had first considered her as distinct from a world of women who were no more to him than more or less pleasing components of a great natural color scheme. It was as if a man, used to finding a mild pleasure in the contemplation of an autumn hillside, content to consider its crimsons, umbers, chromes, and greens as splashes of color agreeably stimulating to the retinal nerves, should suddenly discover one leaf to be surpassingly individual, vividly and intimately alive, a quivering sensitive being reacting as he reacted.

His first attitude had been that of the involuntary discoverer. He found himself a Columbus standing on the shore of a new continent, the thrill of it un-

diminished by pre-calculations, an accidental astronomer before whose unexpected eye a glorious new planet swam into view. Instinct gave him the proprietary tone of all discoverers toward their discoveries. He had found her; she was his. It was a simple proposition in elementary male logic. And Marcia, with her deep, clear, understanding eyes, softly touched with humor, read his mind and, as a mother enters into the play-world of her child, suffered him to cling to his illusion. For all the splendid independence of her, the fine passion of self-ownership which had kept her free of life's entangling alliances, she let this man dream that he had some title in her which took precedence even of her own.

Discoverers have always been just a little prone to ignore the prior patents of the aborigines. She did not quarrel with Porter Cresson's naïve establishment of a protectorate. Being Marcia Playre, it was given her to see beyond the man's boyish bent for strut and parade; to know and value the clean, fine, honest soul of him. Perhaps, even then, she understood that she was to love him as only the Marcia Playres may love—with clear eyes that penetrate illusion, and a courageous spirit that knows how soon, and in what ashen bitterness, the flowers fade.

I am trying to be just toward Porter Cresson, and it is less difficult than I had fancied it would be. There was no malice in him, then or later. As far as a man may be the thing men mean when they say the word gentleman, Cresson

deserved the name and still deserves it. Even in those bad days when I felt the old, savage lust of murder stir in me at the sight of him, I loved him, I think. He was a man's man. He did not know that women loved him, and if he had found it out, it would have shamed him, hurt him. He was—and is—a living refutation of the absurd lie that women love pretty men, for if his mother had found him beautiful in his infancy, she must have been self-deceived beyond the limits of maternal bias.

Let me sketch him for you, as I have him roughly crayoned in my portfolio of drawings that I, only, see. I have spread that crude portrait on the desk before me, to be translated into words instead of lines. If I could only make you see him through my eyes, it would be so much easier to explain what happened. Porter Cresson, in the flesh, would make you acquit him as I acquit him, and like him as I like him.

Think, then, of the big, brown bear, the great, amiable, friendly bear of your fairy books, of Baloo, teacher of the Pack Law to the cubs of Seonee. Dress him in gray homespuns that are always immaculate, always meticulously fresh and creased, and yet which seem to multiply the burliness, the overgrown boy-muscles of thigh and shoulder. Shave him to an olive skin, darken its tint with the burn of suns, and add a glow of savage health. Give him a wide, friendly, elemental mouth, quick to reveal teeth that are almost a bear's—short, undeveloped incisors and prominent, menacing cuspids projecting well below the line. Give him wide, deeply recessed eyes below heavy brows which meet above the wide, low-bridged, big nostriled nose. Give him a forehead that slopes sharply back to thick, soft hair growing in a clear-defined widow's peak, hair that is always brushed sleekly back, lying very smooth and flat and yet leaves always an impression of shagginess when you think of it afterward.

Yes, more than a hint of cave-man, as you have already told yourself. But there is no such impression when you see Porter Cresson. He radiates an aura of mental alertness that is almost grotesque in its contradiction to his physical type; you cannot hear him talk without knowing that he is one of the rare men who can think incisively without making cynics of themselves, men who have warm emotions below glacial brains; fine, generous impulses forever combating remorseless, scientific logic. You must think of him as a man who would take almost the same delight in a sharply fought game of chess as in a bear-romp with crowing children, or a rough-and-tumble wrestling bout with a lumberjack. You must conceive him as a joyous football player, delighting in the rudest shock of straining bodies and still guiding his stone-age muscles with the cold, detached intelligence of a twentieth-century scientist, plotting his attack and defense to the most trivial detail and playing like a berserk viking.

Make him quick with sympathy, eagerly generous, give him a tact that is almost uncanny, and then send him through Princeton and Cambridge and let him spend a year or two finding himself in the inner circle of painters and players and thinkers that a few very lucky men find waiting to welcome them at Paris. Give him, too, a striking success for his first effort at letters, a well-deserved position of authority in a field in which few men succeed before they have passed fifty. If you can visualize charm, give him more of it than any man you have ever known. Thus you will have a fair idea of Porter Cresson; and perhaps you will understand why I have never learned to hate him—even now, when he detests me, and is certain his detestation is well founded.

Marcia? That is not so easy. There are scores of sketches of her in my portfolio, but each of them is no more than a beginning, abandoned before it was

well begun. It is no more possible to put Marcia into lines and shadows and lights, than to paint a star. Star—that is the best key-word. There is something starlike about her, something of the distance, the ineffable pathos, that surround the unattainable; something, too, of the purity that only a star seems fitted to typify. The weakness, of the simile is its cheapness. Every towheaded wench, since the race learned to grunt an embryo speech, has made somebody think of a star. I can do no better, but you must imagine a star different from any other ever used for purposes of comparison — a higher, clearer, more ethereally luminous star than any you can see in the sky to-night. Or, if you are young enough, perhaps you can envision Marcia Playre by giving her name to the dream woman you hope to find and love before you die. It doesn't matter whether her eyes are blue or gray or her hair flax or red or midnight black . . . you wouldn't inquire the specific gravity of your star, would you?

I brought Porter Cresson to Marcia. It seems incredible now that I should not have foreseen what must inevitably grow out of that encounter. I knew Marcia as a man sometimes comes to know the woman he loves with a hopelessness so complete that it keeps his secret even from such eyes as Marcia Playre's. I used to be glad, in those days, that Marcia didn't know. If she had known, she would have sent me away—for my soul's sake. But she did not. And I, after I had seen for myself that there was that in Porter Cresson which made a woman's heart quicken at the sight of him, brought him to Marcia—Marcia, the star-woman, fatuously cocksure that no woman of six-and-thirty need fear an overgrown bear-boy, twelve years younger by the calendar and twelve hundred centuries younger in that age of the soul that is understanding. Oh, I didn't even think about it—it would have impressed me, then, as being quite

as needless as to worry over the results of letting the Aphrodite of Melos meet John Keats.

Cresson was blind to her beauty. Marcia had the kind of loveliness which is in the blue of a September sky too perfect to advertise itself, to obtrude insistently on the senses. And Cresson was taken off his feet from the first instant by his discovery that she could think. He has the type of brain which is closed against simultaneous impressions—he has room for only one idea at a time. I doubt if he had any clear mental image of Marcia's face when he came up to my rooms after that first visit, to spend half the night telling me about her mind.

Can you see him, filling my biggest chair so that it seemed absurdly frail, blazing at me with the vivid words he chose like a master of speech, and alight with the miracle of a woman whom the gods had seen fit to endow with a brain? I remember smiling tolerantly at him and thinking what a wonderful thing it was to be young enough to have enthusiasms. . . . I suppose I looked a hundred years old to him. . . . He talked to me as if I were an innocent bystander. . . . I was thirty-eight then.

His confidences were rather hard to bear, as he grew to understand Marcia. For no better reason, I think, than that I had introduced them, he chose me, from the very beginning, as the repository of his emotional processes. He twitched at my sleeve, as a vivisector might, to urge me toward the operating table on which he dissected his soul—dissected it like the genius he was, with an uncanny sureness of hand, but with savage ruthlessness. It revolted me, but, with the hypnosis that horror can exert on the least sanguinary, fascinated me. It was only when he began dissecting Marcia that I stopped him short. I couldn't bear that. . . .

Still, I heard enough. It was no more than a question of years that lay between

them, within a week after I took him to her blue and silver room that looked out on the plane-trees. Twelve years—I could understand how terrible they must seem to Marcia, against the boy's vivid youth, how deadly they were to her now that she had become conscious of time. . . . There had been moments when I had envied her the two years that lay between my age and hers. Marcia Playre, to whom time had been no more than a fourth dimension, to whom the years were friends whose passing left softly blessed memories and no regrets—Marcia, facing at last the bitter lesson of age—at six-and-thirty! How she would hate them, those months that had tricked her into thinking them her friends, as, little by little, they carried youth from her!

Yet she saw the truth clearly enough. From Cresson's vivid recitals of the arguments he marshaled against her, I could reconstruct her thought. He did not violate her confidence, but he told me, without knowing it, just how she opposed him. I knew her so well, you see.

Yes, I was glad that she was old. It had been hard enough to face the truth that she would never care for me except with the placid, dilute friendliness that tortured, while it fascinated me. Now, to find her wakened by this boy, responding to the pagan youth and fire of him as if she had been a woman of his own crude epoch—it was enough to make me fiercely glad that she saw that barrier for what it was, and would not yield.

"Youth turns to youth. . . ."

She knew, of course she knew. The years that waited for her were the bloodless ones, the evil days of the Psalmist. She had learned at last of the bitterness which takes no pleasure in the morning and sees only the foreshadow of death in the dusk. . . . And the years that lay before Cresson—ah, the years that leap and pulse and laugh in a world of youth and love! Marcia knew the ever-widening gulf between her to-morrows and

those of the boy who loved her. I think that she always knew what the end must be, that Cresson's blazing eloquence never convinced her. Something she said to me before the shadow came, told me the truth of that.

"Happiness? Isn't it only a reflection, after all? Is there a positive happiness, Jim? I think it's only what one sees in the eyes of somebody one loves. . . ."

I knew, then, what she meant. She married Cresson, not because she hoped to trick the years, but because she saw that in making him a god in his own belief, she would know happiness by the divine indirection of her service. She married him as a girl would have married him—flinging away her fears and her doubts, plunging recklessly into his madness, giving him fire for fire, song for song, laugh for laugh. She made herself his mate in youth, in the magnificent folly of it, the glow and blaze and glad abandon of it. I watched her, marveling. . . . She turned her back on the sunset and on me, and raced back toward the morning, laughing, sped back to where Cresson waited for her.

I found some plausible excuse for being far away when they were married. In my self-centred blindness, I thought that she would mark my absence and guess its reason. I reproached myself for risking a shadow on her day. Later, I laughed, as an old, wise man laughs at his boy's importance. Marcia would not have seen me, on that day, if I had cut my throat before her in the very aisle! She had found the way back into that cruel Eden of Youth, the mystery that makes a solitude for two in the midst of many, the paradise that is more a paradise because the whole world is relentlessly shut out of it. I found out, long afterward, that she believed I had stood among the guests and seen her marry Cresson!

I watched them both. Somehow, now that the thing was done, I lost my bitterness. I wanted Marcia to win her game.

Looking on, from my place above the playground, I almost prayed that she might win—and with only gladness I saw her steadily winning. I even came to like Cresson again because he let her win, because he loved her as crazily, after two years, as he had loved her in the first mad days, because not even Marcia's eyes could find a hint of waning infatuation in his attitude.

He must have been less than human if he had not loved her. She gave him no chance to relax; she flung herself down from her infinite places to become a temptress, a playmate, a laughing, challenging, elusively maddening mistress of the sort that a woman must make of herself to be a successful wife to such a man as Porter Cresson.

The years passed—lightly for them, heavily for me. For I was afraid, horribly afraid. The difference between twenty-five and thirty-seven is hard enough for love to span; between twenty-eight and forty—I could not hope that even such a love as theirs could bridge that gulf. And I knew Marcia; when love died, she would die, too. Cresson would not understand. So, greatly fearing, I stood by. It was not easy to look on. There were times when I saw their eyes meet in a chance, roving glance, clash and fasten and glow, shutting me out. . . . No, it wasn't easy. But I did it. I wanted Marcia to feel, always, that I stood very close.

Cresson, as the world knows, developed splendidly in line with his precocious promises. His genius found itself, expanded, flowered. He took a boy's delight in it, a frank, unaffected and unconcealed pleasure in being known, admired, respected, envied. The passionate youth of him seemed to grow stronger as he came into the surety of his thirties. He was a pagan still, a boy, a wild, joyous beast-man, above or below or beyond the weakening inhibitions of our degenerate age, a law to himself. I watched him. And, gradually, I saw him change

under the slow chemistry of time, as other men change, saw the tragedy begin to slip its shadow, unperceived, above him.

Men who have passed beyond the sinister line of fifty know too well what it means to discover a growing inclination to be critical, a deepening discrimination which at first seems only the result of knowledge and experience. There comes a time when nature seems to sharpen the eye and quicken the ear, when the mere prettiness of face or figure, the light laughter of young voices, no longer suffice to quicken the pulse; when one seeks something nameless and haunting—beyond the superficial. A man grows critical under the years; he develops an eye for trivial blemishes, an ear for slight discords. And he turns constantly backward, trying to blind himself to the grayness that waits beyond.

Cresson was in my rooms when he woke to himself. At least, he seemed to understand what was happening in him, suddenly, under my eyes.

He turned toward me slowly, his face queerly drawn.

"My God, Jim, I'm thirty-one years old!"

I did not smile. I remembered too keenly the thrill of fear that bites through a man as it dawns on him, in one sobering flash of realization, that he isn't a boy any more, that he has been lifted out of precocity to a footing of equality with other men, when he is no longer measured relatively, but absolutely, no longer a clever youngster, but a man—to be appraised by the standards of all men, young or old.

"Yes," I said. "I was wondering when you would find it out. It won't do you any harm, if you keep your balance. Youth is relative, like everything else."

"That's it," he said, still under the cold touch of discovery. "There are—people who'd think me old—"

"Not so many as those who would think you still a boy," I reminded him,

and could have bitten my tongue at the careless speech as I saw his thought leap toward Marcia. I had wakened his self-consciousness to the gulf between them—Marcia at three and forty, he at thirty-one!

He nodded slowly.

"That's true enough, Jim. I suppose I do look like a kid to—to you, for instance?"

"Yes." His cruelty showed that he was still young. I managed not to wince at the heedlessness of that speech. "Yes, Cresson, when you feel your age getting oppressive, consider me and be comforted. That's one advantage of choosing your friends out of the earlier generation."

Again I saw his thought flash to his wife. Henceforward he would strengthen his mental grip on youth by contrasting his years with Marcia's. They would actually comfort him now, those twelve intervening years!

I met them both, a few days later, at the Moseleys' dinner. I saw in a flash that my chance-dropped seed had taken root ineradicably in Porter Cresson. He was charmingly thoughtful of Marcia—so obviously solicitous that old Mrs. Moseley commented on it in her pungent style, for my ear only.

"Young Cresson's waking up to Marcia's age, isn't he? He couldn't be more careful of her if she were his venerable grandmother."

I changed the subject rather pointedly, but the wicked old woman gurgled in her formidable bass to let me know that she didn't care whether or no I approved of her. Later, I saw her repeating the idea to Sally Fraser, who is more feline in her instincts than any other woman of my acquaintance. I did the only thing I could: I hung about Marcia persistently until she left—quite early. Cresson suggested it, fondly reminding her that she'd had a trying day. I thought I saw her flinch a little away from him as he bent over her. I knew what she

was feeling, behind those words. And her eyes clung to mine for a moment as we parted, clung with a kind of fright in them, the blind, bewildered appeal of the child who faces new, terrifying pain. She needed me. And her glance said so. I went home afoot that night, thinking hard. There are moments in any man's life when he faces, quite suddenly, an opportunity that challenges every evil impulse in him. Marcia needed me, at last. It was to mine that her eyes had made that mute appeal, over Cresson's shoulder. . . .

I went to see her next day. Cresson, I knew, would be at his work. He always drove himself relentlessly at it. Until five, nothing could get him out of his study. Marcia was alone in her blue and silver room, paler than I had ever seen her—and lovelier. She was more like the Marcia I had known before Cresson set her life on fire with the flame of his pagan youth. Her hand, as I touched it, was cool and gentle and steady, and her eyes were calm, as they had been in the old days.

"Porter's busy," she said. I knew that the words merely covered her thought.

"I came to see you," I told her. "I—I'm seeking consolation, to-day. I'm fifty, and I don't enjoy it."

It was quite safe to add five years to the truth. I am not given to publishing my personal affairs in such compendiums as "*Who's Who*," and if anyone except my brother in Hong Kong is aware of my age, I cannot imagine how he discovered it.

Marcia's eyes widened.

"Jimmy—you're not!" She spoke compassionately before her mind had time to weigh the words. The color swept into her cheeks as their import dawned on her, but she was Marcia—she did not aggravate the wound by apologies. Instead, she laughed softly, and dropped her cool fingers on my wrist.

"You mendacious graybeard! You've been deceiving us all for years. I thought you were no older than I. There—let's not talk about it." She snapped her fingers. "There goes the calendar. Sit down and talk to me nicely, Jim. I haven't seen you half enough, these last few months. I've missed you."

I lowered myself into a chair as if I were seventy. I had my part to play for her, and Marcia's eyes are shrewd and keen. Age—age—there was my cue. Marcia would be comforted at every sign of it I showed. And, if I hoped to stand by her when the crisis came, she must come to be sure of me again—to think of me as she had thought of me before Cresson came. I could foresee the ugly rocks that lay before her in the channel.

I saw her rather often, after that. I comforted her, you see. She kept her pity out of her eyes and tone, but I could feel it always, feel her sense of youth quicken in her as she regarded me. It is not easy, when you are forty-five or so, to have the woman you have loved for years look toward you as a sort of bulwark against old age. But I knew that the time was coming when Marcia would need me horribly, and I meant to stand by. I had no thought of anything beyond that service, though sometimes I felt my nerves leap and quiver like a boy's when her hand touched mine.

It was months after that interview that I stood on the wide, flagged terrace of Harry Loring's Long Island *palazzo*, the sunken, formal garden, silver and black under the moon, the white marbles ghost-gray about me, and saw the spark leap from the soul of Porter Cresson to the vivid, eager youth of Edith Strang. There was a strange, insistent atmosphere of unreality about it—the sense of something theatric, staged cleverly against an obscure background for a subtle emphasis on the figures and faces. I had foreseen a little of what impended. Ever since Edith Strang had come from

her years abroad, a wonderful bit of human artistry, like the intricately perfect figurines one finds on old China, a restless, fiery spirit in a body that made me think of a bacchante caught and prisoned in stays and petticoats, I had known that Porter Cresson found in her an appeal that mocked at his honest efforts at resistance. The girl herself, surfeited with cheap devotions, surrounded by a ludicrously servile crowd of tailor's-dummy males, must have felt and gloried in the combat she stirred in a man who mattered—a man like Cresson. I liked her. She was far above the hateful habit of small women who snare men for idle sport. It was not her fault that something in her drew Cresson irresistibly, nor was it his fault that he was drawn. He was a drowning man. He fought hard, and he kept his head above the waters till that night at Loring's. Then, as the girl slipped through one of the tall, wide windows to the terrace, I saw him follow her. There was that in his eyes that told me he had reached the end of his strength. I went after them. It is a queer conviction, that firm belief that each of us holds it in his power to avert disaster by his mere presence. It seemed to me that I could stop the mischief, even then.

As I stepped into the shadow of the wall and looked about for them, I saw it happen. She stood motionless in the clear space by the pool, the moon full on her, her head up and back, her arms at her sides; a woman waiting, unafraid, remorseless. And Cresson went to her like a man carried onward in the grip of some outer force. I saw his hands lift suddenly and hers rise to meet their groping gesture, saw them stand so, frozen into immobility like carved marble, saw them sway together. Even a man whose youth is twenty years behind him could understand the force that moved them into that embrace. Love laughs at locksmiths, does it? What a feeble saw! When love snaps his fin-

gers, faith mocks honor and makes a butt of God. . . .

I went back into the blur of casual, rippling speech, which sounded like the noise of some futile brook after one has stood transfixed and appalled before the power and awfulness of Niagara. Somebody was dissecting the last hand of bridge; there was a little outbreak of light laughter from the group where Johnny Blent was holding forth, untiring buffoon that he will be till he dies. I instinctively, looked about for Marcia. She needed me, now. I must find her, find her before she guessed. . . .

She came in from the terrace as I searched for her. Something swelled achingly in my throat at the sight of her, erect, proud, smiling that cool, remote, inscrutable smile that seemed to lift her above us, like a mildly entertained goddess looking down on the amusing antics of men. She had about her shoulders a wrap of black Spanish lace that made her seem curiously old, for the instant before my eyes met hers. Then she came toward me, and I saw the blaze and glow in them and knew that she was young.

"It's a night for all the gods, Jim," she said, in her throaty, whispering voice. "Let's have our share of it. It's blasphemy—this electric counterfeit."

We went out. I managed to choose the west window. Marcia's hand slipped through the bend of my arm as we stepped out on the terrace. I could feel that it was steady, and her voice was cool and even and level. She must have seen what I had seen, and yet, with her life tumbling in dust and ashes about her, she could laugh in that low, cool music, and drink in the penetrating, aching beauty of the night.

I don't know how long we sat on the old marble seat that Harry Loring smuggled out of Italy. I remember that some harsh-voiced night bird yawped dismally in the bulked shadows of the evergreens and the distant complaint of

surf throbbed eternally in my brain. I was thinking hard, seeking a way out—for Marcia. I found it, at the last, with a stab of self-scorn for my blindness. My time had come for speech—after the silent years.

". . . It aches, doesn't it, Jimmy—the moonlight and the night and the blending voices of it? Do you feel the pain in it all? Does it seem to be telling you to hurry, hurry, hurry, before life twists out of your clutch and deserts you, with a mocking, taunting chuckle?"

I had her hands in mine. Words came to me. I cannot set them down. They do not matter. She understood. I should have been afraid of her clear, cool anger, but I was not. We had passed beyond the petty levels where offense is easy. Perhaps, because I had forgotten that I loved her as a man loves only once in his life, because I was eager to stand between her and the rude shock of disillusion, awakening, she found no injury in my speech. So I sat in the moonlight and told Porter Cresson's wife that I loved her, and was not ashamed, and did not anger her.

I stopped. There was a moment of black stillness between us, a tense, straining instant like the hush that seems to come before the thunderbolt. Then Marcia laughed. It was like some unearthly sound—her quiet, low, round laughter. Her hands tightened ever so slightly in mine.

"Dear old Jim! Do you dream I haven't known? I brought you here, so that the moon would make you tell me. I—I wanted to hear—"

I could only grope in a sudden radiance that was more blinding than the dark. For an instant, I almost believed what I wanted to believe—that Marcia cared for me, in some mysterious miracle of transformation. Then, as my universe cleared, I understood. Marcia would do exactly this; a lesser woman would have turned to me for spite, perhaps, to soothe her wounded pride. Put

Marcia meant to give Cresson freedom in the only way in which such a man as he might take it at her hands. Ah, she was clever!

"Cresson—" I managed to say his name before my throat tightened.

She sighed a little.

"It is all right, Jim. He—he doesn't know, but the years have broken what linked us. I am almost forty-three, and he is barely thirty-one. He tells himself that love still spans that gulf, but—but he is careful not to set his weight upon the bridge, Jim. I have come to understand a little better in these later years. There is a difference between us that isn't in the books. A man loves forward or back—the boy conceives his passion for a woman, and the man, as the years draw down on him, for a child. But a woman can't find comfort in the spectacle of youth. . . . Porter's youth is like a constant sneer in my teeth. A woman wants to comfort herself behind the shelter of another's age, to hug the thought that she is not so old as someone else. Jim, if you had guessed, you would have told me long ago. I have wanted you so—so terribly."

I sat very still. She would have made an actress such as no stage ever held. Knowing that she lied, knowing that every word and tone was false, I all but believed her. Women—the best and the worst—are infinitely more cruel than men; she reminded me of the wife in some Shaw play—the eternal feminine who tells her youthful suitor that she would cook him for her husband's supper without qualm. She knew that I loved her, and she coolly used that love to shield her man from the reproach of his conscience for deserting her. She would have ordered me flung to the lions as lightly as she played on the soul of me. . . . I knew. She was Marcia Playre! And I loved her more because I knew. There is the paradox of love. I adored her more utterly than ever, now that I was wholly sure that she could

watch me torn in pieces without a quiver, if my destruction served the man she loved.

My mind worked swiftly, in that moment. How did she dare choose this expedient? Did she think that I could be hoodwinked, like the pathetic old fellows of French farce? Or did she really contemplate the sacrifice of herself? I knew she could not. Marcia Playre might sin splendidly, but she would never sneak, or cheat, or steal. Then I guessed. She thought me fifty—and fifty meant age unspeakable, to her, for all her nearness to its sinister boundary-line. I was dear old Jimmy, in my dotage; a man who might need a nurse, a daughter, but no wife! I looked ahead, measuring the cost. Fifty? When you come to it, my cocksure friend, you will discover for yourself that your illusion of youth is stronger than at thirty. Now you are young without thought or endeavor; at fifty you will be young because you will cling passionately to the conviction that you are young. I knew what I should pay for taking Marcia at her word. I think the martyrdom began in that still moment on the ancient Roman marble.

I played my part convincingly, I think. I was the calm, old lover to the very life. I kissed her hands gently, and still more gently kissed the cheek she turned to my lips. I spoke softly, calmly, of the autumn days of life, of Indian Summer suns. She seemed to understand, for she leaned affectionately against me, relaxing confidently in my arms, her cool cheek pressed to mine. For just a moment, I lost my rigid grip on myself. My arms tightened and my lips found hers. A kind of phantom youth throbbed in me—the madness of the spring does not die when the leaves turn. Then I was frightened, because she lay so still and silent in my arms. I must not alarm her with the spectral apparitions of that youth she believed long dead and safely sepulchered in the years. . . .

We told Cresson together. It wasn't

hard, for me, at least. I knew how mercifully his release would come to him, how every fibre of him would thrill at this escape with honor from his prison. From first to last, he behaved beautifully, controlling the savage exultation that strove to find utterance in his voice, avoiding the pretense of resentment and grief which a less sensitive man would have employed as a mask under the circumstances. He was very calm about it, very gentle, not too forgiving toward me, and with no reproach for Marcia.

"We can't help these things," he said philosophically. "I've always been afraid that this would come. You two knew each other so long before I came—you have too much in common. You mustn't be too sorry for me, Marcia. It—it stings, of course, but the real loss of you came long ago—I felt it, even while you tried to hide it from me. I'm sensible enough to know that these wounds heal very nicely."

"Yours is healed now, Porter," Marcia spoke softly. "If I had not known that this could not hurt you, I should have played the game out. But it's best for both of us, and your common-sense is telling you so at this very moment. We are cutting the lines before they have degenerated into shackles, before either of us has learned to hate them."

"Yes," Cresson laughed rather harshly. "Yes, that's so, Marcia. We're doing that. And, as you say, it may be best for both of us."

He ignored me, except for monosyllabic answers to direct questions. But when he left us, he shook hands, and I fancied that I felt a faintly grateful pressure in his grip. I got away soon afterward. I dared not trust myself too long in my unsupported rôle of fatherly guardian and friend.

We managed the details as decently as such things can be managed in a country which demands that its laws be cheated. Marcia went West and when her residence had been established, sued

for divorce on the usual fictitious ground of incompatibility. Naturally, Cresson did not defend the action. He had gone abroad almost at once. This was not surprising; Edith Strang had fled within a week after that night at Loring's. I stayed at home and answered Marcia's letters. She wrote wonderfully well. I have never found another woman who so fully possessed the fine art of the letter. And she innocently twisted the knife in me by writing as if she cared; I could see her, carefully choosing her words like the artist she was, deliberately playing her chosen rôle at long distance. It was not easy to answer in the proper key; I labored over every line I wrote her, during those eight months.

She wired me when the decree was issued. It was a curious message, that breathless string of unpunctuated words. I guessed that she meant it as an invitation, but to me it read like a command. I loathe traveling, especially the exaggerated, Brobdingnagian business of travel as we know it in America—railway journeys that are as long, by clock and calendar, as transatlantic voyages, and infinitely longer, so far as the wayfarer's endurance is concerned. But I bought my passage and went, obediently, submissively. I had had time to think. I knew quite well that I was being utilized as a sort of living ointment for Porter Cresson's self-esteem. He was tired of his wife; his wife knew it, and wished to give him his freedom; she knew that he would not accept it as a gift, however freely offered. His pride, his sensitive conception of *noblesse oblige*, demanded that he stand by his bargain to the end. But to grant her request, to stand back and give her up, magnificently, to the man she preferred, to make her happy and lift his old comrade, meaning me, to the plane of semi-divinity—here was a heroic part at which his boy's instinct for the limelight snatched greedily. He was *Sidney Carton*, doing his "far, far better thing" with-

out the inconvenient sequel of going to a "far, far better rest." He could have all the sensations of self-immolation, and then, rubbing off the grease-paint and hanging the powdered wig on its block, could put a gardenia in his button-hole, tilt back his topper, and drive, in a beautiful limousine, to what welcome waited him *chez Mademoiselle Strang!* All of which Marcia saw quite as clearly as I did. To secure it for her darling, she was perfectly willing to butcher a dozen sober-sided old adorers like me, and herself into the bargain. Still, I went. One good point about being fifty is that one learns to do with half-loaves rather nicely.

We were married—a bleak, civil ceremony in an ugly law-office—a week after the decree had been signed. Marcia wore traveling things and looked quite pleasant about it. She sent a cable to Cresson from the railway station.

"I want him to know it's final—a closed chapter," she explained. She would have had me help her with the composition of that cable, but I managed to avoid it. I was having a touch of gout, you see. Gout seemed to be the most suitable ailment—aristocratic, moderately painful—and beautifully suggestive of aging decrepitude. Besides, one can travel with it—in a compartment. I had read up on the symptoms and I flattered myself that I was convincing in the part. At least, Marcia hovered over me with a charming solicitude all the way east. Women, I think, enjoy little illnesses in others.

It was rather hard to remember that she was my wife. I kept thinking of her as Porter Cresson's wife, thanking her as one thanks a friendly outsider for little services. It wasn't pleasant to look ahead and see myself feigning old age until I no longer needed to pretend—I believe I ventured to construct air-castles in which Marcia would presently discover that she always had cared for me, air-castles in which I was permitted to

resume my proper self, to be as young and eager and foolish as I felt. But I knew that they were only dreams. Such things don't happen.

There was a cable for Marcia at New York. I knew it would be from Cresson, and I knew, too, what was in it. She showed it to me as we drove to the pier—my poor foot lifted carefully to the opposite seat of the cab.

Congratulations to you both. Edith and I married yesterday.

PORTER.

I managed to appear surprised. Marcia evidently expected it of me. She folded the flimsy sheet small and tore it meditatively, letting the fragments flutter through the window. I tried not to look at her, but her silence drew my eyes against my will. I could see her profile, touched with a distant sadness that hurt me horribly. But there was nothing I could do. I complained fretfully about an entirely mythical twinge in my foot. She leaned forward and adjusted the cushion skilfully. It took two porters to assist me up the gangplank and along the deck. I saw that it was best to risk overplaying my part. Marcia needed something to distract her. Nursing is a sovereign anodyne for feminine heart-aches. I saw her lips twitch a little as I collapsed into the chair where my porters deposited me. I had a sudden, horrible fear that she was going to let go. If she cried—if Marcia cried—I knew that I shouldn't be able to keep my little secrets under that test.

The door closed; I heard the clink of silver as Marcia tipped the men. For safety's sake, I had shut my eyes and was leaning back, behaving as much like the interesting invalid as I could. There was an interlude of silence. Then, so suddenly that I gasped and stared, Marcia pulled away my foot-rest and let my falsely petted foot drop with a thud on the carpet. It was so unexpected that I

forgot to yelp until it was too late. She stood watching me, her lips straight and tight, but her eyes starrier than I had ever seen them.

"You old fraud—how long were you going to keep it up? Forever?"

She was sitting on the arm of the chair now, and her hands had seized liberal locks of my hair, playfully menacing. She tugged spitefully, till I seized her wrists in self-defense. . . . Marcia's wrists—my wife's.

"'It is a far, far better thing that I do,'" she quoted, in Marcia's own voice, the old, laughing, understanding voice I loved. "If you could have seen yourself, Jimmy—strutting to the guillotine like a matinee idol! Did you really think I was doing it for him? Didn't you ever guess that it was all the other way? Why, when I saw him kiss that Strang child, that night at Loring's, I nearly

cheered. I knew that he would have to wake without my waking him; he honestly believed he cared as much for me as ever—until that night. Jim, Jim, I've tried so hard to play the game! I'd taken his youth, you see, lived on his ideals, his boyishness, his illusions—and grown tired of them. I couldn't drop him, like a squeezed orange, could I? I had to be sure, first—" She sighed, wearily. "Oh, how tired I got, Jim! you'll never know what a job it is to stay young, when you want to be comfortably middle-aged—and that wasn't the worst of it. I—I discovered you, Jimmy—after all those silly, wasted years, I knew. . . ."

Every story ends somewhere. I suppose mine ends here. But it's my conviction, in spite of everything, that I'm still at the beginning. The calendar says—it doesn't matter what it says—it lies!



AFTER RENUNCIATION

By Anna Spencer Twitchell

I HAVE not let him know my love,
 Nor put its rapture in a song,
 But with stern guard on lips and eyes,
 I have been strong.

I have shut out his prayers and turned,
 Blindly, from his dear arms and kiss—
 Oh, I have found, someway, somehow,
 Courage for this.

Oh, road whereon he lonely walks,
 Oh, sailing moon, a silver rim,
 Oh, winds and clouds and stars, to-night
 Be kind to him.

Envy—a New Poison

By Cleveland Moffett

FOR centuries preachers have warned us against "envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness"; but now the scientists begin.

Envy is literally a poison, they say, just as anger, hatred, and fear are literally poisons. When we yield to these passions, we change the chemistry of our bodies, and produce in our vital organs evil secretions that can be detected by laboratory methods and that cause stomach troubles, kidney troubles, and other serious ills. A man may become a victim of diabetes, for example, through jealousy or through anger.

In view of this discovery, let us take a fresh glance at our ancient enemy—envy. What does the Great Teacher say? "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country."

Why is that?

It is because people who knew the prophet, when he was not a prophet, are envious; they will not stand for his accession to greatness. They remember him as little Jimmy Blank with freckles and a pug nose, who used to run away from school and go swimming. He a prophet? Never!

How prone we are to doubt the abilities and distrust the motives of those who have emerged from an obscurity that they once shared with us!

We do not mind how many great and brilliant things happen to strangers—they may inherit millions, or strike oil in their back yards, or become governors of States, without its troubling us; but let one of these things happen to an acquaintance and we immediately resent it.

We read that a multi-millionaire has died and left a long list of bequests to people of whom we never heard—half a million to this one, a hundred thousand to that one, fifty thousand to another; and we take it calmly. But if we read that he has bequeathed ten thousand dollars to some hard-working secretary whom we know, we regard it as a personal insult.

What? That poor stiff? Ten thousand dollars? The idea!

Let some newspaper man make a hit with a play that represents years of brave striving, of self-denial, or repeated disappointment, and what happens? Do other newspaper men crowd around him with congratulations? Not so that you would notice it. The congratulations come mostly from strangers.

We go to a distant city and hear high praise for a man we have known for years. What? That fellow a great artist? A distinguished scientist? An international authority on this or that? Absurd! And we recall something to his discredit.

Alas, how envious we are! How envious women are! Listen to their talk! And this envy reacts against ourselves.

A real test of character comes when we meet a friend—at dinner or on the street—who has had good fortune, professional success, a public distinction. Then what? It is so easy to be indifferent, to pass the thing over as of slight importance, or to speak some flippant, wounding word.

Good God! Is not life a hard enough

pilgrimage without our wantonly adding to the blows and hurts that each one of us must bear?

Let us resolve to honor the prophets, including the minor prophets who may be near us, not only for their sake, but for our own.

Remember that the beautiful flowers in our hearts can never flourish or come to full bloom unless we root out the poison weeds of envy.

Don't wait until your friend is dead

before you give him the credit that is his due. Acknowledge his fine achievements, his industry, his high purpose. Do it now. Praise him, if he deserves praise. Speak generously of him to others. Rejoice with him when fortune smiles, when triumphs come. Be sincere about it, be happy about it, and by so doing, you will win smiles of fortune for yourself.

And you will gain in health!

That is the law.



THE TIME FOR DREAMS

By L. M. Thornton

LIST, little maid, with the eager feet
 And the tender eyes of blue,
 Laugh while the world seems glad and sweet
 Sing while you think it true.
 Gather roses and lilies fair,
 Dance with the dancing streams,
 Keep your heart while you can from care,
 Youth is the time for dreams.

List, little maid, with the waving hands
 And the plaited, golden hair,
 One in the wide world understands
 All that you do and dare.
 One is glad for your eager heart
 And your smile that ever gleams,
 Yours is of life the golden part,
 Youth is the time for dreams.

List, little maid, with the faith sublime,
 And the trust that angels know,
 Grievs may lie in the lap of Time
 And your bounding step grow slow.
 But one who wearies of stress and strife
 And of joy not all it seems,
 Is glad, from the depths of his jaded life,
 That youth is the time for dreams.

“Three Old Men”

(*Souvenir de Guerre*)

By Robert W. Sneddon

“ANOTHER!” said Monsieur Gravault the apothecary, as the bursting of a shell broke in upon the game of chess.

“*Bigre!* That sounded nearer!”

Monsieur Chautard’s voice was even thinner than usual, and the hand that hovered over the board trembled.

“Come, come, my friend,” Gravault counseled him with a sly twinkle in his eyes, “attention! This is all the battle we are fit for—a couple of old crocks laid on the shelf.”

Chautard sighed and lighted his cigarette. The process seemed to trouble him, for he hesitated before blowing out the match.

“A comfortable shelf you have, anyway,” he said, looking about the room with its heavy hangings, its tall clock, polished floor, and solid, stiff furniture.

“It will last its time,” assented Gravault. “After I am gone, my brother, the antique dealer in Paris, will be glad enough to have it. Meanwhile, it is your move. You are slow to-day.”

Chautard shifted in his cushioned chair. He turned his eyes nervously to the Venetian blinds through which filtered the afternoon sunshine.

“To the devil with the Boche!” he said querulously. “Twenty miles away, and dropping shells on us. Is that war, I ask you? Bah!”

“Ah, let the war alone, Chautard. Think of your game.”

“Pardon, Gravault.”

Chautard put out his hand and drew

it back with a jerk as the blinds rattled and the chess men danced on the board.

“*Sacré nom!*” he cried, steadying his elbow on the chair. “Did you hear that one? I swear it struck the church.”

Gravault carefully replaced a bishop dislodged from his square.

“See. Monsieur the cure is safe enough. You are as nervous as a cat. Look at me. Do I tremble or shake? Am I afraid of death?”

“You are an apothecary,” said Chautard curtly. “Death means nothing to you.”

“Ah, I forgot you only come in after death to read the will. Well, it is not my will you will read, my friend.”

“Enough, Gravault!”

Chautard rose to his feet.

“I have the honor to wish you good-day,” he added in a furious tone.

“Oh, sit down, neighbor! I meant no offence. Sit down. I’ll fetch a bottle from the cellar.”

“Much obliged, but I have no wish to be poisoned.”

“Poisoned? What has got into your head? Ah, I see—it is shell shock.”

The two old men glared at each other; Gravault pulling his white beard nervously; the notary screwing up his clean shaven, wizened brown face and drawing in his lips over his nearly toothless gums.

There was an imperative knocking at the door and before Gravault could call out, it was pushed open abruptly and a sergeant stepped across the threshold. He

halted in amazement, looking from one old man to the other:

"What is the matter here? Weren't you told to get out by noon?"

They stood silent.

"Hurry!" the sergeant shouted impatiently. "What is the matter with you? Are you deaf? Get out of here at once. The Boches have the range and you may be blown to bits any minute. You must leave as you are. Not a second to lose. Here, is this your hat? Put it on, old fellow. Now let me see how fast you can run," and with a not unsympathetic push he shoved the two old men out through the door into the street.

"Where are we to go to?" asked the notary weakly.

"Eh? Don't bother me. Go back—anywhere back of here—to Paris—but move along."

A stream of motor lorries laden with infantry rumbled past them as they stood at one side of the street, looking up and down helplessly. Already the buildings began to show their gaping wounds. Smoke was rising from the church. A dog slunk by, limping.

"Time we got along, neighbor," said Gravault.

Chautard still stared at the little white house with its green blinds next to the town hall. For a moment, it seemed as if he were impressing the picture of his home upon his mind, then with a feeble gesture of resignation, he nodded his head and without a word walked towards the granary which marked the farthest boundary of the village. Gravault followed him slowly.

Suddenly Chautard turned and put out his hand, and Gravault, grasping it firmly, knew that he had found again his old friend.

"That is better!" he cried, regaining his cheerfulness. "There is no one else with whom I should rather start upon a journey."

"Nor I. Beginning life again, eh, *mon vieux?*"

"And without a sou."

Chautard beamed with almost childish delight.

"No, my friend," he announced, "no, you are wrong as to that. Trust your legal adviser. I took care to put some money in my pocketbook. Not much, perhaps, but at least we shall not starve."

"You rogue!" cried Gravault in great good humor. "Then perhaps we can travel by train."

"To where?"

"To Paris. I have not seen my brother for years. An old bachelor. Oh, quite an important personage in his way. An ex-detective and with political influence. We shall be well looked after."

"Just as well we have no dependents," said Chautard as they walked on.

"Nothing to worry about but ourselves, eh? That may be called selfish, but in a time like this—well!"

"True. Pity those poor devils with two or three squalling brats."

"A good thing the women went yesterday in the carts."

They came opposite a little farmhouse. A ragged rent showed in the sloping roof, and the walls were bulging as though a giant hand had pressed upon them from above.

"Poor Madame Florin!" said Gravault as they paused to look at the ruin. "It is a good thing she did not wait to see this. It would have broken her heart: her man at the front, and she toiling in the fields for two, *Dieu!* What was that?"

A faint wailing came to their ears.

"A cat!" said Chautard.

"Listen! That is no cat. It is a child."

"Impossible!" cried Chautard impatiently. "Surely Marie Florin did not go yesterday without her child. A devoted mother, if ever there was one."

"What if she did not go?" suggested Gravault.

"Nonsense! All the women went. Come along. It will be dark before long."

Gravault hesitated.

"Very well."

They walked on. All at once Gravault stopped.

"Tell me, Chautard, what if I go back and have a look. It is just possible it may be little Victor."

"You are crazy!"

"Crazy or not, comrade, I shall go and see. Wait here. It will not take a minute."

Chautard shrugged his shoulders.

"You are obstinate as a mule. Go, then, on your fool's errand, but don't blame me if you find nothing but a cat."

Gravault hastened across the field. He could hear nothing more, but as he came up to the ruin, the wail was repeated. He peered in through the window, then cautiously climbed in. A moment later, he came out carrying a bundle in his arms and hastened to rejoin Chautard, who had seated himself on a pile of stones.

"Well?" asked Chautard.

"Look!"

Gravault's voice was trembling, and Chautard turned his head sharply.

"*Oh, mon dieu!*" he cried. "So you were right. But I could have sworn Marie Florin would not have deserted her child."

"It is strange," Gravault replied gravely. "There is no trace of her anywhere. What can have happened?"

"The child was lying there?"

"Beside a bundle of clothes. It is plain she left him."

"These women! What folly!" grumbled Chautard. "Too bad. But what are you going to do with the youngster?"

Gravault was surprised at the question.

"Eh? We must take him with us," he answered very simply.

Chautard sat down again on the pile of stones and threw up his hands.

"What has come over you, Gravault? We have enough to do to look after ourselves—two old men!"

"I am not so old," Gravault hastened to assure him. "The child is no weight to carry. Feel him." He held the baby out.

"Bah!" ejaculated Chautard regarding the child curiously. "It is a little animal. My advice to you is—" He paused, then added hastily; "is to leave him by the roadside. Someone else will be sure to pick him up."

"Who?" demanded Gravault derisively. "A general, eh? An American General?" He still held out the child to Chautard.

The notary, putting out his hands to ward off the extended burden, suddenly felt his thumb grasped in the convulsive grip of sturdy little fingers. In vain, he tried to free himself.

"*Peste!*" he spluttered at last. "Who would have imagined such strength? It is a little man. After all, it would be a pity to leave him. Only do not expect me to handle him."

"A regular little soldier," chuckled Gravault proudly. "Enough, little one; that will do for your wrestling. Keep away from lawyers if you would be happy. If you must pull at something, here is my beard. Now, march!"

The procession limped on its way. The miles grew longer. Gravault's feet became uncertain and he lurched at the knees.

"Here," cried Chautard roughly, "give me the brat. Not a word. You were a fool to take him, but the mischief is done."

A kindly motor driver going their way picked them up and dropped them at a railroad station. In the canteen presided over by two girls, they were fed on sandwiches and coffee.

"Have you a bottle for the little one?" asked one of the girls, bending over the counter. "We can give him one and some milk. A boy, isn't it? How often do you feed him?"

Chautard, who was still holding the child awkwardly in his arms, looked

helplessly at her smiling face, then nudged Gravault, who was nodding to sleep with fatigue on the bench beside him.

"Heh, grandfather!" he cried, and gave his companion a sly look of warning. "Madame asks how often you feed the child?"

Gravault straightened to attention.

"Eh? What is that? Child? Ah, yes!" he sought in his memory for the lore he dispensed in his store to inexperienced mothers. "Every three hours, Madame, but it is long since he has had anything to eat."

"Poor little mite. Your grandson, m'sieu?"

For a moment, Gravault hesitated. Here was his opportunity to get rid of the burden which he had taken upon himself. He had but to say no, and he knew he could leave little Victor in hands which would treat him tenderly. He had done his part. He looked over at the upturned face with its black, round eyes watching him with a comprehending curiosity, and he felt suddenly ashamed.

"Yes, yes—my grandson," he mumbled hastily. "A fine boy, eh?"

Chautard emitted a low grunt of impatience, but something in the defiant poise of his old friend's head held him silent.

"Well, here is the bottle, and good luck. You are taking him to his mother?" said the girl.

"Alas, no, Madame. We do not know where she is. Perhaps she is dead."

"What a pity, m'sieu. You are going to Paris? Do you know where to go for aid? You might try the Seminary of Saint Sulpice."

"We are provided for, Madame. Many thanks all the same," said Chautard stiffly.

"Pardon. I meant a kindness only. But for the baby. Let me give you this card. Ask for Madame Brochard, the matron, if you need a woman's help. And now—I think I hear your train.

Good-by, messieurs. Good-by, baby. You will find milk at other canteens. No, thanks. A pleasure to do a work of mercy. We must all help."

In the compartment of the stuffy carriage were two soldiers on leave who were smoking like furnaces. As Gravault climbed in with his burden, propelled from behind by Chautard, they took their pipes from their mouths and gaped.

"*Dame!*" cried one in a rough voice. "Do you not see, m'sieu, that this is a smoking compartment?"

"Eh? Whew!" panted Gravault, plumping down on the wooden seat. "Any objection to our company?"

"None, messieurs!" said the other politely. "Only"—he pointed with the stem of his pipe—"for a baby, the atmosphere is pretty thick."

"That's right!" muttered Gravault aghast. "Where are your brains, Chautard, steering me here?"

"You will remember that I warned you the child would be in our way," answered Chautard in a surly tone as he drew out a cigarette.

"Perhaps we had better change," suggested the apothecary.

"Too late, m'sieu, we are moving. And time too. One might think they had called out all the young and active locomotives and left nothing but the old wrecks to pull the trains.

"True for you, comrade, but we are going now," chuckled his companion. "What about our smoke?"

"Why not stick your head out of the window, eh?"

"I am sorry, messieurs," apologized Gravault, "I did not think when I climbed in. I will remove myself at the next station."

"Nonsense, old man," said the first soldier. "Lights out, Pierre."

They knocked the ashes out of their pipes and sat back with folded arms.

Chautard puffed at his cigarette, his eyes upon the low ceiling.

The baby sucking at the bottle coughed and a dribble of milk ran down his chin. Gravault wiped it off and looked piteously at his old friend.

"Perhaps it will be better, Chautard, if you put out your cigarette," he suggested timorously.

Chautard drew down his eyes from the roof and flashed an angry look at him.

"*Dieu!*" he snarled bitterly, "I have lost everything. Would you deprive me of my only consolation?"

The soldier in the corner stirred uneasily.

"See here, you," he said in a peremptory tone, "the order was 'lights out.' Are you going to obey, or must I make you, old man?"

He thrust his heavily mustached face toward the notary.

"If you must smoke, put your head out of the window."

"And catch cold. Very likely! Do you know who I am, young man?"

"I don't care," answered the soldier simply, "but I know what you are. You are the prince of selfish old rascals."

Chautard glared at him a moment, then with a gesture of fury tore the cigarette in two and flung it out of the window.

"Ah, that is better," said the soldier with a grin. "Now we can be friends all round, eh? Pardon my words, m'sieu, but I have a baby at home, and I know when to smoke and when to do without it." Then he added seriously: "We must take care of the babies, we others. They are the hope of France, eh? You look tired, old boy. Perhaps if I took the baby for a little, you might sleep."

He stretched out his strong arms and took little Victor. Gravault sighed with relief. The monotonous jolting of the train was making him nod. He could see that Chautard, his head bent on his breast, had dropped off to sleep.

"A moment's rest, then, *mon brave*, if you will be so kind," he said drowsily and closed his eyes.

When he opened them again, it was broad daylight. The train was still crawling along. The *poilu* had Victor on his knee sitting upright.

"*Bon Dieu!*" Gravault cried in consternation as he came to his senses. "I have been asleep, and the little one had to be fed."

"Don't worry. My comrade ran out at a stop and got the bottle filled," said the temporary nurse. "He swallowed it down like a little sucking pig. It is a brave little fellow, and not a whimper out of him. And look, m'sieu, how he is laughing now. You will laugh yourself. Another performance, bag of tricks."

With a grin, the other soldier tied a knot in his handkerchief and put his forefinger in it; then draping the cloth about his hand, there was a little puppet with a pointed cap, whose arms (the thumb and second finger) gesticulated violently, now folding across his breast, now calling upon heaven for vengeance on the Boche, now extended as if in benediction.

"The little preacher, m'sieu," the contriver confessed shyly.

"It is amazing," said Gravault. "I must remember this. Let me see. Ah! It is very simple, after all."

He glanced over at Chautard, who apparently was still asleep. Through the window he could see the gaily painted villas growing closer and closer to each other, the thickening of traffic on the roads.

"Is it Paris already then?" he asked.

The nurse sprang to his feet, and thrust his head out of the window.

"Paris? Yes. Now we're happy, eh, boy? Look out, youngster. What an experience for you. Paris! You're still there, old Eiffel!"

"I went up the tower in the year of the Exposition," said a dry voice. "The view was superb. And what mushrooms for lunch!"

"Ah, you are awake, old boy," cried the soldier heartily. "Now you will get your smoke. No offense, I hope, m'sieu."

Chautard screwed up his face, then mumbled:

"None. I was tired last night. Pardon!" he turned to Gravault to ask with a sort of timidity; "And the little one, old friend?"

"A regular traveler, m'sieu," cried the nurse.

The baby crowed confidently.

"Hear that! He knows what Paris is, eh? Well, we must get our belongings together. There, *mon petit*, you can go back to grandpa."

Gravault formulated a denial of relationship again, but it did not come, and reaching out his arms, he took Victor.

"Thanks, *mon gars*," he said cordially. "When I go back home, if—if—" he faltered.

"No if's. It is an understood thing. Go back. We shall put you back, we boys. Certainly."

"Then you must come and see me. And we shall open a bottle together, and smoke a pipe, eh? Here is my card."

"Surely. With pleasure."

The train drew to a halt with a succession of back-breaking jolts.

"*Gare du Nord* at last. I swear these engine drivers drove cabs before the war. What a jolting. Come along, comrade. *Au revoir*, messieurs! *Au revoir*, Victor."

They shook hands all round, kissed Victor, and swinging down from the carriage, threw out their chests, and swagged down the platform.

The two old men climbed down and stood dumbly for a moment, bewildered by the confusion. Then Chautard took the lead.

"Come with me. I know my way. When I was here in the year of the Exposition, I took a cab. We must find a cab and then a hotel."

"No hotels," said Gravault decisively. "They cost money. We will go and see my brother in the *rue des Sts. Pères*."

"As you please," answered Chautard stiffly. "Perhaps after all you are right.

With a child, it would be difficult to get into a hotel. I told you, but you would not listen. Now we must both suffer for your obstinacy. However, I shall say no more. Only, when we come to the gates and the examination of passengers, let me do the talking. They may suspect us of kidnapping, or worse, and a fine pair of country fools we should look then. Come along."

"There!" said Chautard with a complacent air as they came safely out of the station. "What did I tell you? We did that very neatly, I flatter myself."

"Thanks to your lawyer's tongue. But what did you say when you bent over and whispered to the officer?"

"Eh?" Chautard was confused, "eh? In a case of this sort, Gravault, it is well to make sure. So—"

"So?" Gravault's tone was full of suspicion.

"So," Chautard confessed, "so I said I was his grandfather, too."

"Look here, Chautard," grumbled Gravault, "two grandfathers? Are you crazy?"

"Two grandfathers. The maternal and the paternal. There is nothing unnatural in that. Do I want to grandfather the brat? No! It was solely for your sake. But hurry, let us get to your brother and get settled. I am anxious to see some of the sights I saw in the year of the—"

"Yes, yes—the Exposition. Hi, cabby. *Sapristi!* It is a woman!"

"Yes, m'sieu. Jump in. Where to? *Rue des Sts. Pères! Bon!* Get up, *Cocotte!*"

The venerable horse ambled on its way, the two old passengers gazing with gaping eyes at the wonderful sights, the uniforms, the cafés as gay as ever, the hurrying crowds. Even more interested was Victor, sitting erect on Gravault's knee, sucking his thumb.

At the door of the antique store in the narrow street, Monsieur Gravault the younger, smoking his pipe serenely,

with his dog, Musette, at his feet, was amazed to see the party which drew up.

"Where in the devil did you come from?" he cried as he ran to embrace his brother. "Why did you not send me word? This is Monsieur Chautard, isn't it? And. . . ?" His jaw fell and he puckered up his lips. "Whew! Who is this? You are married, you old rascal, and a child at your age! *Eh bien*, I always said the Gravaults came of good stock. But where is Madame?"

"No, you are making a mistake," protested the apothecary. "This is a little refugee, Victor Florin, the son of one of the villagers. His mother, poor woman, could not be found."

"And his father?"

The antique dealer peered with his short sighted eyes as if expecting to see another man descend from the vehicle.

"At the front. We are looking after the child. But can you put us up for a little? We have no homes now, you know."

Gravault the younger hesitated.

"You are welcome, both of you, that goes without saying, but a child— Well, I am an old bachelor, it will be difficult. And besides, I do not know how Musette will behave to a child. If she were to bite him, that would be a pretty mess."

He looked from one to the other as if asking their sympathy in his dilemma, then his attention was attracted to Victor, who stared at him with unblinking black eyes that seemed to search into the recesses of the perturbed soul of the bachelor.

"Oh, well," he continued hastily, "come inside. It is safer, and I have a fine cellar in case of alarm. Does the child walk? No! Good! I have some valuable antiques I do not want broken. This way, brother. Come, Monsieur Chautard, make yourself at home. We Parisians should be proud to do anything for you who are exiles."

The question which alone had come between Monsieur Gravault, the younger,

and the extension of all the hospitality and kindness which at heart he was delighted to dispense, was settled by the two parties concerned, for while the three men were disposing of an omelette, war bread, and a bottle of wine, Victor had been set down on a rug on the floor. Musette, after a cursory sniff at the intruder, had retired to a safe distance, and head on paws watched him through half closed eyelids. Suddenly Victor, attracted by the fall of a crumb from the table, began to crawl toward it. A low growl came from Musette. She shot to her feet and came forward, silent and menacing. Victor reached out for the crumb and at that moment Musette snapped her jaws together with just enough of threat to have stayed an older person. But the imperturbable crawler sat up, and with a pudgy fist, struck the dog on the nose, and added further insult by catching him by a long ear and pulling hard. Musette's back stiffened; then, crouching, she stretched out her neck, her long tongue shot forth; she moaned faintly and submissively.

"There!" cried the apothecary. "What do you say to that, my brother? Look! This ferocious hound of yours is licking the little one's face."

"Then it is settled," sighed the antique dealer with relief. "After all, I have always maintained Musette was a dog of sense. You can stay here as long as you please, and I shall be glad to have you. It is lonely here now since my old friend Bidoche became a landed proprietor and moved to the country. We can have a game of cards in the evenings in the cellar, and as for the little one, there is a poor woman who has just lost her baby, and she will be glad to come in and look after—what is his name?—ah, Victor. A good name. It is near to Victory, and we shall have that next year, thanks to our brave lads and the Allies."

So the bargain was made. Weeks went by peacefully in spite of the ever-present menace of war.

"By the by," said Chautard one night after the game of cards, "I have been thinking. I have no one in the world to follow me, and I can not take my money along with me. Suppose I set aside a sum for Victor, eh?"

"You are a good fellow, Chautard," cried Gravault heartily. "I have always said so. Have I not, brother?"

"Nonsense!" cried the notary, but his thin face flushed with pleasure. "I shall make him my heir. As well him as another. Only, do not ask me to look after the little animal, that is all. And now I shall go to bed, if you will allow me. Good night, my friends."

After he was gone, the two brothers sat smoking in silence. When Gravault the elder rose to go to bed, his brother spoke as if the idea had just come to him.

"Say, all the same, it is very curious," he said reflectively. "Little animal or not, it is Victor this and Victor that, all the time. One would think the old boy really was his grandfather. Madame Destries tells me she comes upon him daily, amusing the youngster with some sort of a game with a handkerchief. What can that be?"

Gravault the elder scratched his ear.

"A handkerchief? Let me see now. Why, that must be the little preacher. A good *poilu* showed me— I thought Chautard was asleep, the rascal. I had forgotten about it. Say what you like, there is a heart within that dried hide of his. Only, have you noticed, these last two days he is not himself? He has almost the look of a man with a secret. He starts at a word. He watches the door. What can be the matter?"

"Poof," said the antique dealer as he took up his candle, "he is old, and the cough of big Bertha is bad for the nerves. Nothing more. Pleasant dreams, brother, and no Boche planes."

The next night, Chautard laid down his cards on the table in the middle of the game.

"It is no use. I cannot sleep. What have I done? Poor Victor! I am a monster."

His partners protested:

"Come, come, you are talking nonsense."

"Who could be kinder to Victor?"

But Chautard continued in a dull tone:

"Yes, I am to be condemned, and you would condemn me most of all, my friends. Listen! Three days ago, I was crossing the *Pont Neuf* when a soldier passed in front of me. There was nothing extraordinary in that, but no sooner was he past than he turned with a quick look at me as if memory had returned to him. I recognized him. It was Victor Florin."

"The father of little Victor?" cried the antique dealer. "*Dame!* That was a meeting. But where is he? Why did you not bring him home with you?"

Chautard bent his head. His lean hands smoothed down the cloth on the table till it seemed as if he would rub the skin from his finger tips.

"That is it. I did not. We spoke for a little. He was on leave for a week. He had just reached Paris that day. He was in a daze. He could do nothing but stare at me with fierce eyes, and then"—he moistened his lips—"then, when I was about to tell him of the little one, something stopped me."

"And you let him go without a word?" asked the antique dealer in open-mouthed surprise.

"Yes," answered Chautard simply. He did not look up. "He gave me his address, and we parted."

"But why—?" demanded Gravault the younger, with increased bewilderment.

"Permit me as your elder brother," the apothecary begged ceremoniously. "There is something strange about this. I don't understand. Why did you not say to Florin: 'My poor fellow, all is not lost. Come with me and see your son.' Nothing more was necessary. *Dieu!* The emotion of the meeting

should not have robbed you of words, you a notary, experienced in matters of this kind."

But Chautard did not appear to hear. He seemed to be listening for some expected sound.

"Can it be possible," suggested the antique dealer in a modest whisper to his brother, "that he is afraid Victor will be taken from him?"

Chautard looked up fiercely.

"The child is ours. *Mon dieu!* Why should we give him back to misery?"

"Not to misery, my friend," said the apothecary gently, "not to misery, but to his father."

"His father! You are talking sentiment now. In the trenches, what time has his father to think of anything but the filth, the rats, the noise, the hazard of death, the assault? He has no time for paternity. Tell me, what has a soldier to do with a child?"

"You are wrong, Chautard," said the apothecary in a voice which he could not keep from trembling. "You are wrong. Without the children, we should have no soldiers. For what does a soldier fight? For his country, an acre of land, a house, a city? No! He fights for the family, for the many families which make up a nation. If he has no family of his own, he fights for the family of his neighbor, for the wife who has no man; for the girl who has no brother, for the child who has no father. He fights that they, too, may live and breathe the air of the good God in liberty, in equality, in fellowship, that each may have his or her rightful chance. He fights with all his courage—for an ideal, perhaps you will say. But a father—a father fights with his love behind him. He defends the doorway of his home; he stands across the cradle. Listen, old friend; we others who are, like you, without children, we understand. Perhaps we too might have done as you. But now—where is that address? Let us send Madame Destries to bring this

father here if she can—and then, we can talk things over."

Without a word, Chautard fumbled in his pocket and brought out the scrap of paper on which he had noted down the address. It was in the *rue de Grenelle*, close by. Madame Destries was despatched with orders to say nothing beyond the invitation to come, and in silence they waited. Once, Chautard tried to speak, but Gravault laid his hand on his shoulder, almost in a caress.

"Wait," he counseled. "Wait. When the time comes, our hearts will speak the right word."

Victor Florin came back with Madame Destries, his honest face flushed with his haste.

"Ah, Monsieur Gravault, this is a pleasure," he cried. "Pleased to make your acquaintance, m'sieu. Good evening, Monsieur Chautard. Lucky you caught me. I was just about to go to the hospital. What is it you want of me? You have heard my news, eh? You have heard something from the village?"

The excitement died from his eyes as Gravault the elder shook his head.

"We have heard nothing from the village, but—but there is someone"—he sought for words. "*Dame!*" he continued roughly. "There is someone you know here to see you. Go with Madame Destries." And he thrust him out of the room.

Madame Destries came back almost at once. She was between laughing and crying.

"Never have I seen anything like it. No! Not even in the cinema. It was beautiful, messieurs. What a man! At first he could not believe—and the little one sleeping like an angel—and then when he picked him up, to his breast—I thought of my little Henri, and I could not say. . . ." She looked at them pleadingly. "He will not take little Victor away, surely."

The door burst open. A new Florin

entered joyously, little Victor nestling securely in the crook of his left arm.

"Ah, thank you, messieurs! Thank you. I am grateful. But what a surprise. Permit me to shake your hands. And so healthy. And my faith, I believe he knows me. See how he holds to my buttons! What can I ever do to repay you, and Madame, who tells me she has had care of him. If you knew what this means! I have a son again. Only"—his face clouded—"my permission expires in three days, and then poor little one, what is to become of him, unless, perhaps, messieurs, the doctors at the hospital are right. . . ."

"The doctors?" asked Gravault wonderingly. "There is nothing wrong with the child, surely? Did you not say he was healthy?"

"But Marie, m'sieu. I am speaking of Marie, my wife."

He studied their astonished faces eagerly.

"Is it possible? Have you not heard? I have found Marie in a hospital, messieurs. A miracle, yes. It seems that she went to fetch a basket from the barn, and a splinter struck her. While she was insensible, an ambulance picked her up and brought her to Paris. They did not know of little Victor until she began to cry aloud, to plead for him. Messieurs, she is insane, they say. But to-day the doctor said: 'My lad, if you can find your child, there is one hope that

the touch of him on her breast may bring her back to her senses.' And to-day I have been in despair—where to look? Where to seek news? But now, if you will permit me—I shall take Victor with me. Yes, a thousand thanks. And after—but it is nine o'clock. I must hurry. *Au revoir.*"

The door closed upon his excited exit.

"Good night, messieurs," said Madame Destries dully. "If I may, I shall slip round to the church."

There was a long pause after she left them.

"After all," said Chautard in a low voice, "that does not prevent me doing what I said. To-morrow I shall go to the hospital. Meanwhile, will you play a game of chess with me, Gravault?"

"Willingly. That occupies the mind."

"All very well, but what am I to do?" grumbled the antique dealer dolefully.

"Oh, you—" said his brother as he opened the board, "occupy yourself with Musette."

"Bah!" Musette's master grunted and settled himself in a deep chair. His eyes closed. When they opened again, he saw a strange sight. The game of chess was at an end. His brother, a newspaper in front of him, was peering over the top of it at Chautard. And Chautard, a handkerchief draped over his hand, was rehearsing some new variations in the emotional gestures of the little preacher, in preparation for the next day's visit.



ANY DEPOT PLATFORM IN DRY STATE

By F. R. Odle

DOWN on the depot platform, bathed in the bleak wintry breeze,
 Shy long ago of its contents, with nothing inside it to freeze;
 Shorn of its former glory, tapped of its last amber dreg;
 Bungless, beerless and friendless, stands an empty eight-gallon keg.

Alice-Sit-by-the-Radiator

By Edwin Justus Mayer

"I SHALL get you a servant to-day, if it—if *she* costs one hundred dollars a month!" Jones told his wife, his young wife, in the fiercest of accents and with the most benevolent of looks. Having delivered himself of his intentions as a good husband should, he kissed his wife on her lips, on her young lips, and strode out of the house with all the dignity it is possible for a man to assume when he carries an umbrella under his right arm and is in a hurry to catch the eight-twenty-five.

At five o'clock that evening, he triumphantly returned with Alice, who had asked only fifty dollars a month.

Alice was small—*petite* is the word, I think—and she had fine, exquisitely curved lips—red lips, they were; and she had other accomplishments, among them, two blue eyes the exact color of the lamp shade in the Jones' parlor, and a very blue lamp shade it was. Also, she had fair skin and white hands, and as you can see at once, she looked much more like a maid in a Sardou play, like the one that is dusting the furniture when the curtain goes up, than like an honest - to - inefficient - maid - presumably-of-all-work, receiving the insidious sum of fifty dollars a month for her services. As Mrs. Bellers (Mrs. Bellers was the mother of Mrs. Jones, *not* the mother of Mr. Jones) said: "A few years ago she would have been glad to come for sixteen a month." Very likely she would have been.

When Alice was alone at last in her room on the top-floor, her first sensation was one of chilliness. She was cold,

and curiously enough, she was lonely although there was a whole houseful of people below her. Nevertheless, she sat disconsolately on the edge of her bed and looked about her. The size of the apartment did not permit any far gazing, any more than the earth permits man to look far when, like Alice, he is young and curious and hot and cold at once. She felt like some one just born, thrust onto a circumscribed earth from remote and freer worlds. Her mental orbit, she felt, must henceforth swing within these four bare walls and no further. Every moment that she sat on the edge of the bed, the walls grew nearer to each other, or seemed to do so.

This was all a great pity, for Alice had once loved the fairies and believed in them; and while she was wiser, now that her childhood lay behind her, she had always a haunting doubt telling her that there really *are* fairies on earth, or at least *one* fairy, a good fairy. But what fairy, good, bad or indifferent ever came up to the top floor?

Alice was so cold by this time that she slipped over to the radiator and sat down on the floor and leaned against the one warm, and therefore friendly, thing in the room. After a while, she ceased sobbing—at least, she ceased when she fell asleep.

"This morning," said Mrs. Jones *sotto voce* to Mr. Jones at dinner, "she ruined the eggs. At lunch she burned the liver. And look at the chicken!"

Her worse half dutifully looked and saw at once that harm had been done to that bird. It did not look healthy;

it did not possess the robust appearance which it had when Mrs. Jones bought it. Indeed, it was shriveled and mean-looking, and wan and tough appearing all at once. As far as the chicken was concerned, nothing would ever be the same.

"It can't be eaten; it's burned beyond recognition," Jones said in a dreadful voice. And it was. No rooster would ever claim it now as his own fair own.

"What shall we do?" said Mrs. Jones. "She's such a *nice* girl, and so *pretty*."

"She must have learned to cook from a cook-book," Jones said, but added: "She is a *nice* girl."

Everybody admitted Alice was a nice girl. Even Mrs. Bellers (Mr. Jones could never decide whether she thought herself *Edith's* mother or *his* mother) admitted Alice was a nice girl. And a pretty girl. But above all, *nice*.

"I am paying her *fifty dollars* a month," said Jones, speaking in a tone of voice which left no doubt that he was thinking in long words and not in short numerals.

"*They are so hard to get*," said Mrs. Jones.

Her husband sighed. *They are hard to get*.

Now, Alice knew perfectly well—as well as the Joneses, you, and myself—that she had maltreated that chicken. So, as soon as she placed it on the table before the young couple, she fled upstairs to her room and waited for the fateful summons she was sure was coming. She fled to the shelter and friendship of her one good friend in the house—the radiator, and sat down next to him (she was sure it was a him) with palpitating heart and quick breath. But no word came from downstairs. Instead, after a while, she heard a door slam. The Joneses had gone to a nearby restaurant for supper. Perhaps they had not called Alice down because their hearts were heavy within them. The chicken was not, however, as Alice saw when she crept downstairs and into the dining-room.

"I'm hungry," said Alice wistfully, "but I can't eat *that*." Alice was not altogether impractical.

By and by, she went back to her radiator and considered her future.

"I can't sew," she thought, "and I can't learn shorthand, and I can't cook." She closed her eyes and smiled. "In fact, I can't do anything," she said aloud; "I'm useless." Which was ridiculous, as anybody could see by looking at her.

"I can't go back home," Alice continued aloud. "If I keep on cooking I shall inevitably commit manslaughter." (Mr. and Mrs. Jones heaved a sigh in the restaurant and agreed with her.)

"I shall *have* to get married," said Alice-sit-by-the-radiator.

Opportunity rang the doorbell once right there and then.

"Is neither of them at home?" said Opportunity, who turned out to be an eligible looking young man in a great-coat and small hat. Alice reaffirmed the absence of her lord and lady, the Joneses of Suburbia.

"But they invited me to dinner," said Opportunity, pleasant but somewhat puzzled.

"They must have forgotten," said Alice. "You see, I burned the chicken."

"And do you *always* burn the chicken?" asked the young man facetiously.

"Always!" said Alice, and burst into tears.

It is a commonplace for Opportunity to knock at the door, but it is a rare thing for Opportunity to eat a burnt chicken. Yet that is precisely what Opportunity proceeded to do after Alice suddenly let loose her emotions. In vain for her to protest!

"I was invited here to supper," he said firmly, releasing her from his arms, and here on the table is a chicken. Burnt? What of it? Do you know that one of our Revolutionary heroes lived on burnt sweet potatoes? Well, he did. Why, he would have considered burnt

chicken a delicacy! And very likely it is."

Alice waited on him and laughed at him and with him, and a very good time was had by all, including the radiator, which could be heard ticking, ticking, ticking, from above, which is the way radiators chuckle when they are happy.

As usual, it was cold in the room and Alice sat down on that clean warm spot on the floor which was heated by the nearness of her good gray friend. Now, as has been said, everybody admitted that Alice was a *nice* girl; and with her lovely body sloping against the pleasantly warm radiator, she would dream the sort of dreams nice girls dream, which, of course, are nice dreams. Things would take on a rosy color, harsh things would soften and undulate and renew themselves with kindness, and charmed images would rise in her eyes in her silent communion with the fire-light (as it was to her) of the radiator. Sometimes Alice would break the silence and speak to the fire-light, which was what she was doing now.

"I burst into tears," she said reminiscently, "and he looked at me as if he didn't know whether to pet me or leave me or make love to me. Evidently he has all sorts of decent instincts. Anyway, he started to leave me, then he started to pet me, then he started to kiss me.

"I think I liked that best," said Alice very seriously. "He really is good-looking, you know," she told the radiator.

"After a while I recovered myself and he stopped kissing me." Her face clouded for a moment, and then lighted up.

"But he ate the burnt chicken!" she said triumphantly.

"She doesn't look in the least like a servant no wonder she can't cook!" said Mrs. Bellers, not taking the time to puncture her sentence. "I'm sure," she added firmly, "there's a mystery about her." Mrs. Bellers was eternally sus-

picious of the true status of other people.

"There's nothing mysterious about her cooking," said Mr. Jones. "It's rotten." That's just what he said.

"Maybe she's an heiress run away from home," said Mrs. Bellers hopefully.

"Maybe she cooked a meal and they drove her out," said Mr. Jones darkly.

"She's a nice girl," said Teddy Campbell, nephew to Mrs. Bellers, cousin to Mrs. Jones, Opportunity to Alice. He had come in with his aunt.

"What do you know about her?" demanded Mrs. Bellers suspiciously.

"I ate supper with her the other night," Teddy told her. "My fair cousin here invited me to dinner and when I arrived she was out with her husband. There was a chicken on the table and I ate it."

"You ate that burnt chicken?" asked Jones.

"It wasn't burnt, it was just browned a little too much," said Teddy with a far-away look. "Browned," he added abstractedly.

"Burnt!" said Mr. Jones fiercely. "Burnt, sir!"

Alice heard the door slam once again and crept downstairs. She walked into the parlor and came face to face with Opportunity.

"I thought you went out with them!" she said.

"I don't like the movies," said Teddy.

"Neither do I!" said Alice-sit-by-the-radiator.

"Who are you, anyway?" said Opportunity.

"I'm Alice," said Alice.

"I'm Teddy," said Opportunity. "Nephew to Mrs. Bellers, who thinks you are a run-away heiress. I am always kind to run-away heiresses, when I locate them."

"Are you?" said Alice. "You were kind to me the other evening."

"Was I kind to one then?" demanded Teddy.

"Almost," murmured the girl. "I ran

away from home because my aunt wanted me to marry a wealthy undertaker."

"What an ideal!" said Teddy. "I'm in the advertising business myself."

Yesterday I went up and talked to the radiator about Alice.

"I miss her very much," he told me with a sigh. "She was such a *nice* girl. She used to tell me all sorts of interesting things about herself; about her school days, and her college days, and her wealthy and stingy aunt who wanted her to marry some man she didn't want to marry, and how she ran away and became a stenographer, and lost her job when she confused the words 'lost' and 'found' in a letter. Then she went to work in a factory, but lost out there too."

"She was a nice girl," said the radiator, "but not very practical."

"That was one of her charms," he added as an afterthought.

"She married a cousin of the Joneses," he went on after a while. "It was quite a shock to them, as nobody in the family had ever before married a servant girl. 'I never heard of such a thing.' I heard Mrs. Bellers say when he told them about it. But he married her."

"Are they reconciled—the Joneses, the

Bellers, and the bridal couple?" I asked.

"Quite," said the radiator. "Her aunt was so glad to hear that she was safely married that she forgave her everything. At least, that's what I heard, but these days the house isn't what it was. You know, we have no cook, can't get one. It's awful."

"So everybody is happy," I said.

"Everybody but Mrs. Jones," said the radiator. "When she heard that Teddy was going to marry Alice—she used to sit just where you are standing—she said: 'And just as she was getting trained!' I don't think she is over it even now. Cooks are hard to get these days, you know."

At that moment, there was a swish in the hallway and in came Alice, sparkling, furred, gay. She did not see me simply because I have the fascinating power of making myself invisible when I want to do so.

She slipped over to the old radiator and sat down on the floor and felt it with her hands.

"Dear old thing!" she said. "Dear old thing!" said Alice-sit-by-the-radiator, and there was a confused sputter heard, the sort that radiators make when they are half crying and half laughing.



SOMEDAY

By Marvin Luter Hill

SOMEDAY I shall not tremble when you speak;
 And that your lashes fall
 In ebon fringes on your flower cheek
 I shall not care at all.

Yet—it may be that my dead eyes will stare
 (Tortured by all I missed)
 Forever at your eyes, your wind-blown hair,
 The lips I never kissed.

"Your Job Will Be Waiting When You Get Back"

A NOVELETTE

By Ferdinand Reyher

I

"YOUR job will be waiting when you get back," were the last words old man Carew said to Johnny Lamb as they shook hands before the boy went to camp.

Once in a moment of wild excitement, Mr. Holling laid aside his manner of being in perpetual attendance at a peculiarly solemn memorial service and barked at Hatty:

"Say, young lady, what'n h——, er blazes, are you supposed to be round here, anyway?"

Hatty had so far been jostled out of her usual cheeky self-possession as to stand in open-mouthed amazement before the startling tableau of the man of dignity in a towering rage. But she had speedily recovered her unquenchable self, smirked at him, and answered, with a triple wriggle of her chewing gum:

"Just Hatty!"

In a way, that was exactly it—that is to say, during the first months in which Hatty honored the otherwise normal firm of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough with her presence. Having been "just Hatty" at that time, explains, perhaps, her presence with the firm in the year of peace, 1919.

Hatty was a war relic. Regarded dispassionately, one might say that she was

one of those recurrent minor atrocities of a war supposedly ended. She would have remained a simple lily of Harlem if it had not been for the war, and with no serious intent would she have approached nearer to the swift running current of Nassau Street than One Hundred and Forty-sixth Street. The war made her; although to be just, she really discovered the war by herself, and in no sense could she have been called a war baby.

Business men will recall, sobbingly, that fatal winter, 1917-18, when a rapacious Government cast its hungry eye round for the last available crop of stenographers. There were whole days when the click of a typewriter in the abandoned region of Wall Street sounded as lonely as a nightingale in Yonkers. Then, when all the good stenographers and passable typists had surged toward the Potomac, a herd of wild ones stampeded the hitherto peaceful, domestic offices. Daily they came, the silk stocking army from Jersey City, Queens, and Rahway to register at one of those business colleges where they make a Schwab secretary between Tuesday and Friday of the same week, position guaranteed. After six days and a diploma, the unloosed hosts of Remington and Underwood overran lower Broadway, wild for plunder. To be a stenographer within walking distance of Wall Street in 1918, was like being an heiress once upon a

time. Bank presidents' salaries were awaiting her who could write a letter without misspelling "receipt," and there was room for them all, the cruder the quicker. However, no sooner had an office trapped one, and spent a week cursing, raging, and shrieking slander at a blonde from Yorkville or Flatbush after she had carboned the letter on the back of the first copy three tries running, then she would fail to answer the roll call.

"Where is she?" someone in distress would ask at 10:22 in the morning.

At 11:04, the third bookkeeper, having gotten the married sister on the nearest grocery phone, would report:

"Gone to Washington!"

Even if the time comes, that peace is so thick upon the earth that Republican Senators will endorse the League of Nations, there will still survive one sentence to grate upon the soul of the Fagged Captain of Business, make him see red, and want to fight all over again:

"Gone to Washington!"

Some day, a fat poet of commercialism will come along and sing a free verse pæan to the greatest patriot; the man who kept the wheels turning and grinding on the lumpy grist of human make-shifts. Then a sculptor will make a statue of the middle-aged nervous wreck who owned a large office space filled with typewriter desks entirely surrounded by vacancies—the man who caught them with a four-day diploma from the Sit-tight, Razem & Potter Academies of Commercial Delinquency and allowed them to practice on his machines for a week before they bought a Pullman south; the man who saw them marching in, in their silver cord coats and Harlem mink, with nothing in the world to recommend them but an instinct for the touch system, and put the glint of typewriter polish on them that they might desert him for the Government.

He was the unsung hero of the back regions; the buffer plate between the rawest sort of product and the cry of

the Bureaus that bulwarked the White House. He was gray before his time, a menace to his wife, a dread to his children, a pest to his fellows, a devotee of profanity—and no delegation of citizens and cheerful sirens along the river welcomed him home.

Yet the normal citizen, did he have to choose between old man Carew and Hatty would, without the slightest hesitation, have chosen—either Norma Talmadge or Alice Brady. Hatty would have made the jaguars run to cover in the jungle; and old man Carew in a day and a night, would have made a jungle out of Palm Beach. So there you are.

Old man Carew, second on the sign of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough, burlap and denim sack manufacturers, but first in importance and general peevishness, followed Miss Judson, the last of the stenographers, into the corridor and to the elevator. His shoulders were round as a bundle of hall runner, his eyes sunk like golf balls in mud, and his spirit diminished to the size of the 1917 sugar allotment. Now, Miss Judson was a good shift lock manipulator and a mistress of the hieroglyphics of shorthand. Furthermore, by comparison to other stenographers the firm had recently acquired, she shone like varnish against a first coat.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Carew," said Miss Judson, drawing one hand back through the palm of her glove like the retreating head of a snail, and then pressing her fingers forward and stroking the leather. She cast her eyes north and continued:

"I am going to Washington. These are critical times, Mr. Carew. The Government needs me."

"Cut the editorial guff and revert to personals," interrupted old man Carew rudely. "Just how much are you going to hold me up for?"

"Mr. Carew," responded Miss Judson with dignity, "I am going to Washington to do my bit."

He grew hysterical at that

"You won't take—" he shouted and his words congealed as his eye caught the indicator on the elevator clock whizzing counter-wise: 22—21—20—19. There was a burst of sinister crimson in the bulb beneath the clock. A clatter of iron. Old man Carew unhypnotized himself.

"I'll make it—" he began desperately.

"Good-by, Mr. Carew," lilted Miss Judson, flicking a gloved hand at him.

She turned in the elevator and smiled as the folding grill, with a chuckling clatter, unlimbered its lattice between them. The indicator resumed its counter stepping: 17—16—15—14—13— . . . 5—3—1. As it settled on 1, he tore himself away and flung through the door into the outer office of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough. He jabbed a shaking finger at Johnny Lamb and a trembling fist in the austere direction of Mr. Holling.

"If any of you ever let another female come into this office who knows the difference between a letter of acknowledgment and a legal holiday, I'll—I'll"—he wheezed off into incoherency. After a bit, he got the brakes on to himself and once more became noisily intelligible. "The next one that comes stays forever. I don't care if she knows so much that she can carry it in her locket and still have room for a powder puff. By ten thousand cripes now, the man who puts an idea into her head or even teaches her how to sharp a pencil will—will—*brrrrr!*" He blew up again, with a noise like the stripping of gears.

He was still rumbling and erupting with molten hate an hour later. Miss Mencken, who came to take a letter from him in place of Miss Judson, suddenly shot out of his private office as from the barrel of a howitzer, wild-eyed and in tears. An eerie wail in the accents of old man Carew pursued her, couched in notes of a blood-curdling pathos:

"Oh oh, oh! I wan'a commit aspasia or something? I'm goin' to Mexico—

5—L. S.

they'll all kill me yet! Get out! Get out! Eskimoes! Eskimoes! That's what they are—punctuation, spelling! Ten thousand cripes now, don't nobody go to school no more? Throw out the typewriters—throw 'em all out—throw 'em outta the window—use 'em for road foundations! Denham! Denham! Come here, Denham!"

Imperturbable Charley Denham, cool and smiling, breezed into old man Carew's den of profanity.

"Denham, make a note o' this!" shrieked the old man. "Be here at five o'clock t'-morrer morning and interview all the office charwomen and s'lect three for secretarial jobs! Three of 'em! Make a note o' that, Denham!"

Denham laughed and went out, leaving the old man fluttering down, through fantastic circles of humor, to a normal temperature. A little later, Carew sent out a note to Johnny Lamb.

"Insert following advertisement in all morning papers," read the note, and then the advertisement:

WANTED: Four husky female laborers for light office work."

About two-thirty, he popped out and shouted across to Mr. Holling as though they had been carrying on an uninterrupted conversation:

"You'll get me one that even Washington won' take, and while that sounds crazy you'll do it—do you hear—you'll do it!"

The door of his office slammed behind him. From outside in the corridor, came the metallic clattering of an elevator gate sliding open and shut, as though it were the echo of the banging of old man Carew's door. A moment later, the office door opened and Hatty came in.

She was about nineteen, slim, with that wriggle to her walk which suggests Coney Island on an August Sunday, Longacre Square at eleven-fifteen Saturday night, Sixth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street on the eve of holidays, and every other spot overpacked with

congregating humanity. She was that exclusive product of New York and the subway that personifies the rush hour motto of Harlem and the Bronx—"Room for just one more!" She had the air of being able to board an express at Grand Central at the zero hour, five-fifty-eight, and arrive at her station on the outskirts with her hat on straight and not a crease in her blouse.

The first lasting impression she gave, after the surface impression of baby prettiness had been dispelled, was a sense of self-dependence and nerve. A tinge of green in her eyes did this; and a certain hauteur with which she wore her clothes, the whole outfit of which could not have cost her family more than sixty dollars, as though she were trailing through a world, safe for all democrats, in the habiliments of the Queen of Sheba.

She paused on the threshold of the office, daintily punishing the chewing gum in her mouth, and coolly returning the stare of the gaping force. Then her eyes lighted on Johnny Lamb.

Lamb was the office cub and one of its principal rays of sunshine. He had a head of curly hair and a disposition like the sublimated essence of the cheeriest beams of old Sol. He was rather shy at heart; but an incurable romanticism constantly drove him out of himself. He was the kind who make all the fifty-to-one wagers and draw to the inside straights of the world, being a devotee of enthusiasms, and the prospect of getting Taft for president of the Yanks or Charley Hughes to manage the Dodgers would furnish him with serious conversation for weeks at a stretch.

"D'ye need any stenographers?" Hatty asked him.

Regarding her with wide twinkling eyes, he rose, smiling.

"Funny, that is!" he laughed. "I just heard something about something like that."

"I'm ready to start now," said Hatty.

"Say, ain't that fine!" he exclaimed heartily, and paused. "But d'you know," he added with confidential frankness, "I'm afraid I'm not exactly the chap to ask."

"Gee, ain't that strange! I thought now you must be the president sure!" she said innocently. "But use all your pull and see if you can't get me a interview."

"Say, all the pull I got round here wouldn't stretch a rubber band. But Mr. Holling over there, he's the director of employment, and—follow me."

He led her to Mr. Holling who was entrenched like a feudal despot behind a huge double rosewood desk which stood by itself.

"This young lady is an expert stenographer," began Chubby Lamb romantically, bowing slightly toward Hatty, "and she wants a job."

Mr. Holling frowned upon Hatty. Her nose crinkled faintly as she stared back at him. Mr. Holling had a manner that fairly vibrated with the desire to use whatever advantage he could gather to himself over anyone unfortunate enough to be compelled to confront him in the role of petitioner. He was the incarnation of Disapproval.

"Where have you worked before?" asked Mr. Holling.

"In a telephone exchange," answered Hatty. "I was an operator."

"In a—a what?" demanded Mr. Holling. "A telephone operator! And you ask for a stenographer's position? Have you ever gone to a business college or had any experience in shorthand or type-writing?"

"Why, mister," exclaimed Hatty in a grieved tone, "them business schools've each got a waiting line in front of 'em from here to Van Cortlandt Park. I was thinking I could learn right here."

"Does this look like a school room to you? What ever brought you here, Miss? D'ye think we've got the time to instruct you?" demanded Mr. Holling in sheer horror.

His idea of running a business in a crisis was to look up the word crisis in the dictionary, and then, turning to the Book of Customary Procedure, do what had always been done before in precisely the same way. Old man Carew, thought Mr. Holling, had been speaking ironically about engaging an inexperienced stenographer—he could not have been serious, of course not! Hunting, and being given, employment was a sacred proposition in Mr. Holling's eyes; it was something of mercantile ceremonial; a sort of commercial confirmation. One came humbly, with a starched air if not in a starched dress, bearing typewritten and properly endorsed catechisms of recommendations and references. No emergency nonsense about Mr. Holling. In his soul's horrified recoil from the spectacle of Hatty asking for a stenographer's job on the basis of having been a telephone operator, he was hardly conscious of what she said to him.

"Gee, Mr. Hollow, I learned to op'rate a switchboard in four days and that's some complicated job, I'll tell the world. You put me on and I'll guarantee—"

"Do you mean to say you have had no stenographic experience?" asked Mr. Denham, who had come up and overheard.

"Gee, come to think of't, oncet I—" meditated Hatty slowly, but Mr. Denham gripped her arm firmly and checked her.

"Not another word, please!" he said almost harshly, before she could dig up from her past any incriminating evidence. "You're engaged! What's your name?"

Hatty beamed up at him with delight. Here was a man who appreciated great talents in the rough:

"Harriet Weller," she said.

"Here, write it down with your address and telephone."

Hatty scrawled it.

"Do you see that desk over there? From now on, that's to be your business residence. Come along please, Miss Weller."

He gently touched her elbow and Harriet advanced toward her future business residence. Behind them, Mr. Holling was emitting gurgling noises expressive of supreme spiritual agony. It was always a bitter reflection upon himself, felt Mr. Holling, that Charles Denham with his sense of humor, should be his immediate superior. This latest grotesquery of the humorous Denham, taking old man Carew literally at his word and engaging a "stenographer" whom certainly even Washington would never take from them, was really too much.

"Mr. Lamb, this is Miss Weller, one of our new stenographers," Mr. Denham was announcing soberly on the other side of the room to Johnny Lamb. "You'll be kind enough to give her what assistance she may need at first in becoming accustomed to the work."

So, having palmed off Hatty on sunny Johnny Lamb, Mr. Denham hastily departed from the room with all his solemnity intact—until the door shut behind him. Johnny stood there with a great grin, playing like May sunshine over his face. It was patent that he did not share Mr. Holling's attitude toward the advisability of attaching Hatty to the firm of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough. He lifted the edge of the desk which was to be Hatty's. The central section made a combination leap and dive, and there stood Hatty's typewriter.

"Ooh!" said Hatty. "It's like a Jack-in-the-box, ain't it?"

"That's your typewriter," laughed Johnny.

"Gee!" said Hatty looking at the typewriter and transferring the wintergreen from the left to the right molars, "that don't look so awful hard to work, does it? Is it anything like a pleaner?"

Johnny threw back his head and laughed, and a ripple of sprightly tittering ran around the room. As they stood there, they looked like the joy twins; a sudden lightness had come into the place; the whole office, with the exception of

Mr. Holling, took Hatty affectionately to itself. It remains to be said that Mr. Denham, having engaged Hatty in what was certainly a facetious moment, did play fairly with her—as fairly as a superstitious man who in a crisis plays the limit on a hunch. She seemed to bring luck, for in the next three days the firm engaged seven girls who could take dictation if it were given to them as elementarily and distinctly as a starter in a race says: "Get ready! Set! Go!" and would even put in a punctuation mark where it belonged if a pistol were fired. Mr. Denham never waved the high sign of dismissal at Hatty, although as a stenographer she was as useful to the firm as the elevator starter on the ground floor. Gradually, she drifted into the role of a kind of sublimated office girl, criss-crossing the rooms on small errands which eventually gave her a certain librarian's knowledge of the company for which every one found constant and increasing use. With it all, she remained forever "just Hatty," darting to and fro like a dragon fly; glimmering with slangy laughter, chewing gum, giving a rapier retort to every pin prick of witticism addressed to her. It was always "Hatty, get me that Spurgis report; I think it's File 28, or 38!" "Hatty, where's that Ashbrot, Taffel & Dreyfuss, Pittsburgh, memorandum Mr. Denham was asking for?" "Hatty, where's this?" and "Hatty, where's that?" Yet she never seemed to be doing anything; seemingly surfeited with time enough to try fantastic fingering systems on typewriters left unguarded for a moment; time to relieve Tessie Edelson at the switchboard for a quarter of an hour; time to—seemingly, there was nothing for which she could not find time. The keen edge of even Mr. Holling's resentment at the presence of anything so capricious as Hatty in a sober office blunted into grim acceptance. His last outburst against her occurred on the afternoon when he came upon Hatty showing Victor, one of the office boys,

how to make practical drinking cups out of bond paper, legal size.

"Young lady, isn't there anything you can find to do here, besides destroying office material and wasting the time of these boys?" he fussed, reaching round Hatty for the paper cup holder, that at this moment, was paper cupless.

Hatty calmly handed him the drinking cup she had just taught Victor to make.

"'Ere y'are, Mr. 'Ollin'!" she clipped triumphantly at him.

He glared at her for a moment, and then actually snatched the cup out of her hand.

"I'll tell you what's wrong with you, Mr. 'Ollin'," said the astonishing Hatty, coolly folding another sheet of paper into a drinking cup. "You're a reg'lar business man, awright, awright; but you're not a reg'lar guy."

With that, she tossed Victor the other drinking cup and walked away, leaving Mr. Holling so agitated that his fingers clutched convulsively on the drinking cup he held and pressed open its edges, so that a trickle of cool spring water descended upon his immaculate waistcoat and trousers.

Fate had been kind to both the office and Hatty in keeping her away from her principal source of danger—old man Carew. In a moment of hysteric eccentricity, he had really been responsible for her; in a similar moment of outraged wilfulness, he might have been equally responsible for her abrupt departure. Some day, of course, a dramatic collision between those two fantastic personalities would take place, and daily the office awaited it; and with every day fatuously hoped it would be deferred. Came a day when the old man was in one of his usual bad moods, and in the afternoon he suddenly stalked out of his private office and glared about him. It just happened that not one of the stenographers was in the room with the exception of Hatty, who was picking out "Now is the time for the good brown fox to jump over the lazy

party on the fourteenth of last month?" with one finger and a puckered expression of intense concentration, upon Miss Roseman's typewriter.

He pointed at Hatty and shouted:

"You, miss! Bring your book and come here!"

That which every stenographer in the office dreaded more than influenza had descended upon Hatty of all people. Augustus Bains, old man Carew's secretary, was away at something or other and the old man had singled out a victim from the outer office to take dictation. Long before this, Hatty must have invested old man Carew with the sacred halo of those who can raise the brother of Abel and not get called down; but nevertheless, without a visible tremor, she answered the call, which must have sounded like an order to stop the current in a third rail by smearing talcum powder on it. Picking up Miss Roseman's shorthand book, she followed old man Carew into his cave of horrors, leaving the door partly open.

"Im—or'nt lett—four cop's—ge'roffawuntz!" crackled the old man's opening salvo: A humanitarian might have translated this into: "An important letter is about to be dictated to you, my child. Kindly make four copies without delay and just bring them to me for approval and the necessary signature, so that the letter may be dispatched immediately."

"Da'lin, R'luck—oh, Ne Jurzee—t'day—Messers Simp, Luch, Dill! Derr Sirs!"

With jerks, cracklings, and explosions, old man Carew shot out this address. It meant that the date line was to be Roloco, New Jersey, the site of the Rosmer Loading Company's plant, a war company in which he was vitally interested and of which he was an officer; and that the letter was to be sent to the firm of Messrs. Simpson, Lucknow & Delancey, Pittsburgh, Pa. Almost everyone in the office at some time or other had become familiar with the address, but in that tense instant it must have been as crystalline to Hatty as a Chaldean mud tablet. The

whole office sat rigid with a sickening impression of impending calamity. Johnny Lamb had risen from his desk, his lips open and his eyes fixed in a terrified stare on the partly open door of old man Carew's private office. He sank weakly into the chair before Miss Roseman's desk, which Hatty had just left, some papers which he had carried fluttering from his fingers over the typewriter. With a flurry of his shoulders, as though to shake off the tragedy achieving itself in the private office of the old man, he mechanically stuffed paper into the typewriter, bent over his scattered notes, and clicked merrily away at the keys.

"Pr'ves' ga—shun'—'scover pres' shortch necer'y supplies c'pellsus 'cline handling farth' ord's. Is wi' deepst 'grets I'd'vise you this, buttes th' French say la war it's HELL! Meet the 'gen aft Dutch 're LICKED! Sur—"

Old man Carew's characteristic and strangely fascinating volleying of a business letter stopped with an ominous break.

"Why, in ten thousand cripes, didn' ye take that?" he suddenly bellowed.

"Take what?" came the clear voice of Hatty.

There was a sound of choking.

"Take what!" shrieked the old man. "The letter I was givin' you!"

"Oh—" her voice was charged with honest surprise. "Was that a letter? I thought you was hiccupin'!"

It was a full minute before another sound was heard. Then, like the bursting of a barrage, the old man's voice roared out against the horrid quietness that was broken only by the noise of Chubby Lamb's frantic typewriting.

"Get out! Get out!" old man Carew howled. "Get out and never come back—never come near here unless you bring me that letter perfect! What'n—what'n ten thousand blazes did you think I called you in here for—to sing 'Way down on the Suwanee River?'"

Simultaneously Hatty appeared in the

doorway. She didn't seem much upset; but she was holding Miss Roseman's red-lined pad upside down and crinkling her nose in the direction of the old man.

"Well, of all the noive!" she said so distinctly that he must have heard her. "Of all the noive! He must be sick!"

She marched over to Johnny Lamb.

"Say, Johnny, was that there riot what you call bein' fired?" she demanded, as though Johnny were the guilty party.

He started, rose and unwound his written sheets from the typewriter.

"Here, Hatty," he said cramming the four sheets, carbons and all, into her hands, "sit down for a minute and read 'em over, and take 'em to him. Tell him you never had a previous opportunity of getting next to his peculiar manner of dictatin'; but that when it comes to memory, you're a bear!"

She looked at him with wide eyes.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and for all her amazement there was a new softness in her voice. "D'ye mean this is the stuff he was shootin' off 'bout in there—all done—all O. K.?"

Johnny smiled, shifted awkwardly, and nodded.

"Johnny Lamb, you're what I call one real, white gent, I'll tell the world!"

She pressed his hand with a warmth of gratitude and tenderness so unusual to her metallic bright little self that his blood pounded along with a thrill and a trill.

"Thanks—not 'tall!" he mumbled, blushing furiously and confused.

Five minutes later, chin perkily up and rustling four sheets of paper defiantly before her, Hatty breezed toward the old man's den and disappeared. A moment later she reappeared, head even higher.

"Great blazes!" came from old man Carew as she crossed the threshold of his private office. "Look here!"

She turned. There was a pause and he came and stood before her, bent over the letters, looking so hard for an error

that the whole room felt the real strain.

"Say!" he exclaimed. "Ten thousand cripes now, young lady—what's your name?"

"Hat—Miss Weller!" she responded with inflammable dignity.

"Well, Miss Weller, hereafter when I got any dictatin' to do what Mr. Bains ain't here to take, you'll stay out there at your desk and we'll do it by telepathy!"

He darted back into his office, and with a bang of the door behind him, severed himself from the astral influences of psychic stenography. But quick as he had been in darting back, no one except perhaps on Hatty herself, was lost the fact—the indubitable, miraculous fact—that old man Carew's perpetual and deep-grooved scowl had flirted for a moment with a grin. Hatty had borne the gleam of gladness into the old man's cavern of gloom. She crinkled her nose as the door closed, and with one hand stroking the flat smoothness of her hipless figure and the other wiggling the pencil in her hair against her scalp, she repeated, distinctly:

"Well—of *all* the noive!"

Through the succeeding weeks, at little odd moments, Johnny Lamb found opportunities to hover about Hatty, with a kind of half shy, wistful joy in her presence, or in inflicting himself on her. Lips parted with boyish embarrassment, he seemed nevertheless to thrive upon the witticisms and slang she flung at him, and the chirpy bright prattle of her incessant mockery splashed over him like a delicious summer sea. In spite of the service he had done her in the matter of old man Carew's dictation—wiser psychologists than even Mr. Denham, would have said because of it—she apparently had singled him out as the special target of her raciest shafts; but seemingly, Johnny had become so devoted to this dragon fly of a girl that where he should have winced, he merely grinned. One evening, as she pushed

through the revolving door of the Trowbridge Building and came out on the steps from which she would step into the day-is-done tide of humankind hurrying toward Elevated stations and Subway kiosks, to the Bronx and Long Island City, Flatbush and Yorkville, he was standing on the pavement in the violet dusk, evidently waiting for someone. She saw his face light up as his eyes met hers, and he stepped up to meet her.

"I—I was jus' waitin' for Gus Spencer—y'didn't see him anywheres up stairs, did you?" he stammered.

She laughed merrily.

"Gee, Johnny, you're a razzle-dazzle!" She hitched her fox piece more snugly round her neck. "As if you didn't know that when the minute hand steps on five o'clock, the only thing about Gus ye c'd see is the corpses he's leaving behind him as he goes battling through the crowd to make that Lenox Avenue special." She slipped her hand through his arm. "C'm on, Chubby, take me to the station!"

So, having it made easy for him, he escorted her to the Subway station. Together, they fought their way to a ticket window; but quick as he was, she was before him with her nickel and he pushed after her across the crowded platform and into a train as packed as a freshly filled slot machine. He was pressed close against her; and at each succeeding station the thud of another desperate wedge of homegoing Harlemites squashed them still nearer to each other. Unconsciously, he strove to stand between her and the impact of each new host. He had the satisfying glow of the protecting male. He felt something like a knight standing between his lady and the press of a rowdy. It was good that he got some satisfaction from this, because from their talk, small benefit could have been derived by either of them. What there was of it was mostly gasps and smothered imprecations; yet Chubby was treasuring each word and groan that Hatty

uttered, as something semi-sacred and beatifically private. Suddenly she turned.

"Say, wasn't that your station?"

He blushed; but a warm thrill of pleasure ran through him at her question. She knew where he lived. There was delicious intimacy about that. He had known it was his station, but he answered:

"Oh—eh—wha-wha—I'll be—so it was!" Emboldened he added: "I don't care. I'm seeing you home! Get me?"

She looked up at this new assertive Johnny with an appreciative mockery.

"Huh!" she exclaimed. "Y're 'fraid I'll miss *my* stop?"

He gripped her elbow, which in the jam of the train had long been identified with his floating ribs.

"Don't you worry what I think!"

"Gee, don' you see me gettin' gray doin' that!"

"I'm stickin' t'ye close, little one, like a postage stamp."

"Say, ye don' put much of a price on y'r comp'ny, do ye? You'd have t'be ten of yourself to be worth twenty cents to me or thirty."

"Say, talkin' of price—I could even buy you a dinner."

"An' a movie after?" she mocked.

"The best in the town."

"Lawd! An' me poor old mother waitin' home with the bean soup and the stew."

They were at her station now, and he walked with her up the stairs out into the clear cool Harlem evening. At the corner, she stopped.

"D'ye wan' me to lend y' a nickel to get back on?" she said, hinting his dismissal.

"It's a fine night for a walk," he answered sentimentally.

"Life's too short—ye better get a taxi, and be natural, no matter what the doctor's been telling you."

"Listen, Hatty, now—"

"Go on—go on—lot you care if my stew gets cold."

"Listen—" Johnny Lamb began.

"Aw, gee, go on! Ain't you satisfied I'm standin' in front of you? D'ye wan' me to put on a list'nin tube?"

"When *are* ye goin' out to dinner with me, an' a show, or anything you wan'a do, like a dance or somethin', see?"

"*See!*" she mimicked with scorn. "Say, wha' d'ye think I lis'en with—my eyes?" She looked up at him laughingly, and gripped his arm. "Go on, go on, fair one, tell me some more—dinner, show, dance an' anything I wan'a do—keep on, it's like music to my ears, me bein' a poor kid f'm Harlem with no pleasures o' me own."

Her patter of mockery disturbed him, and quick to see that perhaps he really was hurt, she said impulsively:

"Hones', Johnny, ma's all ready with the add-hot-water-and-serve, so I'll have t'be runnin'. But lis'en, ol' dear, any night, any place you say—tell me t'morrer when the big time's comin' off! Nighty-night!"

A quick pressure on his fingers and she was gone, leaving Johnny Lamb in a state of beatific trance.

They had exactly three "big times" together. The first took place three days after the evening on which he had made the initial excursion to Harlem with her, and the third and last, one week later. This occasion was a gala event for Johnny Lamb, imbued for him with something of an international flavor. After they had departed from their American business office on that great night, they had dinner at an Italian restaurant, with spaghetti in strings as long and slippery as the Piave. With a final spurt through demi-tasse, an apple, a brick of Neopolitan ice cream and a domino of Camembert cheese, they hurried to a French musical comedy in which an English actor was starring. They concluded with a Yellow Peril, a tête-à-tête over an inlaid marble-topped teak wood table and a steaming mess of chop suey, that well-known midnight in-door sport of Longacre Square and Col-

umbus Circle. It was as they walked arm in arm from the Harlem station through the desolation of that province to Hatty's home, that they reverted to their inalienable American citizenship again. For a time, Johnny had been strangely silent.

"Gee, Johnny," Hatty burst out finally, "I'll admit they ring the curfew up here in the suburbs; but at that they can't do no more'n pinch you for conversation. Be a sport now and shatter the stilly night with a few well chosen remarks on anything, will ye?"

For answer, he pressed her arm closer.

"Hones'—hones', Hatty—when I get to thinkin' this is the las' time, maybe, I'll have a chance to see ye—why, aw gosh, girl, can't ye see, I haven't got much heart left to chew the rag."

"The las' time!" She stopped short, disengaging her arm and gripping his. She looked up close into his face. "The las' time—say, what's the answer?"

He fancied there was a tremor of solicitation in her words, and the fancy warmed his heart.

"I'm drafted," he said. "I go t'morrer."

"Why—why didn't ye tell me?" she asked slowly. "Gee, I never even guessed you was goin' so soon."

"It'd a been sooner, but old man Carew begged me not t'enlist. . . . An' my mother and sister was both dependent, an'—well, I'm goin't'morrer."

There was a heavy silence between them.

"You'll write t'me?" she asked.

"You bet. And you?"

"I'll do it if I have to use Miss Wasserman's machine."

They had reached her door. As she stood facing him he gripped her arms and drew her close to him. His eyes were gleaming near to hers; his lips an inch from her lips.

"Hatty—" his voice was husky—"I'm not goin' to say it now—but when I come back to you, I'm goin' to say—to

say—"I love you, Hatty!" In an iron hold that was expressive of a new, unrecognizably masterful Johnny Lamb, she was drawn almost fiercely to him, and he kissed her. For a long minute, she felt held from the ground, and then as her toes touched the pavement again, he suddenly released her, and in an ecstasy of panic, he turned and fled.

That was Johnny Lamb's real farewell to Hatty. She saw him the next day when he came to say good-by to his friends in the office; but almost shamefacedly he avoided her; the incurable and genuine shyness that was characteristic of Johnny Lamb having, in the meantime, visualized all manner of indignations in the mind of Hatty, which that highly sophisticated young Gothamite certainly never felt. As a matter of fact, she was actually piqued that he made no fuss over her in the office as he shook hands and said good-by. Foolish Johnny Lamb, he could have kissed her again; because in the first place, kisses, as kisses, meant nothing vastly significant to Hatty. In the second place, all the movie actresses and society girls in canteens and enlisting booths had made kissing potential dough-boys an act approximately as thrilling as a handclasp. The office would have laughed and made near-witty remarks—and there, as far as the public was concerned, the matter would have ended. The kiss he had given her the night before, had really stirred something in the deeps of Hatty's apparently frilly little soul. It was not like other kisses; she still thrilled to it. And now—

"Good-by, Hatty, I'll write ye," said Johnny.

"I'll bet all the words you'll send me'll give yo' writer's cramp," she answered.

"Will you write as many?"

"If I don't I'll knit ye a pair o' strawberry socks."

"S'long!"

"Fare thee well, my darling boy."

So Johnny went to a Southern camp, spent his first leave of absence in quar-

antine with mumps, and his second in quarantine with measles, and shortly after recovering, sailed for France from a southern port on the well-known Atlantic, without reappearing in New York. Hatty received eight letters and a post card from him; answered the first two faithfully and in corresponding length, and cheated cruelly on the others, owing the lad when he left something like a thousand words of neglected reply. She got his photograph—photograph of Corporal John Raleigh Lamb—when he was on the high seas and at the moment when he was pitching in a coquettish storm, indifferent to her, indifferent to life itself, the needs of France, war, love—anything except the gyrations of a stomach which had never been brought up to be a sailor. Had he known at that moment, he would have been miserably indifferent to the very slight thrill his photograph evoked in her; he wouldn't have cared had she torn it across. But fortunately he knew nothing of the fact that the picture of Corporal John Raleigh Lamb shared an unimportant place on her dresser behind a can of powder, a vanity case, and a jar of cold cream, with three other youths in khaki, her cousins and Freddy Mawser, whom she had always known without ever having been elated to any pitch of fervor by it. For when Johnny was sailing the high seas and hating life with the terrible hatred of a rebelling stomach, Hatty was sailing on a strange, exciting sea of personal adventure; a sea upon which, however, the wraith of Johnny Lamb's one fervent kiss occasionally fell like a reminding shadow.

II

In the spring of 1919, Johnny Lamb returned to New York on a troopship welcomed by aldermen and a committee, the formation of which had caused more controversy than the League of Nations. He had lollled about France for almost a

year before his regiment was sent into action, and then he arrived in time for the tail end of a very minor skirmish. He wore no crosses; was never mentioned in the orders or disorders of the day; was unknissed by French ladies or French generals, and altogether, having been prepared to do his duty, had done it without fuss and feathers as the great unmentioned thousands have done it, and was glad—the phrase is "damned glad"—to spot the sky line of Manhattan again. He had no subtle soul awakenings; no psychic spiritual transformations. He went forth Johnny Lamb, and he came back Johnny Lamb, despite the corporal honors. He had been the same sunshiny Chubby in camp and in France that he had been in the office of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough, and in that big, shy, sunshiny heart of his he still carried one picture—the vision of Hatty Weller, forever vitalized by the kiss he had given her in the discreet and cemetery-like somnolence of Harlem at 1:15 A. M. over a year ago. So, having laid clear the war record of Johnny Lamb, it is time to return to Hatty and the end of the winter of 1918.

Curiously enough, after the rebuff she had given Mr. Holling *re* the matter of impromptu drinking cups folded out of bond paper, legal size, Hatty became vaguely aware that his attitude toward her had undergone a radical change. She was utterly bowled over one afternoon, when Mr. Holling gratuitously walked across the room and apropos of nothing stated:

"A wonderfully fine day, isn't it, Miss Weller?"

Hatty stared at him somewhat as though he had announced: "Let's can the work and go down to Brighton for a swim—they say the water's fine in February!"

He repeated:

"Simply wonderful weather, isn't it?"

She painstakingly examined the startling sentence to discover what sarcasm

underlay his words, and to her own amazement finding none, responded solemnly:

"Mr. Holling, you speak words of wisdom, and it's a pleasure to meet such a fine observer."

Whereupon Mr. Holling, far from being his usual ruffled self at her reply, actually smiled a great beaming, semi-human smile.

"Let me get this right," said Hatty quickly. "It was your great aunt what died, wasn't it, Mr. 'Olling, and left you all that money?"

He laughed. The whole office now stared at this astounding outbreak of hilarity on the part of the Grand Secretary of The-I-Will-Glooms.

That evening, as Hatty, homeward bound, was entering the elevator, Mr. Holling stepped in behind her.

"Pretty good to call it a day, eh?" Mr. Holling said, as an effort at small talk.

"Callin' it a day, Mr. Holling," answered Hatty, "is what fills me with heavy sorrer ev'ry evenin'."

He walked beside her down the corridor toward the revolving doors of the entrance, and he was beside her when she came out on the street.

"Going over toward the subway?" Mr. Holling asked, and without delaying for her reply, touched her arm and went with her. Her surprise at the general evidences of thawing taking place in the frosted top soil of the man next to her was not lessened by the fact that Hatty, who knew all that was to be known of the personal habits of the people with whom she worked, was aware that Mr. Holling never went home on the subway, but took the Elevated at a station which lay in the opposite direction.

Somehow, she was not able to frisk in front of Mr. Holling and lay her nickel on the little glass shelf of the ticket window ahead of him, as she had done with Johnny Lamb, and Mr. Holling preceding her with two tickets to the chopper, stood aside there while she passed him,

and then dropping the tickets into the box, followed her to the platform.

In the few cubic inches of space inside the train which they had won for themselves, Mr. Holling deftly sliced open an evening paper. He shifted one shoulder round in front of Hatty so that she could glance over the sheet also.

"What do you think of that!" exclaimed Mr. Holling. "The President has issued a statement upholding Garfield's closing order."

"That means the the'tres an' ev'ry-thing'll be shut down, don' it?"

"It looks that way."

"Gee, ain't the war fierce!" she exclaimed passionately.

"So—McAdoo's appointing a Railroad Wage Commission. I wonder what that will signify?" Mr. Holling brooded aloud, with an inflection in his voice, however, that was the first appeal that had ever been made to Hatty's intellectual discretion.

"Say, turn to the comics!" said Hatty.

A faint shiver ran through Mr. Holling. Under the Proper-Rules-of-Procedure-Crust of him, there was, perhaps, a reservoir of humor, dried up through long parched years of efficiency, that livening streams might again fill. He turned to the comic sheet for the first time, and with that simple act started himself on the backward track toward the lost laughter of his youth.

Mr. Holling, raising his hat gallantly in farewell among a hedge of arms and iron hand-loops, left Hatty at Grand Central Station. She had been vaguely wondering whether he were going to see her home; and vaguely disturbed at the prospect. She was already flushing secretly at the thought of the various slangy attacks she had made upon Mr. Holling, during the course of their encounters in the office. She began to sense that this new Mr. Holling was intent upon proving that in addition to being a "regular business man," he was at heart, a "regular guy," as well. Mr.

Holling was, after all, a figure of importance in the concern of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough; and as such, even in purely social relations, could not be so flippantly regarded as Johnny Lamb.

As the days went on, it became apparent that by one of those freaks of the law of sex attraction, Mr. Clarence Holling, forty-eight years of age, and with a record clean of entangling alliances with the charms of femininity, to say nothing of being the recipient of a weekly salary much larger than the total monthly wages of Hatty's father, had become very definitely interested in that father's daughter. Mr. Holling, evincing a surprising instinct for advancing his cause for one so untutored in the Great Game, did not lose, but gained, in dignity in Hatty's eyes. He was really very wise. Several times, he rode as far as Grand Central Station with her in the evening. Several times, he accidentally met her at luncheon, on those rare occasions when she forsook a clattering, marbled, coffee-and-emporium for the tea shop round the corner. Several times per day, he could find a moment in which to say a pleasant word to her; and pleasant, unprofessional words from Mr. Holling during business hours had a value all their own. Several times, he walked to her subway station, tipped his hat, and walked back to his own Elevated station. Several times he made to her little, subtle suggestions indicative of his interest in her success. Very, very subtle was Mr. Holling in these suggestions, and it was from him that Hatty heard first the magic word "career" applied to herself. Yet, it was all accidental seemingly; all in passing; he gave no air of plotting to bring about these occurrences. He had none of the youthful stress and strain of Johnny Lamb, dog faithful in expressions of eye and lips, awkward hands and stumbling speech. Each of Mr. Holling's slightest attentions to her caressed her like flattery; each had distinction. He spoke a deliberately careful English

to her, and Hatty, long entrenched in the armor of instantaneous slang, felt that his sentences reprov'd, with loving correction her own maltreatment of language. She, consequently, lost in speech with him, a bit of her cheeky independence; imperceptibly, she was toned down, and whole hours passed when she forgot to replace the verbal chip that she had always carried upon the trim, Georgette curve of her lovely little shoulder.

It was five minutes of five and Hatty began zigzagging across the outer office toward the dressing room.

"Miss Weller!"

Only two people called her "Miss Weller" in the office—old man Carew and Mr. Holling. She turned. Mr. Holling was coming toward her, a sheaf of papers in his hand.

"Miss Weller, the office is frightfully crowded for time. There's a special job to be done on these papers, and Miss Tracy, who was to go over them, has just told Mr. Carew that she cannot stay to-night—she's going down to Washington at midnight and has to pack. Will you help us out—I can show you what has to be done by going over these with you for a few minutes?"

Hatty gasped. Miss Tracy leaving, and she was being asked to step into her place, even if it were for only one evening!

"Why, sure, Mr. Holling. I'll call up and tell my mother I'm not comin' home for dinner."

"Fine. Don't worry about your dinner—we'll have that together."

Until this evening, Hatty had been a kind of free lance in the office, a sort of independently operating bureau of trivial information and petty emergencies. Now, for the first time, she was assuming the importance of a definite cog in the machinery of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough.

"Do you know what I should do if I were you?" said Mr. Holling a little later as they sat in the restaurant. He had

evidenced the craft of his courtship in this matter of dinner, too. As they went out together from the office, he had said to her: "Now, we can only allow ourselves thirty minutes for dinner. I'll regret it more than you will, of course," and he had smiled pleasantly. "This is what I should do if I were you," he continued. "I should study business methods, office detail, and every bit of work that came my way, as though they were chapters of some new, racy novel. Miss Weller, here's your big chance. Men are leaving us every day, the girls are leaving us day and night, and at the same time, the necessity of the times demands that we keep right on, speed up, and even expand. If ever you had a chance, here it is. Stay with Morningfield, Carew & McCullough, and the firm will not forget you, and everything possible will be done to broaden your opportunities. Do you know, I think you're an exceptional person. I can speak frankly, can't I? Well, you have had no training worth speaking of; you've never really taken things seriously, simply because you were never trained to do so. Now the time has come when the big chance belongs to those who are equipped, not with training, but with ability. Ability, you honestly have. Will you give me the opportunity of being very good friends with you—and of helping you?"

He looked with candid gaze across the table at her.

"Well—I don't see exactly how we can be enemies after that," she answered. His offer was worded hardly so much as an offer as an expression of interest in her; but there was in his words a warmth of cordiality that vaguely startled her.

"Shake hands on it," he said.

As she shook hands with him, she broke into laughter.

"Say, what is this, a lodge meetin' o' the Thirty-first Amalgamated Alliance of Soft Soapers?"

He started somewhat; but his parched reservoir of humor had been sufficiently

replenished in the last few weeks to ripple a response to the gust of her sense of humor.

"You wait and see what develops before you try to label this meeting," he answered. "You're going to have a real career in the business world open out before you."

It was the second time he had used the magic word "career" in application to her.

Hatty did not get Miss Tracy's job at once, but the first time she held it for almost a week before a Miss Silverstein came to grace Morningfield, Carew & McCullough with the glittering and brand new array of commercial armament she had just purchased with fifty dollars and a few weeks' attendance at a business college. Miss Silverstein had been in the office only a week when the well-known roar sounded from old man Carew office telling the others that Miss Silverstein was going to Washington. The old man, fuming out of his private grotto of wrath a little later, stopped dead before Hatty and suddenly belled at her:

"Ten thousand cripes now, why don't you go to Washington next!"

"Oh, I guess I'll stick round a bit," she answered unabashed. "You people've been pretty white t'me."

He glared at her, turned on his heel without another word, and retired to his burrow. A few minutes later, Mr. Holling was seen entering old man Carew's private office. He came out, went back to his desk, and another few minutes elapsing, the old man himself reappeared and belled across the room:

"Miss Weller! C'm here!"

Strangely, this time Hatty entered into old man Carew's presence with greater trepidation than upon that memorable occasion when she went in to take his dictation.

"Holling tells me you're a pretty clever body. That cost and percentage charting you was doing when Miss Tracy left

didn't prove no such thing, however; however, however, Miss Weller, I'll give you 'nother chance. I'll treat you easy f'r three or four days; but then—you've got to have that work abs'lutely in hand. D'ye understand? I'll give ye till then t'get onto Miss Tracy's old work, and it's got to be done perfect then."

Hatty's eyes opened wide. Miss Tracy had been an old employe; she was an expert typist and stenographer, and although she was never called upon to take shorthand notes, she had spent on the average of half of each day in type-writing.

"Bu—but, I ain't no stenographer—I can't typewrite—you know that, don't you, Mr. Carew?"

"Know that! Great blazes, do I know that! O' course I know that; there ain't no such thing as a stenographer left, so d'ye think I'd think you could be one! Mr. Holling's goin' to tell you what you got to know about this new work. There'll be a lot o' typin' to do, and you'll have to dictate notes and stuff. Whatever there is, you give t' Miss Rosamere. She'll be assigned t'you. You're her boss now, see!"

Hatty nearly fainted. Estelle Rosamere, that regal, squirrel-collared blond! Hatty's stenographer! Hatty Weller, boss over Miss Rosamere, the disdainful Miss Rosamere. In a half trance, she rose and wafted herself out of old man Carew's office with another dream zephyr to drift her farther skyward following her in the form of his last words:

"But it's my good advice t'ye to pick up typewriting and shorthand as speed'y as possible, Miss Weller. Your pay'll be twenty-two-fifty, if you make good."

Hatty made good. For once, life lost its carnival aspect for her and she enlisted in the sober ranks of the serious-minded. It is true that Miss Rosamere was unable to stand the preposterous and ignominious insult to her regal grandeur when asked to consider Harriet Weller as her immediate superior. But the day

after Miss Rosamere left, presumably for Washington, a neat, demure little creature, named Genevieve Marks, was engaged as Hatty's assistant.

The chances of war, even those behind the front, and on this side of the Atlantic, have been so variously, fully, and pertinently described, that it would be tedious and behind the times merely to recount the story of Hatty's steady acquisition of personal ability and importance in the firm of Morningfield, Carew & McCullough during the year 1918. Freakish as had been its beginning, both ability and importance grew together, nor abated on that great day in November when Hatty, in company with an office of enraptured men and women, again destroyed great quantities of bond paper, legal size, cutting the white sheets into small pieces, and giving her assistance to the creation of that impromptu snow-storm which, on Armistice Day, whirled through the canyons of lower Manhattan from thousands upon thousands of windows.

It had been an unfolding year for Hatty. More and more intimate had she and Mr. Holling become—they were Hatty and Clarence to each other outside the office now. In the summer, Mr. Holling had purchased an automobile. She was the first invited to ride in it. On Armistice Day, they rode about the mad, holiday streets together until late night. Shortly before midnight, they were dining in a famous chop house in the theatrical belt. Mr. Holling, flushed with the rejuvenating excitement of the day, and a whole world turned young, bent toward her, his eyes gleaming. Suddenly, he drew her hand to his lips and kissed her slim, cool fingers.

It was the first time Mr. Holling had ever touched her with his lips. She knew he was devoted to her; she was too keen not to realize that sooner or later his devotion would no longer be satisfied with mere arm-in-arm saunterings, motor rides, pleasant courtesies, theatre

companionships, and so on. Yet this kiss he set upon her ungloved fingers made her start strangely. It marked the dividing line between the friend who was fifty and a lover who was fifty. Mr. Holling had always been the pattern of respectfulness to her; there was a kind of scrupulous propriety even in the kiss he had just given her hand. During the summer, he had taken her several times to a house he had bought and was remodeling in White Plains. Without a definite hint, without any sentimental innuendoes, he had nevertheless made it clear to her this was the house to which, in the next summer, he wished to bring his wife. In almost a year of intimate friendship, he had made himself years younger through daily companionship with her exuberant youth; it was indeed a rejuvenated Mr. Holling who sat across from her now, still tightly holding her hand. In that year, also, he had cleverly made her dependent upon him as she never before had been dependent upon anyone. Mr. Holling had seen to it that henceforth he should be associated in Hatty's mind with the best things the most generous future could bring her, from a modest, but highly efficient motor car, to a modest, but utterly sufficient and lovely home in a pretty suburb. All these things, so expensive in the market places, were hers—and all he asked in exchange was merely a commodity common enough—her youth; just her youth.

Again, he kissed her fingers.

Youth! That compound of recklessness, impulse, vision, and generosity. For just a second as his lips pressed upon her fingers, the memory of another kiss, fervent, rapt, almost religious in its intensity of adoration, came to her, and she thought of Johnny Lamb. But only for a second. The man before her had been her workmate and playmate for so long that there was on his face the sheen of a flare-back to youth stolen from her bright treasure of twenty years.

"Hatty!" he said beseechingly across the table at her.

Hatty put her other hand over his, and drew his fingers to her lips, and kissed them in answer. That night, as he left her at the door of her home, he kissed her on the lips. But still Mr. Holling was not in a hurry.

"In spring, dear, when things have quieted down, we'll get married, and I'm going to take you to the little house."

The morning after Armistice Day Hatty received three letters at once from Johnny Lamb. Simple, forthright notes, they were; sunshiny, homesick, faithful Johnny Lamb was his undisguised self in every line of them. The promise of world peace again taking form, Hatty felt a glow of good will to that boy over in France; a glow which was dampened only by a vague impression that she had not—perhaps she hadn't played him fair. She couldn't quite decide how she had failed him; there was nothing between them really. A kiss? An implication that when he returned he was going to tell her he loved her? She shrugged her shoulders.

Mr. Bureson had not been kind to Johnny Lamb in the matter of carrying the boy's letters to Hatty. Three or four of them had been lost; two or three had arrived so late that they came with the effect of anti-climaxes, having been preceded by other notes written later. These last three, coming in a batch of tenderness and outpouring laughter and sentiment mixed in the bright concoction that was Johnny Lamb himself, came also too late to bring their recipient to that stage of appreciation for their author to which she might have been stirred if she had received them even the night before the armistice.

Shortly after receiving news from Johnny Lamb, the fates arranged a weird coincidence, whereby Hatty received something else. Once again old man Carew called her into his private office, and there were present Mr. Hol-

ling, Arthur Routledge, Nathan Burbarg, Miss Solon, Esther Wingate, and May O'Reilly. There were also imposing arrays of charted papers, stacks of memoranda, and index cards upon the old man's desk. When Hatty and May O'Reilly and Mr. Holling went out together about two hours later, she realized that the first great shift in wrenching back the expanded activities of Morningsfield, Carew & McCullough from a war basis to a peace footing had taken place. Of course, the conference that she had just attended had been no conference at all; old man Carew, following some secret sessions with Mr. Denham, Mr. Holling and Graff McCullough, had simply dispersed a flock of new orders. But these new orders pointed to reorganization. The big shoprooms on East Eighteenth Street were to be given over to some new venture in salesmanship, in charge of Mr. Denham, who was to leave the main office. This would put Mr. Holling second in command in the main offices. Furthermore, in the new division of the work just assigned them by old man Carew, Hatty perceived that her coming duties would be largely those formerly Johnny Lamb's. In fact, she, May O'Reilly, and Nathan Burbarg together did the work formerly done by Johnny Lamb, Miss Tracy, and Dick Bostick, who left for camp shortly after Johnny had gone.

Hatty separated herself from May and Mr. Holling and drifted through the big room toward one of the great windows. She stood there looking out on the November noon, and suddenly the problem of Johnny Lamb confronted her as vividly as the opposite skyscraper. When Johnny came marching home—what? She could not suppress a thrill of triumph at the thought that she had proved herself as good as he. In fact, when he left his salary was thirty-two and a half dollars per week, and Hatty already getting thirty dollars, was confident that her wage would again be raised—at least to

thirty-five. When Johnny came marching home—what? She felt a new, intense love for the work. She felt at that minute she would fight to hold it. Not even to be Mrs. Clarence Holling would she give it up. Under Mr. Holling's educational promptings she had read articles on "Woman's Work After the War," and had listened to several exceedingly plausible women preachers whose eternal text was:

"What the women have gained during the war, they do not intend to relinquish in peace."

She had become well acquainted with the magic word "career," and even the phrase "women's rights, social, civil, and political" had no terrors for her. When Johnny came marching home—what?

That night, when Mr. Holling bent to kiss her, as they stood before her door, she again thought incongruously enough, of Johnny Lamb. Involuntarily, she turned her head slightly so that the kiss fell on her cheek.

On Thanksgiving Day Mr. Holling presented her with a handsome nutria fur coat, with a wolf collar. It was his most sumptuous present to her; so sumptuous indeed that it almost alarmed her mother. But that lady, who had as much of what was once fondly termed "parental control" over her daughter as a weather vane has over the winds, wisely said nothing. On Christmas, Mr. Holling outdid the fur coat with a flawless solitaire which, with a little speech, reassured Mrs. Weller, Senior, and the engagement of Harriet Weller to Clarence Holling was thereby announced to the family.

III

THEN, Johnny did come marching home.

It was a beautiful April day, with the world swathed in a delicious softness as delicate as lavender tulle. Hatty saw him almost first of all; and he certainly, for

the moment, saw no one else in the big outer office but her. Swiftly, he went to her and took both her hands.

"Hatty!" he whispered, as he gripped her fingers.

She looked up into his wide, blue, sunshiny eyes; a whirl of panic seizing her. Suddenly something in her heart seemed to break away from the moorings to which she had tied herself with Mr. Holling's aid—and she had the impression of staggering out into a great storm-bound void. The actual, corporeal Johnny Lamb was so much more vital than her memory of him!

"Hello, my hero!" she giggled, afraid that he would kiss her, afraid that he would not; baffled by both fears.

The comparatively few men and women who had been in the office when he had worked there crowded round him to her relief, and it was fully a half hour before he reached the door of old man Carew's private office. Mr. Holling stood there.

"I wan' to see the ol'—Mr. Carew," said Johnny.

"He's out now, Lamb. Is there anything I can do for you?"

There was a cool edge of antagonism in Mr. Holling's voice.

"Out? When'll he be back?"

"Sometime this afternoon."

"Where's Mr. Denham?"

"He's not in this office any longer. He has charge of the Eighteenth Street building." Mr. Holling scrutinized, with an almost impersonal dislike, the well-built, tanned boy in uniform before him. "Is there anything I can do for you?" he repeated.

"Well, it's jus' this. I don' wan' to waste any time. I've got my discharge, and I wan' to start right in again. D'ye think Mr. Carew 'll wan' me t' c'm in the mornin'?"

Mr. Holling coughed slightly.

"Well, Lamb, you see, it's this way," he said softly. "I rather think there's no vacancy here just now—in fact, I know there isn't. We've taken one or two of

the men back, but the work has been so radically changed, and the whole place so reorganized, that we've been unable to give quite a number of the others their old places. You see, it wouldn't be fair to those who have learned the game in the meantime."

With open-mouthed incredulity, Johnny Lamb looked up at him.

"No vacancy just now! You haven't taken the ol' boys back? It wouldn't be fair—fair to them that's taken our places?"

"I'm sorry, of course—"

"I can't get my old place back?—Why, the ol'—Mr. Carew promised me my job'd be waitin' for me here when I got back, Mr. Holling."

"Unfortunately, Mr. Carew himself could not have foretold, at that time, the extent of the changes that would take place."

"Who's got my job?"

"Well, no one person, Lamb. It's really been split up and joined with other jobs. Miss Weller, for example, is doing one part of it."

"D'ye mean to say *Hatty's* got my job?"

"Part of it."

Turning abruptly on his heel, Johnny went over to Hatty.

"Hatty, will you have lunch with me?" he asked. She noticed a determined tilt to his chin.

She had promised Mr. Holling that morning to lunch with him, so she momentarily hesitated.

"Yes," she said finally.

As abruptly as he had left Mr. Holling, Johnny now turned and left Hatty. He went down to the street, bought himself a package of cigarettes, half smoked three of them, and went back for Hatty. In the hallway, he met Harry Beddoes, who had also been in France, and was now back in his old place in the office.

"How'd you slip in?" Johnny asked him curiously.

"Ain't they takin' you back?"

"Nope. No vacancy at present—'t wouldn' be fair to them that suffered here while I was in France, see?"

"You're the fifth they turned down. Ned Hawkins, Abe, Lil Cutey Cunningham, Rudens, an' you. Oh, an' Frank Boydelle, too."

"Why, the ol' man hisself promised me my job back."

"Well, what're ye goin' do 'bout it?"

"Get another one, I guess."

Beddoes laughed raucously.

"Y'are, are ye? Guess again! Ye got a fat chance, ol' timer. This burg's been gone through with a fine-toothed back-comb a million times by every doughboy in ten divisions. We got all the khaki in the world here now, an' more of 'em comin' each day. Jobs're rarer'n beef-steaks in France. Everybody, most, I know is out a job."

"I heard 'bout it in France already; but I never thought the ol' man'd renege on his word."

"They're goin' at top speed, and you're jus' as green as a pickle to 'em now, bein' 'way so long, they figger, an' it'd take you days to catch up, and they'd be losin' all the time on ye, they figger, I guess. Ye can't hate 'em for that," said Beddoes, with the smug judicial air of the securely placed.

"I can't, can't I!" exclaimed Johnny. "I went over there for fun, I guess. I went over there so's they could wallop me from in back, eh! I'll see if I can't hate 'em for that!"

He stalked into the outer office feeling as though he would like to pitch Mr. Holling out of the window and follow that gentleman's flight with a few well-chosen selections from the rest of the firm. Hatty was waiting for him, a human tempest of emotions—puzzled at his sudden departure before; wondering vaguely if he really intended to come back for her; hoping he wouldn't; hoping he would; fearing their meeting; praying for it. She had told Mr. Holling of Johnny's luncheon invitation. Shrewdly,

Mr. Holling had urged her to go. He had no intention of enhancing the attractiveness of any rival by putting forth objections that Hatty, in all probability, would not have regarded. Moreover, Mr. Holling had seen that the boy was raw with disappointment, and this, with all the coaching he had given Hatty on the importance of her job and her career, promised to create a situation that would make of this luncheon the last occasion that Johnny Lamb and Hatty Weller would have for any confidences. He even went out before Johnny returned.

As the two sat in the furthest corner of the somewhat out-of-the-way tea room to which Johnny had led her, he sensed the change in Hatty. But more important than this, for the first time, he recognized a change in himself. He had gone away Johnny Lamb; he had come back Johnny Lamb; but between coming back and this moment something had happened. There is really no such thing as class consciousness in America, but the war has created this: a pal consciousness and an age consciousness. Men who have stood tiptoe on the brink of hell for over a year, in company with thousands of their fellows of similar viewpoint—Americans all—have become imbued with the sense of the cohesiveness of youth and laughter and similar ambitions. He felt all this now. As he sat there facing the problem he had never dreamed would be his—the problem of his right to work, which involved the goodwill and the pledged word of the nation itself to safeguard his interests while he was away guarding the safety of the nation—Johnny Lamb felt that he was not alone, but that he represented a million others; that he was spokesman for every lad in sea-going blue and Flanders mud khaki; and when he did speak his very voice was deeper, vibrant with the massed volume of inaudible other voices.

It was not until the gap that preceded their dessert that he said:

"Holling told me this morning that the

old man wouldn't give me back my job. That there ain't no vacancies, and that it wouldn't be fair to chuck out anybody who suffered in my place while I was off takin' a trip for m' health. What d'you think 'bout it, Hatty?"

He watched her keenly across the table. He noted the air of new effectiveness about her.

"Think about it?" she repeated, a little startled. She, too, sensed the change that had taken place in him since his first impulsive, two-handed greeting of her when he had come into the office less than three hours before. Perceiving that she had been thinking about it, he leaned toward her, awaiting her words as though they would have the true stamp of finality upon them.

"It's a give an' take prop'sition, isn't it, Johnny? We—new people came in, gave up old comforts and everything, and took a hand at helpin' when the country was desp'rate. They deserve some consideration, don' you think? They did their share, and now d'ye wan' to turn 'em out, an' tell 'em to beat it and starve or somethin' jus' because a few men can't find other jobs?"

As he listened to her, a cold weight fell for a moment upon the sunshiny heart of Johnny Lamb. Then it vanished. This was not Hatty's voice that he heard. The words came hard and dry, cool and merciless, selfish and, if words can be blind, they had a quality of *sightlessness* about them. He merely looked at her as though she were a stranger.

"This is the period of reconstruction, Johnny," continued the flaying, cruel, young voice, with the intonation of one reciting a selection—for Hatty was unconsciously quoting Mr. Holling in effect. "An' periods of reconstruction always make it stiff for some people. But don't you see, the last year was a reg'lar record breaker. All sorts o' things was happ'nin' to business: new changes, new workers, new methods—an' you'd have

to begin all over again like a green hand see; an' more'n that—you can't talk 'bout gettin' your old job back, 'cause there ain't no such thing as your old job left, see?"

He merely looked at her.

"Where'd ye study that?" he asked, almost gently. "There's somethin' in your voice that sounds jus' like that double entry dose o' patent business medicine up in the office named Holling."

She flushed furiously and shifted in her chair.

"More'n that," her voice was higher with determination not to be belittled, "it ain't fair to them what's made a career for themselves now in business; with all sorts o' chances openin' out ahead of 'em; for them to drop right out now like they was just part time substitutes."

His fingers tightened into two hard fists. He leaned his bulk on the table.

"Hatty—Hatty," he almost commanded, "you got my job! Give it back to me!"

She looked at him, startled for a moment, and then her fingers, too, curled into a firm little ball.

"Your job!" she exclaimed. "Your job! Where d'ye get that notion? Tellin' me what to give up! Didn't I earn it, givin' up just as much as you did?"

"Give up as much as I did! What'd you ever stand to lose? Nothing! You've got a father and mother to take care o' you; I got a mother an' kid sister to take care of, and I'm goin' to take care o' you! It wasn't even patriotism that brought you down to the office—it was easy money, an'—'scuse me, Hatty, for mentionin' it—a helluvalotta nerve! I'm not ever goin' to kick against those wimmen an' girls that've got others to look out for now, holdin' down our jobs; but who'd you ever have to look out for 'cept yourself?"

"I guess you think my career don't amount to anything at all, eh?"

"Your what!" he snorted.

"My—my career!"

"Rats!" he exploded. "Your career! With a thousand men home a day who've been tacklin' doomsday at thirty bucks a month minus, so's you could keep on chewin' gum and powderin' your nose, and you're talkin' 'bout a career, when they're runnin' the streets now lookin' for somethin' to help 'em keep their womenfolks again!"

"I—I ain't no—no baby, you talkin' like this to me!" she stammered, reaching for her gloves and pushing back from the table.

His hand closed over hers and held it with the grip which had held the rifle he had borne for her for sixteen months.

"No, you're not! Not before I tell you one more thing right off the bat, anyhow! You an' me's been apart too long, an' it ain't goin' to happin again!" he said in a voice that held her in her chair. "I heard 'bout this job-snatchin' over in France already, an' I wanna put you right, so's you can tell some of your girl friends the story. Beddoes told me up in the office a little while ago that jobs is so thick here that a feller could go out hikin' the offices for one for three months, an' the only thing he'd get would be blisters. You know what's goin' to happen from all this? This is what's goin' to happin—you're goin' to turn a man's army into panhandlers and crooks, an' all round blue hell's goin' to happin, and happin soon!"

His blue eyes flashed with a transcendent wrath as he leaned, white and tense, toward her. He seemed to be speaking at her as though she were the Nation, not merely little Hatty Weller; and somehow it shook her as though her soul were caught in a gale, and to her he appeared to grow larger and even threatening.

"It was me—me what cinched your job for you one day up there in the office, when you didn't even have a job, only luck. An' now, you'd have the real laugh on me, wouldn't you, if I wasn't goin' to marry you!"

"Marry me? Why—I—I—you jus'

wanna marry me for my job!" she blurted, slandering her own insight.

"Forget it! I gave you more'n any job, Hatty; I gave you sixteen months of all my dreamin'," he said simply.

Something in her throat caught as he spoke, and suddenly Mr. Clarence Holling, even with the favorable reflection cast from his automobile and remodeled house, looked all of his fifty years to Hatty. All of his kisses then seemed the frosty peckings of a belated passion, against the memory of that one indubitable kiss the boy before her had once given her. With eyelids blinking, she looked down and opened her handbag. She took out the ring she never wore at the office but put on only at night when Mr. Holling took her to dinner or the theatre. She was feminine enough to hold it out so that he might be impressed properly by its sparkle.

"There!" she whispered, in what she meant for defiance, but which was merely confusion. "I'm—I'm engaged to Mr. Holling!"

"You're—what!"

"Engaged to Mr. Holling." Her voice was even lower.

He looked at her steadily for almost a minute without moving. Slowly, something like a trickle of sunshine filtered back into his blue eyes, and a smile spread over his face.

"Let me see it," he said.

He took it, and holding it in one hand, felt in the pocket of his tunic with the

other. He brought forth a little green box and opened it. A diamond glittered in the slotted bed of the tiny casket. With a recently acquired connoisseurship he coolly compared the two jewels. Finally, he held out Mr. Holling's diamond and squinted critically at it, turning it so it flashed in the light.

"It's a beauty, I'll hand him that," he said judicially. "Maybe, it's a little better'n the one you're gone to wear now; but when I get *his* job, I'll give you one that'll make it look like a piece out of a plate glass window."

He drew her left hand to him, and as though he had spent a lifetime slipping on engagement rings, he placed his diamond ring on her third finger. His own fingers went fumbling in the pocket of his tunic again.

"In about two hours, you'll be wearin' this," he said, holding out a plain gold ring, "and then you'll come back to the office with me, and while I start in again on the job what's been waitin' for me till I got back, you'll hand ol' double entry his solitaire."

As their hands came together, two tears of gladness glistened in Hatty's eyes, and then some way she got her fingers free of his, and—

"Gee, Johnny!" she exclaimed. "Can you beat it! Look how it fits!"

There, on the principal finger of a girl's left hand, the plain gold band already gleamed sedately beside the bluish flame of Johnny's diamond.



CONVENTIONAL

By Frederick Moxon

LAST night a girl banged into me,
 (The wind was wild and wet)
 To-day she would not speak to me
 Because we "hadn't met."

The Long Arm in the Clearing

By Robert Shirley

JUST around a bend of the cypress-grown point, we came full upon a house half hidden in the canebrakes. The silences of the Great Dismal Swamp lent an air of unreality to this human habitation. A house, in that place, was as incongruous as a telephone in Pharaoh's palace. The negro lad who had rowed me ran his skiff alongside the splintered plank that served for a landing stage, and I stepped ashore.

"Dis heah's de place," he muttered, and began hurriedly backing his boat into the canal. The sun had fallen low behind the trees, and the lad was fearful that darkness would find him still in the mazes of the swamp. I threw a silver dollar into the skiff and started up the weed-grown pathway to the house.

As I mounted the crumbling steps, one of these gave way, and I caught quickly at the rickety rail to steady myself. This, too, splintered under my hand, and I leaped back to the ground. Then I observed that the front door was barred by two rough boards nailed across it, and heavy spider webs crossed and recrossed from board to lintel and post. As I forced my way through the tall weeds, I gazed curiously at the ruin of rot and decay, wondering what had possessed my friend, Jim Curtis, to come to such an uninviting place, and why he had sent for me in such a hurry. I pulled the letter from my pocket and looked at it again. It read:

Dear Tom:

The nigger who takes you this will guide you back to me. I've run across a mystery that is more in your line, as a prosecuting attorney, than in mine. Besides, it's getting on

my nerves. Bring a couple of guns with you and come.

The darkness was beginning to close in quite rapidly, and I was not particularly enamored of the prospect. To be somewhere in the middle of the Great Dismal Swamp at seven in the evening, in the midst of a silence that could be cut with a knife; to have the messenger who had conveyed me hither prove as communicative as a broiled lobster, and to have him depart as if he were afraid disaster would overtake him if he delayed, was sufficiently disconcerting, but to find no trace of the man I had come to see was annoying.

I made up my mind to investigate the place while the light still held, and with this idea in mind I turned toward the kitchen, or L, that leaned for support against the main building. To one side, as I walked forward, I noticed a circular plantation of trees, close set. I judged them to be tamarack. They grew probably to the height of fifteen feet, and bore evidence of having been, at one time, carefully tended and clipped. The foliage was so dense, and they were set so close with their interlacing branches, that they formed a wall as impenetrable as that of a citadel. I wondered idly what they could enclose, for they were not over fifteen feet from the house.

"Hello, Jim! Hello, Jim Curtis!" I called loudly, and walked on toward the kitchen. Some distance off in the swamp, I heard crashing, then the sharp bark of a dog, followed by a man's voice.

"Hello!" echoed the voice, and I turned to the opening that gave access to

the dense thicket. A moment later Curtis, accompanied by a nondescript hound and carrying a shotgun, came into view. From his hand dangled a brace of ducks.

"I'm glad you came," he said soberly, shaking hands. "More glad than you can imagine," he finished significantly.

There was a furtive look in his eyes, and I noted that he glanced nervously about him as we approached the house. It was as if the gloom of the place had got into his blood.

"What's the mystery, and why are you here?" I asked sharply. "The last I heard, you were in Richmond, organizing a power company."

"Help me chuck together something to eat and I'll spin you the yarn afterward," he answered, kicking open the ramshackle kitchen door as we came to it. "Some of it I can give you, maybe, while you pick the feathers off one of those ducks." He applied a match to the wick of an oil lamp standing on a table.

I stood looking curiously about the place, while Curtis set about building a fire in the stove.

"What's that circular clump of trees for out there?" I asked, as I peeled off coat and waistcoat.

"I don't know," he answered shortly. "Pete—that's the dog here—doesn't approve of it, though. He growls and sticks his back up every time he passes it. A 'coon probably lives there. Throw me that box of matches."

During the process of preparing supper, Curtis told me that he had always known he had an uncle somewhere in the south of Virginia, but never having seen him, had paid little attention to the relationship. He had recalled hearing his father speak of a brother, a naturalist, who lived the life of a recluse, and that the old gentleman seemed deliberately to have cut himself off from his family to pursue his researches. Curtis was more than a little surprised, therefore, when, one morning of the week

before, he had received a letter, signed with his uncle's name, asking him to come and visit for a day or two on a matter of some importance.

"The letter rambled a little, and spoke vaguely of something that would astonish the scientific world," said Curtis. "I'll show it to you later on, if you like. Anyway, having a vacation due, a few days ago, I packed a bag and came out here to see the old chap."

"Here?" I echoed, startled. "Then, where's the uncle?"

"Ah, there's the mystery," he replied, and I caught the apprehension in his tones. "We'll talk about that a little later on. It's something that I believe will be pretty sure to stir up the brain reactions of the prosecuting attorney of Pasquotank County in a way that will do him a lot of good."

"For your information, the said attorney feels he has about all the mental exercise he wants in the ordinary tasks of his office," I replied. "I've noticed that North Carolina counties seem to find enough for their officials to do without going outside said counties."

"Huh!" retorted Curtis. "This isn't outside. This section of the Swamp is in your county. So it's up to you, anyway."

After the supper had been cleared off, Curtis went straight to the point.

"My uncle's name is Henry Curtis," he said. "As I told you in the note, there's a mystery here that is worth taking hold of. Anyway, it has given me half a dozen good hard thrills in the few days I've been here. As a starter, I'd like to find my uncle."

"Where has he gone?" I asked.

"That's the reason I sent for you," Curtis answered. "As I told you, I packed a bag and came down here when I got his letter. The same nigger who brought you brought me, and he was afraid to come ashore. Said there were devils here. However, the vital fact is that when I got here not a sign of my good uncle's presence could I find, nor

have I been able to find any trace of him since. That was three days ago. Then, there's that infernal dog. He won't let me out of sight, and shivers as he's doing now, as soon as the sun goes down."

I looked at the dog. He was crouched close against Curtis' leg, shaking as with an ague.

"Perhaps the old gentleman went away on a little trip, not expecting you so soon," I suggested. "As for the dog, he may be sick."

Curtis scratched a match on the table and lighted his pipe.

"Gentlemen invariably go away on little trips without clothing," he remarked. "They always get out of their beds, leave their shoes beside a chair, their watch on a table, ticking, and their doors bolted on the inside."

I sat up quickly, and the dog howled mournfully.

"The door bolted on the—are you sure?" I asked, and he grinned ironically.

"Bring that lamp with you and I'll show you," he answered. "Come this way."

He pushed open the door that led into the house proper. I followed him, and the dog squeezed through between my legs as if afraid to be left alone.

"See that?" asked my friend, with a look at the animal.

We walked down a short hall that smelled old and mildewed, and stopped before another door.

"This is where the old man slept," Curtis remarked, taking the lamp from me. He turned the knob and pushed the door open. As he did so, the dog growled savagely, and looking at him, I could see the hair rising along his spine, while his fangs showed white.

"Come on, Pete," said Tom to him, but the dog backed away and crouched close against the wall outside. He would not enter the room. Curtis pushed at him with his foot, but the animal snarled viciously and snapped at him.

"Let him alone," I said, and with Curtis entered the old man's chamber.

"When I got here," said my friend, putting down the lamp on the old-fashioned bureau, "the door was bolted on the inside, as I told you. The window was open about two feet, and the dog was in the room, howling. When I had tried the door and found it locked, I went outside and climbed through the window. As soon as I opened the door, the dog rushed out as if he had been frightened half to death."

"How long ago was that?" I asked. Outside in the dark passage, I could see the dog's eyes shining.

"Three days ago," was the answer. "The poor beast was half starved, of course. Ever since, he's shivered at night, just as you see him."

"But why didn't he jump out of the window?" I asked. "That would have been easy for him."

"Answer me that and I'll make you a present," replied Curtis. "Look here. You see I've left everything just as it was, save that I unbolted the door. Here are my uncle's things, evidently just as he removed them. His clothes neatly folded over the chair here, as you see. His collar, tie, and scarf pin on the bureau; shoes, socks, etc., on the floor beside the bed. Handkerchief and book within easy reach, and his watch on the small stand as you see it. Everything as methodical as you would expect from a man who has been doing the same thing for years."

I glanced about the room and found everything as Curtis had described it. The open window again attracted my attention.

"Why should a man have left his room by the window when he could have gone by the door, and why would he leave without his clothes?" I muttered.

"Exactly," agreed Jim, "and that is why I've sent for you. I tell you, there's a mystery here; even if the dog didn't act the way he does."

I glanced outside into the passage and was confronted by the glowing eyes. Seized with an idea, I walked through the door and stooped down as if to pat the animal. He was deceived, and when my hand was close enough, I grabbed him by the collar and flung him headlong into the room. With a howl of anguish, the poor brute, terror-stricken, dashed back again into the passage and crouched against the wall."

"That's queer," I said to myself. "Very queer. What is there in this room to frighten him so?"

"Outside, he's just as friendly as can be," Curtis said. "He's just what a hound usually is, but in the house here, he won't be left alone a minute. He's as skittish and frightened as an old maid."

"What have you done since you landed here, Jim?" I asked.

He did not answer me until he had closed the bedroom door and we had returned to the kitchen. The dog had huddled close beside our legs as we walked down the short passage, and now he flung himself, with what might have passed for a canine sigh of relief, before the fire, close against my friend.

"I've searched about generally," said Jim. "You see, when I first came, I thought, just as you suggested, that Uncle Henry had simply gone off on one of his little expeditions, not expecting me to come down quite so quickly, and that he would return when he got ready."

"But the dog in the room?" I queried.

"Why, I supposed he had forgotten the animal, or was in a hurry when he went away. I'll confess it did not at the moment strike me as an ordinary thing to do, for down here a man usually takes a dog with him; later on, I began to wonder why the dog didn't jump out of the window. Since then, I've gone everywhere within a reasonable radius, searching for some trace of Uncle Henry."

"And you've found nothing?"

"Not a hint of him. To be frank with you, I hardly expected to, for as I pointed out, a man doesn't go off on excursions with no clothing. Save for his night shirt, I'm sure the old man was as guiltless of clothing as the day he came into the world. The thing's a mystery, Drake."

Now, I'm quite convinced that there is no such thing in life as a real mystery. The term is purely a relative one, and the only reason for the use of the word in connection with any event is the absence of all the facts. I was sure either that Curtis had not given me all the facts, or that he did not know them. It was therefore up to me to ascertain them as best I could. As may be guessed, by this time I was keenly alive to the interesting elements in the situation, and entirely outside of my friendship for Curtis, it was apparent that it was my duty to run this thing down to its logical explanation.

"Did the old gentleman live here alone?" I asked when I had gone over the main facts as I knew them.

"Why, there's another angle of it that I forgot to tell you," Curtis answered. "There seems to have been an old Scotchman, named MacGregor, who lived here with Uncle Henry, but he's gone too, it seems."

"You'd better tell me all you know," I said a little ironically. "For instance, just how much do you know of your uncle's habits?"

"Next to nothing. As I told you, I think I've never seen him. He's a recluse, in a way. You'll understand better when I tell you that he and Luther Burbank were born and brought up together in Lancaster, Massachusetts, and their tastes ran in the same channels. Uncle Henry was always experimenting with flowers and plants and things. I've been told that he had some queer ideas about the relationship between plants and animals; in fact, that he was inclined to the opinion that plants were

really of the animal kingdom, and had, through lack of appropriate nourishment, fallen into an atrophic condition. A fellow named Belding has endorsed that since, I'm told. Anyway, he believed this Swamp to be the best place to experiment on any such theories as he had, and he came here years ago. He had an idea that the conditions here approached those of the world in the period of the great mammals. I don't know enough about it to tell you more than that, but over there you'll find a shelf filled with books on the subject. From the look of them, the old boy studied them pretty thoroughly."

I arose and approached the shelf. The books were old and well worn. I pulled down the first one I came to. It was Darwin's "The Power of Movement in Plants." I put it back and took down the next. Again it was Darwin. "Effects of Cross and Soil Fertilization." The rest were of a similar character, and I returned to my seat.

"Then he experimented with plants?" I queried.

"There's a greenhouse, or forcing house, back in the clearing a couple of hundred feet," Curtis answered. "The place is filled with queer looking things."

"I'll have a look at it to-morrow," I decided instantly. "Now, about this man, MacGregor. Who told you about him?"

"Ben Biggotty, the boy who brought you here."

"What did he say?"

"Very little. He doesn't care for the Scotchman. Few negroes do, I imagine. MacGregor has thrashed him, probably, or something like that. At any rate, there is no love lost between them. As to what has become of the man, I have no idea. From what Biggotty tells me, MacGregor went away, as he does two or three times a year, ten days ago."

"I'd like to have a look at this man, MacGregor," I said half to myself after a few moment's thought.

"It's a pleasure ye'll be havin' th' noo, then," said a harsh, rasping voice almost at my elbow. Both of us started as if we had been shot, to find a tall, red-bearded man in shooting clothes standing in the kitchen. The door was wide open. As we jumped to our feet, he came a step further into the room.

"An' who may ye be?" he inquired with a keen glance at each.

"It seems to me that if explanations are in order, it might be well to begin with yours," remarked Curtis quietly. "That will keep us occupied for a time. Where's Mr. Curtis?"

The other man smiled and let a heavy knapsack slip from his shoulders to the floor.

"I ken ye noo," he replied. "Ye'll be th' auld mon's nephew fra' oop Reechmon' way. But wha's yer fren'?"

By this time it had dawned on me who our caller was. The man MacGregor, of course, returned from his trip afield, and I stepped forward.

"I'm the prosecuting attorney of this county, Mr. MacGregor," I answered for myself. "I'm here in my official capacity to investigate the disappearance of Mr. Henry Curtis."

The Scotchman stared, with dropping jaw.

"Deesappearance!" he echoed blankly. "Is he no here?"

"Unfortunately, no," I replied. "His nephew, Mr. James Curtis, whom you see here, has been in the house three days, and has been able to find no trace of his uncle."

The blue eyes of the Scot sought those of my friend and held them. The scrutiny lasted several seconds. Then he sighed deeply.

"Forbye he's gone explorin'," he said quietly. "He's for doin' that noo an' agen."

"Mr. Curtis left without his clothes," I observed. "There is a deep mystery here, Mr. McGregor."

I noticed that the dog was fawning

upon the boots of the new arrival. It was apparent that the dog recognized the man as a friend, and I'll own that this went far to remove any suspicions I might have had of him. The animal evinced none of the fear that seemed to possess him at the sight of the room in which the tragedy—if it were a tragedy—had occurred.

Curtis explained to MacGregor the events that had transpired since he had received the letter from his uncle asking him to visit the Swamp, and together we outlined for the Scot the situation as to the apparent conditions accompanying Mr. Curtis' disappearance. It was when we touched upon the actions of the dog that MacGregor evinced alarm. To convince him, we were compelled to take the dog back to the room where he could witness its terror with his own eyes.

"'Tis verra queer," he murmured, as if to himself. "T' beastie wad ne'er leave yon room wi'out his maister. Noo he'll no enter it. I fear ye'er richt when ye speir there's a great meestery here."

"We both feel that something mysterious has occurred in that room," I said. "Mr. Curtis evidently left in his night garments."

"Aye, aye," answered MacGregor. "An' that's no like him eyether. A great mon for dress, he was."

To cut across the corners of description and get down to the plain facts, I may say that while at first I had a suspicion that MacGregor might have made away with his employer, the man himself proved to be a kindly, whole-souled individual of more than ordinary intelligence. A naturalist by temperament and inclination, he had associated himself with Henry Curtis fifteen years before, when they had met in New Orleans, both en route for South America. Finding him of kindred tastes, Mr. Curtis had invited the Scot to enter his employ, nominally as a secretary, but actually as a co-worker. The friendship had proved a permanent one of mutual respect and

liking. For three years they had traveled together in the southern continent, and had come back loaded with theories and strange specimens.

"A great mon, Henry Curtis," commented MacGregor at last. "He had ideas that wad startle the world, were they known."

We talked until nearly midnight. It was decided that I should occupy the room from which Henry Curtis had disappeared, as we had come to believe.

"For heaven's sake don't stay there if you have any feeling about it," said Curtis. "The thing's queer enough as it is."

"To tell you the truth, I'm so infernally tired that I doubt if any weird suggestion could keep me awake," I answered. "I see no reason why I shouldn't stay there. And to-morrow we'll take a look at the greenhouse, MacGregor. By the way, I'm curious to know what's inside that ring of tamarack trees out there."

The Scotchman looked at me strangely.

"Ye've no been inveestigatin' thereabouts, I'd say," he commented.

"Why, no. I just wondered what it was, that's all," I returned, and speculated on the oddity of his manner. He turned away, but returned to us.

"Did ye experience any queer—any phenomena thot struck ye as peculiar about th' place, noo?" he asked.

"Nothing since I've been here," answered Curtis. "Mr. Drake arrived only this evening. 'Come to think of it, I have heard some noises that sounded like—like a great rope being dragged about, at night."

"Aye," MacGregor muttered. "Aye, there'd be thot, mayhap, wi' th' auld mon gone three days. Aye, yes." He turned away, tugging at his red beard.

I'll not pretend that the strangeness of the Scotchman's manner did not impress me, but also I was so nearly dead for sleep that I felt if I did not soon get to bed I'd topple over onto the floor. Whatever dulled suspicions I may have

had, I decided would keep profitably until to-morrow, when I could tackle them with a clear head. MacGregor lighted another lamp and handed it to me.

"I'm sleeping here on these blankets in the kitchen," said Curtis. "Yours is that room on the other side of the corridor across from Uncle's, I presume, Mr. MacGregor."

"Aye, thot's mine," answered the other, "an' I'll be seekin' it, wha's more."

With a brief good night, he picked up his knapsack and left us. The dog followed him to the door, stopped, looked back, then decided to remain with Curtis, and curled himself up on a corner of the blanket. I yawned again and wished my friend good night.

Inside Mr. Curtis' room, I barely glanced about, for I wished nothing so much as to get my clothes off and close my eyes. I think I was not above five minutes in getting between the covers. I did not close the door, nor the window. While the night was chill, it was not uncomfortable, and I like plenty of fresh air.

Almost at once, I began to dream. I dreamed that Ben Biggoty was trying to row me away from the house, and that MacGregor had a rope tied around my waist and was trying to pull me out of the boat and into the water. I struggled mightily, and then with a strong heave he had me over the side of the boat. Instead of the cold plunge I expected, however, the water was unconscionably hard, for I struck it with a bump. That waked me instantly, and I found that it was no dream. I had been dragged off the bed and onto the floor, and the rope was about my shoulders. Even as consciousness returned, I found myself being dragged toward the window, and with all the power of my lungs, I shouted aloud. My arms were lashed to my sides, but with herculean effort, I succeeded in freeing one of them, and tore fiercely at the bond that gripped and dragged me. It felt like slimy leather,

and I yelled with the fright that was upon me. With the energy of desperation, I clutched and tore at the thing, and finally ripped it from me, to fly shouting toward the door. Daylight was just appearing. In the passage I collided violently with Curtis and MacGregor, coming from opposite directions. I could do nothing but point to the room I had left, and they rushed in. I caught a puzzled look on the Scotchman's face, and staggered into the kitchen, where I dropped upon a chair, completely exhausted. The dog was shivering as with an ague, and crouched in the furthest corner of the room.

"For heaven's sake, what was the matter, old man?" demanded Curtis, returning to the room. "What on earth possessed you to yell like that? Were you dreaming?"

"I thought I was—at first," I answered, "until I found it was a reality. Hush, here's MacGregor!"

The Scot hurried in, and I noticed that his face was pale beneath the tan.

"I suffer from nightmares occasionally," I said casually, though my teeth still chattered with fright and revulsion. "That was a particularly bad one. Sorry I waked you both."

"Nightmare, eh," said MacGregor, eyeing me doubtfully. "I'm no so sair-tain o' thot. Mon, ye yelled like a steam whistle."

"It was very real," I told him. "I think I'll not turn in again. It's getting light."

"Half-past four," said Curtis, glancing at the old clock on the kitchen shelf. He stirred up the embers of the fire. The warmth was grateful, and I stretched toward it. As I did so, I turned and accidentally glanced out of the window. What I saw prompted me to an exclamation, but I succeeded in turning it into a cough. MacGregor went back to his room to put on some more clothing. The instant he had gone, I dragged Curtis to the window.

"If your uncle went away," I whispered swiftly, "he went in the garb with which nature endowed him. There's his nightshirt!"

I pointed to the top of the circle of tamarack trees, and sure enough, there fluttered in the morning breeze a white shirt, torn, it is true, but palpably a night-shirt. Curtis turned to me with a puzzled face.

"What does it mean?" he asked. "How could it get up there?"

I shrugged my shoulders with a cold shiver. It was as if someone had touched me with an icicle.

"Don't ask me, my friend," I replied with a chatter of the teeth. "Ask—MacGregor!"

"I'm going to ask somebody," he answered with a set of the jaw. "I'm about tired of this mystery business. There's a deal too much of it."

"I'm certain MacGregor knows something he's keeping back," I said.

Curtis turned to me swiftly.

"Look here," he said sharply. "I want the facts. What was that circus you kicked up in there? You can tell that nightmare yarn to the marines."

"It was a nightmare, and a horrible one," I said, "but it was also more than that." Then I described to him in detail the experience as I have already related it.

"But such a thing's absurd," Curtis said. "I could understand it if we were upon the seacoast, but you can't find octopi about here."

"I don't know anything about that," I said, "but I do know that something like an enormous tenacle had me around the waist and was dragging me to the window—"

Curtis took me by the shoulder and shook me gently.

"Are you sure it wasn't just a dream, Tom?" he asked. For an instant, I hesitated. Then the memory of that horrible moment swept over me, and I stamped my foot upon the floor.

"As sure as I'm standing here talking to you," I replied with all the solemnity I could put into the statement.

MacGregor, probably, felt the suspicion we had both begun to feel about him, for he withdrew into himself, and maintained a glum silence until I spoke directly to him.

"I'm going to take a look at that greenhouse of yours this morning," I told him, and he nodded.

"Whenever you're feelin' like it," he said, without enthusiasm. "I'll be puttin' away th' specimens I brocht wi' me fra' the Everglades th' noo."

"The Everglades!" exclaimed Curtis. "Is that where you've been?"

"Certainly," replied the Scotchman. "Twice a year, I'll be makin' a trip thereabouts for specimens o' plants." He smiled. "I never held wi' all yer uncle's notions, particularly about th' similarity o' soil here an' yon, but he would have his roots fra' Florida twice a year for the' graftin'."

I lighted my pipe and walked outside the house to think the situation over. I was morally convinced that some reptilian thing had seized me in the night, and I was more than half inclined to believe that Mr. Curtis had been dragged out in the same way. Yet, the more I came to consider the possibility of such a thing, the less likely it seemed. I heard the sound of splashing oars and looked up, to find Ben Biggoty in his skiff nearing the little wharf. I waved my hand at him and walked around to the front of the house.

"Heah's you-all's eatin's," he announced, and I saw that in his skiff he had two baskets filled.

"Who told you to bring them, Ben?" I asked, and he stared at me.

"Ah brings 'em twict a week," he announced, and lifted the baskets out.

I went out on the plank and looked down at him.

"Ben," I said. "Do you know who I am?"

"Yessah. You's de pussecutin' lawyer, Yassah," he replied with a toothed grin.

"Then you know that if I feel like it I can have you taken down to Elizabeth City and locked up as a witness, don't you?" I went on, whereupon he turned as pale as a negro can turn.

"For de Lawd, I ain't done nothin'!" he cried. "Hones' to goodness, I ain't!"

I looked at him and sympathized with his fright. Probably there was a good reason for it. There generally is with men of Ben's stamp.

"Why are you afraid of this place, Ben?" I asked him. "Tell me the truth, now."

He glanced about him and dropped his voice.

"Dis heah's de debbil's islan', suh," he said tremblingly. "Black man ain't got no show heah. Debbil he ketch a niggah heah after dahk an' dat man never shows up no moah."

"What makes you say that?" I inquired.

"Two men has bin took dat away," he exclaimed. "Bat Minogue an' Hahvy Johnson come down heah an' dey ain't come back no moah."

MacGregor came around the corner of the house just then, and stopped when he saw me talking to Biggoty.

"Wi' ye tak a look at th' greenhouse?" he inquired, with what seemed elaborate solicitation.

I nodded.

"I'm coming," I answered, and walked away from the negro. Of course, I took no stock in his statement, but there was certainly a mystery about the place. MacGregor waited, and as I came up to him, he turned with me. I walked perhaps a dozen paces with him, and then an idea struck me. I would put this thing to him without delay. I stopped and swung about to face him. We were standing within ten feet of the tamarack trees that formed the circle.

"Mr. MacGregor," I said in my courtroom manner, "I'm going to ask you

some direct questions, and I want direct answers to them. There's a mystery here, and it is time it was cleared up. To begin with, why are you concealing something from us? Why did you not tell us frankly what was in your thoughts last night when you heard about Mr. Curtis' disappearance?"

"I misdoot ye have th' right—" he began, when I stopped him.

"I'll soon convince you of that," I replied grimly. "As I told you last night, I happen to be the prosecuting attorney for this county. I'll make it a legal matter if I can't find coöperation any other way. Just now, it is my duty to find out what you know. To begin with, why did Biggoty tell me that two men had disappeared from this place already?"

The Scotchman looked at me with startled eyes.

"Twa men?" he echoed.

"Yes," I replied sharply. "I have their names. Minogue and Johnson. You'd better tell me all you know."

He looked at me calculatingly, and seemed to weigh the matter in his mind.

"Mayhap I will—when I'm certain Meester Curtis has surely gone away fra' here," he replied.

"Do you mean to say there is a doubt in your mind?" I asked with some astonishment. "Then I think I can convince you that he has gone, and most unusually. Look up there!" I caught him by the shoulder and swung him about, pointing up to where the white shirt still fluttered in the breeze. His eyes followed my hand, and I saw his face pale. Suddenly it became suffused with blood, and he clapped both hands to his head and staggered back. I caught at him, but with a cry he plunged forward again and fell to the ground. I stooped over him and turned him on his back. He was breathing stertorously. I knew the signs. The man had suffered a stroke of apoplexy, or at least, what resembled one.

With Jim's aid, I got him into the house and laid upon his bed. The situation was a difficult one, as there was no medical aid within miles, and no way to send for any until Biggoty should appear again. However, we did what we could for him, and then retired for consultation. As far as I could see, the situation had not changed. We were still confronted with the facts. Mr. Curtis had disappeared. I had been attacked by some snake-like creature in his room. Two colored men were reported to have disappeared in a like manner, and the Scotchman was out of the running for the time being.

We put in the day in searching the surrounding canebroke for possible tracks or indications that someone might have wandered into them and been either attacked or overcome. We found nothing. On our return, just at dusk, I secured a pole and rescued the shirt. It was clean, but badly torn, as if it had caught upon something and been ripped from its wearer.

"Now what's to do?" asked Jim when we had finished supper.

"I'm going to find out what attacked me in that room last night," I said grimly. "Something came in through that window, and I'm inclined to think it was the same thing that attacked Mr. Curtis."

"What's your idea? I'll help, of course," said Curtis.

"We'll sit up and watch, without a light," I replied. "If we hear anything, we'll flash this pocket electric torch I brought. We'll take a couple of shotguns, and if there is—"

There was no need to finish the sentence. Its import was sufficiently obvious.

At eleven o'clock, or thereabouts, we proceeded to the bedroom where I had slept the night before, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could under the circumstances. Shotguns reposed across our knees, the lamp was placed

on the table between us with a supply of matches, and I held the electric torch in my hand.

The hours passed, and I began to yawn. There was an old-fashioned clock in the kitchen, and I heard this strike two. There was a faint breeze blowing outside that rustled the leaves, and occasionally there was the call of a night bird. Suddenly Curtis touched me on the arm.

"What was that?" he whispered, and as I listened, I heard a peculiar sound that one might liken to a great arm beating a heap of brushwood with a giant rubber flail. Jim let go of my arm.

"It's that thrashing sound I mentioned yesterday," he said. "It's nothing, I expect."

I could hear him yawn. Suddenly he closed his teeth together with a snap, and stood up.

"I'll go to sleep if I sit there much longer," he said. "I'm going to walk about the room. Don't let that gun drive at me, like a good fellow."

He stretched himself, and then moved over toward the window. I could see his shadow dimly outlined against the panes, and there was a sound of something moving behind. He stopped with his back to the window and listened, standing quietly. As he did so, I caught a glimpse of something that moved behind him, and then just the faintest, scraping sound. It fascinated me, and my heart began to pound in my breast. Apparently Curtis did not hear it, for he made no move. With an effort, I forced myself to action, and bringing the torch into play, I pushed the button. Instantly, Jim stood in a circle of brilliant light, and he cried out as I yelled.

"Jump!" I cried, and he sprang forward just as a long, thick, snake-like tentacle writhed above his head. In the light, I could see that this tentacle had come in through the window. Without further thought than the disgust and

horror that possessed me, I swung the shotgun across my knees into position, dropped the torch, and fired both barrels. There was an instant's thrashing, a scraping sound, and silence. Shaking and trembling, I picked up the torch again and flashed its beams about the room. The place was empty.

"Thank God!" I exclaimed fervently.

"What was it, Tom?" asked the shaking voice of Curtis from the doorway where he stood. He coughed as the fumes of the burning powder struck his throat, and before he could answer, a quavering voice behind him broke in.

"Ye'll ha need o' thanks this nicht," it said solemnly, and I threw the light from my torch upon the white and quivering features of MacGregor, who stood, a phantom of fear in the passage behind my friend.

"Stand aside, Jim," I said quickly to Curtis. He moved, and I opened the breech of my shotgun and shoved in a fresh cartridge. As I snapped the weapon shut again, I turned it on the Scot.

"Come in here!" I exclaimed venomously. "There's an explanation coming from you, my friend, and you'd best be swift in making it. What devil's business is going on here, and what was that thing?"

I expect there was something more than mere determination in my tone, for I was so shaken with the revulsion of feeling and the horror of the sickening thing I had seen that I doubt not I would have driven the charge from the shotgun into the man before me had he given me the slightest cause.

"Ye may put oop yer weapon, Meester Drake," he said quaveringly, stepping into the room with unsteady feet. Curtis now applied a match to the wick of the lamp, and I could see that the man was trembling at the knees. He sank into a chair almost as he spoke.

"I'm no certain I'm doin' what th' maister would hae me do, in spierin' to

ye what I'm goin' tae," he said, "but I'll ease ma conscience at ony rate."

Suddenly from outside there came a long drawn howl, and this was followed instantly by a series of agonized barks from the dog. I turned toward the window, but MacGregor cried out.

"Keep awa!" he yelled.

I sprang back. A fresh chorus of barks and yelps broke upon the air, and, followed by Curtis, I dashed into the passage, through the kitchen and into the darkness outside. There was a scuffling and struggling going on near the corner of the house, and in the light of the torch, I found the dog in the clutch of a smaller tentacle than the one that had appeared in the room. *I saw that it led into the circle of tamarack trees!*

Without thought, I sprang forward and seized the struggling dog. It was a matter of considerable difficulty to tear him from that slimy hold, but I did so and flung him to one side, still howling horribly. Instantly he gained his feet and fled in the frenzy of his fear into the canebreak. We could hear his cries for some minutes until they died away in the distance.

"What was that thing? For God's sake what was it?" Curtis cried to me, and I shook my head.

"Keep away from that clump of trees," I warned him. "There's something hidden there that will need investigation. I think MacGregor knows." Even as I spoke, I uttered an exclamation, for out of the kitchen door the Scotchman staggered and gasping, fell to the ground. Unable to regain his feet, he scrambled on hands and knees toward us. Just then the moon broke forth from behind a wrack of dark clouds and shed a brilliant light upon the scene. I strode forward and caught him by the shoulder.

"What's the matter, man?" I cried to him.

"An ax! An ax!" he gabbled and

pointed to the tamaracks. Through the close circle of them, I saw projecting a white arm that moved! Two long minutes later, we had dragged, through a hastily chopped orifice in the circle of trees, the naked and scarred body of Henry Curtis. The old man was lacerated and torn, and could hardly speak. We carried him very tenderly into the kitchen and laid him on the blankets before the fire Curtis had built. I poured brandy down his throat and Jim chafed him with the same fiery fluid. Eventually, we were rewarded by seeing his eyes open, consider us gravely, and then close again, while the deep breathing told us that he slept naturally. It was then I thought of MacGregor, and found him lying unconscious beside the door.

Henry Curtis, as I had learned from his nephew and MacGregor, had become almost a fanatic on the subject of plant breeding and super cultivation, and had concentrated his attention upon a real, or fancied, relationship between plants and animals. I'll leave the naturalists to settle the wisdom or folly of it. In his travels in Bolivia, he had come across a giant specimen of the sundew, or the devil's-tree, as they call it there. The thing belongs to the mimosa family. This plant had the queer faculty of moving certain long, tentacle like leaves, and it uses these to feed itself with the insects that settle upon it. In North Carolina, there is a branch of the same family known as Venus' Fly Trap. Curtis had discovered this and determined to try an experiment following out his pet theory with the Carolina soil. He wanted to try the effect of certain foods upon a plant bred from the specimens he had procured. This explained his residence in the Swamp.

"MacGregor and I worked over that plant for ten years," said the old man the next day. "We cultivated and selected, and Luther Barbank could not have been more patient. Then I tried the experiment of feeding the plant raw

meat, and it grew and thrived wonderfully. Finally, we produced a really gigantic specimen, and I saw that it would necessarily have to be protected, fenced, so we built that tamarack hedge about it to keep it within bounds. A thing like that spreads. It grew and grew. It developed into a monstrosity, a veritable bloodthirsty giant of a plant, and it began to exhibit selective ability to find its own food. We began to miss the chickens, small pigs and the like, and we caught it at work. The tentacles had grown tremendously, and were tough and strong. It was interesting to me to watch it at work, and though MacGregor warned me that it should be destroyed, I could not bring myself to do it, for my theory was being borne out in it. Then MacGregor went away to Florida for a few days. He had been in the habit of feeding the plant, and for the first two or three days, I did it. Then I became interested in a new series of experiments in the greenhouse and I forgot it for nearly a week. Four nights ago, I waked, to find myself being dragged to the window. I tried to free myself and could not. Instantly, I knew what had happened. The starving plant had found me and was supplying itself with food. I was dragged out through the window and up and over the tops of the hedge, from which I fell."

The old gentleman took a sip of the brandy and water and continued:

"The fall stunned me, I imagine. At any rate, the thing must have made heroic efforts to digest me, but evidently it had not yet reached the growth that would permit that, but its effluvia was anaesthetic in quality, and it held me until I was thrown to one side. From what you tell me, the dog must have found me, or scented me, lying near the edge, and in his efforts to dig me out, got caught himself. Then you boys rescued me, and I thank you both. MacGregor here tells me you contemplated arresting him for my murder, Drake."

"He came as close to jail as he ever will come and keep out of it," I said grimly. "By the way, sir, what about those two colored boys, Minogue and Johnson, who are said to have disappeared?"

The old gentleman smiled.

"You'll find them down at Roanoke," he said. "I played the god from the machine there. Both had scolding wives and wanted to get away. They had worked for me, and I gave them money. They rowed down the canal into the Cheasapeake and forgot to mention to anyone where they were going. They sent me the money I lent them some months ago."

"What about that infernal Devil's Tree, Uncle?" asked Jim. "You're not going to leave it here, I hope."

"If you and Drake will take a couple of those dynamite cartridges you'll find

in the closet in my room and plant a little mine near the thing, I'll be obliged to both of you," the old man answered with a smile. "It's like tearing out one of MacGregor's arms, but it will have to go. A thing like that is too dangerous, even for the Great Dismal Swamp."

The next day, just as the dynamite hoisted all that there was of the Devil's Tree into the air, I heard a hysterical bark behind me. I turned and found the dog. As one of the leatherlike tentacles fell nearby, he seized it in his teeth and shook it viciously, then trotted in and laid it at old Mr. Curtis' feet.

"Pete never liked that tree much," the old man said. "I think his mind is relieved."

"An' so's mine, I'll hae ye knaw—private-like, ye'll understan'," remarked MacGregor grimly.



A LAUREATE

By Clinton Scollard

O THERE be many things to sing
 As pass the vari-colored days—
 The birds that mount on gleaming wing,
 The glamour of the forest ways;
 The sea that chants unto the shore,
 The rainbow's radiant arc of light,
 The earth's abundant harvest store,
 The red auroras of the night.
 Yet would I not my lot bewray,
 But hold it very kind of fate
 Should Sylvia smile on me and say
 That I may be *her* laureate!

Carlotta Advises

By Florence Baier

THE Mackensie houses were the first one passed on the road to the Country Club. They stood on the crest of a long rise, each in the exact centre of its thirty acres; great, squarely-set houses of tawny brick, with wide eaves and deep, shadowed porches. A brick wall shielded them from the road, and symmetrical drives wound across the sloping lawns from the similar gateways, set side by side, to the similar carriage-porches. At the back, a tree-shaded lane ran from the garden pergola of one to the garden pergola of the other, and a white stile mounted the picket fence at the boundary line; but that was a later, womanish development with which John and William Mackensie had little to do.

For twenty years, the Mackensies had but a single aim between them; and that, the establishment of a wool business equal in output and quality to the mills of their native town in Scotland. They spent their days in the clack of looms and carding machines, breathing an atmosphere filled with fine floating dust, and redolent of unwashed fleeces. The rest of the time, they merely ate and slept. They were short, stocky men, slow of speech and movement, with insignificant faces and dull, kindly eyes. John was a trifle older than William, and the intruding note of gray in his brown hair was a bit more obvious, but they had both lived so far beyond the normal marrying years that marriage came to them as something more than a simple surprise.

They were very cleverly manipulated in the matter, had they but known it. From her weather-beaten cottage, oppo-

site their boarding house, Mrs. Ayres had watched, with quite as single a purpose as their own, the Mackensie progress from nothing at all to riches. She was a plump widow with no income worth mentioning and with twin girls on her hands. It was a situation in which she fully expected to be forgiven much. In spite of her handicap of shabby gentility, she groomed her daughters for what she was pleased to call their destiny, and governed them shamelessly with a weak heart. As day-pupils they attended the most select school—taking the same morning train as the Mackensies, but giving the brothers no attention beyond a modest "Good morning," on pain of bringing on one of their mother's attacks; they took cooking lessons and learned to make delicious scones; and they had a singing-master who made a specialty of the old-fashioned ballad. Mrs. Ayres was the sort who believed that all a woman's claims on life were canceled by a nice marriage; and she achieved it triumphantly for her girls the summer they were eighteen. The dual courtship was not exciting so far as Camilla and Carlotta were concerned, and they wrinkled their noses involuntarily the only time they ever mentioned the honeymoon; but not even they had the slightest doubts as to the propriety of their marriages.

The nine years since had served to prove them not only successful but almost identical. Breakfast was served in the morning and lights were turned out at night, almost to the minute in each house. Camilla and Carlotta ordered roast mutton three times a week and laid out woolen

underwear on the morning of the tenth of November. Once a month, each household entertained at a dinner, followed by old-fashioned whist; and once a year, they gave a dance, jointly, at the Country Club. Camilla planned the details of these affairs, but it was Carlotta who decided on the dates and grouped the guests. To be sure, Camilla's baby died at eight days, and Carlotta's lived to eight years and gave promise of her mother's loveliness; but that was hardly a recognizable difference. It was not until Cedric Dewing had begun to walk with her, up and down the tree-shaded lane, day after day, that Camilla felt she was experiencing something in which Carlotta did not share.

It was not a thing that had come suddenly. For at least two years before the reviews began to speak enthusiastically of his promise, Cedric had been a frequenter of the smart little country club on the high road. Occasionally, he brought a chum down from the city to make up a foursome of golf; occasionally, they spent a rainy afternoon in one or the other of the Mackensie living-rooms, at music or bridge; or the four met, rather casually, for a matinee in town.

It was not until the third summer that a perceptible rift appeared, and Camilla and Cedric took to walking in the lane. They were nearly the same age and had grown conscious of it, as if they were the younger members of a family, and were subtly united by their common impulses and ideas. The recklessness that John forbade, the wild spirits that perplexed him, Cedric accepted as the natural expression of Camilla's self. The smallest incidents served to enhance their happiness. He seemed to bring her, out of his insatiate love of life, the fulness of her own un-lived youth, the pulsing joy that had evaded her. She had a restless, unconscious yearning for life, lived to its full; and Cedric's companionship gave her a curiously satisfying understanding of what life might mean. After all, she

was less than twenty-seven. She bloomed, as a plant, grown in the shadow, flowers under the sun. Into the laughter that she shared with him, there poured the man's own pagan love of life; of the blue sky and the great white clouds and the scents and sounds of summer. But through their laughter, Camilla was aware of a mystery which she half understood and after which she wanted to seek. The time came when she was conscious of a delicious inward throbbing at the sight of his face and of the dark eyes into which she could not look straightforwardly. And then—the time came when their easy friendliness crashed down about them, and they were left clinging to each other in its ruins, terrified at the intensity of love.

Three times in as many hours Camilla put out the clothes that she would take on such a trip. Already she had packed her bag with her characteristic consideration for such practical details as the weight of brushes and the certainty that her tiny case of remedies was filled. But two great boxes still yawned on the floor beside the bed on which she spread her array of garments. Some of them were old favorites, soft, vivid gowns such as Cedric liked, and some of them, the smart traveling suit, the shimmering, silken lingerie, were new, bought in the last, unhappy week when the intense absorption she gave to clothes had served to still her agonies of indecision. She sorted and arranged the piles exactly in the order in which she would pack them. But she did not pack them. Instead, she caught up a wide shade hat and went out.

She had it vaguely in mind to go to Carlotta whom she had been avoiding for days. But when she reached the foolish little stile at the boundary line between their meadows, she saw Cedric coming toward her. She realized, with a shock, that it was he, rather than Carlotta, whom she had been seeking; that it was for him she had chosen the white gown

she was wearing and the hat lined with a rose-color that gave a warm glow to her clear, creamy skin. She stood quite still, watching, as he came toward her, for his quick smile and the glow of pleasure flaring in his narrow, deeply-set eyes, like a dull flame in the depths of a cave. All day she had been longing for the inexplicable joy his nearness brought her. Now that he was there, she felt herself trembling with the impact of his presence. It was Cedric who spoke first.

"Camilla, you're as white as your own dear ghost. You're not ill?"

"No. I just didn't sleep last night, nor the night before."

"I know." His eyes changed, clouding a moment. He reached down and slipped his hand over hers. "To-night ends it, thank God."

"To-night begins it," she said very low.

Taking her elbows in his firm hands, he drew her toward him. She could see that his lips were quivering, but he smiled down at her before he spoke.

"You can't stifle love, dear," he said. "Love means life. And sacrifice of love is the first of the great sins against life. You know you love me."

"Oh, I do, Cedric. I do." She drew back and looked at him with sombre eyes. "It's just that I'm not the kind of woman to play the part you are giving me. I—I dread all the chances accumulating against me. I—all my people have been good—my mother, my cousins—in the conventional sense. Proper and narrow, if you like, but good. It's I who am strange to myself. I—didn't know I should be like this. It—it has all come so quickly. I can't help thinking of Carlotta."

"Carlotta?"

She nodded, her face averted.

"Carlotta is so keen," she said. "She's always been a balance wheel for me."

"Camilla,"—he swung about and gripped her arm so tightly that it hurt her—"promise you'll not tell Carlotta. Promise me."

She looked up amazed at the hostility in his tone. "But I thought you *liked* Carlotta."

"Oh, I do. But this is between us—you and me. There is no one else in the world that could understand what it means. We're starting out new, with just ourselves and our lives before us."

There was a boyish wistfulness in his voice, as if he were trying, in commonplace words, to tell her the many ways he loved her; but the portent of what he was saying stilled her for an instant. The thought of going away with him had been dominant for days. Whatever she had been doing or saying, she had been conscious of that as she would have been conscious of a neuralgic pain at her temples. There were times when she was certain that it was the only way of escape into life, that not to go away with Cedric would be an irreparable calamity; and there were other times when it seemed weakness and she could smile at her own folly.

"I have everything planned," she began quietly. "There's a boy coming for my boxes. I decided not to take a trunk. He'll bring them to you late this afternoon."

"I'm going up to town in time for dinner." She heard his quick intake of breath, and there came a pause that seemed to carry them on irresistibly. "Camilla, hadn't you—wouldn't it be wiser for you to come with me? On the early train?"

She shook her head, answering his perplexed look with a still more decided negative. She knew that the delay of an hour increased the danger of discovery; that if John were at home, it would require all her wit to evade his questions and get away.

"The boat sails at ten," Cedric persisted. "It makes a short evening any way; and we've dined together often enough this last year."

"It's not that. I'm not afraid of being seen with you."

"Then why?" he asked insistently.

"It's Carlotta. I want to see Carlotta."

Desperately, she had given him the simple truth. Behind everything, she was aware of her sister as she might be aware of an idea strangely personal to herself. She had established a more essential communion with Carlotta than with anyone alive; and at the parting every fibre of her being cried out for some last contact.

"But I will not tell her," she added, as she saw the stern line about the man's mouth. "I promise you that I won't tell her, Cedric."

They were close to her own door, and he followed her into the dim hall. The silence into which her promise had fallen grew deep and intense. Through her half-veiled eyes, she saw his profile, brown and boyish, and the curves of his face and shoulder, motionless in that moment of tense quiet. Almost against her will, she swayed toward him and found herself imprisoned in his arms. His lips, hot and eager, fell on her face and throat. She drank in the poignant rapture of his caresses, giving him back kiss for kiss when his lips sought hers. Her very blood seemed to bubble with joy. Even when she had let him go, and stood for a moment leaning against the door that she had just closed behind him, a triumphant happiness filled her, drove all doubts away.

Upstairs, she found Carlotta in her room. She was standing beside the littered bed, examining a frock flung across its foot. They were very like. They had the same creamy skin and pointed chin, the same brown hair that showed coppery threads in sunlight, the same long, flexible hands. Camilla was easily the more beautiful, but Carlotta had a sparkling charm that gave her piquancy. They smiled at each other good-humoredly.

"What does it all mean?" Carlotta asked. "Are you cleaning house?"

"I—I'm sending some things back to

the dressmaker. A boy is coming for the boxes in half an hour."

"Where's Lizette?"

"I'm going to pack these myself. Have you been in all the afternoon?"

"No, I've been walking." Carlotta yawned and glanced at her watch. "Archie Carstyle was with me."

Camilla hardly heard what Carlotta said. Her happiness ebbed a little. Thought followed thought in an instantaneous succession, contradicting, refuting one another. As her hands folded and packed, it seemed to her that her old life was running out like the last straggling sands in a glass. Cedric had said that love meant life, and she knew that it was true. All the years that she had been John Mackensie's wife had been as if she had not lived at all. She wanted to live ardently, to the furthest reach of feeling. That was to be in the years to come. Cedric was offering her his strange, sweet love; and presently, with the gift, life would be made over.

"You've had that gown for ages," Carlotta's cool voice came to her. "You're sending *that* back to the dressmaker's?"

"It needs—refitting." Her hands faltered. She looked up to see that Carlotta was searching her face with wide, startled eyes.

"Milla," she said, "are you running away with Cedric Dewing? Is that it?"

Something within Camilla gave way, like the breaking of a taut cord. Her hands shook a little as she smoothed out the gown.

"What's the use of lying, Milla? Of course, I'm surprised. I've always thought your sense of convention was so obdurate that fear alone would keep you safe. It's rather odd—"

"What would you do?" Camilla interrupted. "What would you do in my place? You know better than anyone what a poor business life has been."

"But you've made it do, haven't you. Until you met Cedric Dewing, you made it do, just as I have."

"I haven't anything," Camilla flung at her, and was amazed at the wave of color that surged up her sister's throat. "It was dull before. Then Cedric's coming made it—ugly. Oh, I hadn't meant to tell you. There's no use. And I promised Cedric." She flung out her arms half despairingly and crossed the room. Looking back, she saw Carlotta sitting quietly, her chin propped on her hands, in an attitude as unstudied as a man's.

"I suppose Cedric means to do the decent thing by you," she said, "once John gets his divorce?"

Camilla winced a little at the word. It was the first time she had allowed it to enter her thoughts, and while she admitted it, she found herself hating it.

"I suppose John will divorce me," she said slowly. "Just now—nothing matters except that I'd be free."

"John will divorce you," Carlotta observed coolly. "Once you're gone, you never can come back. He isn't the sort to welcome a Magdalen. Nor William, either. What will you do with life, Camilla?"

"How do I know? How does anyone know? You can't think of life *tout d'une pièce*."

"You can consider the possible results," Carlotta said sharply. "You've plans, haven't you? You'll have to talk fast, Milla. I'm leaving at six."

"Six? Then I could catch the early train and have dinner with Cedric?"

"Would he be expecting you?"

"I was to meet him at the boat? That's where I'm sending the boxes. The boat's sailing at ten—for South America. We'll spend the winter in Montevideo, I think. Cedric wants to finish his new book by spring. Then on—Japan, India—"

"You can't travel forever."

"We'll settle down after a year or so. Paris, perhaps. Cedric does his best work in a crowd."

"Of course, you know you're making a fool of yourself," Carlotta said, with less cruelty than sheer thoughtfulness.

For a moment, she sat turning the matter over in her mind. Camilla felt no resentment. The understanding between them was too complete for that. After a little, Carlotta began to speak almost tonelessly, the breaks and pauses between her words more emphatic than the things she said. It was Carlotta's way. She looked at everything from every imaginable angle.

"Whatever turn life takes, and you're not one to divine life's turns, the thing's likely to be disastrous. You rarely hear of a *liaison* lasting over six months, and it will take that to get a divorce. Cedric's likely never to marry you—well, suppose he doesn't? You'll be wandering out-laws in the very places where your out-lawry is most easily understood. Those big hotels, Cairo, Paris, London, have the same sophisticated, sharp-eyed people in them. And they've the same suggestion of our social order: visiting lists, and caste, and Doucet gowns, and Friday fasts. Women like you who've defied the same rules, will recognize you. And they'll claim you, too, in a sort of unconventional sisterhood. You'll hate it: Respectability is the one thing women such as you and I care about. It'll become so precious in a year or two that you'll steal chances at just looking respectable. . . . Cedric's sacrificing a good deal. The thing is likely to interfere with *his* success. He'll come to see that. Whatever your relation, it can't be conventional or normal. There is always the past; and even if you marry each other, it will look as if you were afraid he'd escape— You are so abnormally exposed to each other. John and William have rather the habit of regarding us among the furniture. Cedric won't. You'll feel that he's aware of you every moment. The time will come when you will be afraid to talk; and afraid not to, because you have no reason for avoiding it. The little things that protect married people from each other—children, duties, visits, new maids, bores—you won't have.

You've cut yourself off. It's hard on human nerves—that sort of thing. I wonder you've the courage to chance it."

Camilla did not answer. She rose and sent down the boxes by the maid who came in answer to her ring. When they had gone, Carlotta shrugged her shoulders with an air of accepting the inevitable and moved toward the half-open door. Her voice was quite casual.

"We'll probably regret this afternoon all our lives," she said. "I'm sorry I haven't persuaded you. But there's no use going over it. Shall—shall you leave a note for John?"

Camilla shook her head.

"Why should I? I've nothing to say."

"No"—for all the lightness of her voice, Carlotta's lips quivered a little as they touched Camilla's—"there's nothing to say. Shall I take your bag? It might make it easier for you to slip out without it."

Camilla stood at the window, watching Carlotta as she went down the drive. It seemed odd that she did not go through the lane as usual, and the sight of her carrying the bag was almost too much for Camilla. Would Carlotta try, even now, to delay her or prevent her going? Would she go to John or William? The house was very still. The clock ticked off the minutes, and the things that Carlotta had said ran through her mind in rhythm with its ticking. The agonies of indecision flooded back upon her. Was it true that she could never be happy? Was the brief rapture of love worth the sacrifice that she would be called upon to make for it? Only an hour remained between her and the moment when she would be getting into the train. After that, the thing became irrevocable.

She ate her dinner early, alone in the dining-room, and quite without tasting it. When the clock pointed to half-after eight, she put on her hat and went downstairs. In the dim vestibule where Cedric had kissed her, she gave a quick gasp and stood still. John Mackensie was

standing in the open door, which he had just unlocked.

"I—I am going over to Carlotta's," she explained.

"Carlotta's?" He looked at her stupidly, and from her to the figure of a messenger boy scudding down the drive on his wheel. "Carlotta isn't home. She sent you this from the city." He held out to her a square, creamy envelope with her name across it in Carlotta's dashing, angular writing.

She took it with a sense of abject despondency, waiting until her husband had gone on into the lighted dining-room and she had heard the scrape of his chair at the table, before she opened it. It began abruptly:

You should receive this just as you are starting for the station. And having received it, you will not go. Between us, we should have made a clever woman, Camilla, and a courageous one. I seemed to have reached the limit of endurance, this afternoon; and I could see no way out. It was your plan of escape, clear, definite, detailed, that set me to thinking. I could never plan like that. This is a shabby trick I am playing you—

It is I who am going away. I piled up the chances of misery, while I was talking to you, and for all that they are there, I'm going to risk it. I am writing this from the restaurant where we are dining. I have been very sure for a long time that Archie cared about me—and it was your escape—or mine.

I know that I am cutting the ground from under your feet. I imagine you'll have a tremendous throw-back into conventionality when you realize what I have done. I am quite sure you will not follow me. One sister gone is a tragedy. But two! You yourself can see the farce a second elopement would be. And neither you nor Cedric could endure a lifetime of farce. I think, perhaps, you will suffer horribly for a little, dear. And I am sorry. But, as I said, it was your escape into life—or mine. The whole thing depended on which of us acted first.

CARLOTTA.

P. S. I'm taking your bag. It was all so nicely packed. And when I am on board, I shall ask Cedric for the boxes. I have taken nothing and your gowns will be lovely for me.

Through a blinding mist, Camilla twisted the letter slowly into a taper and, burning it, dropped the blackened wisp into the grate. Whichever way she turned, an ironical complication confronted

her. She had the sense of having walked into the trap of some gigantic practical joke. She turned passionately heartsick at the thought of Cedric; but she knew that Carlotta had written the truth. Even if he should come back, she would never have the courage to receive him. This was the end. She shivered a little as she told herself that she was already old, her emotions burned out, her life gone by un-lived. Presently, she became aware that here too, a clock was ticking in the room's stillness and, through it, she heard the far-off rush and rumble of the train she was to have taken. What seemed like a long time passed and she stood motionless, thinking not at all. Then, suddenly, she remembered William.

Who would tell William? She thought of his austere face, with its stiff graying hair and its dull kindly eyes, and saw it stricken as it would be when he knew what Carlotta had done. She had never doubted William's love for Carlotta. It echoed in the sound of his rough voice, in his awkward, slow tenderesses; a deep, unworded pride in and love for all that made Carlotta lovely. The ruin that she had brought upon him, upon them all, became bitterly clear in the face of that. For a moment, she hated Carlotta.

The next, she was plunged into self-loathing. It was she who had planned the wrong that Carlotta had accomplished. She was not guiltless. She had given the other woman a weapon with which to strike and wound. Had not Carlotta said that she would never had laid such plans? If John had cared for her as William cared for Carlotta—

She could hear him coming along the hall, and saw his stocky figure outlined between the portieres, as he searched the darkened room for her. She stood up, her knees trembling. He came to her, gave her a fleeting kiss on the corner of her mouth, and drew her down comfortably beside him, within the circle of his arm.

"Had a happy day, lassie?" he asked as he had asked for nine years. When she broke into a wild sobbing, he held her off, bewildered. "Carlotta?" he said again. "She's in town, I tell ye. She came to the factory just at closing and dragged William down for dinner at a fancy restaurant. They're staying in for a theatre. They'll be down at midnight. But, by the Lord, I wasn't to tell ye till past ten o'clock. Aweel, sax minutes, one way or another— Have ye the paper, Camilla?"



PRODIGAL

By Edgar Daniel Kramer

YOU softly came and uttered not a word,
 But shyly placed your gentle hand in mine;
 And in my soul a sudden rapture stirred,
 A rapture that was agony divine.

Though I had sinned, you gave your lips to me,
 You let me find a solace in your eyes,
 And in your tears, an unshed mystery,
 I swooned, a broken fool in Paradise.

The Live Book for July

The Secret City

PAINTING a midget with a highly elaborated mountain as a background is scarcely fair to the midget. It could not be blamed for complaining of the artist's judgment of relative values. It is very nice for the mountain, but the bit of a thing standing as the central figure has a sorry enough time.

Indeed, it is hardly fair to the artist. His background overwhelms him; rises portentous and awful, and the midget, for which, after all, the picture was painted, is lost in the confusion of disjointed proportions.

Hugh Walpole, in *THE SECRET CITY* (George H. Doran Company, \$1.60), has told a third-rate story against a first-rate background. The setting for his latest novel is, nothing less than the Russian Revolution, but the story is merely the everlasting triangle with a sort of fourth side dragged in for good measure. Mr. Walpole assumes to know Russians; that is to say, he must be a sort of demigod, shining like the angels. To know the Russian is to grasp the scope of human passions as dominating men and women and directed by the irresponsible whim of children. Mr. Walpole says he has sensed all of this and he proceeds to exhibit men and women who do not differ, as far as can be judged at this distance, from the men and women the best known Russian writers have created. Hence, they must be true.

As hinted, the story is slim enough and as to the accuracy of his picture of the Revolution, one can only guess. Accurate or not, it reads well and the arrangement induces a dramatic tension.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Walpole has sounded the first indication that the French Revolution, for purposes of fiction, is henceforth passé. However, the similarity of the two mighty events has already been so strenuously noted that the reader will not be at all confused by the fiction dealing with the Russian upheaval. The book is worth reading as an indication of what one may expect, in addition to the fact that it is, in itself, a creditable work.

Marie Corelli is still writing. You may not believe it, but assuredly it is true. Age seems not to have given hesitation to her pen. Naturally, it is not surprising that she is turning to the question of rejuvenation. Her latest offering, *THE YOUNG DIANA* (George H. Doran, \$1.50), in no sense a novel, deals with the acquisition of beauty and youth by a homely spinster. Surely the book shows Miss Corelli at her worst. It lacks plot, ingenuity, care in construction, human sympathy, understanding, ideals, interest, originality. Outside of these trifling defects, it may be a great work.

THE FLAIL, by Newton Fuessle (Moffat, Yard & Company, \$1.60), analyzes the psychology of an American born German boy before and during the war. Take the first two books, that is the first two hundred pages, throw them away, and give the last two books your attention, and you will have a rather good picture of the ambitious German-American caught in the throes of the great conflict.

JUDITH OF BLUE LAKE RANCH, by Jackson Gregory (Charles Scribner's Sons,

\$1.60), is a foolish attempt at western romance. That there never were such people and never was such a life matters little to Mr. Jackson, nor would it matter to his readers had he made the highly impossible seem probable. He doesn't. The excessively credulous may find it interesting, but the mildly initiated will be bored.

ONCE ON A SUMMER RANGE, by Francis Hill (The Macmillan Company, \$1.50), is of the same kidney as Mr. Jackson's book. It is also an effort at western romance, but the events are thrown into a highly impossible setting and the characters are neither interesting nor true.

THE MAN NOBODY KNEW, by Holworthy Hall (Doubleday, Page & Company, \$1.50), is a war novel, now happily growing scarce. One doesn't quarrel with authors who create men and women different from any men and women who ever lived, but one is justified in being disgruntled if the writer fails to

make his characters convincing. Mr. Hall, unhappily, is of this number. His remade man is a creature that never was on sea or land, and his secret is forever quite safe, as no one could have any interest in discovering it or propagating it.

Frank Dilnot says some condescendingly nice things about America in his little book, THE NEW AMERICA (The Macmillan Company, \$1.25). The work is just barely readable.

AN AMERICAN POILU (Little, Brown & Company, \$1.35), is an anonymous war offering consisting of letters supposed to have been written by an American enlisted in the French Army. After reading the book, one can scarce blame the writer for keeping his name off the title page. It is weakly sentimental and deals almost exclusively with things in which one, viewing the war, has little or no interest.

S. W.



THE BLOOM IN THE LEAVES

By Aloysius Coll

MY LOVE was like the feathery mist
 Of green upon the spring—
 The little leaves that catch the dew,
 And make the birds to sing.

Laughter and tears upon my soul,
 As little leaves are spun
 Around the giant oak to catch
 The dewdrop and the sun.

But O, his love, the thundering rain
 That drenches bough and root,
 Swept through the timorous little leaves,
 The blossoms and the fruit!

The Silver Lining

By Sam S. Stinson

LITTLE FABLES OF INCONSISTENCY

*Wherein Is Shown That the Wise Saws Are
Generally Equipped With Cross-cut Teeth*

Love Laughs at Locksmiths, But—

ONCE upon a time, before the High Cost of Living raised its hydra-headed menace in the land, there lived a youth and a maiden named respectively Jack and Jill. In the Theatre of Life, they listened to the clever patter of the little vaudevillian billed as Love, and fell for his stuff. So they were married, and all was as merry as the wedding bells until one day Poverty came in at the door. The door was locked, but that made no difference to Poverty. He came in just the same. By way of a joke, Love jumped through the window. Poverty took possession of the spare room and proceeded to make himself at home.

Jack and Jill 'phoned for the Locksmith to come and repair the damage. The Locksmith came with his kit of tools, but, catching a glimpse of Poverty in the spare room, demanded his pay in advance. Whereupon Love stuck his head in the window and burst into roars of laughter.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho!" cried Love. "If there's anybody that can get a laugh out of me, it's a Locksmith. He's funnier than I am."

Jack and Jill were overjoyed to see the Locksmith slink away, nor did they know he had merely gone to fetch his gang. But that is just what the miserable gangster did. Presently he returned, reinforced by the Butcher, the Baker and the Candlestick Maker, all armed with cruel weapons known as Bills. Using these horrible instruments of torture to extract their nefarious toll from Jack and Jill, they beat Love to an unrecognizable pulp while Poverty stood outside to stall off any possible police interference, thus making the world safe for Democracy. Then they all went away to report to their master, the High Cost of Living, making the well-known welkin ring with the peals of raucous mirth.

MORAL

Love laughs at locksmiths, but—He laughs best who laughs last.

THE lure of the unattainable is what makes life worth while. After a man's search is rewarded by finding the ideal woman, she passes him up because she is looking for the ideal man.

THERE is nothing so beautiful as sympathy. A woman always feels sorry for a man who has trouble with his wife, unless she happens to be his wife.

Signs of the Times

THESE are the erstwhile gladsome days
 When real beer came in kegs;
 When poets sang their summer lays,
 And hens laid priceless eggs.

But now, alas! the Demon Rum
 Has sadly slipped a cog.
 One swan song, then he must succumb
 To temperance egg-nog.

With founts of inspiration dry,
 Drab days all look alike.
 The very hens but justify
 A sympathetic strike.

•••••

Wise Saws and Modern Applications

AN ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If there were no marriages, there would be no divorces.

SWEET are the uses of adversity, but adversity, like olives, may be an acquired taste.

HAPPINESS comes from mating with our opposites; but did you ever hear of a beardless youth marrying a girl with a hare lip?

ALL the world's a stage, but don't try to be the whole show.

CONSISTENCY is a jewel, with which beauty is content to be unadorned.

MEN are but children of a larger growth. When our parents cease spanking us, experience begins.

A SOFT answer turneth away wrath, but that is no reason why you shouldn't take boxing lessons.

VIRTUE is its own reward, and most of us go through life unrewarded.

LOVE is blind. It causes two people to think almost as much of each other as they do of themselves.

THERE is nothing new under the sun. Even our mistakes have been made before.

IT is possible to reach a man's heart through his stomach; but that sort of man would rather lose his heart than his appetite.

Mother Goose Up-to-date

I

OLD KING COLE was a merry old soul,
 And a merry old soul was he.
 He called for his pipe and he called for his bowl,
 And he called for his fiddlers three.
 But his pipe is clay, and his bowl to-day
 Is a grape juice brew. Oh, spare us!
 And his fiddlers three were drowned at sea
 In a flood of apollinaris.

II

Dickery, dickery dock!
 The thirst ran up the block
 To the place at the corner,
 Forlorn and forlorn.
 Dickery, dickery dock!

III

Little Jack Horner kept at the corner
 Stuff you could put in a pie.
 The law put in its thumb and pulled out the rum,
 With a humor most certainly dry.

IV

Old Mother Hubbard she went to the cupboard
 To get her poor dog a bone.
 When she got there the cupboard was bare,
 Bone dry in the bone driest zone.

Of Two Evils

BEING a coward myself, I am an ardent hero worshiper. The golden chevrons on a soldier's sleeve intoxicate me with adulation. An aviator thrills me with bliss. A man who can nonchalantly go to a dentist commands my admiration. Even a married man inspires my respect.

Consequently, when the circus manager volunteered to conduct me through his realms of romance and mystery, my love of heroic deeds prompted me to accept. First he pointed out his celebrities.

"There is Signor Scario, my lion tamer," he announced.

I regret to say that Signor Scario scarcely looked the part. He seemed decidedly anemic. "Still, you never can tell," I mused. "He must be possessed of great courage."

"To-night he has decided to sleep in the cage with his lions," said my host.

"Ah! What a brave man," I exclaimed.

"Oh, I don't know," replied the circus manager. "He has had a scrap with his wife and he's afraid to go home."

Well, it just spoiled my whole day.

SONNETS OF THE COMMONPLACE

To a Fried Egg

TO-DAY the golden sun sank in the west,
 And as I watched its mellow afterglow,
 And saw the changing colors come and go,
 By vagrant cloudlets kissed and e'en caressed,
 Unbidden tears came to my eyes distressed,
 And caused my memory to overflow
 With ever present dreams, and in my woe
 I cursed the sun in very wretchedness.

For in the west, the world seemed turned to red,
 And then a smear of yellow overcast
 The sky; and as the color quickly spread,
 Brought visions of my early morn's repast;
 And all the scene recalled, as from the dead,
 The weary egg with which I broke my fast.

From the Dictionary of Experience—

LUCK—The religion of fools.

FLATTERY—Praise of other people.

PAST—The graveyard of buried hopes.

FUTURE—The millennium of resurrected dreams.

HOPE—Breaking a pair to draw a flush.

TEMPTATION—That which a person never puts off till to-morrow.

LEISURE—A life sentence for those who marry in haste.

AGE—That for which we have little respect unless it is bottled.

GENIUS—A person who can make you believe that he, or she, is smarter than you are.

ADAPTABILITY—An admirable quality possessed by a few people who can even get used to being married.

WEDLOCK—A tie that enables a woman to be miserable with one man rather than to be happy with another.

ASPECTACLE to make the gods laugh is a married man and an old bachelor pitying each other.

DISCIPLINE is a thorn in the flesh of education. A girl can always learn to love a man if he makes the lessons easy enough.

The Mummers' World

By W. Carey Wonderly

AMONG the musical plays of the season "The Royal Vagabond" must rank well in the front line, if only because of the workman-like job which George M. Cohan has done with an o'd-fashioned opera comique. In the early stages, this musical entertainment apparently was a hopeless mass of ancient humor, silly lines, and lugubrious plot. In the hinterland, when first produced, and where the name of Cohan is an open sesame to every pocketbook, audiences walked out on it, and the critics damned with faint praise. I am willing to admit that after witnessing the opening down in Baltimore, I was thoroughly convinced that "The Royal Vagabond" henceforth should be known as "The Royal Bloomer." Without doubt, it was the most tiresome musical concoction through which I had ever sat.

This same entertainment is now numbered, and quite rightly, among the most successful stage pieces in New York. For "The Royal Vagabond" on view at the Cohan and Harris Theatre contains about all of the ingredients necessary to find favor with the most discriminating playgoer. How George M. Cohan has done it, I do not know; but that he has done it, I am positive, for I have seen the piece both before and after. If ever bricks were made without straw, it has been done in this instance.

The program states that "The Royal Vagabond" is a "Cohanized" opera comique; which means, I take it, that its sponsor has satirized an old-fashioned libretto. The result is an entertainment of real humor, insinuating melodies, and

a setting worthy of the Follies and the Winter Garden. Without a doubt, "The Royal Vagabond" is the best dressed show that Cohan and Harris have ever put out.

The opening *ensemble*, with its explanatory solos and choruses, gives at once the keynote to the entertainment. Here are the merry villagers who sing of "Opera, comic opera"; and here are *Chefcheck*, the inn-keeper, who tells in song of his pretty daughter; and *Marcel*, the barber, who has an eye on the pretty daughter and a mortgage on her father's inn. Of course, the pretty daughter, *Anitza*, doesn't love *Marcel*, and of course *Marcel* threatens to foreclose the mortgage unless *Anitza* becomes his bride—all old stuff, old situations, but treated humorously—Cohanized too. The Soldiers' Chorus, with the four prancing, dancing soldiers, is an inspiration. Imagine, with the stage full of a cheering populace, singing, "Here Comes the Soldiers," there appears on the scene an army of exactly four men, and they, apparently, followers of St. Vitus.

Anitza refuses to marry *Marcel* because she is in love with a revolutionist, who, I believe, is called *Franz*. The name is not on the program, and various persons on the stage pronounce it differently, so that it may be *Fernand*. When her father tries to compel her to wed the barber, *Anitza* hurries to the royal palace, where she implores the *Queen Mother* to save her from a loveless union. But the *Queen* has troubles of her own, for her son, *Prince Stephen*, insists that he is in no great hurry to

marry the *Princess Helena*, so that when *Anitza* appears upon the scene, the *Queen* thinks she cannot do better than obey her father. Which moves *Anitza* to speak to *Prince Stephen*, and she finds the prince very like her lover, *Franz*. Of course, *Stephen* and *Franz* are one and the same, and when a revolution is under way and ultimately succeeds, the future *King of Bargravia* becomes the country's first president, and with the bars of caste down, weds *Mistress Anitza*.

There is a goodly measure of charm about this concoction, but it is the satire rather than anything else that makes "The Royal Vagabond" the healthy success it is. Only those who have seen the two versions of this musical piece can realize and appreciate what Mr. Cohan has done with an old-fashioned skeleton.

Much of the music is lovely, my preference being for "Where the Cherry Blossoms Fall" and "Love of Mine." These two numbers, with a stirring march song, "Democracy," are the work of Dr. Anselm Goetzl. Mr. Cohan himself has supplied a brace of hints in "Good-by, Bargravia," and "In a Kingdom of Our Own," the last winning countless encores through the introduction of some very attractive children, skilfully drilled. "Charming" is a pretty number by Joseph McCarthy and Harry Tierney, and, lastly, Sir Arthur Sullivan is resurrected for "The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring."

This gem from "The Mikado" is sung by Robinson Newbold, who, incidentally, must be credited with the individual hit of the evening. Mr. Newbold, whose bid to fame hitherto has been his resemblance to Raymond Hitchcock, now comes forward as a successful comedian on his own. His humor is legitimate and it may safely be said he has arrived. Opposite him in many of the scenes appears Frances Demarest, as the *First Lady of the Bath*. Miss Demarest is as handsome as ever, and acquits herself with credit throughout the performance.

The dual role of the prince and revolutionist is played by Frederic Santley, a brother of the more famous Joseph; and while Mr. Santley is an improvement over his predecessor, the thought is there that he is a trifle plump for a romantic role. He looks better as the prince than he does as the revolutionist. Tessa Kosta is pleasing as *Anitza*, singing and looking well throughout. Winifred Harris is "every inch a queen" in her long, trailing gowns, and Grace Fisher is a lovely *Princess Helena*, whom the prince refused—probably because he heard her sing. John Goldsworthy, besides knowing how to read lines, makes a handsome Colonel Petroff, and Louis Simon scores second comedy honors as *Janku*, an apothecary.

As in all Cohan shows, dancing becomes an important part of "The Royal Vagabond," and from the Soldiers' Chorus to the featured principals, there is much excellent dancing. Dorothy Dickson, who seems to be the legitimate successor to Mrs. Castle, has a little girl air, and a charming trick of lifting one shoulder which should assure her success even were she a less gifted danseuse. I think I like Miss Dickson the best of present day dancers. With Carl Hyson, her partner off-stage as well as on, she gives an exhibition of some grotesque stepping which, in the vernacular, was a riot. Another charming dancer was Mary Eaton, a pretty blonde, who seemed as light as thistledown. Then, there were Gladys Zell and Edna Pierre who attempted more syncopated measures with Mr. Santley and Mr. Robinson.

The three acts are beautifully staged, and the costuming is charming, yet everything is in good taste, a thing of brains as well as money. Deservedly so, "The Royal Vagabond" is the most successful musical entertainment in New York.

Another excellent and successful musical piece is on view at the Shubert Theatre, "Good Morning, Judge," built from the Pinero farce, "The Magistrate." This

divertisement is now in its second year at the Adelphi Theatre, London, where it is running under the name of "The Boy." With such a basis for its plot, it would seem that the entertainment couldn't possibly go wrong, and for once the rule holds good. We are provided with an evening's pleasant pastime.

The plot, while not remarkable for its freshness, is undeniably funny. *Millicent Cavanaugh*, a widow with one son, has married *Horatio Meebles*, chief magistrate of the Bromley Street police court. Since her age is a delicate subject with the lady, she has calmly struck off five or six years, though this has proved to be something in the nature of a boom-erang since it keeps *Hughie*, the son, in Eton jackets and makes him out to be fifteen years old instead of twenty—and *Hughie* doesn't feel fifteen years old. At the parties, he kisses all the pretty girls because *Hughie's* "just a boy." Likewise, he has fallen in love with his music mistress, a most delectable young person known as *Joy*. *Hughie* and *Joy* furnish the subject for the motif of the musical score, an arresting little number named "I Am So Young and You Are So Beautiful."

But news reaches *Mrs. Meebles* of the arrival in London of *Colonel Bagot* from Bengal. The *Colonel* is *Hughie's* godfather and knows to the day the date of *Hughie's* birth. *Mr. Meebles* has invited *Colonel Bagot* to dine with them the next evening, and *Mrs. Meebles* trembles for the result. After her guests have gone, she prevails upon her sister to accompany her to the *Colonel's* hotel, where she will explain the defect in her son's age, and trust to *Bagot's* honor. But before *Mrs. Meebles* and her sister *Diana* can get away, *Master Hughie* appears upon the scene not in Eton jacket but in evening clothes, and he inveigles *Mr. Meebles* into going with him to a masquerade supper dance at the Cosmos Hotel. *Mr. Meebles*, sorely tempted, falls, and sets out with his stepson.

8—L. S.

The second act, at the Cosmos Hotel, introduces *Hughie* and *Mr. Meebles* at table with some pretty girls. When we consider that *Hughie* is "so young," it must be admitted that he is a very fair picker, and thoroughly familiar with the night life of London. *Joy* turns up at the Cosmos, and also *Colonel Bagot*, of course. Then come *Mrs. Meebles* and *Diana*, who have followed the *Colonel* there. After some narrow escapes, and when the entire cast is assembled within the walls of the hotel, a raid occurs. Policemen's whistles are heard; there is the flash of lanterns; the lights are extinguished and the proprietor begs everyone to hide. There is a really funny scene in which *Mr. Meebles* and *Mrs. Meebles* hide under the same table in the dark, without one knowing who the other is. But the police are coming upstairs, and *Hughie*, feeling his responsibility, comes for *Mr. Meebles* and helps him to escape over the skylights. The others are not so successful, and *Mrs. Meebles* and *Diana*, *Colonel Bagot* and *Diana's* fiancé are arrested and taken to the Bromley Street police court.

Here *Magistrate Meebles* shows up the next morning, much the worse for his night at the Cosmos. He has no mind to be troubled by anything or anybody. When he is told there are two women outside who have been taken in a raid, *Mr. Meebles* sentences them to six days in the workhouse. In vain, the chief clerk and the sergeant try to reason with *Mr. Meebles*. They implore him to see the ladies before passing sentence, but *Mr. Meebles* is the victim of "the morning after," and the ladies fall under his displeasure. He orders them to the workhouse, and then goes home.

Of course, the ladies are none other than *Mrs. Meebles* and *Diana*, a fact which the chief clerk knew but the magistrate didn't. So the clerk, instead of obeying *Mr. Meebles*, appeals to his superior, the chief magistrate, one *Mr. Burridge*, who sends the ladies home.

Back home, there is an unpleasant moment, and then it is seen that everybody has so much on everybody else that the best way out is to forget and forgive. *Hughie* is permitted to grow up and discard his Eton clothes, and, it is presumed, he marries *Joy*. *Mr. Meebles* finds *Mrs. Meebles* just as fascinating at thirty-six as she was at one-and-thirty. *Diana* goes to her lover's embrace.

First honors go to George Hassell for his really splendid work as *Horatio Meebles*. His makeup is a triumph. He has never been seen to better advantage, and like a true artist, he never misses a point. The part of *Hughie Cavanagh* is not especially easy to cast, since the actor has to possess a semblance of youth and at the same time have the experience in playing to save the rôle from the *risqué*. It would be easy to "roughen up" *Hughie*, and at the same time there must be a strong temptation to do that very thing. To his credit, be it said, Charles King gives a clean performance.

His sister, Mollie King, a lovely blonde, plays the part of *Joy*, the music mistress, and with Charles sings the famous "I Am So Young and You Are So Beautiful." Fortunately, neither of them boasts of being a vocalist. Miss King gives her usual imitations, although it seems as if eleven o'clock were a little late for impressions of Miss Barrymore and Eddie Foy, however well done.

An excellent performance is that given by Margaret Dale as *Mrs. Meebles*, while other well known players include Cyril Chadwick, Shep Camp, Edward Martindel, and Grace Daniels. The chorus is especially decorative, with a pair of splendid dancers in Cunningham and Clements.

Next to the "Young and Beautiful" duet, the most striking number in the entertainment is a captivating thing known as "Swinging Doors," which surely will find its way to the dance orchestras and phonograph records. "Dinky Diddle Dicky" is another tuneful melody, while

"Sporty Boys" pleases doubly because of George Hassell's invaluable aid.

Taken on the whole, "Good Morning, Judge" is one of the best examples of musical comedy on Broadway, with much clean fun, tinkling music, and pretty girls.

The new Winter Garden show, "Monte Cristo, Jr.," is to my mind the best entertainment ever offered at the country-famous resort of the Tired Business Man. There are those who will miss Al Jolson, perhaps, but in the current extravaganza will be found several comedians who do not work in vain, and on the whole, "Monte Cristo, Jr.," boasts more "zip" than the Jolson show, "Sinbad." Likewise, it is the best dressed show in New York, and with a cast that sounds like a benefit performance.

There is a real idea back of this new extravaganza wherein the characters from the present day are transferred back to the time of ancient Rome. A clever conceit is the introduction of the characters from Dumas' romance, in which *Mercedes*, *Fernand*, *Danglers*, *Madame Caderouse*, *Haydee* and *Edmund Dantes* appear to step from the pages of a huge book and walk off the stage. We are shown the Harbor of Marseilles, the Island of Monte Cristo, and the Carnival at Rome—each a gorgeous stage picture, peopled with colorful characters.

In the vernacular, there is something doing from the first curtain. An excellent comedy bit is contributed by Tom Lewis, who plays the part of a crook who will "lift" anything from a pocketbook to a safe. The plot concerns the love affairs of a group of modern mortals, the poor young *Monte* falling a victim to the charms of *Mercedes*. *Mercedes* is enacted by Audrey Maple, so that *Monte's* infatuation is understood. But the lady's friends and relatives seek to break off the attachment between *Mercedes* and *Monte*, with the result that *Monte* falls asleep and dreams himself and his companions back in the days of

Edmund Dantes. Here he accumulates great wealth and discovers the falseness of *Mercedes*, so that at the final curtain, we find our hero paired off with the faithful *Haydee*, while *Mercedes* seeks life happiness with another man. It is probably the first time in the history of the theatre that the blonde turns out to be the adventuress, and the brunette lady gets the hero. Comparisons, of course, are odious, but Miss Maple is a pretty young woman, though it is true that we are given an opportunity of seeing more of Flore Revalles.

Charles Purcell plays *Monte Cristo, Jr.*, and achieves very satisfactory results. Herein, he is seen to better advantage than he was earlier in the season in "The Melting of Molly." But then, "Molly" was a woman's play, and since it gave Isabel Lowe such splendid opportunities, we mustn't cavil. Purcell has a pleasing personality and a good voice, which is heard to fine results in "Broadway Butterfly" and "Mr. Monte Cristo," the latter the song-hit of the piece.

Of Miss Maple, we have spoken. That she is a principal woman who can stand comparison with any of the beauties of the chorus is significant. Next, I liked best the Watson sisters. While it is evident that their methods are frequently of the variety stage, loud and direct, their humor, especially that of Fanny, is good-natured and distinctively American in tone, with the result that they seldom fail to please. When they paired off with the Dooleys, the sum total was up in the billions, as our English friends

say. The Vampire Dance by Gordon and William Dooley was quite the funniest thing these brothers have done.

Adelaide and Hughes are the featured dancers, with their Wedding Number and the Toy Dance standing out. This couple was never seen to better advantage, and it probably is true that this engagement will do more to enhance their popularity than anything they have yet done. Adelaide's is distinctly a Winter Garden personality, combining as she does French chic with the wit and brilliance of the Irish intelligence.

Esther Walker, from vaudeville, has come in for a great deal of attention in this new extravaganza, but I must admit that Miss Walker failed to impress me very much. She is an excellent number leader for a certain type of song, but I cannot see that she is a star by any means, and for the rest, the Garden is still lacking a "big" woman.

Charles (Chic) Sale is seen briefly and, as usual, scores. Virginia Fissinger returns in this show, and Ralph Herz plays several bits in legitimate manner, his *Rev. Fluffy Ruff* in the Prison Scene being genuinely funny. Sydney Jarvis sings, and shouldn't, while Flore Revalles is picturesque in appearance and secretive in speech. There are girls and girls and girls, all of them pretty, all of them well-dressed, if not well covered.

It has become the fashion to acclaim each new Winter Garden extravaganza as the "best ever," but cold facts seem to point that the Messrs. Shubert have outdone themselves with "Monte Cristo, Jr." It has melody, wit, and beauty.



ALWAYS remember that a woman may say what she means, without meaning what she says.



I KNOW a girl who absolutely does not flirt, but she will be thoroughly proficient by the time she is twelve.

White Treasure

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

A THREE-PART STORY—PART III

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING INSTALLMENTS:

Barbara Le Moyne, after seeing Christopher Keene fight for his life against five Malays on the Pacific coast, rides away for help but finds, on her return, that he has disappeared. Later, in San Francisco, Barbara is courted by Longfield, who introduces Keene to her. Longfield, who has all but won Barbara's consent to marry him, has deliberately courted Keene's friendship. There is something mysterious about Longfield, and Keene's suspicions are aroused. Keene is in San Francisco in search of a clue to the scene of his fight with the Malays. The wounds he received in that encounter have wiped from his mind all memory of the location of the spot at which he had buried a treasure, brought, through great dangers, from Asia to America. Barbara unwittingly gives him the name of the bay.

VI

KEENE went away in a more happy frame of mind than had Longfield. She had not wittingly told him, but into his mind had flashed her careless words, "Bay San Juan." That was enough. He sought his room at the club, got his map and put his finger upon it at once. There! His long adventure was to end at that spot—end in success. And a new adventure was to begin. A never-ending adventure with a woman, a woman who thought him a traitor, yet who had returned his kisses; a woman who had pledged herself to another, yet who had not shrunk from his embrace. Longfield? Sooner than permit her to degrade herself by such an alliance, he would kill her, or, better still, kill the man!

It would have been easy to dispose of Longfield, but Keene decided to let him do his worst, and, despite him, to carry out his own great design single-handed. Let Longfield look to himself. He would have need of all his finesse and trickery to stop Keene now.

Keene went to the window. Dawn

was at hand. As he looked out across the square, he saw a man lurking under the trees, staring at the building. There was something suspicious in his movements. Could it be that some creature of Longfield's was spying upon him?

Keene changed his clothes quickly. His bag was already packed. He had intended to leave for the North by the morning train. He would go now.

The streets were empty when he set forth. The city was not yet awake. That made it more difficult for the man to follow him undetected. Keene, realizing how close his pursuer was, turned a corner, waited, confronted him, struck him down before he could jump back or voice a cry.

He watched the man roll senseless into the gutter. When Keene struck, he struck hard. That was his precept, or at any rate, his practice. Miss LeMoyne could bear testimony to that in the matter of kisses. Longfield would also be in a position to give evidence as to his striking force—later. So his thoughts ran, as he hurried down the gray street.

It was not yet ten o'clock when Longfield presented himself at Barbara Le-

Moyne's house and demanded to see her. She had gone to bed after the exciting episodes of the night, and toward morning had fallen into a deep sleep from which her maid had difficulty in arousing her at Longfield's insistence. She dressed rapidly and swept down upon him in an exquisitely becoming morning gown. He kissed her hand, led her into the morning room, and closed the door. He did not mince matters; the exigency was too great.

"Keene!" he began. "I've lost him. I had him shadowed. He knocked down my man and got away. Do you know anything of him?"

She nodded. Concealment, secrecy, were not in her blood any more than was cowardice.

"He was here," she said with that bold frankness which so became her and which ordinarily he liked but which he now found strangely irritating.

"Here! This morning! But you were not up!"

"Last night!"

"Last night! After I left?" She nodded again. "In this house?" he demanded angrily.

She did not like his tone, his manner. He was losing control of himself in his jealousy, anger, and disappointment. Her next words did not tend to restore his equilibrium.

"Not in the house; in the garden," she said coolly.

He stared at her. By a violent effort, he got back some, at least, of his self-control and spoke more gently, as if remonstrating.

"And you were alone with him, you permitted—my affianced wife—"

"Not yet," she said quickly.

"You had speech with him. What did he say—what did he want—did he admit—did you tell him—?"

"I told him that you said he was a traitor, and sought to betray his country to Germany."

"Ah— Anything else?"

"Nothing," she answered shortly.

"Did he tell you where he hid the—"

He stopped, but she promptly finished his sentence for him.

"The platinum? No, he does not know. I could have told him."

"But you did not?"

"No."

"And you will tell me?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I could not help him and I will not help you," was her amazing answer.

He stamped his foot in impotent rage despite his effort to restrain himself.

"He is an enemy," he protested. "I must know where he has gone and where he has concealed the platinum. If you can help me and don't, you will be as guilty as he. The Secret Service—"

"I know nothing as to that," she answered, maintaining her ground. "I told him that when his villainy had been exposed and prevented and he was punished for it, I had agreed to marry you."

"And what did he say to that?"

"He agreed. He said if he were what you said he was, he deserved to lose me—"

"Lose you! Is he mad? Does he dare to—"

"He says he loves me, and I believe he does."

"And you are waiting for him, too?"

"For one of you."

"Which one?"

"That depends on—" but he did not let her finish; he knew.

"Good! When I come to you with the proof of his treachery in my hand!"

"Then I will add my hand to it."

Perhaps she would never have made so bold an avowal if, with every passing moment, she had not become more and more convinced of the entire innocence of Keene, however black might, nay must, be the case the Secret Service, as represented by Longfield, had piled up against him.

She had never seen Longfield so agi-

tated and so angry. She had not believed it possible that he could give way to such violent emotion. She liked him less than ever, and carefully drew away from him. One madman had taken her in his arms and kissed her. She would not suffer another to do so.

He burst out furiously:

"I thought before, that I fought Keene for the greatest of all stakes. I was mistaken. You are thrown into the balance. Platinum and the woman! I mean to have them both. Let him look to it! Good-by."

By the time Longfield took up the pursuit, Keene was well on his way to Bay San Juan. The engineer, in a swift automobile, had been able to catch the early morning newspaper express at a station far up the line. He had succeeded in concealing his movements perfectly. Longfield, however, was not worried by his disappearance. He was sure that Keene would remember where he had concealed the platinum, and supposed that his delay in disposing of it had risen from some difficulty in the negotiations.

At any rate, the discoveries of the past few hours would precipitate matters, and Longfield had no doubt that, if he could get to the place whence the woman had witnessed the fight, he would there find Keene and the platinum. Barbara LeMoyné had not told him where that place was, but he knew where he had met her, and she was, he reasoned, a person of sufficient importance for him easily to find where she had camped and possibly some of the men who had guided or otherwise served her. With that knowledge, the rest would be easy.

He summoned half a dozen trusted assistants, gave them explicit instructions, and they all boarded the same train that afternoon. They were suitably disguised, got on the train separately, did not recognize one another, and debarked at stations before and after the one nearest that for Bay San Juan. Their movements, by Longfield's direction, were ex-

ceedingly circumspect. Longfield, in view of the emergency, had ventured upon the risky act of chartering a special engine and car, and had preceded them up the line.

When they arrived at the rendezvous, they found him awaiting them with weapons, two automobiles, and one Dempsey, a deputy sheriff, whose services he had enlisted. Dempsey had been one of Miss LeMoyné's party. He had heard her account and had joined in the search for the missing Keene on that day of battle. Dempsey was told that Longfield was an agent of the U. S. Secret Service, and papers were exhibited that appeared to substantiate the claim that he was on the trail of a dangerous enemy of the government, a traitor and a German sympathizer. Dempsey was asked, as an officer of the law, to assist in thwarting the plan and capturing the man. Longfield declared that he would swear out a warrant against the accused for the murder of the Malays, and that the rest would be easy.

He so inflamed the mind of the honest, if not very bright, official, that Dempsey was ready for anything. He offered to organize a posse, but Longfield declared this was not necessary, as he had available certain deputies of his own whom he had brought with him. Dempsey guided them to the place of Miss LeMoyné's camp, which they reached late at night, and offered at once to lead them to the scene of the encounter, which was several miles away.

Now, Longfield had also discovered from the station agent that Keene had preceded him, that he had inquired the way to Bay San Juan, that he had purchased a few supplies, and had ridden off alone that morning on a horse hired from the local livery stable.

Longfield knew that Keene had brought off and concealed over six thousand pounds of the precious metal. He could not carry it alone. He could not even get it ready for transportation by others

in a day; therefore Longfield decided to wait until morning before seeking further. Unless Keene had chartered a boat, he would have to come back by way of the camp. Hence it would be impossible for him to escape. Carefully apportioning the watches for the night, Longfield turned in and went to sleep, confident that the next day would see the end of Keene and the beginning of the end of Barbara LeMoyné, though he did not put it exactly in that way.

Keene did just what Longfield had conjectured he would do. He went on alone to look over the ground, before doing anything else. He had no idea that Longfield was in the vicinity. He did not for a moment believe that Barbara had given Longfield any clue. He felt perfectly safe.

It was with the strangest feeling that he drew rein on the little plateau whence she had come to his assistance. It well indicates his feelings that he thus at first identified it, rather than by the battle he had fought. As he surveyed the clearing, it all came back to him. There he had stood when Po-Yanpen had made that furious lunge. There he had grappled with Wan-Aman. Over that cliff, he had thrust the Malay. He stepped to the edge and peered over.

A tree growing far below him, near the water's edge, had been uprooted in some autumn storm. Amid its roots he saw the skeleton of one of the Malays—Po-Yanpen himself, or Wan-Aman possibly—which had lodged there and had been hidden by the tree. Held there by the tree's roots, it had not gone out to sea with the rest. If the old tree had not blown down, the body might have remained concealed until it moldered away. Some of the bright cloth of the jacket, a part of the shining sarong, a faded handkerchief, caught on the branches, told their tale. He turned away to pleasanter things.

There he had fallen, only to awake in her arms, so white against the heavenly

blue above him. There under that tree she had dragged him before she left him. He recalled how he had looked and listened. Down that hill he had crawled to the boat. Upon that azure sea he had been borne away.

As he stared seaward, he gave thought to young Seymour, who had shared all his dangers, who had backed him up with youthful energy and enthusiasm in the long journey from Baku to within a few days sail of that bay and shallow river below him. If it had not been for the devoted comradeship and loyal support of Seymour, scarcely more than a boy, even he could not have passed through all the dangers. In keeping watch over white men and brown men and yellow men, strangers all, they had divided the time. If Seymour had not broken down at last, at the close of the long voyage across the Pacific, almost in sight of the goal, with success practically within their grasp, Po-Yanpen would never have dared attack him. He would never have met Barbara. Young Seymour's life seemed to be another of those wondrous ties that bound together the man and the woman. And now he slept peacefully, far below the tossing waves, beyond the far horizon.

Longfield? He lifted his head and laughed at the thought of him, not mirthfully, but in scorn. As he did so, his eyes fell upon the open crest of the over-looking hill not far away—just out of earshot, he noticed, as he remembered how she had called to warn him and in vain. She must have stood there. He stared up at it and laughed again, but differently, this time, in sheer gladness of heart. He would go up there later. He would stand where she had stood. He would kiss the spot her feet had hallowed.

A traitor, he? His brow clouded at the accusation. He had brought that platinum across the world for the United States. Why had he hidden it? For safety, its safety and his own. He knew

he had been under surveillance, that German spies were everywhere, that he had narrowly escaped a thousand dangers, that it was one thing to bring the platinum to the shore and another to deliver it. Besides, he wanted the pleasure of giving it in his own way. He had no bargains to make. The government could have it for whatever it chose to pay, or for nothing, after he had led its agents to the place of concealment and had said: "There it is, take it." Of course, now that Seymour was dead, he felt morally bound to see that the boy's old mother back East got something out of it.

As for himself, he did not care. To do the thing was reward enough. At least, he had not cared until he discovered he loved Barbara LeMoynes. She was rich, not fabulously, but sufficiently so for luxurious independence. He would have liked to match fortunes with her before seeking her hand. As it was, he was almost at the end of his resources. He had spent his money freely, the savings of years, in that dash from Russia to California, and now it was practically all gone.

Besides, what did it matter. If she loved him in the end, as he determined she should, she would be as superbly indifferent to any such disparity as he was. Love was all. Let her give him that, and for interest on the obligation he would return her—the world.

His memory returned to him completely. He plunged into the forest path, penetrated its deep recesses unerringly, marveling that he had ever forgotten, until he stopped before the vine-covered mouth of the cave, or niche, in the rocks, upon which he had chanced and in which he concealed his treasure. With hand that trembled a little, he quickly lifted the vines so as not to break the screen and peered within.

It was there!

Six thousand pounds of platinum for the American government!

VII

BACK in San Francisco, the wires were calling Longfield, and in vain. He had left the station up the road and had given no address, the agent said, when the cabalistic messages had been relayed to Bay San Juan with frantic appeals for instant delivery at any cost from obviously anxious senders. There they lay in the station awaiting his return.

Other wires came from the East, not the orient, but the Atlantic side of the continent. And after reading one of them, a quiet, soft-voiced, unobtrusive man named Stevens called upon Miss Barbara LeMoynes. He narrated little of his plan or purpose, or even of his desire. He showed her abundant evidence, however, to establish himself in her good graces. When he asked her questions afterward, she answered fully and gladly, withholding nothing. He was well satisfied, apparently, with what he learned, for he thanked her warmly as he turned to go. Her last words checked him.

"Mr. Longfield told me that he, too, was in the Secret Service of his government. I think he must have gone to Bay San Juan. If you find him, I have no doubt you can count upon his giving you every assistance."

She remembered afterward how the man's face had changed as he stood listening to her parting words. His lips straightened under the sudden compression of his jaws, his eyes flashed. But when he spoke, it was in the same smooth, easy, pleasant, even gentle, way she had noted.

"Quite so. He told you that, did he? Well, it's quite true. On government service! I should dearly love to meet him, and I expect to do so."

Before he left the room, she called to him:

"I've told you everything?"

"Yes."

"Tell me one thing in return."

"If it does not run counter to my duty."

"Do you think Mr. Keene is an enemy, a traitor, as Mr. Longfield asserts?"

"Dear Miss LeMoyné, I rarely 'assert' anything myself. It's dangerous, in my work."

"You mean?"

"Evidence is the only thing that counts, and without it one is so apt to be—ah—mistaken."

Her face lighted. She could not help it. He stared at her, his eyes twinkling.

"Pardon me the liberty," he said gently, turning through the open doorway, "but, for your sake, I hope not."

And with that somewhat enigmatical remark, he was gone. What did he mean? He had smiled as he vanished from her sight. Somehow she took comfort from the fact. And she needed comfort, for she could not escape the conviction that she was not playing fairly. She was inclining more and more to one side; was it the right side? To one man; was he the right man? She had something to do herself, she decided. And for her, to decide was to act. She rose and called her maid.

There must have been some fatality about the place where Keene spent the night, that little open plateau by the cliff overlooking the river where he had been caught napping before. For when he opened his eyes in the morning it was to gaze into no woman's face, but to see Longfield, who had indeed kicked him roughly out of sleep and now stood over him, gun in hand.

"Get up. Got you at last," he said harshly.

Keene, covered by the pistol, arose, got on one knee, and then, with a scientific football tackle as vigorous as it was sudden, he bowled Longfield over like a stricken tenpin.

As the latter went down, for the tackle was clean and low and hard, his pistol went off harmlessly and he called loudly for help. He was no mean antagonist,

but Keene was a year or two younger and as hard as nails. Longfield was a bit soft, and the life he had lived had not been so clean. The two, battling desperately, rolled over and over in the clearing, but youth was finally served. Longfield lay panting and exhausted, at the mercy of his conqueror. Now, as he knelt upon him, his hand on his enemy's throat, Keene was at a loss what to do with him.

He finally disarmed him, and having possessed himself of both weapons, Longfield's and his own, he rose to his feet and allowed the man he had just mastered to sit up.

"You nearly had me that time," he said coolly, "but it takes more than one German blackguard to get me."

"What do you mean?" roared Longfield furiously.

"I mean what I say. You're one of the brutal, blood-thirsty, sneaking gang of traitors that's been hounding me since I left Baku. I thought I'd shaken them off, but you're worse than all the others."

"I am in the Secret Service," said Longfield quickly.

"Doubtless, but of Germany."

"Lies, lies," protested the man.

"Truth!" said the American imper-turbably. "I suspected it at the club. The way you looked at that poor mess boy, the way you speak certain vowels, the mouthing to which you give way. Why, you almost said 'haus-frau' the other night! You actually went away from that dinner party humming 'Heiden-Roslein.' I traced you to the closed saloon of one of the most notorious enemy aliens on the coast. I intend to give you up as soon as I've delivered the platinum to the government. That's what you are after, I suppose."

"That and the woman," returned Longfield insolently.

"You'll never get either."

"I mean to have both."

Longfield had his back to the bay and river toward which Keene's face was

turned. Longfield, who had got up before the others that morning and had gone to the overlooking hill, had seen Keene, still asleep, below him under the trees. He could not resist the temptation to take him alone. Although his attempt had resulted so disastrously, he knew that his men, under Dempsey's guidance, would soon find him. Indeed, he saw them creeping through the trees, and he backed up his insolent rejoinder by leaping at Keene, despite the other man's gun. The struggle was a brief one. Before Keene's superior strength and skill could be used, Dempsey and the six accomplices of Longfield had seized him, disarmed him, and freed Longfield.

The latter was first to speak.

"Sheriff," he exclaimed in triumph, "I accuse this man of the murder of certain harmless and inoffensive Malays, one in particular named Po-Yanpen! This is his dagger," he continued, showing the weapon he had stolen from Barbara Le-Moyne's desk, unnoticed by her, two days before.

"I seen it afore," said Dempsey.

"And there is the body of the poor man," continued Longfield, who had caught a glimpse below of the hideous thing tangled up in the fallen tree by the water's edge.

"Stranger," said the deputy sheriff grimly, laying his hand on Keene's shoulder, "I guess you're caught with the goods. It'll be jail for you."

"And I accuse him of being a traitor to the United States Government in bringing into this country and concealing hereabouts a quantity of platinum with intent to sell it to Germany," went on Longfield in relentless triumph.

Things were coming his way; he held all the cards in his hand. He would be a fool indeed did he fail to play them.

"Didn't know nothin' 'bout that platinum stuff," said the deputy sheriff easily. "Murder's enough. It's a hangin' matter hereabouts; sometimes a trial's made un-

necessary," he added gloomily. "The boys frequently takes matters in their own hands."

"Exactly," said Longfield. He turned to Keene. "You see?" he asked.

"You damned scoundrel!" burst out the other, whereat Longfield laughed scornfully. Keene turned to Dempsey. "Who are you?" he demanded.

"I'm the deputy sheriff for this county, mister."

"Have you a warrant for my arrest?"

"This is warrant enough, I reckon," said Dempsey, tapping his pistol.

"You're making the mistake of your life in arresting me. I'm neither a murderer nor a traitor."

"The court and the jury'll have to settle that," answered Dempsey unconcernedly.

"There's the liar, the traitor," Keene went on passionately. "I accuse him of being a German spy. Longfield! I'll bet my life against a nickel his name is Langfeld."

"Von Langfeld, if you please," interposed the other boldly.

"There!" exclaimed Keene instantly. "Look, sheriff, how the others are closing about you. They've got the drop on you already."

"He said he was in the Secret Service of the government," began Dempsey uncertainly.

"And so I am, but of the German government," admitted Longfield, or von Langfeld, to give him his proper name.

"Hell!" exclaimed Dempsey, reaching for his gun.

Before he could draw it, the others seized him. And before they finished, both men were bound and helpless.

"Now," said von Langfeld, "you've led us a long chase and given us a hard fight, Keene. But we're at the end of the road. You and this damned fool here have got mighty few minutes to live unless you do what I say, and do it quick." All the veneer of civilization fell from him, and he stood revealed for what he was.

"Stranger, I reckon here's where we cash in," said Dempsey. "I axes your pardon for bein' sech a fool."

"Yes, you do, unless—"

Von Langfeld paused and looked at the two bound men.

"Unless what?" asked Dempsey, Keene disdaining to speak, knowing that neither he nor any other man of honor could accept any proposition the German would make.

"Unless Keene tells me where the platinum is and confesses in writing that he is a traitor."

"And what'll you do with his confession?" asked Dempsey.

"Show it to Miss LeMoyne," answered von Langfeld.

"Well, what's the answer?" continued the sheriff, looking at his fellow prisoner.

"What would your reply be?" asked Keene in turn, smiling a little.

"See him damned first."

"Exactly. We are agreed."

Von Langfeld swore savagely, reached forward and struck Keene heavily across the mouth.

VII.

WHEN Barbara LeMoyne descended from the sleeping car at Bay San Juan station that morning, and confronted the quiet little man with whom she had conversed the day before, and who had come up on the same train, it would be hard to say which was the more astonished. The two stared at each other until the man broke the silence.

"Miss LeMoyne, what are you doing here!" he asked severely. "This is no game for a woman."

"Not when she is the stake for which men play?"

"Ah, I see," he added reflectively.

"And, now that I am here I mean to help—" She paused.

"Whom?" he asked.

"You."

"Good!" said the little man, who had shrewdly appraised her. "This war has taught us that women are absolutely to be depended upon. I have learned during the night that the man I am after came here."

"Mr. Keene?"

"Certainly, and others perhaps. Now I want to get to the place where you saw that battle of which you told me. And if I can get a good man to guide me, and perhaps help me, so much the better."

"I can guide you myself. I know every foot of the way."

"You could be of no help in—"

"Could I not? Try me."

"By Heaven, I will. Let us get some horses and go. Are you ready? Speed is imperative."

"I'll be ready when the horses are, Mr. Stevens," she answered, turning toward the rude hotel across from the station. "If you can get hold of a man named Dempsey, tell him Miss LeMoyne wants him."

As they mounted the horses, the man told the woman that Dempsey had gone away the day before with Longfield, into the wilderness, no one knew where.

And that was how and why the woman, looking down from the bare hilltop as she had done a few months before, saw Keene assaulted a second time. Only now it was no savage, uncivilized Malay who sought to stab, but Longfield who struck him, bound and helpless.

But this time Barbara LeMoyne did not scream as she had done before. She watched Keene reel under the blow which he could not return, and noted with thankfulness that it was not repeated. She saw the cowardly assailant turn away. Her eyes were opened at last. She could almost rejoice over what she saw, save for Keene's sake. It had enlightened her. She knew now which was true man, which was traitor, and which she loved. She looked at the man at her side. He, too, had seen, of course,

but he did not seem so much surprised as indignant.

"It was to be expected," he said in answer to her look. "German spies behave worse than that as a rule."

"German spies! Is he—oh, thank God!" she burst out brokenly.

The man comprehended instantly what was back of her ejaculations.

"Time enough to thank God when we've got him," was his practical comment.

"And Mr. Keene?"

"I'm not altogether sure of him yet, Miss LeMoyne, but it doesn't look as if he stood in with that gang any too well," was his cautious yet reassuring answer.

She faced him with indignation, but he stopped her with upraised hand.

"No time for argument. Whether its a case of villains falling out or not, we've got to get that scoundrel Longfield."

"You'll find that Mr. Keene—"

"We've got to release him, too. I had no idea that Longfield had brought a gang with him, but I can't wait to assemble a posse. We must deal with the situation ourselves. Look yonder!" he exclaimed.

He pointed far out to sea and then drew a small three-power glass from his pocket, focussed it swiftly, and after one look handed it to her. She soon made out a stout motorboat coming up the coast at a rapid rate in the smooth seas.

"He's planned everything," continued the man. "That'll be his boat. They mean to get the—"

"Platinum," she interposed, as he hesitated.

"How'd you know? No matter. We've got to stop 'em now. I wish you were a man."

"They are seven against us two," she said swiftly. "We'll have to try to trick them. Perhaps you'll find a woman's wit will serve. Listen."

Rapidly she outlined her plan while he listened, his face lighting.

"Good," he said. "We'll try it. Are you armed?"

For answer, she handed him her pistol, a small but serviceable automatic, which she drew from her jacket pocket. In that brief interval at the hotel, while he got the horses, she had dressed herself for riding. She wore just what she had worn before when she had plunged down the hill to help Keene the first time. She threw back her jacket as Stevens took the pistol, and disclosed a small sheath-knife at her belt.

"This will be all I need; you keep the pistol," she said simply.

"Miss LeMoyne, I take off my hat to you," said Stevens admiringly. "You're better than a man in this situation. Good luck to you. I'll do my part, never fear."

She nodded to him, thrilling a little that she had won his praise—his commendation was well worth having, she had come to believe—and then she mounted and rode down the familiar trail toward the clearing and the two men to whom she meant so much. Stevens watched her until she had disappeared. He waited for a time as agreed upon, and then he went straight down the hill afoot over places impossible for a horse, moving slowly and with great caution as he drew near to the open.

"Do you see that fire?" asked von Langfeld, pointing to a heap of blazing brush his men had piled up at the foot of a tree and had just lighted. He did not wait for an answer, which would not have been given in any case, but went on: "When it gets a better start, we're going to warm your feet a little this cold morning to stimulate your recollection of the place where you hid the stuff."

"I know perfectly well where it is now, you dog," snarled out Keene.

"Where? Better tell me quick, unless you have a fancy to go lame for the rest of your short life."

"Where you'll never find it, you sneaking spy!"

Von Langfeld rushed toward him ferociously, his hand upraised for another blow, his face white with passion; for Keene, who had no hope of rescue, had counted upon a swift end by provoking him to murderous assault. Anything, he thought, would be better than the slow torture of fire.

"Why don't you kill the traitor and have done with him?" broke in Barbara LeMoyné at the instant. The German stopped his rush and whirled about, his hand on his pistol. "It's only I," she went on, smiling at him as she spoke. "Oh, I'm so glad to find you! The Secret Service men are after—Mr. Keene—" Von Langfeld did not catch the pause, nor, for that matter, did Keene, who was listening as if distraught at this evidence that the woman he loved had decided against him. "I came up here to warn you. I knew you wanted to have the glory of catching him yourself," she went on hurriedly.

"Where are those Secret Service men?" asked von Langfeld, looking about him anxiously.

"I don't know. They didn't come with me."

"But you may have been followed. It is most serious!"

"Nobody followed me," she protested, as if the matter were of no moment. "Come and help me down."

Reluctantly, for her presence somehow seemed unaccountably threatening, he lifted her from her horse and set her on her feet. Keene said nothing. In his heart was wonder, despair, pity too deep for words. She did not look at him.

Dempsey intervened.

"Miss LeMoyné," he began, "you know me. I'm true American all through. That man you're talkin' to is a damned traitor, an' a thief to boot. Keene's o. k."

"Once I too thought Mr. Keene was a true American," she said gravely.

"I'm sorry to see you in such bad company, Dempsey."

This was too much for Dempsey. He shut up like Keene. The woman went on:

"Why don't we go, Mr. Longfield, now that you've got him?"

"The platinum," he answered. "He won't tell where it is."

"Why don't your men search for it, then? It must be hereabouts. They came down that path, I remember," she said, pointing into the forest.

Keene gritted his teeth together. There was no doubt as to the genuineness of her disbelief in him. She was playing into von Langfeld's hands in every way. He opened his mouth to protest—and then stopped. Suppose he could convince her that von Langfeld was a villain, in what terrible danger would she not be plunged by that discovery? What might not the German do to her? He turned to Dempsey and whispered his thought, whereat the sheriff nodded and also refrained from speech. If he came out alive, he could convince her; if he died, it would not matter to him. Yet he would have died gladly to warn her.

"A good, an excellent idea!" exclaimed von Langfeld. "Two of you watch the prisoners, two of you follow the trail yonder and see where it leads. One of you tend the fire and you"—he pointed at the last—"go down to the river and see if the boat is coming."

As the men hastened to follow these directions their chief turned to Barbara.

"You promised me, after I had caught him—"

"Yes, I did," she answered promptly.

"Well, then—"

He made a step toward her. As in sudden timidity or bashfulness, she stepped hastily backward. She was between him and the two prisoners. Dempsey was reclining against a rock. Keene was standing erect. Each was securely bound as to hands and merely hobbled as to feet. Two disarmed men

amid half a dozen enemies did not require extra lashings. They could never release themselves unaided. The two men told off to guard the prisoners were behind Von Langfeld. The others were already moving away according to orders. Barbara backed close to Keene, who was nearest her.

"Not now, not before—" she cried, with well simulated reluctance. As she spoke, she put her hands behind her.

Keene was almost blind with rage. What was Von Langfeld about? Dempsey had no such reason to obscure his vision and cloud his judgment. He saw the flash of a knife in the girl's hands and he straightened up and touched Keene quickly with his foot, the loose lashing giving him a certain freedom of motion.

Instantly Keene understood. His hands were in front of him, his arms held to his side by his own waist belt, which had been buckled about them. His fingers closed over the knife. And which was the more precious to him, the weapon or the knowledge that she knew the truth, he could scarcely say.

She smiled at Von Langfeld as she released the knife. He thought the smile was for him and, stepping forward, caught her in his arms. The men behind him turned away with a consideration begotten perhaps of the thought that their master might not care to have his love making observed.

"Now!" cried Von Langfeld as he drew her to him, finding her strangely yielding to his embrace. She had surrendered herself to Keene's embrace a few nights before, but this yielding was different. Then it was spontaneous, despite herself; this was calculation. "Before them all," continued Von Langfeld, bending to kiss her and thinking how doubly sweet would be that kiss with Keene looking on.

But betwixt lip and lip there is many a slip, as he was to learn. With incredible quickness and equal courage, Barbara,

with her free hand whipped out the pistol from the holster of the utterly unsuspecting German, and, pressing the barrel hard into his stomach as she did so, cried out:

"Hands up!"

It would have been better if she had pressed the trigger without a word. For a moment he stood motionless. Keene had cut Dempsey's bonds, and the sheriff had seized the knife and done him the same service. As Keene stooped to cut his feet free, he heard Barbara's triumphant cry. So did Von Langfeld's other men. They turned. But before they could draw a weapon, Stevens' pistol got the first. He stepped out from behind a tree and covered the others. At the same time, he threw Barbara's pistol to Dempsey, and the three remaining Germans being helpless, Barbara stepped back and handed Von Langfeld's pistol to Keene.

Before he could take it, the big German awoke to action. The game was not lost; there were two men still with him. Two were running back toward him down the path; the man going down to the shore had stopped and turned at the sound of the shot. They were, or soon would be, six to three and one woman. Von Langfeld was a two-gun man. He took advantage of the second in which Keene permitted himself to look at Barbara to spring back and sideways.

"For the Fatherland!" he shouted, drawing his second weapon. "I'll get you, anyway!" He leveled his pistol at Keene and pressed the trigger.

The girl, first of all, sensed the danger. She threw herself before the man she loved and was shot down. Then Keene went mad. The rage of the old berserker overcame him. He dropped the pistol and sprang at Von Langfeld.

The latter, unnerved because to him had come in a flash the awful conviction that he had killed the woman he loved, as much as it was in him to love anyone, hastily fired at the man leaping upon him

like a raging tiger. He had no time to decide whether or not he had scored a hit before Keene seized him. In his mad fury the American could have torn him limb from limb. He lifted him up in the air bodily. Von Langfeld struggled furiously. He saw death at hand. He might as successfully have coped with the wild passion of the American as a leaf might withstand the hurricane. For one second he cursed, he prayed, and then he fell. Through the air he hurtled, over the cliff he drove, to join Wan-Aman and Po-Yanpen.

Keene did not wait to see him fall; he did not hear him crash and break on the rocks below. He did not take any further part in the fierce battle by which Dempsey and Stevens presently got the better of the remaining spies as they came on. The bullets whistled about him unheeded

as he knelt down and raised the woman he loved.

The old situation was reversed. He sought to do for her what she had done for him. With nervous hands he tore away her dress. The wound was in her shoulder. It was not fatal, not even dangerous. She had fainted after that instinctive movement to shield him. His caresses, as potent as the spirit she had once used, called her back to life and love in his arms.

"I doubted you," he whispered. "God forgive me, I doubted you."

"It was you all the time, didn't you know, didn't you feel?" she made answer, her soul in her gaze.

And once again she gave back his kisses, not so hard as those in the garden, as he pressed his White Treasure to his heart.



GRAY WALLS

By Mary Morsell

"SOMEWHERE there is a land unhemmed by walls,
 A place of vast free spaces where the sea
 Laughs in the sun, and every white ship calls,
 'Come, rove with us, for we alone are free.'"
 You spoke, and then I followed after you,
 Stumbled along a thousand rock-strewn ways,
 Journeyed by starlight and in morning dew
 Till wearily, and after endless days
 We saw across the hilltops to a land
 Of boundless vistas, looking toward the sea—
 A place with no engirdling walls on either hand
 To hem love in, nor make man less than free.
 We hastened, joyous, to our paradise,
 But scarcely had we claimed it as our own
 When, from the silent valleys, seemed to rise
 The same gray walls that we had always known.

LIVE STORIES AND THE GOLDEN KEY

THERE was once a man who lived in a valley—a pretty valley, but there was no creek in it, and the man was lonely for the sound of running water.

Then the man said:

"I shall go up to the top of the hill and dig a well and draw water therefrom and pour it onto the hillside so it will run down and form a creek in my valley."

And he did so.

Very soon a little stream went leaping and shouting down the hill, and clapped its hands at sight of the pretty valley and crooned, softly, to itself.

The man saw and heard and was greatly pleased. Then he said:

"Now, I shall go down into my valley and enjoy the rivulet I have made."

And he went down.

When he had descended and stood in the valley the stream had disappeared.

He forgot, you see, that the stream was of his making, and could last only while he drew water from the well and poured it out onto the hillside.

You say he was a very foolish man.

No doubt. Still, you must know many very foolish men who conduct their business with no more wisdom than the man in the valley showed in making a creek.

Don't you know men who started their business with a rush, gained a certain speed, and then sat back to hear things hum?

Generally they fall asleep and awaken to find there is no stream flowing through the valley.

The editors of LIVE STORIES know nothing of any business, except the making of a magazine.

Maybe, they don't know much about that.

One thing, however, they know:

If the stream is to go on running delightfully through the valley, the water must, forever and ceaselessly, be drawn from the well and poured out on the hillside.

This, at least, the editors of LIVE STORIES know.

It is to this they are bending every effort and giving constant attention.

They are not satisfied. They will never be satisfied.

The *last word* is so difficult to reach! The *last word*? Silently, steadily, it removes itself farther and farther as the weary pursuit goes on.

But you, they want to please. They want, at least, with each issue, to come nearer to pleasing you.

In this task, they need *your* aid.

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