ALL STORIES COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

TELLING TALES

April
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Leigh Gordon Giltner
Du Vernet Rabell

THE ENCHANTED KISS

With violets and champagne and electricity to help, he dared to kiss her—there in that Spanish-built town on the border, where the color of the Mexican has fired the cold courage of the Anglo-Saxon to a spirit of love and adventure—where men kill and women kiss on the jump. There this sly young man kissed the beautiful girl—and later, carefully dressed in an elaborate wrapper with her little bare feet in white swansdown slippers, she waited for him to come. And when he did, just by accident she turned the light the wrong way. A laugh, a whiff of heliotrope, a groping little hand on his arm. What he did was the last thing you'd expect. Read this story and you will know why they call

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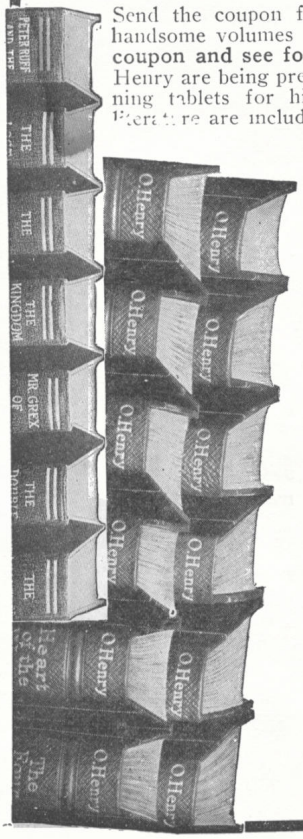

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VOL. VII. APRIL, 1921

TELLING TALES

A Magazine of Distinctive Fiction

CONTENTS

Telling Tales for May

Du Vernet Rabell

whose stories and novels are so widely and favorably known to the readers of America and England, is the author of

"PANDORA'S BOX"

the sparkling and intriguing novelette, which is an outstanding feature of the May number.

Other noteworthy contributions from
Robert W. Sneddon, Rothvin Wallace, Thomas Edgelow, Sandra Alexander, T. L. Sappington, H. Bedford-Jones,
and a prize one-act play,
"IN THAT DARKEST HOUR"
by
Frances Pemberton Spencer
will make the May TELLING TALES notable among American Magazines.

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

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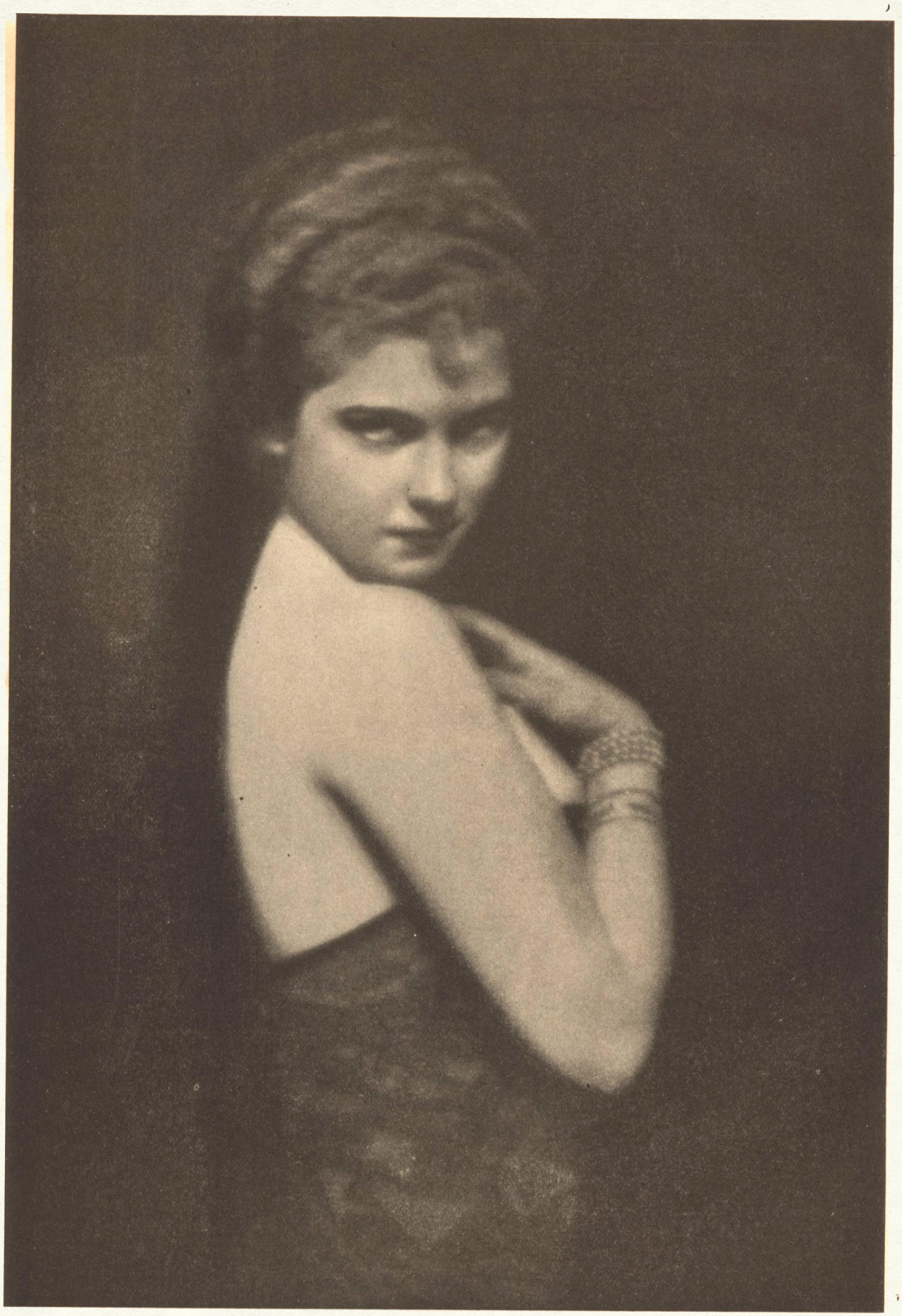
Portrait by Edward Thayer Monroe

Adrienne Dore—soon to appear on Broadway

Portrait by Edward Thayer Monroe

Constance Binney—"Realart Star"



Portrait by Edward Thayer Monroe

Lilyan Tashman in "The Gold Diggers"

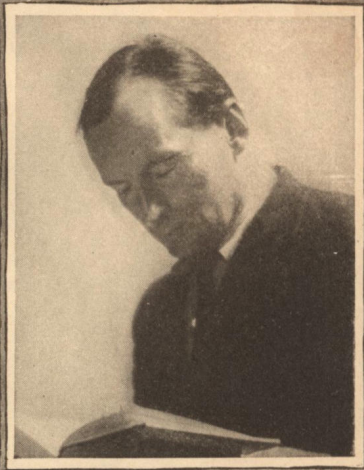
Violet Heming—a new portrait by Rayhuff

Portrait by Edward Thayer Monroe

Peggy Hyland—now in Egypt with the films—
shortly to return to America

CLOSE-UPS OF THE WISE AND OTHERWISE

"Personality Plus" Portraiture. Edward Thayer Monroe, though one of the newest of the new school of photography, already enjoys a most enviable reputation.



The man who made poetry profitable. Harry Kemp, the Hobo Poet, author of several successful books of verse, owner of a theater, and leader of the "never-wear-a-hat" cult.—Photo by Robert Edwards.

Presidential flapjack frier. Delefosse Green, chef of the Presidential private car under the Wilson régime, now a private citizen once again. — Wide World photo.

Controller of the Traffic. Officer D. J. O'Leary for many years has directed the traffic at the three-way crossing of 11th Street and Greenwich and 7th Avenues, with never an accident.

Whittling as a fine art. George W. Lockwood has made wood-carving a hobby, and a plain stick of wood, touched by the magic of his jackknife, quickly becomes a work of art.—Wide World photo.

POPULARITY

"THE most popular boy in school!" "The leader of his class in college!" "A fellow that everybody likes."

Nice things to have said about one, of course, but could we follow such a chap through fifty years of his life we probably would be more than a bit surprised to observe what becomes of him.

Popularity is one of the most dangerous rocks in the course of a man's life. In the first place, with a good many men, being popular takes up a lot of time that in the nature of things ought to be devoted to their business, and in the second place a fellow is very apt to try to buy popularity, not unfrequently with the firm's money. Of course popularity that is bought is not worth having, because it is not sincere, and popularity that costs nothing is generally worth just what it costs. Naturally it is nice to have everybody glad to see you, and make much of you when you come 'round, but remember, most of the nice things that are said about a man are said by the bereaved relatives and friends when they are gathered in the back parlor waiting for the minister to start the dear departed on his way to the cemetery. Even when the hero who saved the day comes back from the war and the people start cheering, it is not really the man they are cheering, but what he did.

Generally speaking, the safest way to estimate a man's worth is by the enemies he has made. His friends are apt to over-enthuse about any good points he may have and try to gloss over his shortcomings, but his enemies won't overlook any of his faults, and it is generally safe to deduct a little for their prejudices. Of course if they happen to say anything good about him it just goes double.

A town constable who made a hit with the tramps and bootleggers in his vicinity could not really be called an efficient peace officer, though a considerable share of the populace would no doubt vote him a good fellow. A man that is unpopular, providing he is unpopular with crooks and liars and cheap tin-horn sports and scalawags of that caliber, is pretty apt to be the sort of a man to tie to. Naturally a man like that would have been too busy attending to his own affairs to have devoted much time to the pretty parlor tricks that pass for breeding in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, but on the other hand he is apt to be so full of "breed"—the breed that means kinship with the man who fights for what he thinks right without counting the odds or considering the opinions of others—that he will assay just about one hundred per cent real man.

W. M. CLAYTON.

PRESS OF ISAAC GOLDMANN COMPANY, NEW YORK

Her Husband's Keeper?

By Leigh Gordon Giltner

The story of a woman who realized that infinite patience is the part—and price—of successful wifehood, and who showed herself too big to yield to the petty suspicions of little minds.

IT IS, of course, within the bounds of possibility that a stenographer may possess, along with arresting beauty, a working knowledge of her craft, but Ethel was not an exemplar of the fact. She had a Greuze face, the flesh tints of a Bouguereau nymph, and the eyes of a Correggio angel. But she couldn't spell; she regarded punctuation as a stupid superfluity, and her inaccuracy in dictation seemed almost inspired.

She had taken up stenography, not from any special aptitude or liking, but because she wanted more spending money, and more particularly because she regarded it as a stepping-stone to marriage. Having read that men are frequently captured by the women with whom they are thrown into contact in the business world, she sought an office position with an eminently eligible bachelor.

But though she vamped him into taking her without recommendation, he repented his rashness after a fortnight of her inefficiency to the extent of inventing a business trip to London to get rid of her. Aside from her general incompetence, matrimony was so patently Ethel's objective that young Van Vost's departure from his native shore had the precipitancy of a flight.

ETHEL'S next employer was not dazzled by her beauty. He was, for the nonce, too much obsessed with a growing infatuation for a lovely, if indiscreet, young matron to even see anyone else. (Also, he was married.) So, though Ethel tried upon him all her blandishments; though she pouted prettily and looked fetchingly helpless and appealing when he called her attention to her frequent errors, she realized she was wasting her efforts. He was as exacting with her as with Miss Wilkins, his

secretary, who was forty-two, flat-chested, spectacled and plain.

Qualters was, indeed, rather more patient than the average man of affairs; but when ultimately Ethel's carelessness in making quotations on an export shipment cost him infinite annoyance and a considerable loss, he felt it necessary to give her notice.

Ethel was surprised and indignant. She had fancied that the sunshine of her smile would offset the greatest blunder and she fairly hated Qualters for his indifference to its charm.

Like a majority of narrow-brained individuals, she was highly vindictive. So, despite Qualters' courtesy and forbearance, she determined to "spy him out." Guarded fragments of telephone conversations which she had characteristically eavesdropped gave her her cue.

THUS, during the remaining fortnight of her final month, she was on the alert. She used her eyes and ears to the best—or worst—advantage. She now seldom had occasion to enter Qualters' private office, but one day fortune favored her. Miss Wilkins was ill, and Qualters, perforce, summoned Ethel to take dictation, in the midst of which he was called to the outer office.

"Kindly wait here, Miss Blinn," he directed as he left the room. "I sha'n't be long."

"Great luck!" breathed Ethel gleefully as the door closed upon her employer.

Swiftly, yet systematicaly, she went through Qualters' desk, hurriedly turning over documents and letters, until at length she found what she sought—a large gray envelope directed in a dashing feminine script. Without hesitation or compunction, Ethel drew its enclosure forth and cast a swift glance over the few hurried lines. Then, with a triumphant smile, she slipped the letter into her pocket, replaced the envelope, closed the drawer and busied herself with her notes.

Five minutes later Qualters reentered, but merely to take his hat, gloves and stick and dismiss her with a pleasant:

"That will do for to-day, Miss Blinn. I'm going out for lunch and probably sha'n't be back till four. Finish the letters you've taken and put them on my desk. That's all."

"Yes, sir," Ethel responded meekly, but there was an ugly gleam of malicious triumph in her lowered eyes as she glided from the room.

THE young matron (she was scarcely more than a girl, despite her three years' wifehood) to whose presence Ethel's card with a scrawled line gained her instant admittance was, in her way, quite as lovely as Ethel herself. But it was a very different way. She was tall, slight and rather pale, with patrician features, the unmistakable look of race, and a smile so winning that, for a moment, Ethel wavered in her purpose. But only for a moment. Ethel's finer impulses were always fleeting.

Mrs. Qualters glanced at the card which she still held.

"You've an important message for me, I believe, Miss Blinn? Won't you sit down?"

Ethel, at first a trifle disconcerted by her surroundings and the other's absolute ease and poise, was fast recovering her wonted assurance. She smiled unpleasantly as she held out a folded sheet of thick gray note-paper, which Madelyn Qualters unsuspectingly took.

IF ETHEL, greedily watching her as her eyes swept swiftly over the few pregnant lines within, had expected dramatics or even any outward sign of devastating shock, she was disappointed. The other's poise was too perfect to be visibly shaken; she did not even start, though what she read was the crystallization of a secret fear which she had not allowed herself to recognize or admit. A slight accentuation of her wonted pallor alone gave token that the letter had, in the slightest degree, affected her. Her voice was quite steady when, after an instant, she spoke.

"There's some mistake, I think, Miss Blinn. This letter is not meant for me."

Ethel laughed, with a note of insolence which was quite lost upon the other woman.

"There's no mistake, Mrs. Qualters. I brought you that letter on purpose."

"It seems to me of a private nature. Just where did you get it, pray?"

Ethel's eyes wavered away from the wife's direct gaze.

"I—er—picked it up on the floor in your husband's office," she faltered unconvincingly, as she herself realized.

"Then why, may I ask, didn't you give it to him?"

Ethel shrugged.

"Because I felt you had a right to know. This thing's been going on since I went into the office and before. It's high time somebody put you wise. You ought to get a line on your hubby's little game. That's why I brought you the letter."

"Very thoughtful of you, I'm sure." Madelyn's voice was cold. "Most kind of you to have my interests so much at heart, particularly since you'd never met me." She glanced at her open desk. "A matter of compensation, I suppose?"

Ethel had the grace to flush.

"No. no!" she protested, "I don't want pay for doing another woman a good turn. That's not the idea."

MADELYN smiled faintly.

"Your disinterestedness does you credit, Miss Blinn," she appreciated. "I don't want to seem ungrateful, but isn't there, perhaps, just a little personal animus back of this—this kindness you've done me?"

"Well," Ethel admitted sullenly. "I've got it in for the boss, if that's what you mean. He never liked me from the start—always ragging me about my mistakes, and last week he fired me. I'm to leave at the end of the month."

"I see," Madelyn commented quietly. "And now," — she rose — "now that you've squared accounts with him, is there anything further?"

Ethel got to her feet—her face an angry crimson. She resented being thus summarily dismissed.

"Oh, all right, if you take it like that," she said huffily. "I thought you'd be interested."

"You were mistaken," Madelyn affirmed, still quietly, "I am not interested in the least."

"Well," flared Ethel, "that may be the proper society pose. But, in society or out of it, a woman's supposed to be interested in whether her husband is meeting other women on the side. If he was mine—"

"Since he isn't—?" Madelyn reminded, smiling ever so faintly.

"If he was my husband," Ethel swept on furiously, regardless alike of the interruption and the rules of English grammar, "I wouldn't sit still and let another woman take him away from me. And that's just what you're doing. But it's your affair, not mine. I've wised you, and it's up to you."

Without waiting for Madelyn to ring, she flounced into the corridor, closing the door emphatically behind her.

Love's Blasphemy

By HARRY KEMP

OUR love was Eden where we dwelt as one:
You were my moon by night, by day, my sun;
You were my pleasant fields, my groves, my trees,
And all that the soul knows or feels or sees:
You were my heaven, my life, my God, my All—
Small wonder that our Eden found its fall!

Because my dreams pursued you night and day,
Because what is not fit for Song to say
Of Woman, I sang of you, until you trod
My being with a height outreaching God,
Because, where'er I looked, your face was there,
And only you were glorious and fair,
And only you were kind and good and true—
God's punishment has banished me from you!

WHEN the unwelcome guest had gone, Madelyn stood for a long moment quite still; her whole organism seemed suspended; she scarcely seemed to breathe. At last she roused herself; glanced again at the letter she clutched semi-consciously; then slowly tore it into bits.

It did not require the bold signature (it was so like brainless Fleta to commit herself) to assure Madelyn of the writer's identity. She had not been blind, though she had pretended to be. And she had seen enough to make her anxious, though she fought desperately for her faith in her husband.

She knew Fleta Maybry well—a pretty, empty-headed butterfly—the sort of whom one says indulgently: "She's a bit indiscreet, yes—but there's no harm in her." Which was erroneous. Silly, vain little creature that she was, there were in Fleta's follies boundless potentialities for harm to herself and to innocent others.

Foolish she was, but nothing worse, Madelyn generously believed. And yet, impelled by her love of conquest and intrigued by the artistry of Cuthbert Qualters' love-making (the degree of which no one knew better than Madelyn), the little flirt was rashly jeopardizing her own happiness and that of another woman.

Madelyn stood groping for her lines. She felt vaguely that there was something she must do or say; that she must act, take some step, try in some way to clutch the treasure that was hers but which was fast slipping from her grasp. . . . But nothing suggested itself. She was incapable of recrimination or scenes or spying. What was there that a woman in her unhappy position might, with dignity and decency, essay?

HER private telephone rang. Over the wire came her husband's voice stating blandly that a business conference would prevent his coming home for dinner or accompanying her to the Dexter musicale; but that he had asked his brother to drop in to dine with her and act as escort in his stead.

"Now! Now is your chance!" something seemed

to be saying to Madelyn as she listened. But, to her own surprise, she heard her own voice replying in quite its usual tone:

"Very well, Cuthbert. It's quite all right."

As she restored the receiver to its hook, she wondered why she had not spoken; though in her heart she knew the answer. To have let Cuthbert know that she was aware of his plans would have merely meant deferment and increased circumspection.

She had never felt so agonizingly impotent. As Ethel had said, she was sitting by and letting another woman take her husband from her without a struggle. Yet of such a struggle she felt herself, at the moment, incapable. She was in the undignified position of a wife whose husband's feet are turning toward the primrose path; and none of the expedients for staying them of which she had heard or read seemed efficacious. . . .

AGAIN the telephone rang. A hatefully familiar voice sounded in Madelyn's ear.

"This is Ethel Blinn," it said. "I just wanted to tell you that some of you society bugs are human after all. Of course I'm wise to who 'Fleta' is—overheard her telephone number one day when your husband called her, and made a note of it. I took a chance on her husband's coming home unexpectedly—they always do in novels and the movies, you know—so I called his office after I left you. Luck was with me. He'd just gotten in from Chi. I didn't go much into detail, but just advised him to drop in at Santley's around eight this evening if he wanted to get a line on his wife. He burnt up the wire, but I hung up. It's my opinion he's going to mix in in this. I'm telling you, seeing it's too late for you to warn your husband. 'Bye."

Before Ethel had quite finished, Madelyn had hung up. Her incertitude was at an end. She "saw her part" in a comedy-drama which might easily prove a tragedy.

Quite calmly she spoke to her maid.

"Fanny, have Walters bring the closed car round at once and tell Parker we're dining out."

WHILE the maid hastened to obey, Madelyn swiftly completed her toilet which Ethel's telephone had interrupted (the daily uses of life must still go on; we must dress and dine and talk small talk whatever our private pain) flung her wrap about her, caught up her gloves and hurried down stairs. The efficient Walters was already in waiting.

But as Madelyn emerged from the street door and hurried to the car, a boyish voice hailed her.

"Hello! I like this! Asked to dinner and find my hostess calmly driving off. A bit thick, I call it."

Frenzied with impatience though she was, Madelyn managed to echo the speaker's laugh.

"It's all right, Erne, dear," she said as casually as she might. "There's been a change of plan. Cuthbert finds he can go with us after all, and we're to meet him for dinner at Santley's. We're taking Mrs. Maybry, too."

"All right. Suits me," Ernest concurred agreeably as he took his place beside her. Madelyn thanked heaven that, with the unconscious egotism of youth, he proceeded to babble cheerfully of his own concerns, with only an occasional monosyllable from her—the while she was praying frantically that they might reach Santley's in time.

WHILE she liked to dance perilously near the brink of the abyss, Fleta Maybry flattered herself that she possessed sufficient poise to preclude the possibility of ever toppling over. She revelled in what she considered a harmless little flirtation, but never, until now, had her calculating nature and her regard for the conventions permitted her to take any chances.

Cuthbert Qualters' good looks and undeniable charm, his subtle wooer's artistry and perhaps a dash of *diablerie* in her own composition had combined to render her a trifle daring. For the first time, she had made, in her husband's absence, an appointment with another man. They were to dine at Santleys, a café not exactly questionable, though distinctly Bohemian; dance at Martigny's and, after that—

"Oh, well, I know my way about," she reflected inwardly. "I can take care of myself."

But now that she was actually at Santley's with Qualters just across the table, the affair began to take on a new and graver aspect. There was nothing particularly thrilling or adventurous about it. Two men whom they both knew had come in while she and Cuthbert were being seated, and she had caught the glance which passed between them. They had taken a neighboring table and, although her back was toward them, she could feel their eyes upon her. The hot blood rose in her cheek; she began to feel uncomfortable. Altogether the affair was less intriguing than she had anticipated. Cuthbert, too, seemed *distrait* and a trifle constrained. She felt suddenly cheap and vulgar and, as more people she knew drifted in, a little frightened.

CUTHBERT, on his part, had also begun to wonder why he had cared to bring Syd Maybry's wife to Santley's and run the chance of getting her unpleasantly discussed. He, too, had caught the interchange of glances as Welles and Ogden took

their seats, and he began to regret his rashness. He had the characteristic masculine regard for the conventions and the equally characteristic fear of the consequences of their violation, and he was heartily wishing himself elsewhere, when, chancing to raise his eyes, he was frozen into sudden immobility.

Coming straight toward him, with Ernest Qualters in her wake, was Madelyn. Shaking off the paralysis which enchained his limbs, he instinctively got to his feet and waited for an instant which seemed interminable. And in that instant he realized the degree of his folly. He was, for the moment, infatuated with Fleta Maybry; he was mad for her touch, for her kiss. But Madelyn! Why, Madelyn was his wife and he loved her with all the best of him.

Fleta's glance had followed his, and Fleta herself, her wonted nonchalance deserting her, was staring, ashen-faced, at Madelyn as though she were a wraith.

Consider the Oyster

Though he hath a big mouth, he speaketh no word, neither wasteth he his days in useless gadding, but stayeth in one place, and attendeth strictly to business.
And unto oysters cometh pearls.

MADELYN, her color a trifle brighter than its wont, advanced smiling, apparently unconscious that she was the cynosure of sundry eyes.

"How are you, Fleta?" she greeted gaily. "So sorry to be late. It was my fault, though—not Erne's; I'm always late, you know." She sank into the chair a waiter placed for her. Cuthbert, man of the world that he was, had begun to recover his poise, but Fleta was still a trifle pale and shaken.

"Have you ordered, Cuthbert?" Qualters dumbly shook his head.

"Then do. We're famished, aren't we, Erne?"

"Sure are," confirmed Ernest, whom the waiter had seated opposite.

Fleta was trying hard to get herself together and succeeding poorly. She tried to think of something to say, but her mind was a blank.

"Glad you decided to go with us to the musicale," Madelyn burbled on. Her eyes were darkly brilliant, her cheek vivid with unwonted color and her smile unwavering. "I knew you'd be moped to death in Syd's absence."

"Awfully good of you to ask me," murmured Fleta. "I should have been dreadfully dull alone."

CUTHBERT, glancing covertly at the neighboring table, was relieved to note the change in the expression of its occupants since Madelyn's entrance. For an instant, following her appearance, he had sickened with the inherent masculine horror of a scene, though he was quick to realize that scenes were scarcely within the range of his wife's possibilities. Whatever of reckoning or reprisal there might be would come later—and in private. He drew a long breath, grateful for even the briefest respite. Fleta, too, beginning to realize that nothing was going to happen—yet, was gradually recovering her composure.

The three of them, all under terrific nervous tension, inwardly blessed the unconscious Ernest, who, impervious to the electric quality of the situation, talked and ate cheerfully while they got themselves together.

MADELYN played up to him cleverly, though she could not keep her eyes from straying toward the entrance. She knew Sydney Maybry; he was a self-made man, of choleric temperament, without finer inhibitions or reserves. He was fond of scenic effects, the more vivid the better; he might even, in his blind, brute rage, based upon a preconception of his wife's indiscretion, do some desperate, rash thing, before he paused to verify the truth of Ethel's implication. He was of the type which shoots first and investigates afterward.

Realizing that her lips were blanched and that she was trembling perceptibly, Madelyn forced herself to give smiling attention to something Cuthbert was saying, but, in the midst of the story he was trying to tell, she was made aware of Maybry's entrance by the absolute petrifaction of her husband's face. He broke off abruptly; the smile froze on his lips; his eyes narrowed. The situation's potentialities for unpleasantness, for possible tragedy even, struck him with sudden stunning force.

WITH set jaw and smouldering eyes, Syd Maybry was standing just within the entrance, his questing gaze rapidly scanning the faces of the occupants of the various tables. Suddenly he caught sight of his wife (who had not seen him) and, regardless of the lordly *major domo,* strode straight toward her. It was not until he was quite near that he caught sight of Madelyn. He stopped short and stood glowering, baffled and uncertain of his ground. Instinctively Fleta turned and saw him. Her gasp was almost a shriek; she knew and had dreaded Sydney's jealous rages.

Again Madelyn saved the day. She held out a welcoming hand to Maybry.

"Why, how splendid, Syd!" she greeted cordially. "When did you get in?"

Sydney Maybry grunted something inarticulate.

"You'll join us, won't you?" Madelyn assumed. "We're taking Fleta on to the Dexter's musicale. I knew she'd be dreadfully dull without you."

MAYBRY looked dazed and a trifle foolish. To anticipate a rendezvous and chance upon an innocent family party is disconcerting, to say the least. Again he mumbled something, standing, fumbling awkwardly with his gloves. He was still in street dress, Madelyn noted.

"Do join us," she urged hospitably. The attentive waiter placed another chair. Not knowing what else to do, Maybry grudgingly dropped into it. "You'll go on to the musicale with us, won't you?"

Maybry shook his head with a glance at his tweeds.

"Not dressed," he offered rather shortly. "If Fleta doesn't mind, I'll take her home with me. Somebody's played a fool joke on me and it's upset me. I'm not in the mood for music."

"Oh, I don't mind; I'd quite as soon go home," Fleta said eagerly, "though I don't like to seem ungrateful for Madelyn's thought of me." As she spoke she glanced at Madelyn with sincerity and intention in her blue eyes.

Madelyn smiled back at her—a smile which set Fleta's wretched fears at rest.

"I'll take your gratitude for granted, Fleta," she said sweetly, "I understand."

I See By the Paper—

There's a whole lot of people on earth imbued with the notion that the world owes 'em a living, but who seem to think a beneficent Providence ought to supply bill-collectors also.

* * * * * *

It's no doubt true that poets are born, not made—but there will always be a good many common folk who can't understand why.

* * * * * *

It's well for every young fellow to reflect that the reason his girl never takes anything but a maple-nut sundae when he wants to blow her after the show may be because her dad provides pretty liberally for her other meals.

* * * * * *

If married life were just a succession of dinner and theater parties, and courtship an affair of early breakfasts, there'd be fewer divorces. But the ministers' incomes would suffer, too.

UNCLE SI.

FLETA drew a long sigh of relief. However Madelyn had found out about her affair with Cuthbert, she had proved herself a good sort and had certainly saved the day. Fleta was sure that with a few skilful fibs she could "square" Sydney, who, in the reaction from his very bad quarter of an hour, was becoming almost cordial.

"I dined on the Pullman," he was saying in answer to Cuthbert's eager hospitality, "but I'll have a demi-tasse, thanks. Don't let me hurry you, Fleta."

But Fleta's appetite, like that of the other two protagonists of the play staged for the benefit of Maybry and the other diners, was nil. The dinner, which Ernest alone had enjoyed, was shortly over. Both women smiled and talked animatedly as they left the place and the casual observer would never have suspected the existence of a seething volcano under Maybry's smiling surface cordiality which had nearly erupted.

"ALL right, Madelyn. Come on; let's get it over."

Cuthbert was trying with unsteady hands to light a cigarette. The ghastly evening was ended and they were at home at last. Throughout what had seemed to him endless aeons of meaningless babble and vexatious noise (Mrs. Dexter had provided for

her guest's enjoyment two Metropolitan artists and a harpist of international renown) Madelyn had seemed quite her usual self. He was divided between admiration of her histrionic ability and wonder as to how she had found out and what she meant to do. She had given no hint whatever as to what he might expect; but he did not delude himself with false hopes of immunity. He had really, in his own vernacular "run pretty straight" since his marriage until infatuation for Fleta had led him into a by-path; nevertheless, what he expected from Madelyn was justice, not mercy. She had probably saved his life; but that did not necessarily connote forgiveness.

MADELYN, who had thrown herself into a chair, with her evening-wrap falling away from about her, glanced up at him as one who fails, precisely, to understand.

"Oh, come now, Madelyn," he urged impatiently, "don't keep up the farce. I know you know everything—at that it's nothing so very incriminating. Still, I don't suppose that you'll ever believe that there was nothing wrong—"

Madelyn thoughtfully played with her string of pearls.

"I don't think I've accused you, Cuthbert," she reminded quietly.

"No; but somebody evidently tipped you off and you must have thought— At that you were a mighty good scout, Madelyn."

"At least," she said, still casually, "I was able to save the situation."

"You saved more than the situation," he assured her fervently. "Somebody had tipped off Maybry, too. There was murder in his eye and a mighty suspicious bulge in his right-hand coat pocket. Maybry's a fire-eater, and he'd never have given us the benefit of the doubt. I wonder if—if you do, Madelyn?"

"Does that matter?" Madelyn's voice was cold.

"It matters more than anything on earth, dear. I admit that I was infatuated with that little fool; but the moment I saw you I realized the difference. You're my wife, Madelyn, the woman I love. The other is—was—just a passing fancy. You're the real thing."

A WHIMSICAL smile touched his lips.

"Don't you know," he urged, "that a criminal is usually given credit for his past record? Mine's not so bad, I flatter myself. I'd run pretty straight since you married me until I fell for Fleta; at that I didn't fall very hard. I can't quite explain her attraction for me; it was purely physical at least. But I give you my word that there hasn't been and probably never would have been anything more than a flirtation between us. But I don't expect you to believe that or to pardon—"

"I'm not the censor of the public morals, Cuthbert—or of yours."

"You mean you don't care enough about me to mind?"

"I don't say that. But—I'm not my husband's keeper."

Cuthbert sprang up and stood before her, his face earnest, his eyes eager.

"That's where you're wrong, dear. You are—or should be. Because we're husband and wife, don't we belong for always? Oughtn't you to stick by me, in spite of my faults and try to keep me to the straight and narrow?"

MADELYN shook her head.

"If your affection for me isn't strong enough to make you run straight, Cuthbert, neither reasoning nor recrimination will. One can't coax—or nag—a faithless husband into fidelity."

"But," he protested eagerly, "I haven't been unfaithful, except in spirit. And this is my first and last excursion along the primrose path. It was just a passing fancy, a sort of—er—temporary aberration. It's over now. *I'm through!*"

A faint smile curved Madelyn's lips. She had learned things lately about the masculine temperament and the knowledge had not amplified her faith.

"Doubtless," she agreed, *"until next time."*

"There won't be any next time. I give you my word."

He had drawn nearer and was looking down at her with pleading in his fine eyes, but he did not presume to touch her.

"You're a good scout, Madelyn, and I don't deserve you and never did. But, by Jove, I'm going to try to! If you'll forgive me, I'll run straight from this time on. You'll see."

Infinite patience is the part—and price—of successful wifehood. Madelyn's smile was tolerant, if not altogether optimistic, as she held out her hand.

"Very well, dear," she said gently, "We'll see."

Two Voices

An unusually dramatic story of the underworld, which, if it carries any lesson at all, teaches that there is some good in the worst of us—and some weakness in the best.

By Henry Leverage

A SONG was rising up the dingy stairway of Stag Hotel Number Two. Old Dave had heard the same song seventeen years before. Now, hearing it again, he pulled out his "smoke-wagon" and stood rigid in the upper hall.

The "smoke-wagon" was a .44 calibre and weighed at least three pounds. Old Dave called it a merry whirl for five.

Even as he cocked the police-regulation revolver his mind went back to the Connover job, when he and another officer had burst into Connover's Bank, pounded upon a brass-grilled gate in vain, and heard *Ave Maria* sung by one of two thieves who made their getaway through a window prepared for just such a contingency.

Now the same voice was filling Stag Hotel Number Two with remembered melody—a lilting song as clear as that of a thrush.

Old Dave gumshoed his way to the first step leading downward, canted a grizzled ear, closed his lips to a firm, hard line, and began the descent.

He took his time because he believed he had his man. This man had gone down in police records as the singing burglar. Deafy Hunt, who was caught soon after the Connover Bank robbery, and who had on his person one half of the swag, refused to disclose the name of his partner in the crime.

Old Dave had plugged through seventeen years on a quiet search for Deafy's pal. Now the man was singing one floor lower down, and Old Dave had the only exit to the Stag Hotel covered with a gun.

A TORN piece of stair-carpet, one of those little things that thwart the best plans of detectives and crooks, caused Old Dave's foot to trip, strike against a board, and make a sound—almost imperceptible.

It was a warning, noticed and heeded instantly. The song stopped as if a hand had been laid over a mouth. Voices rose from the dim lobby of the Stag Hotel. Three men at a temperance bar turned like three quick cats and looked at Old Dave and his compelling "smoke-wagon."

"Get 'em up!" he growled and advanced upon these three men with the lunging stride of a surly bear.

Old Dave thrust his left arm, from wrist to elbow, before his face in a true gun-fighter's position, the leveled police-regulation revolver protruding menacingly across his sleeve.

"Elevate!" he snarled.

Old Dave's camera-eye flashed the features of the three men at the bar who, in the manner of gun-fighters themselves, took their time about lifting their hands.

There was a bartender back of the bar whom Old Dave knew slightly. This bartender did not enter into the detective's instructions to elevate.

The three patrons studied Dave's revolver with a hurt expression, shifted uneasily, lowered their hands an inch or more, then jerked them ceilingward when the detective's trigger-finger showed signs of contracting.

Old Dave, known sometimes as the Old Plug, finished his scrutiny of the three suspects, one of whom had sung *Ave Maria* in lilting measure.

TWO of the men were stout, short, clean-shaven and well-dressed. The man in the middle of the trio was different. He was super-dressed, and his poise, despite the indignity of keeping his hands above his head, was like a dancer's or a fencer's.

Old Dave jabbed his gun toward this man.

"What's *your* name?"

"Ray."

"Louder!"

"My name is Ray."

"Sing."

"What's that?"

"Damn you, sing! Sing anything! I think you're th' guy I'm lookin' for. You're Deafy's pal—who sang that *Ave Maria* song when you made a getaway from Connover's—more than fifteen years ago."

A puzzled smile creased the face of Dave's suspect. He looked to right and left and then stared at the revolver. "Some mistake," he said.

"Sing!"

Old Dave's ire was aroused. He intended trying all three men's voices and nabbing the guilty one. He rather thought Ray looked like a man who would best answer the description of a singer and a clever bank-robber.

"Sing!" he repeated.

"What'll I sing?"

Old Dave advanced one step nearer the man.

"Any damn thing!"

RAY eyed the revolver,—then he cleared his throat, hummed an air, made a false start or two, and sang *"Home, Sweet Home."* He was on the second verse when Old Dave snarled: "Stop!"

"Rather tiring this—singing when you can't sing," said Ray in a deep voice—a voice quite unlike the one Old Dave had heard when he came out of his room at Stag Hotel Number Two.

"Keep 'em up!" Old Dave turned to the end man of the trio. "You sing!" he commanded.

The man sang a number of airs. Old Dave lowered his left hand and dropped it to his side. "Now, you," he said, to the nearest man. "One ov youse is guilty."

This patron of the Stag Hotel had no singing voice at all. The detective rubbed his head with his right wrist and thrust the revolver into a holster beneath his left shoulder.

"Drop your hands down," he said. "Did anybody go out ov here just before I come in?"

The bartender leaned over the bar. "No," he grunted.

"Let's hear *you* sing," said Old Dave with sudden inspiration.

The bartender complained of a cold which he feared would lead to the "flu."

Evening in the City

By MARY BRENT WHITESIDE

THE twilight in the clamorous street
Comes suddenly on dusty feet,
And high and dim, the early stars
Look down on homebound motor cars.
But on the river, from the mist,
Dusk weaves a veil of amethyst,
That blurs the Jersey lights, and brings
Strange beauty to familiar things.
Broadway dons motley; Riverside,
Dark robes of purple, soft and wide.
One is a queen with jewelled hair;
The other, a coifed nun at prayer;
To both comes beauty, unaware.

Broadway is decked with many a gem;
She wears a ruby diadem,
And hyacinth and chrysoprase
Upon her royal garment blaze;
And rich perfumes of musk and myrrh,
And songs and laughter follow her.
But Riverside—gray Riverside,
When the last afterglow has died,
Stands in a revery intense,
And dreams among her monuments.
Alike redeemed from all that mars,
For both the healing of day's scars;
The sky's cool arch and quiet stars.

"You know me, Chief," he protested. "There's nobody around here who can sing."

Old Dave again eyed the slender man who had given the name of Ray. He shifted his glance to the other men.

OLD DAVE'S pent-in wrath—a wrath that had smouldered for nearly a third of his life, burst through his strong-moulded lips. He roundly cursed the three suspects. He berated the bartender, stamped up and down the barroom—looked in a telephone-booth, lifted a trap-door, glared at the concrete floor of the basement, and came back to the trio.

"One ov youse is th' guy! One ov youse is Deafy's pal. I heard you singin' when I was up stairs. I recognized th' voice."

"Rather odd you don't recognize it now," said Ray.

Old Dave's eyes narrowed. "I know it's a double-voice that one of youse can switch on an' off. I've been waitin' seventeen years to hear that voice—and now I've heard it. I'm—"

Suddenly Old Dave grew cautious. There was nothing to be gained by telling what he was going to do. The thing to do was to leave the hotel, lay in wait, and follow all three men with the hope of finding out where they lived.

OLD DAVE left the barroom, slammed shut the swinging doors, crossed the street and took up his station behind a news-stand where he could watch the door of Stag Hotel Number Two.

His police-wise brain worked in a logical line. Since the Stag Hotel was known as a rendezvous for very high-class crooks, the bartender could be counted on not to squeal on the trio.

The policeman cursed his luck for all of an hour before he saw the three men come from the hotel. They stood on the corner under an arc-light and talked. Then two of the three went cityward without glancing back.

The third man, Ray, lighted a cigarette, lifted a straw hat from a prematurely gray head, fanned himself, looked around and walked rapidly away.

Old Dave took up the trail behind the quarry like a surly Apache after a scalp. He believed that Ray had sung the song in the barroom of the Stag Hotel.

Ray was a fast walker, and the older man had trouble in keeping up with him. Times, the detective thought, he had lost his man. At last he signalled a Central Office sleuth and enlisted his services. They found their quarry far ahead of them on a street of mean apartments and frame tenements.

At one of these apartments Ray stopped, looked back, removed a pass-key from his trouser-pocket and hurried up the steps.

Old Dave and his Central Office partner came to a halt at the corner. They consulted and separated.

MIDNIGHT came and passed, with the old sleuth on grim watch. He recalled a number of things connected with the Connover Bank robbery. His mind worked slowly.

There had been a description given of one of the fugitives from the bank, which, in a way, fitted the tall, gray-haired man whom he had followed to the tenement.

This description—provided the witness could be found, added to the supposition that Ray had a double voice—might convict the suspect.

With bulldog determination the officer spent the night watching the apartment. He questioned a roundsman on the beat, chatted with a janitor, made friends with a milkman and a paper-boy, to no purpose.

All acounts agreed that Ray, known as Charles Ray, was a model tenant who lived with an invalid wife on the third floor back—received few callers, and those who did call were apparently above reproach.

Dave went to detective headquarters and made his report to the sergeant on duty.

"Old man won't be down to-day," said the sergeant, referring to the Chief of Police. "Why don't you rent the empty apartment you spoke of next to Ray's—stick there tighter than wax, and when you hear that song again—pinch your man?"

"I'm right, ain't I? A guy can have two voices, Sarg?"

"Y—es, s'pose so."

"One voice heavy—an' th' other sweet as a bird's?"

"Sure, Old Plug!"

DAVE borrowed some additional cartridges from the armory-clerk, got breakfast, and went to the apartment where, after seeing the agent, he installed himself one window away from Charles Ray's rear outlook.

The precautions taken by the detective to secure the apartment were sufficient to lead him to believe that no one in the building, including Ray and his wife, knew that a watcher was anywhere in their vicinity.

Once settled, the policeman communicated with headquarters by telephone, and had some furniture—a bed, blankets, chairs and some much-needed tobacco, sent to him.

He sat through the days and the nights with his ear canted toward the rear window and his lower lip sagging beneath the weight of a briar pipe made distinctive by a broken stem.

Ray's apartment had no fire-escape at the back. Old Dave's had. After inspecting it, he decided he could climb out on this fire-escape, reach for a water-spout, swing, and land on the sill of Ray's window, if such a course should be necessary.

Old Dave considered the problem of searching the suspect's rooms for evidence, but dismissed this idea. The thing to do, he decided, was to wait until he heard the song, *Ave Maria.*

A BRACE of headquarter's men, on instructions sent over the phone by Old Dave, watched the Stag Hotel and succeeded in finding out who Ray's companion's were. Both the men whom Old Dave had forced to sing in the barroom were reformed crooks who had settled down at honest work.

The sergeant at detective headquarters told Dave to stick it out. "Chief's waiting for you to catch the Connover Bank robber," he said. "It'll be a big thing for the department."

"Damn th' department," thought Old Dave. "I've waited nine days an' my bird hasn't sung a single note."

Dave grew familiar with everything that went on in Ray's apartment. He saw a doctor come and go away. He counted the milk bottles in the hall. He slyly watched the washing that was hung on a clothes-line that ran to a pole in the back yard.

Some of this washing was undoubtedly feminine. Old Dave's thatched eyes regarded silk stockings, kimonos, fluffy muslins and gauzy laces of good texture.

"I'm on a dead card," he concluded when ten days passed without any song from Ray.

He had seen the suspect any number of times. Ray had a habit of looking at the back-yards and at the same time smoking a cigarette. Old Dave concluded that the invalid wife could not stand the smoke.

There was a worried look on Ray's face that Old Dave did not exactly fathom. Lines crossed his forehead and stayed there. The doctor came more often. Medicine was sent from a neighboring corner drug store.

Often during the week, Ray left the apartment and walked toward town, but Old Dave did not follow him. He felt sure his quarry would come back.

"I'll get you yet," concluded the detective after he had spent three hours listening for the sound of voices in Ray's back room. "You're a clever guy, but I've waited seventeen years an' I guess I can wait ten more if I have to."

One sweltering night Ray came to the window, lifted it higher, moved aside the clothes on the line, and started fanning air into the apartment with a palm-leaf fan. Old Dave heard him ask:

"Is that better, Alice?"

A woman's weak voice answered in the affirmative.

A BELL in a church struck twelve slow notes. Old Dave leaned through the curtains and listened. The suspect was talking with the woman. Her answers were pathetically frail. Ray's voice was heavy—vibrant.

Slowly Old Dave laid his pipe on a chair, kicked off his shoes, eyed the fire-escape and the back-yards, and climbed over the sill until he stood, in trousers and shirt, at the nearest point to Ray's window, which was fully opened.

The Old Plug's weight sagged the slats of the fire-escape. He breathed deeply and thrust his head over the iron railing. He reached for the water-spout and gripped it with both hands. The police-regulation .44 dragged down his right hip pocket.

He strained his ears in the endeavor to overhear

(*Concluded on page* 303)

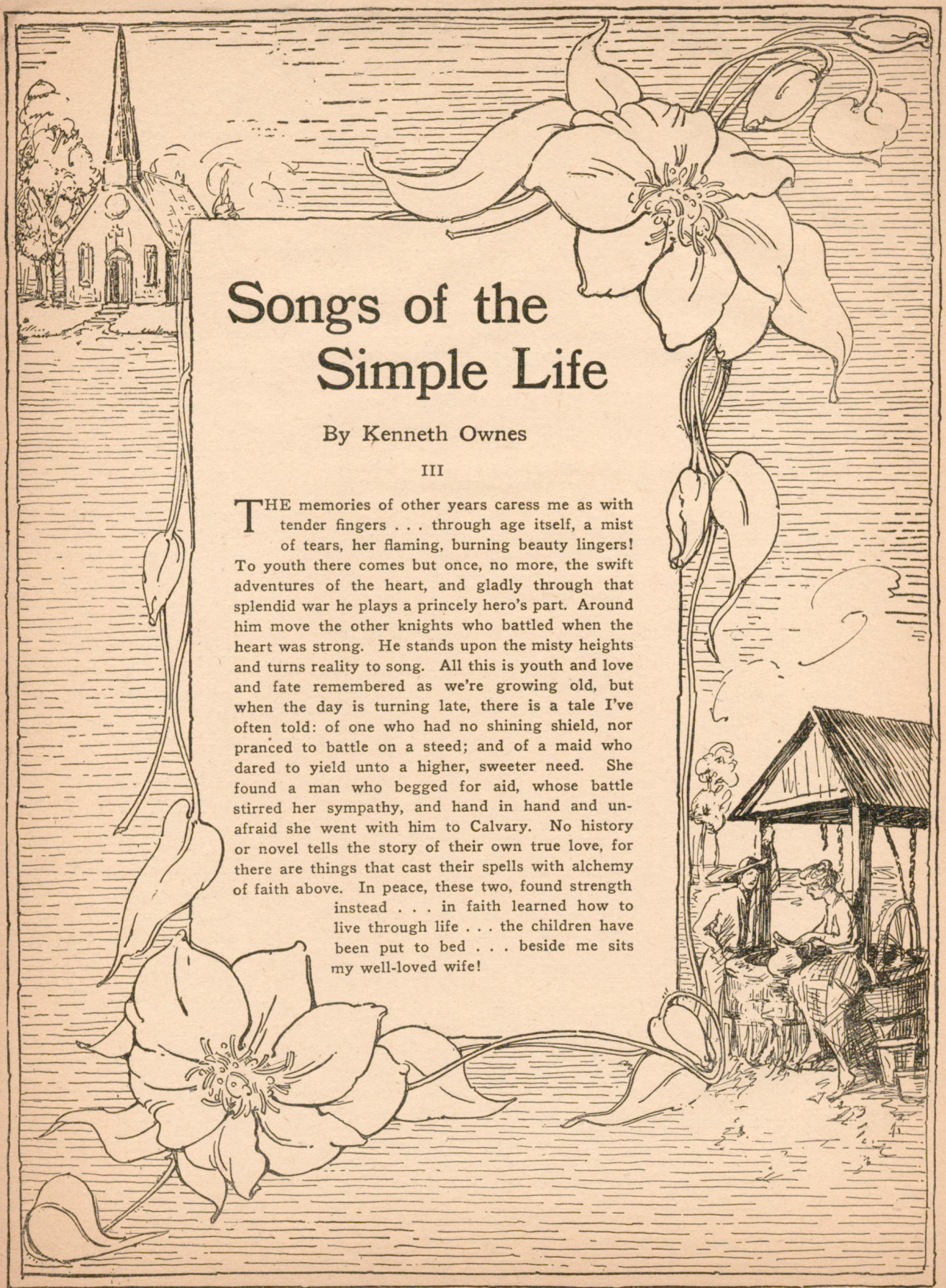
Gardens

By EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER

THE wind and rain were whispering till the
long, long night was through,
But the aching, aching heart of me was
ever far from sleep;
Though my garden in the dawn-light was a
witchery of dew,
The weary, weary eyes of me knew only
how to weep.

If you would be forgiving, as you will never,
never be,
My heart would be a garden laughing in the
dancing dawn,
A little gleaming garden full of fragrant mys-
tery—
Oh the bitter, bitter longing for the gladness
that is gone!

If you would be forgiving—Oh the sorrow I
must know!
For my life is but an empty thing without
the love of you—
My heart would lift and live again, a garden
all a-glow;
But oh, the hopeless waiting for my dream-
ing to come true.



Songs of the Simple Life

By Kenneth Ownes

III

THE memories of other years caress me as with tender fingers . . . through age itself, a mist of tears, her flaming, burning beauty lingers! To youth there comes but once, no more, the swift adventures of the heart, and gladly through that splendid war he plays a princely hero's part. Around him move the other knights who battled when the heart was strong. He stands upon the misty heights and turns reality to song. All this is youth and love and fate remembered as we're growing old, but when the day is turning late, there is a tale I've often told: of one who had no shining shield, nor pranced to battle on a steed; and of a maid who dared to yield unto a higher, sweeter need. She found a man who begged for aid, whose battle stirred her sympathy, and hand in hand and unafraid she went with him to Calvary. No history or novel tells the story of their own true love, for there are things that cast their spells with alchemy of faith above. In peace, these two, found strength instead . . . in faith learned how to live through life . . . the children have been put to bed . . . beside me sits my well-loved wife!

"Who Is Silvia?"

A Spring Fantasy

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

THE musician had gone to the mysterious wood that lay far beyond the city walls, the wood filled with green light; the deep wood that no dweller on the outskirts would enter after nightfall.

He had been walking along the narrow streets of the city only an hour before, and then—a bunch of white violets upheld by a child's hand, the breath of the warm earth in his face—and Spring had beckoned to him, beckoned him into the wood. Now, the violin under his arm, he stood looking into depth upon depth of green light. . . .

A WINDING path invited him. He drew the violin more closely under his arm, feeling a sense of companionship in its familiar shape. As he walked on a faint sound grew into the silence—the rush of water over stones. He turned from the path and plunged into the unbroken woods, guided by the sound. In a moment he was within sight of

the brook, green-brown, gold-dappled in the sunlight. He went toward the stream, intending to drink. At its very edge, just as he would have stooped to dip up the water, he caught sight of a figure on the opposite side, a girl leaning forward to look into the pool, one hand raised to her hair. Both gown and hair were of a color with the tree trunks, and so he had not seen her until he stood before her.

She was looking at him. He caught an impression of a wild thing of the woods in her startled eyes. Strange eyes they were, uncertain like the wavering light in the little pool at her feet. The line of the eyebrows suggested in some way the impulse toward flight, yet she knelt there upon one knee, motionless, half rising, her eyes upon his face.

The musician stood silent, his heart pierced with that quick pang which the sudden sight of beauty gives. To himself he said: "I have found the Spring." But aloud: "I'm afraid I startled you. I believe few people come to this wood."

THE girl rose and drew nearer to him, but the brook was between them. Her eyes dwelt curiously upon his face. "Let me give you a cup," she said, as if the hospitality of the wood were hers. Her voice seemed to belong to the woodland, like a bird's note, and a chord in his heart responded with the music of a new desire, for the girl's voice had reached a heartstring that the subtlest vibration of his violin had never found.

She reached up to a branch of the basswood tree overhead, selected a large leaf, deftly turned and pinned it into cup shape, filled it and passed it to him over the brook with the bright drops overrunning the edge.

"Drink quickly," she warned him, "or you will lose it."

When he had finished he looked down at the wet sparkling leaf in his hand and smiled. "Can't you cast some spell upon it so that it will not fade? Then I would never drink from any other cup."

"I cannot," she answered, staring at him curiously. "But there are always more leaves."

"In the winter," he answered, "there are no leaves." He saw that she watched him with the alert, guarded curiosity of a bird, prepared on an instant's alarm for flight. "I believe you are afraid of me," he said, "but there is no cause for fear. I am just a harmless runaway musician." He tapped his violin with a smile.

Her eyes wandered from the violin to his face. "From what have you run away?"

"From the city," he said, his eyes upon her face, "the tired, dusty city. I wanted to smell the woods and hunt for the wild flowers."

Her eyes grew more curious. "And are there no flowers where you live?"

He made a little deprecatory gesture. "The poor little captive city flowers, imprisoned in the parks and window boxes—they are not the same."

"Are they not?"

"Surely," he exclaimed, "you have been in the city?"

SHE shook her head. He looked at her more closely and, as their eyes met, external consciousness seemed to slip from him as from one looking into the limitless heights of the sky. And while he looked the shadow of moving leaves passed over her face, a ray of sunlight seemed to dart downward, and a bird's song broke out overhead—a brief little bar of melody, wandering, appealing, ending on a half tone.

"What a wonderful bird!" she cried. "Do you see it? I have never heard it before."

He took out the violin and touched his bow to the strings. "Perhaps I can call it—" Then the echo of the bird's song seemed to hover over the instrument. The girl clasped her hands.

"Oh, do it again!" she cried. "Perhaps he will answer."

But there was no sound from the trees except the faint rustle of the leaves.

"Perhaps it is not a real bird, but a spirit from the clouds," he suggested fancifully. He observed that she was still watching him with the frankness of a friendly animal. "Do you ever lie on your back and look up and wonder about it all?" she asked.

"Sometimes," he answered, scarcely knowing what he said, for her eyes stirred strange sensations within him—formless memories as of pain, fear and joy in some previous existence. It was as if she were winding an invisible web about his heart; and when he would have looked away he felt the meshes holding him fast.

"Sometimes I lie over there," she pointed toward a little rise of ground, "and I want to go up there—high up—among the clouds and drift all day across the sky. And in a storm when they are black and tear across the sky—oh, then I am wild to go!"

WHILE she spoke he drew his bow across the strings as the wind sighs through the highest branches of the pines. Then with a rush it changed, like the wind that shakes with a crisper sound the leaves of lower trees.

A swift joy ran like light over the girl's face. "What is that? Don't stop. I know now—it is the wind's music—"

So he played on until around them seemed to sweep the rush of waters, the swirl of rain, increasing gradually to the passion of the storm, and inextricably interwoven with it was the song of the unseen bird that had sung in the trees over their heads. As he played the girl stepped over the brook that separated them and stood before him motionless, leaning against a tree; and when at last he dropped his bow there was still the sound of the wind in the trees, and of the hurrying water, and from above again came the bird's song continuing the music, ending it with the yearning question of the half-tone.

"Why, the wind and the brook played with you," she cried, "for you have stopped and they are still playing your music!"

HE SHOOK his head. "It was I who played with the woods—and all the song is for you." He sought her eyes, but they showed only the curiosity of the wild thing confronting the unknown.

"Tell me your name," he pleaded. "Tell me and I will write the music and the world shall know it by your name."

"My name is Silvia. But why is the music mine? I do not understand."

He turned from looking into the green recesses of the wood. "It came from your soul to mine," he said. "I touched my instrument not knowing what I should play."

But she seemed to have lost interest in him, and bent to pick the wood violets that grew about their feet. Suddenly she rose. "Look!" she exclaimed, "the sun is low between the trees. I must go!"

"Let me walk home with you," he urged. "It is late for you to be alone in the woods."

But she drew back from him, laughing and shaking her head. "Wait, I am going with you," he said. But though he followed her he could not overtake her. Somehow she seemed always to slip from his sight in the green gloom of the woods. He began to run, but the distance seemed only to increase between them.

"Silvia, wait!" he cried, but swiftly as he ran he could not get any nearer to her. "Silvia," he cried after her in despair. "Oh, Silvia! When shall I see you again?"

A voice came back to him as if on the wind. "I am always here."

THE musician stood still, listening, the twilight shadows creeping closer around him. There was no sound but the rush of the water, the faint stir of the wind and the beating of his own heart. A faint glimmer of white on the ground caught his eye. He bent down—some violets she had dropped in her flight. The scent of them came up to him mingling with the memory of her face. Who was she, this mysterious acquaintance of the wood? She was not like any woman he had ever seen.

The fickle warmth of the spring day had vanished and the wood had grown cool. He started back to find the path that led to the town. All night she was with him in his dreams.

It was early in the morning when he returned to the woods. A silver mist clung to the ground and the air was cold with the breath of the vanished night. He searched in every direction for Silvia, but again he was close enough to touch her before he discovered her. She lay upon the ground, her hands clasped behind her head, staring at the sky. The eye might easily have mistaken her brown form for the fallen trunk of a tree. She did not rise when he spoke, but lay still looking up at him. A ray of sunlight slipping between the swaying branches seemed caught in her eyes.

"You have come again to play?" she asked.

"I have come to do your will," he answered, "unless it should be to leave you."

SHE drew up her knees and clasped her arms loosely about them. "You shall play the bird's song for me," she cried, "and perhaps he will come back. I have looked everywhere but I could not find him."

He took out his violin and tuned the strings. Then he looked at her as she reclined upon the red-bronze carpet of the fallen pine needles. The checkered sunlight played over her face and hair.

"It shall be the sun dance," he said. Then he drew the bow across the strings and a scherzo, light and elusive, slipped into the minute sounds of the wood. When he had finished she put out her hand:

"Let me do it," she said.

He gave the instrument into her untaught hand and watched her as she drew the bow across the

You Say I Am So Cold!

By IONA MAE SWEET

YOU say I am so cold—
An ivory princess in a palace,
For whom you would make lyric bracelets
To warm my hands.
O man of slow discernment,
To hang my wrists with words,
Though they be jewels of chrysoprase desire—
Up, dear fool, up,
And lay thy priceless gems upon my lips!

strings in imitation of his movement. But no sweet melody answered to her touch; only harsh, disconnected sounds without meaning. She threw it down impatiently.

"The music is not in it, it is in you," she cried. "I cannot do it. You made it with your hands." She lifted up his hand and examined it curiously. "It is like mine, only it is not brown. Why is it that you can do it and I cannot?"

He laughed. "I have worked all my life to play like that."

She put the violin into his hands. "Play again," she said.

A GUST of wind passed over the pines with the sound of a long-drawn sigh and died away, and the voice of the violin crept into the sounds of the wood, now interwoven with them, now carrying the dominant theme, as if they were all the instruments of an orchestra. Then it changed and the harmonies grew strange and intricate, heavy with minor chords, eerie with overtones, rising by climaxes of close harmony to a breathless height, like the ascent into air too fine for endurance. And it was as if the musician's very soul trembled upon the strings, and a change came over the listening girl. In her eyes he saw the dawning of something like fear. Her hand went up to her throat as if something took her breath. She rose to her feet, her hands against her breast.

"Stop, stop!" she cried. "I do not like this music. . . . There is something in it that hurts."

Obeying her wish he ceased. "And yet," she continued, "I would hear it again. What does it mean? Is it some new thing that I do not know?"

He answered. "It is no new thing, but as old as the world. The name of the music is Love."

"And what is Love?" she asked impatiently.

"Love," he answered, picking softly on the strings, "is the beginning and the end of life. The joy and the pain of the world in one." The music rose with a soft crescendo and fell again as he spoke.

"I do not understand," she said.

"Because two have loved we are born into the world. And because of love men die and others pray to live. Because of love is life sweet, and because of love is life more sad than death. For love is heaven and love is hell."

AND while he spoke he continued to play, with his eyes on hers, and again the compelling music caught and held her.

"I know, I know!" she cried. "Now I understand. It is what I feel when I long to be blown across the sky in a storm cloud, when I want to be in the water and the wind, and to rock in the tree-top under the moon. But I cannot sleep so because I am not a bird. And I cannot live in the water because it is cold and I am warm. And I cannot be in the wind that tears across the world and up to the stars—and then something hurts me here." She pressed her hands against her breast and he fancied he saw the imprisoned soul beating in her eyes like a caught bird against the bars.

"You have said it," he answered. "Love is the desire for the unattainable. Always to desire—never to possess." He laid down his violin and caught her hands. In her eyes he saw the panic of the wild thing caught unaware, frightened and still.

"Ah, you do not understand. I love you. You have touched the hidden string in my heart that made the music. Can't you understand? How can I tell you?—I love you, Silvia." Then he bent and kissed her. She did not move. The woods seemed suddenly still as before a storm. Suddenly above them the bird's song broke the silence, fateful, prophetic, ending on the half tone of unfulfilled desire. Then slowly she raised her eyes. They were unfathomable as the pools in the brook. He took her hand; she neither resisted nor responded.

"You are mine," he said.

. . . . . .

THE woods grew mysterious as the twilight gathered. The evening songs began and ceased until at last there was no sound but the rustle of the brook and the continuous whisper of the wind in the pines. Listening to them he must have fallen asleep, for emerging from unconscious darkness he saw her face bending over him, moonlit, mysterious, like a white night flower born of the still darkness.

"The moon is setting," he heard her say, "and I must go."

"No, no," he cried, putting out his hands.

"I must," she answered. Her voice dropped into the sighing of the night wind. Her face seemed to become vague between him and the sky. He caught her hand.

"Are you Diana, compelled to ride away with the moon?"

She did not answer. But behind her head, low-hung between the branches, he saw the silver circle of the moon. She bent down so that her hair was a veil about him and kissed him. Then, without power to detain her, he felt her slipping from him, and above in the darkness he fancied he heard the echo of the bird's song, ending on the half note. A cold breath seemed to blow across the woods, and the moon went down behind the edge of the world. The musician stretched out his arms to the sky.

"She will come again," he whispered. "I know that she will come again."

. . . . . .

ONE afternoon he came upon an unfamiliar part of the wood. He had been wandering for days searching for Silvia. The people he sometimes met and questioned called him the mad musician, and described how he wandered the wood, clasping his violin. Occasionally a woodcutter hurrying home at nightfall would hear the voice of the violin and pause to listen, half afraid yet held by the strange power of the music. "He is bewitched," they would say, and cross themselves while hurrying on.

As he wandered along the edge of the brook in that strange part of the wood, his eye was caught by something on the opposite bank—a woman's figure leaning over the water's edge. His heart gave a fierce leap and stood still. Then he sprang across the brook and went up to the figure. It was a marble image, weather-stained into the colors of the woods—and the down-bent face was the face of Silvia!

HE FELL upon his knees beside the figure and clasped the cold stone in his arms. As it grew warm under his touch, almost his sense of reality faded. The crackling of branches awakened him, and he became conscious that someone had spoken. He rose to his feet and saw a man standing beside him, evidently an artist, for he carried a canvas in one hand, and in the other a box of paints.

"It is beautiful, is it not?" he said.

"Oh, you can tell me something about it!" cried the musician.

"It has stood here ever since one can remember. It is centuries old, but there is a story."

"Tell me," pleaded the musician.

"It is said to be an image of one of Diana's wood nymphs who was loved by Pan. When she ran away from him he turned her into stone—the usual legend. Then, they say, Diana interceded for her and gained her one chance of life."

"And that—?"

"And that was that once in a thousand years she might come to life for the month of May. And if in that time she loved a mortal yet left him, she might regain her immortality. But if on the contrary she told her love, she would be turned into stone again."

"Ah!" The musician covered his face with his hands.

"And it is said in that month of May when she is alive one may meet her in this wood. But no one knows when that day will come. It is a dateless legend."

The musician did not answer, and so with a light-hearted farewell the artist turned and walked on, his cheerful whistle growing fainter as he disappeared between the trees.

WHEN he was alone the musician lifted his eyes and looked at the stone image. "Have I lost you forever, Silvia?" he whispered. "Was it only for that hour of happiness?" Then as he looked at the stone face a thought came to him. "Your beauty and your mystery shall become music. And the music shall live. So you will gain your immortality." He turned to go, then once again turned to look back, and as the leaf shadows played over

(*Concluded on page 296*)

Ballade of Vain Regrets

By BERNARD GUILBERT GUERNEY

WHERE is the youth that will not grow old?
Who is so free that he wears no chain—
Of roses and love, or steel or gold?
Where shines the moon that will never wane?
When the wine ebbs, but lees remain;
And Death spares none who is woman-born:
Nought availing, yet must I complain—
Where blooms the rose that hath not a thorn?

Honor can be bought; even love is sold;
And sweets of to-day are to-morrow's bane;
No tale so sweet but at last is told—
Where shines the moon that will never wane?
Why will pain lurk in the cups we drain?
Life's a cloak shed ere it scarce is worn:
I sigh anew—is there joy sans pain?
Where blooms the rose that hath not a thorn?

Why do violets bloom next to churchyard mould?
Why is Life a riddle if the end be plain?
Was there e'er love that did not grow cold?
Where shines the moon that will never wane?
Death's but the turn to Life's long lane;
All wisdom is like a thing forlorn;
And flowers once dead never bloom again:
Where blooms the rose that hath not a thorn?

L'ENVOI

Belovèd! I know all regrets are vain —
The sighs at night bring not back the morn:
But—where shines the moon that will never wane?
And—where blooms the rose that hath not a thorn?

Oh, She Won't?

By Du Vernet Rabell

What does marriage really mean to the professional or business woman? Can matrimony and the "artistic temperament" live in the same house? Pertinent questions in these days, when every line of endeavor, formerly held sacred to man, is now filled with members of the weaker (?) sex.

LEYSA HADDON drew pictures of fascinatingly lovely girls in a way that made the hearts of men who were married beat happily just to think that they had been clever enough to have captured one of these delectable creatures; and those who were not married, edit the lists of the girls they knew, determined as soon as possible to possess one for their very own.

Leysa was young and very successful. You saw her alluring, slim-ankled girls and devil-may-care men on the covers of the most popular magazines, and "Illustrated by Leysa Haddon" on the newest books. And she was pretty. She had fluffy hair that no matter what the fashion, she never confined in a net; eyes like the gray of an evening sky, and a sweet, full mouth that puckered in a soft baby pout whenever she was thoughtful, or gay, or worried, or wicked. She was a helpless little thing; she had to be solicitously assisted into taxicabs, and advised when ordering from a menu; and she had soft, limp, little hands that had a habit, when you took them into your clasp, of coming to sudden life, as it were, and twining around your fingers.

THERE were shoals of men who stood about, ready, eager to give their advice whenever Leysa needed it, but she finally chose for her permanent adviser Brand Chisholm; a six-foot, regular he-man, who was convinced that the Lord Almighty had created him with an eye to Leysa's future welfare. Leysa was *so* young, *so* irresponsible, *so* dependent, you know, and Brand asked nothing more of life than to give Leysa's youth the benefit of his more mature wisdom, to steady her irresponsible impulses, and to have her lean on him for the rest of her days.

And for the first four years after their marriage Brand was granted his wish. Naturally. First there was the arrival of Brand, Junior, and later the Sunshine Girl, and Leysa's lovely color faded for a time, and her little hands clung to Brand's, and she used to cry on his shoulder, and beg him to assure her that she was *almost* as pretty as she used to be. And Brand brought her candy in extravagant satin boxes, and took her to the theater, and was kind, but firm, concerning the high-heeled pumps to which Leysa was frivolously addicted.

ANOTHER year went by. Junior grew amazingly, and developed the regrettable habit of going his own sweet way regardless of parental admonition, and Sunshine got to breaking things and having unexpected attacks of croup. Leysa found that as a disciplinarian she was a total failure, and that Sunshine's wheezing positively scared her into

hysterics. So, after consultation with the family doctor, Brand sent for the nurse who had helped to usher both the babies into the world; a starched, capable person, who kept the nursery door closed, and exhibited her charges only when they were sweet and clean, well-behaved and rampant with health.

Leysa began to sing again as she flew here and there about the house, and Brand felt he could go to bed without keeping one ear open, and at the first labored breath from the direction of the nursery, leaping from under warm blankets, grabbing his bathrobe on the run as he galloped to the telephone, colliding with Leysa on the way, carrying the croup kettle and inquiring for the benzoin.

Leysa should have been perfectly happy and contented. And she was. To quote the lady herself, she was "too darned contented—I'll be chewing a cud like a placid cow by this time next year." And Leysa didn't go in much for placidity. She was a mad sort of person who thought the next best thing to being wildly happy was being wildly unhappy, and cherished the belief that too much contentment developed obesity of the mind. And she began to move about the circle of her domestic enclosure with a growing restlessness, and an unruly desire to find a loose picket in the fence.

Brand, poor man-creature that he was, thought all was going as merry as a wedding bell in his menage. How could he be expected to know that Leysa appearing in a new style of hair dressing every second night meant a sort of working out of the theory concerning Satan and idle hands, and that her lately acquired habit, when she was playing the piano, of swinging from the latest jazz to Rubenstein's *Melody in F,* indicated a growing wanderlust of the spirit, and served notice that something was about to come to pass.

ONE night after dinner Brand found himself in a particularly mellow mood. He followed Leysa into the library, smiling in a congratulatory fashion.

"Some dinner we had to-night, Leysa," he said. "You are a great little housewife."

Leysa stopped short at the entrance to the library door, and looked at her husband; an inscrutable look—half-frowning, half-smiling; one of those telescopic smiles a woman employs when she is looking at a man through the small end of the glass and he appears miles and miles away.

Brand lit a cigar and looked about to locate his paper. "Well, honey, and how's every little thing?"

Leysa curled up in the big chair and pouted at the rose-colored lamp. "Oh, all right," she said.

"Sunshine's cold better?"

"Oh, yes—she went out to-day."

"And Junior—had any ructions with him lately?"

"No. Miss Hatch smacked his hands because he stamped his foot at her."

"The little sinner! He must get his temper from you, Leysa, I was always a very serene child. Man come about the screens?"

"Yes. And Ahn fussed because he tracked mud into the hall, and I had to settle the argument."

Brand reached for his paper and switched on the reading-lamp.

"Oh, Brand!" Leysa burst out plaintively. "I don't wonder you are impatient to get to your paper—I don't wonder you're bored to death with me! I'm getting so dull—I feel it myself. I wanted to go down to an exhibition of Zorn's etchings to-day; then I would have had something to talk about to-night. But your sister Ruth dropped in for tea and afterwards it was too late."

Brand laughed indulgently. "You needn't go running 'round to art exhibitions to get material to entertain me."

"Well, I wanted to go for myself, too. Mrs. Frederick Warren Bell—you remember Mabel Bell—spoke of meeting me there. It's about time she was starting her spring book. I have an idea she'd like to have me illustrate it."

BRAND looked up with a pleased smile. "Why, how nice of her."

Leysa blinked; then she swallowed. "How nice of *her!*" she said. Then: "Well, my dear boy, I should hardly put it that way. It would mean something to Mabel Bell to have me illustrate her book—I know her types so well." She paused and shrugged. "But of course I can't."

"No, of course not," Brand agreed absently. Then he added. "You aren't interested in that sort of thing any more. You have real interests now."

Leysa glanced at him from under lowered lids. "Real interests?"

"Why, yes. You've got me, and the kids." He smiled at her over the top of the paper.

"Um," Leysa observed.

"Now take me," Brand went on, running his eyes down the market reports. "I used to go in for tennis—but now I hardly look at the finals."

"Well," and Leysa's voice took on a note of tartness, "tennis is a pastime. I can't see the comparison."

"But, my good child, what else was your drawing but a pastime?"

"Oh, I don't know—I bought my sable coat with my own money."

But Brand wasn't listening, and Leysa shrugged at the hopeless density of man. "Well, call it anything you like," she said presently, "but I've let it get away from me. I don't seem to have any interests—as I say, I'm growing stupid."

BRAND laid down his paper with an air of kindly patience. "Why, my dear, it seems to me you have plenty of interests. You have the house, and you read"—he leaned forward and picked up a book from the table—"Here's a new book. What's this?"

"It's a cook book." Leysa took it out of his hand. "Your sister Ruth brought it this afternoon. It has a thrilling plot. Here, listen to this. 'Take four eggs and beat until they are lemon-colored,'" she declaimed dramatically. "'Add four tablespoons of sugar, and two cups of milk. Put in double boiler—'" She flung the book on the floor. "I hope the cook who invented boiled custard ultimately drowned in a sea of it!"

Brand laughed and pinched her cheek. "Funny little Leysa—you can even get a laugh out of a cook book." He settled himself definitely with his paper.

Leysa roamed here and there. She put a record on the victrola and switched it off before it had gone a quarter of the way. She examined the clock-work on her bronze silk stockings, and rose and straightened a picture.

"HAVEN'T you anything to do, Leysa—any sewing or orders to give for to-morrow? You give me the willies prowling around like that."

Leysa shook her head, although she knew there was a button off her gray kid shoes, and that unless she mentioned it, the apple pudding they had had for dinner would not appear for luncheon next day.

"No, I haven't a thing to do. Please give me a piece of the paper—let me see the funny pictures."

But Brand had the usual masculine aversion to parting with one single sheet of his newspaper while he was perusing its contents.

"Read the cook book," he said facetiously, and buried his face back in the paper before he had time to catch the withering look that Leysa flung him.

LEYSA seated herself at her desk and got out a sheet of note paper, but instead of writing the letter she intended, she drew a caricature of her husband, a shocking little thing it was, too—a sleek pig that bore a marked resemblance to Brand, wallowing in a sty of newspapers. Then she tried to clean her fountain-pen and got her fingers smudged. Finally she sprang to her feet and flung herself on the arm of Brand's chair.

"Oh, for heaven's sake give me some of that paper—any part. Here, I'll take the death notices—I'll even be satisfied with those."

FOR some time past Leysa's fingers had been twitching constantly in the direction of her drawing-board, and the next morning the twitch became positively unendurable. And two days after this she noticed that the windows of the guest-room on the third floor faced north. It was only a step from this discovery to spending an entranced afternoon in a shop that specialized in artist's materials; another step to digging from a trunk in the basement two paint-bedaubed aprons which she hugged ecstatically.

She didn't mention any of this to Brand. It wasn't so much that she had any idea of deceiving him, but she didn't want him to know if she failed. She had been out of the game for over four years, other illustrators had sprung up — well, it would be better to wait and see how it worked out.

Tribute

By BERTON BRALEY

THE mountains are mighty, the sea is tremendous,
The wonder of tree and of sod
Is truly a miracle vast and stupendous,
A proof of the greatness of God;
I thrill to the natural beauty surrounding;
The marvelous visions I scan.
But more am I stirred by the labors astounding
The miracles fashioned by Man!

For God is omnipotent, God is the Power
Who holds the whole scheme in His hand,
While man is but breath in the clay for an hour;
Yet rivers and seas he has spanned.
Like dust in the winds of the ages he passes
But ere into space he is blown
He builds him great cities and towering masses
Of steel and of iron and stone.

A wee moving dot on the face of creation
He labors and struggles and dares,
He brings mighty dreams to a high consummation,
He conquers wherever he fares;
Weak, sinful and blind, yet he leashes great forces
Of nature to fit in his plan,
And by his achievements we know that there courses
The Spirit of God in the Man!

LEYSA came back in a surprisingly short time. She began to receive orders from the magazines, and she exhibited her first check to Brand with fluttering pride. He patted her on the head and said "Good girl" and added that it was a "nice pastime, and far less expensive than playing bridge." And somehow, at this, a little of the sparkle disappeared from the crystal beaker of life. Leysa couldn't exactly tell why, but she felt that some of the joy-bubbles were gone.

Hearing that Leysa had returned from the fold Mrs. Frederick Warren Bell called her up one morning and begged her to come over and talk about the new book. Leysa, her heart singing, agreed, and made an engagement for the next morning.

The next morning came and the first cloud made its appearance in an otherwise cloudless sky. Leysa found that she couldn't keep her engagement with Mrs. Bell because the laundry-list had to be made up. If she didn't make it up and present a carbon copy to Gabriel who took home the Chisholm family wash, sundry articles, one of Brand's best silk shirts, or her own pet camisole, would surely be missing. Gabriel was a good laundress, but she had a dressy son and a daughter who was a social light.

Leysa, in her smart tailored suit, appeared in the nursery door.

"Oh, Miss Hatch, will you make up the laundry-list this morning? I have an appointment and won't have time, and Gabriel comes at noon."

Miss Hatch rescued a glass that Sunshine was about to smash on the hearth. She shook her head with smiling frankness. "I won't have time, Mrs. Chisholm. And besides, you know I told you when I came that my specialty was baby nursing—that I could have nothing to do with the house."

Leysa nodded. "Yes, I know. But I thought—well, never mind. It will have to go without listing."

But it didn't. She called up Mrs. Bell, and said she couldn't come that morning, and when she explained why, Mrs. Bell was decidedly miffed. She appeared to consider her book of more importance than a laundry-list.

No, she was sorry, but she couldn't see Leysa that afternoon. . . . No, it was a shame, but she couldn't go to tea to-morrow—she was going out of town. . . . Really, she didn't know just when she would be back. . . . Y—yes, she'd let Leysa know, but her time seemed to be so uncertain—

LEYSA hung up the receiver and walked into her room peeling off her gloves as she went.

"Well, there's that!" she snapped. "And all for a stupid laundry list. And I hate, I despise, I loathe getting up the laundry!" She opened her closet door and emptied the white-enameled basket out onto the floor.

And she was sitting in a disconsolate little heap, a list in her hand and a pencil in her mouth when Ahn's discreet voice in the hall announced a caller—Mrs. Bell.

Leysa dabbed on powder with a lavish hand, and flew down to the drawing-room. There she cast herself upon Mabel Bell and poured forth a flood of explanations, regrets and ejaculations

"Oh, Mabel, you can't imagine how I felt! I knew you were furious and I didn't blame you. I was furious myself. It's dear of you to come—take off your fur. You'll stay to luncheon, won't you?"

"If I can't make you see reason before then, I will." Mrs. Bell pulled Leysa down onto the couch. "Now what's the matter with you—have you lost your mind?"

"No, I haven't—but I understand what you mean," Leysa answered. "It's this house— Mabel, you can't imagine all the things there are to do in this house."

"You're a regular little housewife, aren't you?" Mrs. Bell sniffed. "I never thought you had it in you."

"I haven't—that's just it," Leysa sighed. "Oh, it's all so mixed up. I hate the whole stupid, maddening round of household duties—"

"Then why on earth do you do them?"

"They must be done."

"Why must they be done?"

Leysa made a comprehensive gesture. "If they weren't, the whole house would go to pot."

"Well, let it. Your time is worth too much to be fussing around with laundry-lists, and whatever else it is you do."

Leysa lifted her shoulder impatiently. "But I can't do that—it worries me to see things getting all upset."

MRS. BELL shook her head. "You are losing your temperament, my dear. If you had the true artistic soul you'd never worry about what became of the house."

"But—what about Brand?"

Mrs. Bell tapped her lips with her fingers. "Oh, yes—there's Brand." She sighed. "Husbands are a nuisance, aren't they? It's so easy to get them, and then it's such a bother to keep them." She frowned thoughtfully. "How is Brand doing, Leysa—his business, I mean?"

"Why, all right," Leysa said, clearly not following the drift at all.

"Um—yes, I heard that he was. He handled that C. L. W. case, didn't he? And corporation cases mean money. Well, then, Leysa, why don't you get a housekeeper? You know, one of these specialists on running an establishment. If Brand fussed—you know how men are—you could pay her yourself. They come high, but they're worth it. Everything is specialized in these days of efficiency, and you can't be a specialist in every line. My goodness, Leysa, when I think of all the things you do it makes my head swim. I see you driving Brand down every morning, so you're a chauffeur; you market and run the house, so you're a housekeeper; you make out the menus for your family—that puts you in the dietician class, and you're an illustrator besides. My word, Leysa, you're living too many lives, you'll be a hundred years old before you're thirty."

Leysa looked alarmed. "Oh, do you think so?"

"I certainly do. And you can't go on doing all these things successfully. Something must go by the board. You can't get anyone to draw your pictures, but you can get a housekeeper."

LEYSA did not take her words very seriously and would probably have never given them a second thought if Brand had not selected that night to complain about the salad. Leysa let him finish, drew a quick breath, and went up like a whizz bang.

"All right—but tell it to Ahn! I'm sick unto death of being the clearing-house for all the complaints in this house. When the bread doesn't come, Ahn prances up to the studio to tell *me* about it. What do I care if the bread *never* comes—when it means being interrupted in my work! Miss Hatch informs me that the merino in Sunshine's socks shrinks every time they are washed. Why doesn't she send them back to the store—what does she expect *me* to do about it? Now you're having a fit because the salad-dressing is in pools all over the lettuce—" She stopped, checked by the expression on Brand's face.

Brand was sitting up straight in his chair, gasping. It was as if he saw a furry little bunny come roaring out of its burrow, with the claws and snarl of a man-eating tiger.

After the few moments required to get his breath, he rose, and taking Leysa firmly by the hand, led her into the living-room.

"Now get it off your chest," he commanded.

Leysa rubbed her soft cheek against his shoulder and wondered if a small outburst of tears would help matters. Not a real downpour, calculated to make the nose red and the eyes heavy, but a few sobbing breaths, and tears trembling becomingly on the lashes. Finally she sighed.

"I suppose I shouldn't let the house worry me so."

BRAND kissed her. "Of course not. You ought to love it—and in your heart you do. You're a real woman, dear, the sweet domestic kind that a fellow always dreams of marrying — and seldom does. The sort of girl he dreams of—waiting for him in the firelight with a bit of sewing in her hands."

It is to be regretted, but at this juncture Leysa said, "Oh, my Lord!"

Brand regarded her with an expression of chill displeasure. "Leysa!"

"I know—but my nerves are shot to pieces!" There was a slight pause and then Leysa smiled ruefully up into her husband's face. "I like the management of the house, but I hate the details. I love to play with the children, dress Sunshine up in her frilly frocks and kiss Junior when he bumps himself. But I will not smack his hands, because it makes him mad at me, and when I take care of Sunshine she always eats something that makes her ill. You know, dear, things are specialized nowadays, and none of these specialties are mine." She held his hand against her cheek. "I hate to admit it, Brand, because you think so much of things like this, but I don't really believe that I have a domestic virtue to my name."

Brand looked at her with an Oh-Lord-how-long look that drove Leysa to further excesses.

"All men don't have to be bankers, or lawyers, or insurance agents, or brokers, or—well, I can't think of any other business, but they don't. You've got to do what you were born for."

"And all girls, Leysa," Brand put in artfully, "were born to be wives and mothers."

"Um, um, I know," Leysa returned, "but just because you marry a man doesn't mean you'll make a good housekeeper, and the fact that you bring a child into the world doesn't prove that you'll be able to manage him to his own best advantage."

BRAND pulled Leysa down onto his knee. "Do you know what's the matter with you? You haven't enough to occupy yourself. Too many servants—that's the answer to this growing restlessness among your sex!"

Leysa stared at him. Suddenly she jumped to her feet and ran from the room. When she returned she was carrying something in her hand.

"Do you know what this is? No? Well, it's a pedometer. I fastened it to my ankle the other day just to see how far I traveled in my journeys around

this house each day. Guess how many miles. Twelve! I am occupied all right, but it's the occupation I object to. A man can change his job—why can't a girl?"

Brand laughed, a new note of tenderness in his voice. "Honey, you're right, you're tired out. Come on, we'll drop everything and go up to the Berkshires for a week or so."

Leysa accepted with a burst of enthusiasm and affection, and while Brand looked up motor routes, she made out a list of new clothes to buy the next day—mostly pink.

THE next morning she telephoned a place called the Bureau of Household Needs, or some such name, and engaged a capable young person with a crisp voice, who would take entire charge of her home during her absence. Leysa passed over her table allowance and her menus and departed well content.

The Chisholm's returned from their trip, and the days went by and Leysa made no mention of letting Mrs. Lane, the housekeeper, go. Every time she even thought of letting her go, Leysa felt as if a tight band were drawn about her head. Her work was going like a breeze, and her bank account gave her a thrill every time she looked at it.

Then one evening Brand brought the subject of Mrs. Lane to the fore.

"She's good, of course, but she's a luxury we can't afford. Besides, we don't need her."

"Oh, yes we do," Leysa smiled. "And I pay her, so you needn't worry about that."

Brand stiffened. "I think my income is sufficient to cover the expense of the servants."

Leysa yawned. Her serenity refused to be disturbed. "Mrs. Lane isn't a servant. She's a specialist on greased wheels. She takes my place in the house." She sat up and smiled at her husband. "Here is the way I have doped it out, honey. My job is running the house—that's what you pay me for. Oh, don't look like that, you know what I mean. You give me everything, and in return the least I can do is to run the house. But I don't want to; I haven't a taste for it. I specialize in another branch. So I—well, let the contract, so to speak, and naturally I expect to pay the woman who takes it over. That's fair enough."

"Perhaps," Brand was the picture of chill dignity. "But I can't let you do it. I understand how absorbing your work is, but your first duty is to your home and your family."

"Brand, you talk like a book of precepts," Leysa laughed.

"It's no laughing matter," Brand snapped. "Where on earth did you get such an idea? Your mother didn't have it, neither did mine; neither of my sisters—"

"Oh, pouf!" Leysa interrupted frivolously. "I have eaten the worst dinner I ever sat down to in Ruth's house, and Gertrude's children make me look with toleration on the crime of Herod. Of course, neither of them would admit their failings. Now I, on the other hand, admit freely that there are things I can't do well, and so I hire someone who can."

LOOKING at her, Brand was sorry—really sorry. He saw that the time had come to take a firm stand, to exercise his own authority, and he hated to do it. He dreaded the next half hour. He would deliver his ultimatum. There would be expostulations, vehement protests, Leysa would try to reason with him—fancy Leysa trying to reason; she would probably lose her temper and cry. And, finally, he would take her into his arms, and all would be forgiven. He drew a deep breath.

"Leysa," he said, taking her soft chin in his hand, and looking down into her gray eyes, "I don't want to be cross with you. I hate to scold you, but you will have to get this now: Mrs. Lane leaves tomorrow."

Leysa did none of the things he expected of her. It was disquieting; Brand didn't like it at all. Leysa, smiling and serene, reached for a magazine and said: "Oh, don't be silly."

Apple Blossoms

By POWER DALTON

TO-NIGHT I lay on the silvery grass
Under the apple tree.
Apple blossoms fell on me—
A fragrant, musical shower.
Softly singing, they came down,
Like an avalanche of flowering melody.

Apple blossoms are like your voice
That breaks and falls
In sweet arpeggios.

Apple blossoms are like your voice.
Your voice falls on me
Petal-sweet and melodic,
Like music
Coming down from high white heaven to earth.

You know the song the apple blossoms sang to me to-night;
It was our song!

"Don't be silly? Don't be— Leysa Chisholm, you listen to me! I've stood just about my limit from you. This new idea of a woman's place being anywhere but in the home doesn't go with me—not for a minute. You belong to me—you belong to me absolutely, and you're going to do the things I tell you to do, so long as you are under my roof. Do you understand? Furthermore—" Brand was too wrought up to consider his words. He just paced up and down and talked and made gestures.

Leysa heard him through in courteous silence. When he finished she nodded very thoughtfully, and after a moment left the room.

ABOUT half an hour later, when Brand was really awfully sorry (sorry that Leysa had made such a course necessary, that is) and when he was waiting for a sweetly repentant wife to creep into his forgiving arms, the telephone rang.

"Hello," he growled, and then as he recognized his father-in-law's voice: "Oh, hello—how are you?"

"I'm well," Mr. Haddon replied. Then he added with chill dignity: "Leysa is here and she wants me to bid you good night. Good night, Brand." And he hung up the receiver, leaving his son-in-law trying to find something on the smooth wall for his fumbling fingers to cling to.

At first Brand didn't believe it. Leysa wouldn't do a thing like that. And besides if she had acted on a sudden angry impulse, how could she have left the house without his hearing her?

But Leysa had gone. Her suitcase wasn't in the closet, and her toilet articles were missing from the dressing-table.

Brand turned and groped his way to a chair. His expression was full of gloom and his slouch dejected; his whole attitude plainly indicated that he had drunk deep of bitter waters and found life far from fair.

LEYSA arrived at her father's home in a fine rage. She hurled herself on that astonished gentleman's waistcoat and wept out her tragic tale. And Leysa, being Leysa, the tale lost nothing in the telling. The tearful, sob-choked details that she poured into her bewildered parent's ear of Brand's obstinacy, his lack of reason, his unfeeling conduct, positively choked that gentleman into language. He bustled around and rang bells, and ordered coffee, and a fire built in Leysa's old room, and kept telling her every minute that she needn't fret, her father would stand by her, and just wait until he saw Brand—the young scoundrel!

"No, no, father, dear," Leysa interrupted him here. "Brand is not all bad. I dare say he thinks he has his side, too. But—well, we'll fix up my old studio, won't we, daddy dear, and we'll have coffee there after dinner just as we used to; and you'll tell me funny stories—only—" she gulped—"only I d—on't feel as if I were ever—going to laugh—again."

ACCORDINGLY the next day the studio was fixed up and the household resumed its old habit of going by the door on tiptoe, and the first thing Mr. Haddon asked when he entered the house at night was: "Well, Pet, had a busy day?"

The fifth day Leysa stole back to see her babies. Ahn opened the door and darted out onto the step.

"But Madam's bag—her trunk?" he demanded.

"Oh, I haven't come back for good," Leysa told him. She despised herself for adding: "My father is not well yet—I'll have to stay with him a little longer. Where is Mrs. Lane?"

"All gone," and Ahn vanished down the hall.

She crept softly to the nursery and flung open the door with a dramatic flourish. There were squeals and shouts and Leysa found herself crying on Junior's hair—soft and unruly like her own. "Because I'm so glad to see you," she explained, when he demanded the reason for this. Tea was brought in and they all had a hilarious time. Sunshine dropped a cup without reproof, and Junior stamped his small defiant foot at Miss Hatch and escaped unsmacked.

Presently Leysa carried him down into the living-room, while Sunshine was prepared for her bath.

"AND now tell me all about daddy," she demanded. "What does he do? Begin in the morning—do you have breakfast with him as I said you should—and is poor daddy lonely? What does he say about mother?"

Junior rubbed his nose reflectively. "Yes, I have breakfast with him—but he don't say nothing 'bout you; he don't say nothin' 'bout nothin' only, 'this oatmeal is burned, and the coffee is cold,' and Ahn makes a face and snatches the cup. You don't let me make faces."

"I know, dear; it isn't nice for little boys to make faces—"

"And then he telephones," Junior broke in, warming to his theme. "He telephones every morning before he goes down-town. 'Hello,' he says, 'hello, I want-a-girl-for-housework-no-laundry-sixty-dollars-a-month-three-in-family—' " Junior rattled all this off like a parrot, and coldly resented his mother's interruption.

"But you talk so fast," she said meekly.

"That's what he *says* when he telephones," her

son explained impatiently. "And then he says, 'Oh —she won't?' . . . 'Oh—she won't' . . . 'Oh—she won't!'—he says it just like that, cross—and every morning—"

BUT Leysa didn't let him finish. She deposited him upon the floor with a hasty kiss, and flew up the stairs to the nursery.

"Yes, Mrs. Chisholm," Miss Hatch was explaining some five minutes later, "it's awful—you have no idea how awful the situation is. Why, there isn't a girl in New York who will do general housework, no matter what you pay, and Mr. Chisholm offers more every day. No sooner does Mr. Chisholm say what he wants than the woman at the office starts telling him what the girl won't do. It's heartrending to hear him."

"Um—yes." Leysa's tone was thoughtful.

She kissed Sunshine, pink, moist and talcumed from her bath, and sang Junior his favorite version of "The Man in the Moon" before she left.

Then she went home and waited. She didn't wait with patience nor with smiles, nor with confidence. She waited crossly, and she waited tearfully, and she waited, often scared to death that her waiting was going to be in vain—but she waited. She loved Brand, she loved him so much that it hurt her heart every time she thought of him; of the way he laughed, the way he caught his lip between his teeth when he was angry, and the way he used to kiss her, on the back of her neck, when he unfastened her frock at night. And thinking of these things she wondered what she'd do if he didn't call her up. Why—if he didn't—she'd have to— Still, how could she? He talked to her so terribly; there hadn't been one bit of love in his eyes when he looked at her—just cold, black rage.

And then, because Brand *did* love her, and because Junior objected to the way he sang "The Man in the Moon," and never let him finish it; because he stamped his foot and demanded to know the reason why mother had cried when she said good-by—"Why did mother cry, daddy — was mother a naughty girl? Wouldn't she be allowed to come home any more—ever?"—because of these things and one or two others, Brand called up and waited impatiently while Mr. Haddon was being summoned to the telephone.

BRAND began at once with no introductory preliminaries.

"Mr. Haddon, I want Leysa to come home. We had some trouble—but you know all young people have misunderstandings, and I love Leysa—"

"Of course you do, my son," Mr. Haddon interrupted heartily. "And Leysa loves you. You're a pair of idiots—but then, you're young."

"Yes." Then Brand asked, more desperation in his voice than he realized. "Do you think Leysa will come home—will she come to-day?"

Mr. Haddon laughed. Then he snorted pompously to cover his laugh. Finally he coughed. "Oh sure, she'll come home. Now—wait a minute. I've got something to say.

"Leysa will drive you down to your office every morning, and call for you at night, in a frilly gown and full of conversation calculated to amuse a tired business man. After dinner she will play bridge or dance or go to the theater—she's quite at your disposal. She'll make out the menus for your meals so that you'll eat the things you like, and she'll attend to the marketing so that the H. C. of L. is kept within reasonable bounds—"

"Say, what is all this, anyhow?" Brand cut in.

"If you let me finish, you may find out," his father-in-law snapped at him. "To go back. Leysa will do all this gladly. But—she will *not* see that the man comes every two weeks to do the windows."

"Oh—she won't," Brand murmured uncertainly.

"She will *not* take down the summer curtains and put up the winter ones."

"Oh—she—won't?" Brand's voice was barely audible.

"And she will not spank Junior when he stamps his foot," Mr. Haddon went on glibly, plainly proud of a well-learned lesson.

"OHSHEWON'T!!!" Brand's voice was fully audible now. And to his ejaculation he added a few remarks that caused the immediate intervention of Central.

"No, she won't—so she says," Mr. Haddon declared when the storm had abated somewhat.

There was a long silence. Mr. Haddon held his end of the wire and Brand held his.

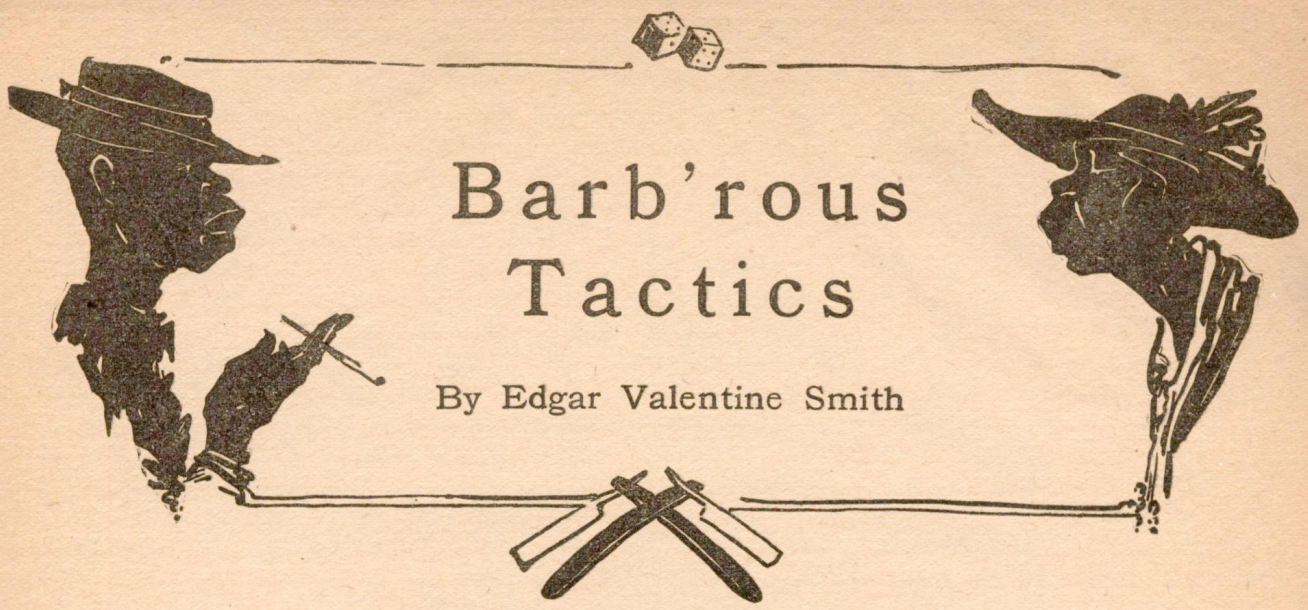
Finally there was a laugh. It came from Brand's end.

"All right," he said. "When is she coming home —could she get here in time for dinner?"

ABOUT four o'clock that same afternoon Mrs. Lane, professional housekeeper and domestic expert, alighted from a taxi in front of the Chisholm house. After her trunk had been taken upstairs she called Ahn.

"See that Mrs. Chisholm's studio is aired and put the roses that Mr. Chisholm sent up, in a bowl on the table. Mrs. Chisholm will be home to-night and may want to work to-morrow."

(*Concluded on page* 306)



Barb'rous Tactics

By Edgar Valentine Smith

Rarely have we encountered a more perfect example of the surprise ending than is presented in this side-splitting story of negro business cunning.

"SOME class!—huh?" Mr. Gooldsby observed with evident pride.

Elias Brown's deliberate, critical glance swept over the twin signs—one in each window—that his partner had spent thoughtful hours in perfecting.

Come In
THE THREE BROTHERS
Barber Shop
Gooldsby & Brown, Props
Mannicure Chiroppodist
Your Next

"Class 'nough," Elias admitted. "But"—after a thoughtful pause—"ruthah misconceivin'."

"In which respecks?" Mr. Gooldsby demanded shortly.

"W-w-well—dat 'chy-rop-po-dist.' Whut is de signifigits of it?"

"Will you *listen* at dat?" Mr. Gooldsby was plainly peeved at his partner's ignorance. "A chiropodis' is a pusson whut trim de cawns offen folkses feets!"

"Ugh-*huh!* But, which one o' us is gwinetah—Looky heah! Goo'sby, you wuzn't figgahin' on me doin' dat, too? If you wuz—"

"Don't excite yo'se'f, Brown! De chiropodis' an' de manicu' is jus' to give de sign class. Us wants to ketch de public's eyes, don't us?"

"Ruthah ketch dey money!"

Elias' appraising gaze returned again to the sign. "I still insis' dat dey's ondeludin'," he argued doggedly. "Fo' instance, dey say, 'Three Brothahs.' Ain't but two of us, is dey?"

"Go on! Show yo' igramunce!"

"An' in de secon' place us ain't brothahs in de fus' place, neethah!"

"Us *sho'* ain't!"

THERE was a decided warmth and vigor in Mr. Gooldsby's assent. Evidently he did not relish the thought that anyone might really believe that a blood relationship existed between himself and Elias Brown. But, with rare self-control and infinite patience, he proceeded to enlighten his partner further about the signs.

"Dem things whut you sees whut ain't so," he explained, "is all fo' 'tractiveness an' 'riginality. S'posin' it jus' say 'Goo'sby & Brown, Bahbah Shop.' Would dey be anything 'riginal 'bout dat?"

"Nunh!"

"Well, den! Co'se, I coulda made it mo' tas'e-fuller by printin' 'Tonsilorial Pahlohs,' 'stead o' 'Bahbah Shop,' but wouldn't none o' dese Mobile niggahs undahstood it. Dey's almos' as igramunt as you is!"

With this Mr. Gooldsby turned upon his heel and entered the shop.

MANY a time since the formation of their partnership had M. Orpheus Gooldsby wondered just how much longer he was going to be able to stand it. Elias Brown's positive lack of initiative had tried his partner's patience almost to the breaking point. Elias, so Mr. Gooldsby was accustomed to reflect, was about as original as a 1920 model horseshoe. On the other hand, take himself. He was full of originality; he bristled with innovations. Scarcely a day passed that he did not offer one or more suggestions calculated to revolutionize the trade of barbering. According to the *Weekly Illus-*

trated Barbers' Gazette, from which Mr. Gooldsby obtained his original ideas, many of these had already been tried out with marked success in the more fashionable barber shops of Paris. But, despite all arguments, Elias Brown had never been brought to see their practicability as applied to Davis Avenue in Mobile.

Elias hailed from an up-state small town, where, prior to his military service via the selective service act, he had conducted a barber shop. His advent as an embryo Hun-hunter found him with considerable savings in the home bank. When he sailed for France his service record, instead of accompanying him, spent the interim between his departure and his return in visiting from one cantonment to another in search of its missing master. Consequently, when Elias was finally discharged he had, in addition to his bank account, several hundred dollars back pay.

He returned to his home, but life abroad had robbed the high-grass town of its lustre. He looked about for broader fields and his choice fell upon Mobile.

IT WAS at the Gulf Terminal Station that he first met Mr. M. Orpheus Gooldsby. Elias' life-like resemblance to ready money proved an irresistible lure. Mr. Gooldsby's originality engineered an acquaintanceship without the other's suspicions being aroused.

"Seekin' employment, brothah?" he asked.

"Nunh! I's huntin' vittles!"

Mr. Gooldsby courteously piloted the way to a colored lunch counter. There he opened the conversation again.

"Prospeckin'?"

"Yeah!"

"Whut line?"

"Lookin' fo' a location fo' a fus' class cullud bahbah shop."

"Hm-m-m-m!"

"Whut you hm-m-m-min' 'bout?"

"Bahbah myse'f! But a location—dat's somep'm else!"

"Whut 'tis?"

"Brothah, dey's skeerce. Dey ain't but one dat I knows of an' I got de option on it. But de bonus got to be paid fus'."

"Bonus?"

"My Lawd, man! Wheah you come f'um? Mean to say you don't know you cain't rent prop'ty in Mobile de way times is now widout payin' a bonus? Huh!"

IT APPEARED from Mr. Gooldsby's further conversation that desirable locations for barber shops were indeed at a premium. But, since he liked Mr. Brown's looks, he would suggest that they form a partnership, pay the bonus, and rent the property upon which Mr. Gooldsby held the option. His talk was convincing, and, within an hour Elias had entered into a partnership agreement. He paid over his share of the bonus which his partner pocketed—for keeps.

There still remained the matter of furniture and fittings. Here Mr. Gooldsby's originality came to the fore again. He knew where they could get just what they needed. He would attend to this. Mr. Brown, being a stranger in Mobile, didn't know the ropes, of course, and someone might put something over on him. So Mr. Gooldsby purchased everything. During the transaction he pulled down a modest commission of thirty per cent—which he forgot to split with his partner.

THE firm had not been in business two weeks before Mr. Gooldsby became acutely aware of Elias Brown's lamentable dearth of initiative. He mentioned it.

"Trouble wid you, Brown—one of 'em—is dat you is so painlessly lackin' in 'riginality."

"Yeah?" Elias was shaving a customer at the time. "Whut do it git you?"

"W-w-well! If dat ain't *igramunce* fo' you! Whut 'twuz, you reckin, showed Christophus C'lumbus how to discovah de nawth pole? Whut learnt Benjamin Franklin how to invent de law o' grav'tation? Huh?"

"Hawss sense!"

"You's as bright as a mud turkle! 'Twuz 'riginality!"

But for several months matters moved along without any serious differences between the two. During his leisure time in the shop Mr. Gooldsby was an ardent reader of the *Weekly Illustrated Barbers' Gazette.* One day he brought the periodical over to Elias.

"Speakin' o' class," he remarked, "look at dis!"

ELIAS took the paper. His attention was directed to a half-tone that covered one quarter of the page. It depicted a half dozen chic, good-looking young women in a row, each draped over the back of a barber's chair. Underneath were the words:

SEXTETTE OF LADY BARBERS

Elias looked at it for a moment and then passed it back without comment.

Mr. Gooldsby snorted his disgust. "Don't dat sejes' nothin' to yo' single track intelleck?"

"Co'se!"

"Whut?"

"Dat some othah fool notion fixin' to wrop itse'f 'roun' yo' brain an' commence callin' it 'buddy.' "

"Huh! You knows a heap 'bout brains!"

"I's learnt somep'm—consid'able—in de las' six mont's."

"But you ain't nevah learnt to interpreck ideas! 'Twuzn't lady bahbahs I was thinkin' 'bout a tall!"

"Whut 'twuz?"

"A lady cashieress!"

"Fo' dis shop?"

"Co'se!"

"*Naw-suh!* Dat 'd be wusser 'n lady bahbahs!"

"How wusser?"

"Dissa way, Goo'sby. I's a ingaged man."

"Well?"

"My gal wouldn't want no scarum-harum, fly-up-de-creek young 'ooman a-flittin' 'roun' de shop whilse I wuz at work."

MR. GOOLDSBY launched into an impassioned argument in favor of a young lady cashier for their establishment. He cited one instance after another, each one hundred per cent fictional, in which, to his personal knowledge, business institutions had averted certain ruin by the addition of attractive young women to their working forces.

But Elias Brown remained unmoved. He let it be known in no uncertain language that there would be nothing doing. Then it was that Mr. Gooldsby issued his ultimatum.

"I gives you fair warnin', Brown, dat you bettah think it ovah! It's hahd 'nough on me to hafta be in business wid a cawn-fiel' han', widout lettin' 'im dictake to me! If you ain't changed yo' mine by dis time to-morrah, dis pahtnahship is busted up! Think it ovah, frien'!"

Mr. Gooldsby flounced out of the shop.

Elias remained for nearly an hour after his partner had left. As he locked the door and turned to go, his eyes rested for a moment upon Mr. Gooldsby's gaudily lettered handiwork in the windows. He contemplated it thoughtfully.

"Sign," he mused prophetically, "somep'm seem to whispah dat 'bout dis time to-morrah you gwine-tah be tellin' a p'int-blank lie!"

To-Night You Came to Me

By CHARLES DIVINE

TO-NIGHT you came to me,
This love-night of a white, transfigured world,
Moon-moulded out of lustrous silences,
Moon-hushed, moon-glossed, moon-statuesque;
A night so softly handled by the breeze
That all the stars stood breathless in caress
And lilac bushes stirred with perfumed sighs—
To-night you came to me
And crept within my arms
Unhurried, proud, and intimate.

And yet . . . your window lies a mile away
Across the silver-gabled town.
And yet you came—
I know not how, save through the moon—
Across the roof-tops while the city slept,
And doors were locked and shutters closely drawn,
Gossiping tongues were still and fools at peace
Beneath this hush of night
So vibrant with invisible unrest
Breathed from the earth or loosened from the sky.

In this moon-lustered city lanterned by the stars
You found your way along some hidden road,
The pathway of a heart's desire, perhaps,
And laid your lips on mine . . . .
To-morrow, when we meet among the crowds,
I wonder dare you look at me, indifferent.

THAT evening he paid one of his tri-weekly calls upon his *fiancée*.

Knowing that he couldn't change his decision, he came to the shop next morning realizing that the partnership would be dissolved. Mr. Gooldsby, he reasoned, would undoubtedly start a business somewhere and engage the services of some young woman as cashier. That was a practical certainty. Elias had felt assured of this much since the evening before.

When Mr. Gooldsby arrived somewhat later their greeting was polite, but frigid. During the entire forenoon an atmosphere of tense formality brooded over the place.

It was just before noon that Miss Jeradine Moseby came, unheralded, into the shop. To say that her personality was striking would be to damn with faint praise. Miss Moseby was more — vastly more—than this. She was tall and well proportioned. She flashed a smile that revealed two rows of almost unbelievably perfect white teeth. Her calm brown eyes rested indiscriminately upon each man in turn. Though she was fashionably attired, she was far removed from the flashy type. She was of the sort which, despite a handicap of physical attractiveness, seems to radiate dependability and steadfastness.

SHE introduced herself. Elias Brown acknowledged the introduction perfunctorily, but po-

litely, and returned to his work. He was an engaged man.

Not so his partner. One glance at Miss Jeradine Moseby and Cupid's barb had smitten Mr. Gooldsby fatally. With unapproachable grace he bowed the young woman to the best chair, deprecating the fact that he could offer nothing better.

"But wid a pahtnah bline to eve'y modern progress, ma'am," he apologized, "it's de bes' I kin do!"

Miss Moseby insisted that no apology was necessary. " 'Sides, bein' a business 'ooman," she continued, "I's ruthah used to unconveniences."

"An' de nachuah o' yo' business, ma'am?"

"S'licitin'!"

"S'licitin' which?"

"Si'scriptions to three o' de mos' pop'lah readin' magazines which is published." She mentioned the periodicals.

"W-w-well! If dat ain't a coinc'dence!"

"In which respecks, Mist' Goo'sby?"

"Heah I's been intendin' to si'scribe fo' all three o' dem papuhs fo' mont's. Whut de si'scription prices now?"

"De three of 'em fo' five dollahs an' a quahtah puh yeah."

"Reas'nubble 'nough! Jus' write me down fo' all three of 'em fo' one yeah!"

"Thank you, suh!" She took Mr. Gooldsby's address and began writing. "De three of 'em"—she read as she wrote—"fo'—three—yeahs! Be fifteen dollahs and six bits, Mist' Goo'sby. An' *ve'y much obliged* to you, suh!"

Mr. Gooldsby gulped, but he paid over the fifteen dollars and seventy-five cents, and took Miss Moseby's receipt.

THE young lady turned her attention to Elias. But, while he deported himself with perfect courtesy toward her, that young man let it be known at once that he was not a prospect. Then he excused himself and went out for lunch.

He returned thirty minutes later and found that Miss Moseby had left the shop. She had also left behind her a wildly enthusiastic, ecstatic Mr. Gooldsby.

"C-l-a-s-s? Oh-h, *m-m-man!"* were the first words that Elias heard as he came in.

"Class?" he inquired mildly.

"You tell 'em, boy! I's deef an' dum'! I cain't speak 'bove a whispah, nuh I cain't heah nothin' but de rustlin' o' angel wings! *Wow-w-w!"*

"Whut is yo' puhticklah complaint, Goo'sby?"

"Complaint is right! An' it's a-gettin' wusser eve'y minute!"

"Cain't you ceast long 'nough to explicify yo'se'f?"

"Dat Miss Moseby—Miss Jerydine Moseby! Whut it take to have good looks, an' style, an' class, an' culchah, an' refinement, an'—an' eve'ything, she is mo' dan got it!"

Elias grunted.

AFTER a while Mr. Gooldsby subsided. Contrary to his usual habit when there were no customers in the shop, he did not bury himself in the contents of the *Barbers' Gazette.* He appeared to be wrestling with some sizable mental problem. His brow was puckered; his forehead became seamed with wrinkles. At intervals he rose from his chair and strode up and down the shop. Finally he spoke.

"Brown," he demanded, "is you still of de same 'pinion 'bout de lady cashieress as you wuz yistiddy?"

"I is still. If anything, Goo'sby, I's *mo'* still!"

Mr. Gooldsby threw out his hands with a helpless gesture. "I knowed it wuz comin' some day!" he exploded. "An' heah 'tis!"

"Whut?"

"De las' straw!"

"Which las' straw?"

"De one whut brung de camel back!"

"Jus' wheah is de connection 'twixt a young lady cashieress an' some fool camel whut got los'?"

Mr. Gooldsby ignored the question. "An', whilse I ain't got nary drap o' camel blood in me—so fur as I knows—I's gwine back! I's *th'ough!"*

"Gwine back wheah?"

"New Awleans—wheah I cóme f'um!"

With this Mr. Gooldsby rushed out the door, slammed it viciously and was gone.

But his outburst, his threat of leaving Mobile, had been theatrical, pure and simple, and staged for a definite purpose. He wanted Elias Brown to think—for the present, at any rate—that he intended returning post haste to New Orleans. As matter of fact, such a course of action was about the last thing that Mr. Gooldsby would have considered. No. He knew a good thing when he saw it!

DURING the half hour that Elias had taken off for lunch, Mr. Gooldsby had learned a great deal about Miss Jeradine Moseby. Among other things was the fact that the young woman was dependent upon her own efforts for a living. She believed that she had an aptitude for certain things, and had recently come to Mobile to secure work that would net the greatest returns. It appeared that she was not overly fond of her present occupation as a canvasser, and would willingly exchange it for any honorable calling that was sufficiently lucrative. Mr. Gooldsby had taken her address.

Now he hastened to the downtown district of Mobile. He sought out the real estate agent who had in charge the property that he and Elias Brown were renting.

"Boss man," was Mr. Gooldsby's greeting, "I's come to see 'bout renewin' de lease."

"Which lease is that?" the agent asked.

"Usetah be Goo'sby & Brown—bahbah shop. Gwinetah be jus' Goo'sby f'um now on, dough."

"Why-y-y—what's the trouble with Brown?"

"Cap'n, you see, suh, he's jus' a small town niggah. Always is been an' always will be."

"But what's that got to do with the lease?"

"Well, suh, Brown jus' nachelly cain't stan' de pressure. 'Tain't in 'im to do de hahd work necessa'y in a city bahbah shop. So, he's gwine back home."

"Back to the tall timber, eh?"

"Yassuh. Back to de cotton patch wheah he belong."

IT LACKED a few weeks until the regular time for renewing annual leases, but Mr. Gooldsby was not taking any chances. He had himself to look out for. Let Elias Brown do the best he could. That was his business, and Mr. Gooldsby's was his own.

The real estate agent did not question the glib statement as to the disruption of the partnership of Gooldsby & Brown, and the lease was made out and duly signed. Within an hour after he had left the barber shop, Mr. Gooldsby found himself the recognized lessee for the coming year of the property which had been rented on a partnership basis by himself and Elias Brown.

AS HE was leaving the building he ran squarely into Miss Jeradine Moseby.

"How forch'nit!" he exclaimed, raising his hat with rare grace and uncorking his most brilliant smile.

"Fo' who?" Miss Moseby shot back.

"Fo' me—I has de audacity to hope! An' maybe—fo' bofe of us!"

"In which respecks, Mist' Goo'sby?"

"Dat you would lak to secu' you a elegant position an' I's seekin' a young lady whut kin do honah to jus' such a place!"

"Does you has reference to business or pleasuah?"

Mr. Gooldsby smiled broadly. He had been right! Here was a girl after his own heart! Country born and bred though she might be, it was a cinch that the man who would put one over on her would have to get up mighty early and keep mighty long hours.

But he sobered suddenly. "Business fuss', wid me—*always,* Miss Moseby!" he announced emphatically. "An if you's got de time to step ovah in de pahk fo' a minute, I won't keep you waitin' long."

Seated on a bench in the park he outlined his plans. He was going to open a first-class barber shop, and needed the services of an intelligent, resourceful, dependable young lady as cashier. Would such a position appeal to Miss Moseby? She thought for a moment and decided that it would. And would she accept it? Y-e-s—at a price, which she named. Again Mr. Gooldsby showed his gameness. He agreed to her figures. They shook hands on it and the pact was sealed.

THERE remained the matter of advising Elias Brown as to certain of the steps that had been taken. Mr. Gooldsby admitted to himself frankly that he had no particular relish for this, but it had to be done some time. Better get it over with now.

He found Elias in the shop.

"Thought you wuz gwinetah lef' out!" was the latter's greeting.

"'Cided I'd come back an' let you lef'."

"S'posin' I don't keer to?"

"Well—whiles de s'posin' is good, jus' try s'posin' dat you mout hafta!"

"Hafta?"

"I said it!"

"Dey cut dat word outen de dictiona'y befo' I comence gwine to school."

"Dey kin cut it in ag'in!"

"Feared I wouldn't know whut it mean if dey did."

A Song for To-day

By HELEN FRAZEE-BOWER

GIVE over dreaming! All too soon the day
That even now illumes the eastern sky
With blush of dawn will take the twilight way
And fade in dusk. Up, Heart! forbear the sigh
That trembles for a dream that may not be:
Behold the promise that this day bestows,
With courage face the morn; to-night may see
A faith renewed, a hope reborn—who knows?

Give over dreaming! What has never been
May yet bear fruit, but what can never be
'Twere better to forget. This hour may mean
The gateway that unlocks Eternity.
Old doubts, old griefs, old burdens, cast away—
Awake! O Heart, arise—fulfill To-day!

"You wouldn't?" Mr. Gooldsby pulled out his duplicate of the lease that had just been signed and extended it toward his partner. "Maybe you mout know whut dis mean, den!"

THE latter accepted the document and read enough to understand its import. Ever since the previous day, when Mr. Gooldsby had uttered his dramatic threat of breaking up their partnership, Elias had been expecting trickery of some sort. But this came as a shock. For a moment he was stunned.

"Whut I gwinetah do?" he asked himself mechanically.

Mr. Gooldsby assumed that the query had been directed to him. "If you don't git you a job soon," he retorted contemptuously, "you may fine yo'se'f a-flittin' 'long de ragged edge o' stahvation!"

"When I desiahs advice f'um you, Mist' Goo'sby," Elias flared back, "I'll make my conbasation mo' puss'nal!"

SOMETHING in Elias Brown's voice and manner brought Mr. Gooldsby up short. There might be danger of pushing this rube too far, he reflected. In such an event Elias would have a strategic advantage in position, for he stood within easy reach of a case of razors, while Mr. Gooldsby was a good six feet away and weaponless. Diplomacy would perhaps serve better.

"Now, looky heah, Brown, dis is a strickly business mattah! Eve'y man in business got to look out fo' hisse'f!"

"Huh! You is sho' acted on dat principle!"

"'Zackly! Whut else you expeck?"

"Nothin'—f'um you!"

"Well, den! Co'se de lease don't go inta effeck till de fus' de mont'. You's got till den to be huntin' you a job."

"Uh-huh!"

"Or, if you wants me to, I'll buy yo' sheer o' de furnchah an' fixin's right now. You think de subjeck over keerfully whilse I's gone."

MR. GOOLDSBY had overshot the mark in one particular. Contrary to the facts in the case he had assumed that his partner was practically on his uppers, but the fact was that Elias had not invested more than a third of his original capital in the partnership. As this was most emphatically none of Mr. Gooldsby's affair, the former had never mentioned anything about additional resources.

But while he had sufficient money with which to embark in business upon his own responsibility, Elias realized gloomily that he hadn't a location. And the indications were that this condition might continue indefinitely. Desirable rental property was not to be had for love nor money. There was a splendid place a few blocks down the avenue, which was being rented by a Greek, who ran a little hit-or-miss general store, but Elias doubted that the latter could be induced to surrender his lease.

He stepped gloomily outside the shop and seated himself in one of the chairs on the sidewalk. He had picked up mechanically the current issue of the *Weekly Illustrated Barbers' Gazette*, which he tried to read. But he couldn't get interested in it. The more he thought of his former partner's trickery, the hotter he got. And the more fully he realized that just at the present there was no legitimate means of retaliation.

IT WAS while he was in this frame of mind that his closest friend, Enos Goodbrad, proprietor of one of the largest of Davis Avenue's progressive eating-houses, ambled up and seated himself alongside.

"Whut you doin', 'Lias?" was Mr. Goodbrad's greeting.

"A-settin'," was the glum answer.

"Jus' a-settin'?"

"W-w-well—you mout say, Mist' Goodbrad, dat I's a-settin' an' a-simmerin'."

"A-simmerin'? Fo' why?"

"'Cause I's almos' 'bout ready to e-rup'."

"Tell me 'bout it, son!"

"It's dat low-life pahtnah o' mine. He done tuck an' flang de double-cross inta me!"

"Hm-m-m!"

ELIAS told it all. Mr. Goodbrad was an older man, and the former unbosomed himself freely. He even showed the half-tone of the sextette of lady barbers—which, incidentally, interested Mr. Goodbrad immensely—and explained how this had given rise in Mr. Gooldsby's brain to the idea of a young lady cashier. Elias told of his sweetheart's position in the matter. The young lady, it appeared, might not object to a half dozen, or more, women about the place, but the idea of one single, unattached female in the shop where her fiancé spent his days was not to be entertained.

Elias wound up his recital with an account of what Mr. Gooldsby had done about the lease.

"It's whut I calls barb'rous tactics, Mist' Goodbrad," he ejaculated indignantly; "pos'tively barb'rous!"

"'Twuz ondahanded, son, no doubt; but you wants to fo'git dis e-ruptin' inclincation o' yo'n."

"Fo' why?"

"Dey's othah ways o' scaldin' a hawg 'sides dip-

pin' 'im in billin' molasses. De 'lasses would do de work, co'se, but it am pow'ful sticky an' you's ap' to git yo'se'f all mussed up in de op'ration."

Acting upon Mr. Goodbrad's admonition, Elias suppressed his volcanic proclivities when Mr. Gooldsby returned to the shop. They dickered for several minutes as to the value of Elias' share in the furniture and fittings, but finally the deal was closed, and Elias, taking his personal belongings, left the shop.

He visited the properietor of the Greek store and made an offer for the latter's lease. But the merchant was stubborn and refused to consider the matter of a transfer. Elias tried real estate agents, but there was nothing to be had. Failing in all of his attempts, he promptly got a job in a shop in one of the leading hotels.

MR. GOOLDSBY'S business prospered, for the comely Miss Moseby, seated in stately majesty at the cashier's desk, was a lure that denizens of Davis Avenue could not resist.

It was toward the close of the second week after his opening that Mr. Gooldsby delicately broached a subject to Miss Moseby that lay very near his heart.

"Is you evah considahed," he asked, "de subjeck o' mat'imonious aspecks, Miss Moseby?"

The young woman glanced coyly down for a moment and then raised her eyes. "Is you evah seed a young 'ooman whut ain't—puhvidin', co'se, dat she ain't already tried it oncet?"

Mr. Gooldsby caught the subtle irony of the remark and smiled appreciatively. "Pays 'em to be keerful," he admitted. "So many of 'em does git stang nowadays."

"Ain't it de trufe!"

"Seem to me, dough, a young lady wid yo' nachel jedgment couldn't hahdly pick nothin' less'n a befo' time winnah."

"But dey's all kines o' fruit in dis heah gahden o' love whut de poeck speak 'bout, Mist' Goo'sby. Dey's many a red apple got a brown worm at de co'!"

"Shows you cain't tell nothin' by de outside. You got to jedge by whut a man done wid his op'tunities!"

"True, too!"

"Yessum! Fine out whut kine o' secess a man is in business. One whut's slow to take 'vantage o' de twis'es an' turns o' forchune wouldn't suit you, I know!"

"I should say not!"

"An' den a man oughta have plenty o' 'riginality."

"Dat 'd he'p—lots!"

THE entrance of a customer caused Mr. Gooldsby to cut short his *tête-à-tête*. But he was thoroughly satisfied. There was no doubt that he and Miss Moseby were absolutely in accord as to the type of husband that would suit her. And Mr. Gooldsby knew just where that type could be found!

Still, he realized that the young woman was not of the sort that could be wooed lightly and won easily. He would have to proceed carefully. One slip might prove fatal. He reflected that one can be surfeited even with sweetness. Therefore, he forebore to call upon the young lady of evenings at her residence. Probably she saw enough of him, for the present, during work hours.

A month passed, during which Elias Brown worked at his trade in the city. The only vacation that he allowed himself was a three-day visit to New Orleans, as he had never viewed the wonders of that gulf metropolis. Thrice a week he called upon the young lady of his choice. He spent a good portion of the remainder of his leisure time in the company of his friend, Mr. Enos Goodbrad. Although he had never visited Mr. Gooldsby's place of business since their disagreement, he knew that his former partner had employed a young lady cashier, and that he was reported to be prospering.

ONE afternoon, just after lunch, Miss Moseby secured her employer's permission to be off for the remainder of the day. It seemed that with her going business in the shop fell off fully fifty per cent. Mr. Gooldsby noted this.

Tapers

By ETHEL HOPE

TWO tapers you have given me
To light me on my way—
Ah, otherwise the night were black
And skies of daytime gray,
And life, a thing so bright and glad,
Were only desolate and sad.

One taper is my faith in you
And one, your love for me;
Their light shines o'er prosaic things
In subtle witchery
Until each daily task is wrought
Where winds with incense sweet are fraught.

* * * * *

Two tapers you have given me—
Their lights burn true and clear;
Ah, otherwise this earth would be
A cheerless place and drear.

"Dat'll prove it to you!" he mused, as he closed up a full hour ahead of his usual time. "Jus' shows whut one good-lookin' gal in yo' place'll do fo' you. 'Twuzn't fo' her, I wouldn't much mo'n pay livin' expenses!"

Some distance down the street he came upon Mr. Enos Goodbrad. They greeted each other politely. Mr. Goodbrad was even cordial.

"Lak to take a li'l walk?" he suggested companionably.

"Don't keer if I does. It'll stretch my laigs. Which way you haided?"

"Oh-h, jus' walkin'!"

For several minutes they strolled, talking of trivialities. Presently Mr. Goodbrad's attention was drawn to a crowd that had collected some distance down the avenue.

"Huh! Mus' a been a fiah!" he observed. "Le's see 'bout dat!"

TOGETHER they hastened to the place. Mr. Gooldsby had some difficulty in worming his way through the crowd to see what the attraction was. Finally he succeeded. He had lost Mr. Goodbrad in the jam. But Mr. Gooldsby did not miss his companion. He was gazing, thunderstruck, at the sight that met his eyes.

Through a spotlessly polished window he gazed upon the interior of a model barber shop. There were four chairs—all brand new! And—could his eyes be deceiving him?—presiding over them were four of the niftiest, trimmest, neatest young women that he had ever seen! Nor was this all. At one side of the shop a couple of fifteen-year-old girls, in white caps and aprons, were busy polishing shoes.

Mr. Gooldsby's gaze floated, fascinated, from first one of the young women to another. With what superb grace they plied the tools of their trade! He took in other details. He noted the skill with which the girl bootblacks wielded their brushes. And—

AT THE opposite side of the room, and facing an almost-mahoganized birch cashier's desk, was seated a personage. The face was hidden behind the pages of the *Weekly Illustrated Barbers' Gazette*. But the figure! Mr. Gooldsby could see a portion of that. He could discern plainly the ends of a long, black broad-cloth "swingeller" coat, and trousers of the softest of pearl gray. And feet. Those feet! They were propped up on the desk. There was something startlingly—something sickeningly—familiar about them!

Mr. Gooldsby elbowed his way through the crowd, flung open the door, and entered the shop. He lunged through a waiting list three deep. His hurried entry created a mild sort of commotion. The *Barbers' Gazette* slid downward for about twelve inches. Elias Brown's placid face appeared above the edge of the paper. He never batted an eyelash. He turned toward his menials.

"'Ten-*shun!*" he barked.

Work ceased. Six pairs of feminine heels clicked simultaneously; six lithe figures snapped to rigidity. The execution was so perfect that it seemed to have been rehearsed for this particular occasion.

"Salute!"

One shaving mug, three razors and a couple of shoe brushes, in the hands of their owners, shot forehead high.

Elias' critical glance swept the statue-like figures deliberately. Apparently the inspection satisfied him.

"As you wuz!"

Work was resumed.

Elias yawned and turned a complacent visage toward Mr. Gooldsby. "Jus' a li'l 'riginal idea o' mine, Mist' Goo'sby," he explained. "Classy—huh?"

MR. GOOLDSBY did not commit himself. He had not spoken since entering the shop. As far as audible expression was concerned he might have been twin brother to the Sphinx.

"Thought I nevah wuz gwinetah git me a place," Elias explained, "till dat Greek man whut wuz in heah went busted, an' I got his lease. Mist' Goodbrad fixed the shop up fo' me whilse I wuz at work. De young ladies is f'um New Awleans."

He took a couple of fat cigars from his pocket, inspected them carefully, returned one to its place, and then lighted the other.

"An' how is you gittin' 'long ovah to yo' place—all by yo'se'f?" he asked solicitously.

This subtle thrust brought Mr. Gooldsby to. "You seems to fo'git," he retorted icily, "dat I ain't 'zackly all by myse'f. Ain't you ovahlookin' my cashieress?"

"Who—me?" Elias chuckled. "I don't nevah ovahlook nothin' lak dat! 'Twouldn't be 'riginal!"

HE PRESSED a button on his desk. For a fraction of a second nothing happened. Then a pair of portières at the rear of the shop parted slowly. Miss Jeradine Moseby stood framed in their folds. She hesitated for a moment, just long enough for Mr. M. Orpheus Gooldsby's brain to register an impression that would never be erased. Then she came swiftly to Elias Brown.

"Did you ring fo' me, honey?" she asked sweetly.

"Jus' wanted Mist' Goo'sby to see how you looks, dollin', in dem clo'es."

Mr. Gooldsby had seen. Now he gasped. He al-

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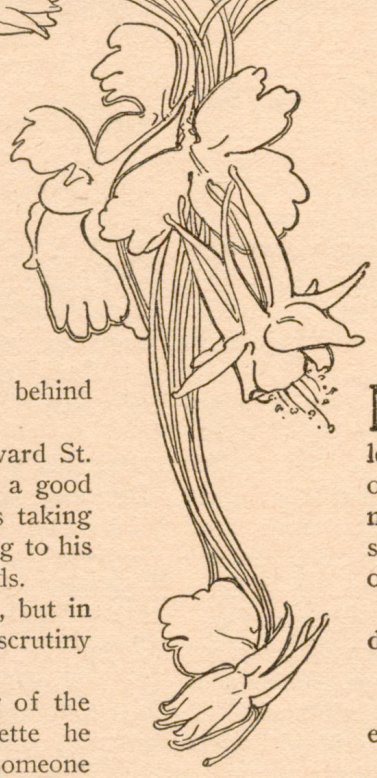
The Cipher of Death

By
Robert W. Sneddon



The old saying runs: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." Monsieur Fusier had cause to remember this in his hour of agony.

"IT IS strange," reflected Monsieur Fusier, "that in the midst of this tumult I seem to hear the footsteps of someone keeping pace behind me."

He was walking along the Boulevard St. Germain with the leisured tread of a good Parisian who, having dined well, is taking a little digestive stroll before retiring to his favorite café for an evening at cards.

Several times he turned his head, but in the faces which met his suspicious scrutiny he saw none that he recognized.

But as he paused at the crossing of the Rue Bonaparte to light a cigarette he wheeled round apprehensively. Someone had tapped him lightly on the shoulder.

"Oh, it is you," he said sharply. "How long have you been following me?"

The woman threw back her head and laughed.

"What do you want?" he demanded thickly.

She drew the fur piece about her throat with a nervous gesture.

"What do you want?" he repeated, stepping back.

She met his bloodshot eyes with a curious air of defiance.

"To speak to you. Oh, you have nothing to fear from me. I am not one of those women who resort to a vial of vitriol."

Monsieur Fusier withdrew the hand he had slipped into his pocket and exhaled a long puff of smoke.

NO, he reflected, after all, Louise had not courage enough for violence. Tears had been her only weapon in the past. What a misfortune to meet her again! Ah, well, a little show of strength and he would be rid of her.

"I have nothing to say to you, madame," he said curtly. "Good night."

"Wait!"

Against his will he halted at the edge of the pavement.

"Well?—I am in a hurry."

"To get to your café and your absinthe. Oh, I know your habits, *mon ami*. Reassure yourself. I want to speak to you on a matter of business."

Monsieur Fusier could not believe the evidence of his ears.

"Business—with me? You are joking."

"Yes. I have a cipher here—"

"A cipher? You have a cipher?"

"Why not?"

"Ah! I suppose there is no reason why you should not. What sort of a cipher?"

"That is for you to say?"

"You want me to read it?"

She nodded her head.

"And you come to me—to me, of all persons?"

"You are the only one who can read it, Paul."

The sound of his name on her lips gave him a strange feeling of irritation.

"Mon dieu!" he said impatiently. "I do not read ciphers in the street. And besides, why come to me?"

"I have already said you were the only man I knew who could read it."

"But—"

She bent forward.

"There is money in it. I am sure there is money in it."

"Money?" he echoed the word.

HE WAS more disturbed than he dare confess by this encounter, and for the time being his mind was at a standstill. He seemed incapable of anything but a dull repetition of her words.

"You mean that you wish to pay me for my work?" he asked after a pause.

"To pay you? No. I have no money."

He shrugged his heavy shoulders, threw away his half-finished cigarette and watched it sizzle out in a pool of rain.

"I have no time for nonsense," he said roughly. "Be on your way and I will go mine. The devil, you are as full of crazy notions as you used to be."

"Listen," said the woman eagerly. "Let me tell you something. There is money for whoever can read this cipher. I will go halves with you."

Monsieur Fusier's eyes narrowed.

"You are telling the truth?"

"I swear it!"

"Where did you get it?"

"Can we go somewhere out of the cold?"

HE HESITATED and looked at her. She was well enough dressed, and time had not dealt badly with her. On the hand which held the fur was a ring; a ring of some value. It was quite possible that in the life into which she had disappeared she had formed some connection by which he might profit.

"Very well," he answered grudgingly, "only no nonsense—no warming over of old affairs. We are done with that, madame."

"I have nothing to do with the past," she maintained with a face in which he could find no trace of bitter memories.

"Then come across the street. We can talk in the café."

She followed him submissively into the smoky atmosphere of the café, and they found a seat on a bench at the back. He ordered two coffees.

"Now what is it?"

SHE put her head close to his and her two dark eyes held him in a strained fascination. A good looking woman, only she had lost the softness which had attracted him first. It had been replaced by a hard brilliancy, by the poise of a woman who, thrown upon the world, had been able to make a foothold for herself. Vaguely he wondered what she had been doing in the year which had elapsed.

"You remember the jewel robbery in the Rue Daunou?"

"Yes."

"Two of the thieves were caught by the police of the Opera station."

"It was in the papers. Yes, I remember."

"The third man escaped with a bag of diamonds through the Holland Hotel on the Rue de la Paix. His name was Charles Antoine Courty. An automobile was waiting near the Hotel Daunou, and jumping in, he managed to drive off in safety."

"But this is a story of crime you are telling me," protested Monsieur Fusier uneasily, regarding his neighbors with an apprehensive glance.

"Oh, you need not be alarmed," said the woman contemptuously. "I have done many things since we parted, but nothing criminal. Courty had a hiding place already prepared for his plunder. He went there, deposited the jewels, drove the car back to Paris, and leaving it outside the fortifications, found a new address and settled down to read his papers in peace. After a few days another crime occupied public attention."

"Really she speaks very well," thought Monsieur Fusier. "She has changed. Things have not gone so badly with her after all."

But aloud he asked:

"Then this cipher of yours?"

"I believe it contains the secret of Courty's hoard."

MONSIEUR FUSIER stared at her in stupified silence. Well, here was a new Louise, one without tears, without recriminations. He drew out his cigarette case, selected a cigarette, and lighted in with hands that trembled.

"You—you know Courty?" he mumbled at last.

"Courty is dead."

Monsieur Fusier's jaw dropped.

"Then the diamonds—"

"Were never found. And for a good reason. Listen. The story is of the simplest. For nine months I have been living in the Rue St. Jacques. Three weeks ago the room next to mine was occupied by a stranger, a man who kept to himself and apparently had no business. He went out no further than the *charcuterie* to buy food, and to the news-

paper store to buy the papers. He prepared his meals in his own room. I could hear him moving about softly, the rustling of papers, the striking of matches. I paid no attention, I was busy with my sewing."

"You were sewing?"

SHE looked up at him with a surprised air, then smiled bitterly.

"Yes. I was clever enough for nothing else."

"Oh, I meant no hurt," he assured her wryly.

"One night I heard him go out. He was not gone ten minutes when I heard someone stumble up the stairs and fling open the door next to mine. There was a heavy fall, a groan, and I ran out of my room and into his. He was sick, I thought, or starving—oh, yes I lived in a house where people starved—perhaps I could do something. It was dark and I lit a candle. What a sight! He was lying on the floor, his neck and shirt-front a mess of blood. 'They got me,' he gasped and fumbled at his breast pocket. I put down my hand to help him and he drew out a paper. It dropped from his fingers and I stooped to pick it up. Just then I heard a noise, and something—I cannot explain it—made me shove the paper into my apron pocket. There were hurried footsteps on the stairs and two policemen entered. When they saw me they started, then went to the man. But he was dead by then. They had seen him—he had taken to his heels and they had emptied their revolvers at him, and he had run back to his lodging. What ferocious energy he had to keep him alive until he reached his hiding-hole."

"AND that was Courty," said Monsieur Fusier with a smile which showed his yellow teeth.

She nodded.

"The police questioned me, and I accompanied them to the station, but the Commissary dismissed me at once. It was only when I was going to bed that night that I remembered the paper. I opened it eagerly. What a disappointment! It was in cipher."

"It was in cipher. Ah! A romance, yes, a positive romance. And you fancy you hold the secret of Courty's deposit? Well, if you want it read, you came to the right person," said Monsieur Fusier nodding his head approvingly. "You did well. I flatter myself that there is no one in Paris who can advise you better. I am in greater request than ever on all matters of deciphering handwriting and hidden writings. Even Monsieur Chalbert of the Mazarin Library does not despise my services. Well, let me see the famous cipher."

"There are one or two little matters to be settled first," she said drawing off her gloves and smoothing out the creases caressingly.

Monsieur Fusier drew back suspiciously.

"I do not understand."

"The cipher is mine."

"Oh, that is understood. Certainly!"

HE MODULATED his harsh tones to a semblance of persuasion.

"There is nothing to prevent me taking it to police headquarters," she announced, looking at him coldly.

"That would be foolish—come, come—foolish."

"You think so."

Monsieur Fusier gulped behind his short black beard.

"Tell me—no one else knows of this."

"No one."

"Then you would be throwing away an opportunity which Fate has thrust into your hands. The

Immortality

By HELEN FRAZEE-BOWER

OUT of the fullness of my heart
I sought some gift to make
Worthy the love that hour by hour
I cherish for your sake.

Not mine the power to give you wealth,
Nor aught that wealth could buy;
Though others came and proffered these,
Who loved you less than I.

Long days I dreamed, and worked, and planned,
And then there came to me
The gift supreme I should bestow:
Your Immortality.

Through love of you I made of you
A thing that cannot die:
You are a part of all that is,
The woods, the hills, the sky.

Your face smiles from each wayside flower,
Your voice lives in each bird,
Your spirit is the wind at play,
Your step the grasses stirred.

Out of my love I willed it so,
And day by day you grew
Immortalized in all I see—
This is my gift to you.

And love returning to itself
Has blessed abundantly,
For by my gift forevermore
I keep you here with me.

devil, the jewelers have given up all hope of recovery, and besides, their loss was covered by insurance, no doubt."

"I am tired of being poor," said the woman slowly, her dark eyes flashing.

"Precisely," said Monsieur Fusier eagerly, "I don't blame you. And between ourselves crime is only a relative term. Some find gold mines, others copper and diamonds, others a stroke of luck on the exchange. What difference is there in finding something which otherwise would lie hidden in the earth, perhaps forever. As for robbery or theft—no. But in a matter of this kind, there is no room for scruples."

She appeared to hesitate.

"Oh, you can trust me. I admit that in the past, perhaps—"

SHE shut her eyes for a moment as though she found the gaze he bent upon her too compelling, then opened them with an expression so wild that Monsieur Fusier shrank back abruptly. Suddenly she laughed lightly.

"So you have moments of reproach, Paul?" she said carelessly. *"Bien!* The past is not always pleasant, eh? Still, that is no affair of mine. We are partners now in a business. When it is over—good-by—we shall never set eyes on each other again, I promise you. Then it is agreed. You read the cipher, and if it has any meaning, we follow it out. Whatever we find we share equally—and that is all."

"Then you bear me no ill will," asked Monsieur Fusier, passing his tongue over his parched lips.

"I am a woman," she answered, "you are a man. We each have our own ways of remaking life. Think no more about it. Drink your coffee. Here is the cipher." She drew out a paper from her handbag.

MONSIEUR FUSIER reached out a greedy hand, a strong, black-haired hand, mottled with brown splotches.

She started, then, controlling her aversion, laid the paper on the marble-topped table.

Monsieur Fusier picked it up and unfolded it.

"Hum!" he muttered doubtfully.

The woman watched him, cat-like.

"Well?"

"I need pen and paper. Waiter, bring me the writing materials."

A waiter brought him what he asked for, and she watched him transfer the symbols one by one to the flimsy writing-paper.

"I could not make head or tail of it," she said slowly, "but you—you are an expert."

"Yes, yes. Let me see. It is not so difficult. Note the regularity—it is an affair of symbols for the letters of the alphabet. I have seen it before, I am sure of that—in the correspondence of the anarchist Vitrau. Yes— Do you remember—? No, of course not—you took no interest in those things."

HE DREW some lines rapidly on the paper, scribbled furiously for a moment with a strange intensity, then chuckled.

"Bah! Child's play. There is only one cipher which has baffled me. But this—pooh!"

Her eyes shone with undisguised satisfaction.

"So you can read it?"

"Like my alphabet. Listen—'Farm of the Three Courts, Pierrelaye. Well ten feet stone wall Villeron Meadow!' Pierrelaye—I have heard that name before—where?"

"I was born there," she said simply.

"Then you know the farm?"

"Yes."

"What a coincidence. In fiction now one would laugh at this. What a stroke of luck. It is not luck, it is fate."

"Yes, it is fate."

HE WAS too excited to note her strange lack of animation. It was almost as if she were stunned by the discovery.

"Bien!" he announced briskly. "We must go there. Waiter, a time-table. Let me see— From St. Lazare to Herblay. There we can hire a conveyance. A fool's errand in the end, perhaps, but it is worth trying, eh?"

"We must go at night then."

He stared at her suspiciously.

"At night? Why? Ah, yes, perhaps better so. Less talk."

"And walk from Herblay to Pierrelaye."

"The fewer who know about our trip the better," he assented. "You have a head on you."

"Thank you."

Monsieur Fusier waved his gross hand indulgently.

"It is true nevertheless. To-morrow night, then? The sooner the better. What do you say?"

"Yes, the sooner it is over—"

She faltered and avoided his eyes.

"We shall meet at St. Lazare about six. It is dark by then. You know the road from Herblay?"

"I know the road—yes."

"She is excited," thought Monsieur Fusier—"the prospect of money, eh. I can afford to be generous—a hundred thousand francs between us—perhaps more."

"Good, then it is all in order," he told her. "We

meet at St. Lazare station a few minutes to six. A lantern will be useful—I shall bring one in a bag. You are going now? No, you are staying? As you please. Then, *au revoir.*"

He raised his hat clumsily, handed her back the paper, and bowing, walked heavy-footedly out of the café.

She watched him go with a tension which endured till the door swung upon his exit, then sank back on the bench and closed her eyes.

WHAT courage it had taken to meet this man once more. She had felt her skin tingle as though the bruises from those brutal, gorilla-like hands were still upon it. To hear his voice again, to confront his eyes with their thatching of coarse hair—it had been an ordeal almost too much for her strength. But now that she had taken the first step, the rest of that which she had promised herself to accomplish was a matter of only another twenty-four hours. And after that—? Well, she did not know—time would tell what her reward would be. Whatever it was, she would be content.

Monsieur Fusier, tramping along to his café, walked upon air. He would retire—he would travel like a milord—the pleasures of the world were within his grasp. And what delicious irony. Through the woman at whose hands he might have expected some gift less agreeable. *Peste!* When he saw her first, it might have been a flask of vitriol that she had in store for him. But she was still afraid of him and his little lessons in duty. Bah! There was only one way to handle a woman.

MONSIEUR FUSIER wandered up and down the hall of the waiting-room with nervous glances at the clock. As it drew closer to the hour of six his agitation increased.

"We shall miss the train," he groaned, "and then another night lost. What is to prevent someone having overheard us in the café and forestalling us? For two sous I am ready to throw up the whole business, or go myself. Ah! There she is."

"Am I late?" she asked hurrying up, her face flushed.

"Just in time. I have the tickets. This way."

"Give me mine. Go through the gate alone. We will travel separately. When I get out at Herblay, let me go ahead, and I shall wait for you by the roadside."

He nodded his head in agreement. She had thought of everything. It was certainly wiser that they should not be seen in company. No prying official, if any question arose afterwards, could remember seeing them together.

At Herblay he saw her descend from the train and walk rapidly out of the station, then unobtrusively followed. She was resting by the roadside, and without a word they set off along the dark road between the lines of tall poplar trees.

"An adventure, eh?" reflected Monsieur Fusier, stumbling in the darkness. "I have never been to Holland—that is the place to dispose of diamonds. I shall drive a hard bargain. There is not a Jew who will get the better of me, I can promise myself that. In cash—I may profit by the exchange. I shall turn financier and double my wealth."

He gave himself up to his fancies as he walked on mechanically.

"WE ARE here," she said suddenly. "There is Pierrelaye where the lights are. The farm lies on this side. Here, take my hand. or you may fall."

"The deuce! She is burning up," Monsieur Fusier said to himself in surprise, as the woman's hand grasped his. "After all, she is not so calm about this business as she would have me believe."

They left the road and entered a meadow. Before them loomed a dark line.

"The wall," she whispered. "The well lies on the other side. This way. Here is the gate."

He passed through the gate after her. In front of him he could distinguish a low, dark mass which rose from the ground. With a stride he reached it and stretched out his hands.

"There is no rope," he said in dismay, "and the well is covered. This is a fine end to our journey. I should have brought a rope."

She disregarded his chagrin.

"Help me to raise the cover. There is a prop here to hold it up." (*Concluded on page* 312)

To Thine Own Hands

By MAURICE LENOIR

TO thine own hands' full liberty
I dedicate this lump of clay,
That they may mould and make of me
Through some exquisite alchemy
The singer of a golden day.

With speed of light let them design
A figure from consuming fire,
So all the beauty that is thine
In this new carving will be mine,
Wrapped with the glory of desire.

Just Letters

By S. E. and E. B.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—*In presenting this series to our readers, we desire to emphasize the fact that these are genuine love letters that actually passed between a man and a woman, both well-known figures in the literary world of to-day. It is our privilege to print them under the condition that the anonymity of the writers be scrupulously preserved.*

Jacksonville on the St. Johns.

GIRL, DEAR:

I can see in your first letter, dear, your uncertainty and fear; the picture of the scarred and ruined birches is symbolic—you, too, are afraid of the fire; the fire that devastates, and the feeling that you *are* afraid hurts dreadfully.

Please do not think that I would reproach you, Eleanor, nor that I think your faith is too small, only I cannot, cannot see it as you do. To me the fire that burns eternally is not one of destruction, but the bright flame of an inspiration that purifies forever. Above all else, dear, the Kingdom of Love is one of certitude; of utter and absolute faith and understanding and it compasses all things.

WORDS are idle, futile things when all is said and done. There is truly more understanding in one touch of the hand than in a thousand written pages; for the heart does not speak a given language, nor are there words in the world to formulate and express the exquisite pleasure that comes from actual companionship.

I know, dear—and I am very certain of the knowledge—that without this, without actual, physical expression, even such love as is ours could never endure, for this is a part of love itself, and the desire is from love inseparable.

I, too, little woman, have seen the awakening your letter speaks of; the pitiable awakening that makes a travesty of the true and the beautiful, but I have seen it always and only in the small-souled people of the earth; in men and women who have (pity them!) no real understanding and comprehension of aught that surpasses the acknowledgement of the senses. Remember, dear, that we are not as they are. You have made of me a man apart and remote from his million brothers, cleansed of the grossness that, I sometimes think, is inherent in us all. And I love you for it; love you even though our continued separation has become a sharp, unending pain; though your letter seems to show that even you do not comprehend the thing that has come to us.

I AM writing this, Eleanor, away down here in the Southland where spring has long since given way to summer, and where the swaying sycamores outside my window seem to speak of age eternal and of the unchanging wonder of the world. Far away I can see the river—the glorious St. Johns—twisting like a silver thread under the sun, and I cannot but believe that all things that are must be forever.

How can love change, Eleanor? Does God in His high heaven tire and change? And what other conception of God can be so true as this: that He is, in part, the soul of each of us; the soul of each lover in the world?—for it is through love alone that we come to understanding—to the ultimate happiness of man.

My dearest, if I could but see you, speak with you, touch you with my hands—I know that you would believe; that you would see and understand. We who have but discovered a new world cannot be measured by the rules and laws that once we knew, and the hurt is very real that your question has given me: your question as to what comes of love when kisses become things of habit—commonplace. How could they, dear? Does a man pray through habit, and do his prayers, too, become commonplace and meaningless? Does he become sated even with those things that are enshrined in his innermost heart forever? As well say at once that there is in the world no permanency—no certitude—no love.

THERE is no more that I can say; words do not come easily where love is so all-embracing. I only know that were we two the sole possessors of the universe; if we alone lived together in the vast emptiness before the world was made; lived there together a million years and even until the end of time; then, when there came the inevitable end of life, my only prayer would be for yet another day with you.

Forever and ever,

STEPHEN.

Valley Lake, N. Y.

VERY well, then, Stephen; have it as you will. You are so sure, so confident, that there is nothing for me to do but to acquiesce. Yet—I cannot agree.

It is not a question of faith with me, but of knowledge born of observation and experience. Nor am I afraid of you, but only of the change that will inevitably come to you. There is not a bit of use in reiterating that you and I are not as other people. Every man likes to believe that he is different from his fellows; every woman likes to flatter herself with the reflection that she is better, finer grained, more delicate and sensitive of perception and feeling than her sisters. The real truth is that we are all human, all pitiably alike in our frailties and failings. Very, very seldom is one of us set apart and exalted, and then it is usually by sheer chance, or by an undeserved glorification that comes from without and not from within at all.

YOU say that I have hurt you by questioning what becomes of love when kisses become a matter of habit; and you ask: "Does a man pray through habit, and do his prayers, too, become commonplace and meaningless?" Does he not, Stephen? Is not a prayer, more often than not, a mere matter of form, run through rapidly, glibly, and without any real reflection as to its significance? How often, to the average man or woman, does the Lord's Prayer, uttered in church or at home, come from the heart, carrying with it a genuine and sincere appeal for care and guidance, and how often does it come only from the lips, to rise no higher than the brain that has assimilated it along with numberless other things of daily routine? It is only in great moments, such as occur but seldom in a lifetime, that the average man really prays, really means and feels his prayer, whether silent or spoken.

TOO, he does become sated, even with the things that are to him most precious and desirable. For, in this world, there is no permanency, and the only certitude is that all things change, and that nothing can remain the same forever.

And we are average, you and I, Stephen; to say or to believe otherwise is wilfully to deceive ourselves. Our love is one of our great moments. It may be that we shall be able to keep it, until its summer, richer, warmer, deeper, is more beautiful, more nearly complete, than the glad and wondrous spring. Or, it may be, that in attaining the heights, we shall lose sight of the peaceful valley beneath, and, in attempting to find our way back, wander into treacherous places, where, in the darkness, we shall go on apart.

I DO not know, I cannot tell what the future has in store for us. Only the gods can say, and they are, as ever, cryptically silent. But since you feel that you cannot be content in the Enchanted Garden, since you doubt that love will remain there with us, then I will go with you to the heights. It shall be as you will. I shall put aside all doubt and fear and questioning, and go with you.

Forgive me if I have hurt you, Belovèd—oh, forgive me! For it is only because I love you so, and because I would keep your love, in all its clean strength, that I have questioned, hesitated. I yield now, not to argument, but to love—to my love for you. Because it is quite plain to me that only by yielding can I make you happy—and that is all I ask, Stephen—that, through me, happiness may come to you, if only for a brief while.

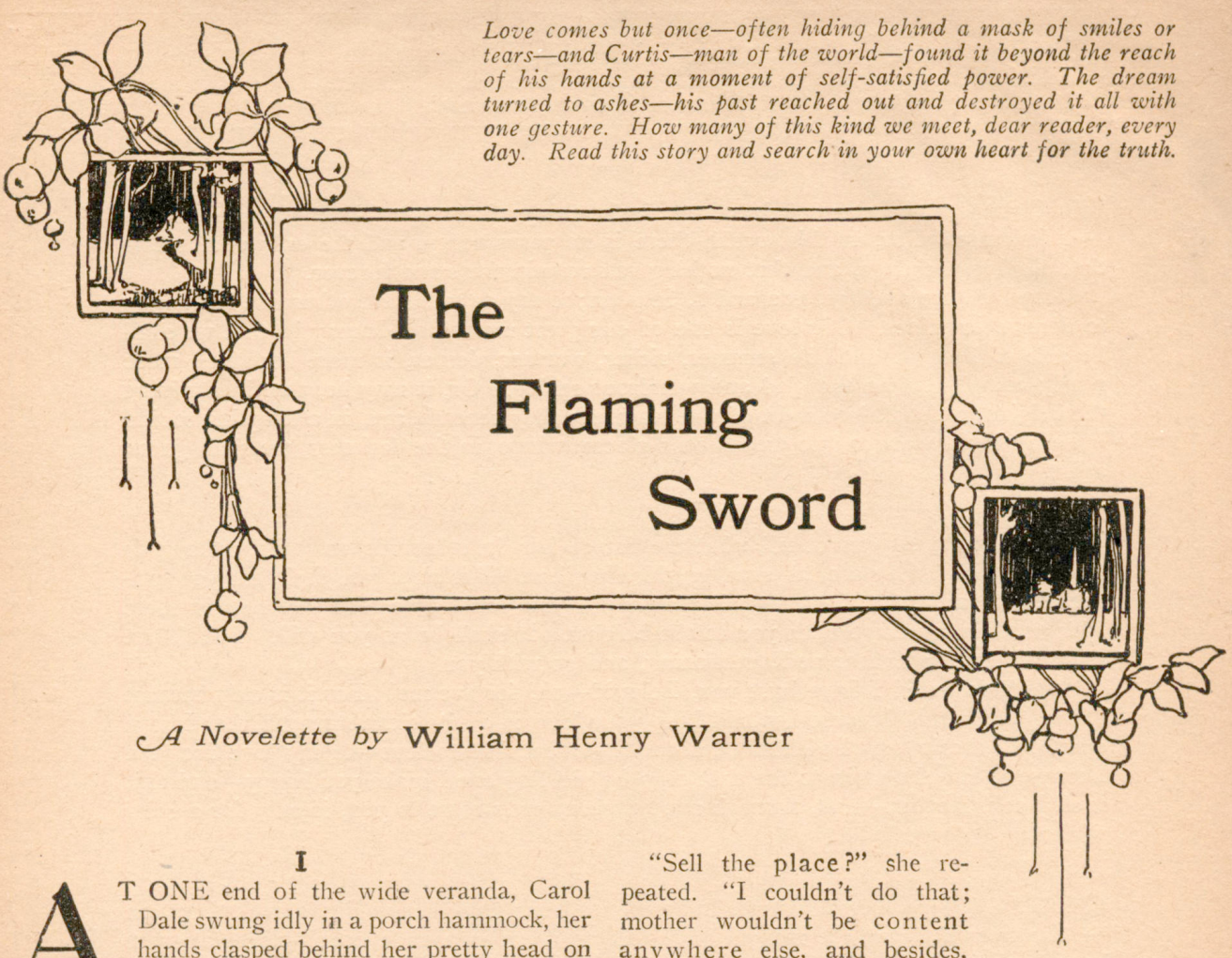
SPRING has gone and summer is here, in all her flaunting golden glory. Between the trees that line the margin of the Lake, there is a little opening like a green barred window. Through this, I can see far out over the sun-kissed water. Through this I shall watch for you, Belovèd, watch and wait for you. Be patient with me, I beg of you; try to understand. I want so much—oh, so very much, Stephen, to be all that you desire, all that you, in your beautiful blindness, would have me be. I shall try not to be afraid any more.

Come to me.

ELEANOR.

THERE WILL BE MORE OF THESE LETTERS NEXT MONTH.

Love comes but once—often hiding behind a mask of smiles or tears—and Curtis—man of the world—found it beyond the reach of his hands at a moment of self-satisfied power. The dream turned to ashes—his past reached out and destroyed it all with one gesture. How many of this kind we meet, dear reader, every day. Read this story and search in your own heart for the truth.



The Flaming Sword

A Novelette by William Henry Warner

I

AT ONE end of the wide veranda, Carol Dale swung idly in a porch hammock, her hands clasped behind her pretty head on the gay chintz cushions, her blue eyes staring at the ceiling above her. Nearby, in a low, wide-armed wicker chair, her sister bent over a work-basket, her smooth, white fingers engaged in the fabrication of some delicate lace.

"I don't see why you want to think of anything like that!" said the girl in the hammock, crossly. "I'm sure it's hard enough for us to pretend before neighbors, let alone with strangers."

The other threaded her needle carefully.

"I cannot bear to have mother worried," she said, "and we—well, it will make things a little easier, if we have a paying guest, and besides the house is really too large for just three of us!"

Carol jumped to a sitting position, her small feet in their smart white shoes set squarely before her.

"Why can't we sell the place?" she said, "I think it would be much nicer to live in New York, anyway. Why can't we?"

MARGERET DALE let her work rest in her lap, while her eyes wandered over the once well-kept lawn, now over-luxuriant; the rose beds, a mass of tangled brambles; the paths, weed-grown and neglected.

"Sell the place?" she repeated. "I couldn't do that; mother wouldn't be content anywhere else, and besides, that would acquaint her with all our difficulties. She has lived here ever since she was married, and you and I were born here."

"Yes, but it's all so different since father died," said Carol petulantly. "Then we had everything we wanted, and now—"

The older sister sighed.

"I understand," she said, "but we must make the best of it! I know it's hard, Carol, and I wish it could be different!"

The girl jumped up and threw her arms about her sister impulsively.

"I know you do; you're a dear, and I'm a little beast for complaining!" she said, placing a cool cheek against the other's face. "Go right ahead and do what you think best and I'll try and remember some of the things I ought never to forget."

Margeret patted her sister's shoulder.

"I'll see what can be done," she said, "but we must both see that everything is kept from mother; she mustn't worry." She bent again over her sewing, and Carol settled herself once more in the hammock.

For a while she swayed back and forth silently. There had been a note in her sister's voice that

stirred her uneasily, and yet Margeret was so capable, so competent to cope with every situation, that she put away the thought of worry.

SINCE their father's death seven years before, Margeret had managed everything, adjusted every difficulty, been the keeper and administrator of the family exchequer . . . no easy task with their dwindling income. In Carol's mind came a picture of her father, the dignified, quiet man whose pet she had been. Once more she saw him as he mounted the wide veranda steps, his arms held out to the dainty little creature with blue eyes and flying curls and the slim grace that gave promise of the loveliness into which she had grown. A lump rose in her throat as she remembered his tender solicitude for her mother. A mist dimmed her eyes as she recalled the terror of his sudden illness, the blank horror of those first few days without him and the realization that he was never coming back.

She let her mind follow the years that had come and gone, when each had brought a little less than the last. First the motor car was sold, then the saddle horses, and one by one, all the things disappeared that had made life pleasant. Although the garden little by little came to lose the smooth beauty of rolled lawns and carefully clipped hedges, of handsome flower-beds and rare annuals, still those hardy flowers that had been planted as a whim, bloomed cheerfully on, and made of the one-time formal grounds a lovely tangle of more intimate beauty, iris and peonies, phlox and sweet-william spreading bravely their simple beauty where once had grown only rare and exotic plants.

The house was a fine specimen of New England architecture, the kind that invariably suggests shining old mahogany, plate, and wide stretches of polished floors. But outside, it needed painting, and inside, although everything was in that exquisite taste with which a woman like Mrs. Dale always surrounds herself, there was still the unmistakable air of "once upon a time," the subtle something that told beyond a doubt how the almost imperceptible tragedy of retrogression was taking place.

THE girl swinging in the hammock was sharply conscious of this, and resented it with an impetuous, sometimes bitter, hatred. It made her restless, moody, shaping her dreams during the "storm and stress period" when life begins to whisper insistently. She was a lovely thing to look upon . . . graceful, slender, full of a flaming vitality that sparkled in the deep violet of her eyes under their dark lashes, showing in the crisp curl of her red-gold hair and the curve of her scarlet mouth.

AS THE elder sister studied her over her sewing, she sighed. She knew that the problem before them was not only the time-old one of making both ends met, but of trying to fit this lovely, vivid creature into a picture that would keep on steadily growing more dull and colorless with the years and their own decreasing income.

Presently she folded her work, and rose with the basket under her arm. "I think I'll go in now and work out our advertisement so as to have it in Sunday's paper," she said. Without waiting for any comment, she went through the wide Colonial door into the cool shadows of the library.

For a long time she sat at her desk, thinking over the simple lines, but at last decided on a form, and writing it out in her round, clear hand, folded it and put it carefully in an envelope. A moment more Margeret sat staring out of the wide window into the bright June sunlight. She knew she must tell her mother of the plan and she wondered just how it would be accepted. Mrs. Dale was very shy of strangers and had objected to bringing any but the most intimate friends into their midst.

FROM the verandah came the sound of Carol's voice and the deeper tones of a masculine one. Margeret knew it must be John Howell, a neighbor who had known them both all their lives. She found herself hoping, as she had so often lately, that Carol would grow to care for him, for Howell's eyes told only too plainly his wishes. She drew the curtains aside and called:

"Carol, is that John?"

"Yes, Margeret," he answered, "and I'm trying to persuade little Miss Obstinate that it's the most perfect day in the world to take our lunch and go canoeing."

Margeret stepped out through the window and joined them.

"Why don't you go?" she asked. "I'll put up something good, and you and John can have a wonderful time."

Carol stretched her slender arms high over her head.

"Oh well," she said, "I guess I might as well; there's nothing else to do!"

The man smiled, but in his eyes was a hurt look that did not escape the elder sister.

"I want you to post my letter on your way," she said hastily, to fill in the gap, "but first I want mother to see it. You and Carol can start preparing the lunch if you will—there's cold chicken, and chocolate cake, and—"

Carol rose lazily.

"We'll take whatever we can find," she said.

"Come on, John, you must do most of the work, because it's you who want to go most!"

They went into the house together, and Margeret stood a moment on the wide stair looking after the girl and man as they disappeared in the region of the kitchen.

John was such a dear, she thought; it hurt her to see him wince under Carol's thoughtless words.

WHEN Margeret came into her mother's room, she found her reading in a *chaise longue* at her window, a filmy scarf about her delicate shoulders. She put her book down as Margaret came in and held out her hand affectionately.

"This is the most delightful story, Margeret," she said, indicating her book, "you always do select such interesting ones. I'll be finished in a little while and you can take it back to the library and get me some others."

The girl drew a low seat beside her.

"Mother," she began, "I've been thinking that perhaps we're a little selfish, having this great house all to ourselves. Don't you think it might be rather nice to have a —a paying guest for a little while?"

Mrs. Dale sat up quite straight.

"Oh, my dear!" she said, "is it necessary?"

Margeret patted her hand.

"No, no," she said, "but—well, I thought it might help a little and it would really be no trouble at all."

HER mother sank back again among her cushions and let her eyes wander about the room with its charming old-time furniture and faded hangings.

"Would your father have approved?" she asked.

"I'm sure he would," answered the girl. "The big east room is empty, and a paying guest would help meet the taxes. Then, don't you see, there would be that much more for Carol and you."

Mrs. Dale sighed.

"Well, you know best," she said. "I rely so much on you, Margeret, that I never question your judgment. Are you sure we have no real cause to worry about—about financial matters?"

"Not at all, mother dear," assured Margeret cheerfully as she spread out the advertisement she had written. "This is what I want to put in the paper."

"A private family will accommodate one or two paying guests. Rest and simple country life. References given and required. Address, Mrs. Gordon Dale—Hampton, Conn."

"Will that be all right?"

Her mother sighed.

"If you're sure it's wise, Margeret — I'll leave everything to you!"

"I'm sure it's a good thing to do, mother. We—we do need a little money, and I'll help Hannah with whatever extra work there may be. We can try it, anyway. Now I must run and see that Carol has some lunch. She and John are off canoeing for the day." And with a kiss on her mother's soft white hair, she hurried down to the kitchen, where her sister and young Howell were worrying old Hannah, the cook.

JOHN HOWELL had been a friend of the family's since early childhood, and there was nothing of their affairs with which he was not fully conversant.

Carol was particularly silent as they drove through the streets of the sleepy little town; indeed she only answered her companion's remarks with non-committal monosyllables, but once out in the canoe she let loose the flood-gates.

"John," she began, "do you suppose things are really getting worse with us at home?"

The man let his paddle rest across the gunwales.

"I hope not," he said. "What makes you think so?"

"Well, that letter you mailed was advertising for

Confessed

By H. SNYDER

I AM a respectable married man. I love my wife, yet there has come into my life this other woman without whom I cannot live. She is necessary to my peace and comfort. She calls me up on the telephone and tells me when I may find her home. If many days elapse without my seeing her, I cannot wait, but must needs call up and beg of her either that she allow me to come to her or that she come to me. And, strange as it may seem, my wife knows of my weakness in adhering to this woman's influence, but is very gentle with me. She does not stamp her foot and make a fuss, as might be expected; instead, when I inform her that I have an appointment, she gladly helps me on with my coat and opens the door for me.

Then, after being in the siren's presence for even a short time, how soothed and comforted I am! She holds my hands in hers and I cannot but take notice of their soft, cool whiteness. Oh! Will I never be able or strong enough to shake off her hold on me, and live in some little comfort and health without her? I doubt it. You see, I have long been a sufferer from rheumatism and she is the best osteopath in town.

a boarder—oh yes, you needn't look so startled—Margeret calls it a paying guest, but I say simply a boarder! I hate the idea, some frumpy old creature that I'll have to be polite to or run errands for, I suppose!"

"I'm sorry that that seems to be necessary," he said. "Perhaps Margeret is making a mountain out of a mole hill."

Carol shook her head.

"No," she said, "she's simply made up her mind to do certain things and she's going to do them, and that's all there is to it. But let's forget all about my worries and have a really good time to-day, shall we?"

"That's exactly my plan," he smiled, "and to begin, suppose we put in over there and have our lunch."

THE spot where they grounded the canoe was a delightful woody little place; a tiny beach ran a short distance into a group of birches, and the moss lay thick and soft beneath them. They unpacked their lunch and for a while forgot everything in just the sheer joy of youth and summer, but presently Carol sat back against a tree while John stretched on the moss at her side.

"Do you know," he said, looking up at her through half-closed lids, "you look mighty pretty with the green all 'round you."

The girl smiled.

"Sometimes you say . really charming things, John," she said. "I wonder why you can't always be nice and romantic like—like people in books."

"People in books!" he growled, rising on his elbow. "I'd rather be a flesh-and-blood man. I may not always wear the latest thing in collars, but there's one thing I do know, Carol, and nobody can teach me any better,"—his voice grew a little husky, as he reached out and covered her hand with his—"and that is that you're the one girl in the world for me!"

She drew her hand away hastily.

"Don't be silly," she said; "you know you're an awfully good friend, John, but you're no more like my ideal than—than nothing at all!" She laughed at her own cruelty.

The man rose to his feet and carefully brushed the clinging moss from his clothes.

"All right," he said quietly. "I suppose none of us can be different from what we're born to be, but I did hope—some day—"

She held out her hand and, with his assistance, stood beside him.

"John, you're an old dear," she said, leaning against his arm for a moment, "but I don't want to think of serious things for a while. Come on, I'll race you down to the canoe," and like a flash she was off, leaving him to follow with the basket and the remainder of the lunch.

JOHN HOWELL could never remember a time when he had not loved her. They had played, and quarreled, and danced and walked together, ridden their ponies through the long lanes, a sedate groom near at hand, and when the Dale fortunes had dwindled away, it was Howell's little runabout that served to take Carol wherever she wanted to go. It was always John who did her errands, and filled in the gaps when there was no one else, but Carol received everything with the high disdain of one to whom it was due. Her thanks had been few and grudgingly given; she had scolded, flouted, coaxed and cajoled by turns, wounded him bitterly one moment, and apologized the next. He had watched her grow from a lovely, brilliant child into the dazzling creature she had become, and although his reason pointed out with a painstakingly careful finger her faults and shortcomings, his heart always answered steadily: "Anyway, she's Carol, and some day—" but beyond that he never ventured.

IT WAS sunset when they drove up to the house again, and Mrs. Dale, a graceful figure in a white muslin dress, with the sheer black of a lace shawl about her shoulders, was sitting under one of the trees, a pile of books and some embroidery work lying on the rustic table beside her.

"Did you have a pleasant time?" she asked, smiling as they came toward her. Carol threw her hat on the grass and sank into a chair.

"Oh, it wasn't so bad," she said. "But everything's dull here. I wish there could be a little excitement!"

John looked away for a moment.

"I think I'll run along," he said. "Good-by, Mrs. Dale. Perhaps we can have some tennis to-morrow, Carol; care to?"

The girl nodded indifferently, and he swung down the path. Mrs. Dale looked after him curiously.

"I wonder how John endures the way you treat him," she said. "Can't you be a little kinder, dear?"

"Oh, mother, please don't begin lecturing; that's all I hear from Margeret," and then she leaned toward her mother. "By the way, what do you think of Margeret's plan?"

Mrs. Dale only sighed, and, picking up the embroidery, dropped her eyes over the bright-colored silks. It was a characteristic of hers when she had not quite made up her mind about things, and Carol

knew that it meant discouragement of further conversation on the subject.

II

FOR several days after the little advertisement appeared in the New York paper, Margeret waited eagerly for an answer. There were two or three which were palpably not the sort it would be advisable to pursue further, but Wednesday morning's mail brought a large, square envelope addressed in a flowing, illegible hand, that somehow looked promising.

"Your advertisement," it read, "seems to promise exactly what I am looking for. I am a writer and, having some important work to finish, would be very glad of the quiet your home might afford. Can you let me know if it would be possible to get a small bungalow or cabin near, which I could use as a studio? I should like to come out to Hampton at once if possible, and can refer you to my publishers, Messrs. Black and Warren, for references.

Hoping to hear from you favorably,
I am, sincerely,
Richard Fullerton Curtis."

"Curtis? Why, I've read lots of his stories!" said Carol excitedly, when her sister showed her the letter. "There's John's little cabin over in the woods. It might be just the thing. John almost never uses it. I'll find out and you can write your letter to-night."

HOWELL was quite willing they should have the small bungalow, which he had intended as a retreat where he might express certain of his own dreams on paper, but he was always ready to sacrifice anything for Carol. So it was decided that Margeret should write Richard Fullerton Curtis that they would be ready for him on the following Monday. With Carol and John to help, she put the little cabin in order. A long deal table for his papers was set between the casement windows, a comfortable old armchair which she covered with some faded chintz found in the attic trunk, a Navajo blanket on the floor, a shelf for his books, a pipe rack, and one or two good prints tacked against the board walls, and the place looked most inviting.

"Do you know, I think he'll want to stay here all the time," said Margeret as, the last touch added, the three stood on the doorstep and looked out through the trees to where the hills showed blue against the sky.

Carol pouted.

"I'm going to try and make it so attractive at the house that he'll forget his old writing," she said.

John frowned and Margeret touched his arm with quick sympathy.

"Don't worry," she said. "Authors have no time for little girls outside of their books. Let's be getting home now. I want to go to town to-morrow and do some shopping. A paying guest must be welcomed with almost as much hospitality as any other."

MARGERET had written in answer to Mr. Curtis' note, and received a very friendly reply stating the train on which he expected to arrive the following Monday, and John volunteered to meet him in the roadster. The big east room with its wide four-poster bed, its polished mahogany and cheerful hangings, was very attractive. One of the windows looked out over the trees to where the hills rose in the distance, and beneath the other lay the gay patchwork of the tangled garden. It all seemed very complete, but there were still one or two things that Margeret felt she needed as a good housekeeper. So, early the next morning, she took the train to New York.

All the way in she was busy counting the advantages of her plan. Deducting the cost of extra food, the laundry, the light that their guest would require, she found that there would be quite a nice little sum to put away, and when she stepped from the train she was pleased with herself and the world in general. Her shopping would not take her long. She decided to get through with it as quickly as possible and spend the rest of her day until train time with a friend.

MRS. GEORGE ALLISON was Margeret's dearest friend. She had married two years before, but the marriage had not turned out successfully, and, after a short period of great unhappiness, she and her husband separated. It was Grace that Margeret thought of now, knowing that she would be interested in all her plans.

She called her on the phone, and a joyous welcome came back to her.

"Finish you bothersome shopping right away," called Grace's pretty voice, "and come straight up to me for luncheon. I've a million things to talk to you about and to tell you; so hurry."

MRS. ALLISON lived in a charming little apartment on Park Avenue. She was a pretty woman, a little shallow, more than a little vain, but Margeret's clear eyes had been able to see below the bubbling, frothy surface of her friend's personality to the deeper pools of the woman's real nature.

She had sensed the fact that, had she only married the right man, Grace Allison would have shed the cocoon of her frivolity and spread the beautiful wings of a nature which now had no incentive to express itself.

"Margeret, you dear," was her greeting, "it must have been mental telepathy that brought you. I've been thinking of you all week. Do throw aside your hat and gloves and let's settle down for a good, old-fashioned talk."

Margeret noticed the fine lines about her friend's eyes, the droop of her pretty mouth.

"What is the trouble, Grace?" she said. "Anything gone more wrong than usual? Or are you beginning to miss George?"

Grace bit her lip.

"I have made it part of my philosophy," she said, "never to miss anyone." But her voice sounded strained, a little too high pitched, and with a note of forced gayety in it that made Margeret wonder.

"I don't want to talk about myself," went on Mrs. Allison. "I want to hear all about Hampton, your mother and pretty Carol. Please begin at the beginning as we used to say when we were children!"

A slim, colored maid had brought out a gate-legged table and spread it with a dainty luncheon, and as Margaret sipped her tea she told Grace some of her plan.

"YOU see," she said, "I haven't really told the family that the taxes are going to worry me this year, but it's true nevertheless, and so I thought that as the summer was just beginning, one of the easy ways to help things along without worrying mother, would be to advertise for a paying guest."

"But Margeret," Mrs. Allison's voice was solicitous, "you know you could have anything from me. Why not have asked?"

"Please!" Margeret shook her head. "I've come through so far; I'll get along all right now. Our guest arrives on Monday. By the way, you may have heard of him. I believe he is quite well known as a short-story writer, Mr. Curtis—Richard Fullerton Curtis."

Grace Allison let her serviette drop from her fingers and sat staring with wide, frightened eyes at her friend.

"Margeret," she said, "please—not that man!" Her face was suddenly drawn and old.

"Why, Grace," Margeret looked at her in amazement, "what is wrong? What do you know of him?"

MRS. ALLISON waited until the little maid had left the room and then pushed the plate away and leaned back in her chair.

"I only know this," she said lowering her eyes a moment wearily, "that he is absolutely lacking in conscience where women are concerned; that every woman who isn't halt or blind, or decrepit with age, is to him fair game. We only exist for his amusement, we have no soul, no mind, no feelings even, only a body—" She bent forward, her hands clenched against the edge of the table. "Oh, Margeret, don't bring him deliberately into your lovely, peaceful home, please don't!" She looked so white and shaken that the girl opposite felt a surge of pity. It was as though she were looking at a tortured soul that imagined it was hiding its suffering. She knew her friend cared little for convention as the world knows it, had in fact flitted rather recklessly near the outer edge since her separation from her husband, but there had been no hint of a reason for this bitterness. She put her cool hand over the small, tense one.

"Grace," she said, and her voice was very tender, "you haven't been foolish, dear, have you?"

MRS. ALLISON drew her hand hastily away. "Certainly not!" she said almost indignantly. "I am only telling you this man's reputation for your own good." Then her little spurt of anger died down and she leaned forward again almost pleadingly. "He is so fascinating, so wonderful to meet, that even you, with your clear, calm head and perfect poise, will be attracted!"

Margeret laughed.

"My dear girl," she said, "I have no time for such

April

By A. LINDSAY SKERRY

MOST fickle maiden, who, with twinkling feet
Bestirs old warlike March along the way;
Beloved art thou in sober mood or gay,
Thy changing brow but making thee more sweet.
Smile, and the earth with gladness is replete;
All living things make haste their gifts to lay
Before thy feet; while dancing clouds at play,
Turn in their maze, thy smiling face to greet.
O winsome daughter of belovèd Spring!
Thou child of heaven—born too fair for earth!
Scarce have we done rejoicing at thy birth,
When robins, by thy bier, a requiem sing;
Sad violets with bowed heads, their incense bring,
And weeping cloudlets end their dance of mirth.

thoughts. Mr. Curtis is coming to us as a means to an end; I assure you there is no need to have any concern about me."

"But Carol," reminded her friend. "Oh Margeret, I wish you wouldn't, but—" and she spread her hands in a hopeless gesture—"I've warned you; I can do no more!"

BACK in the train again, Margeret went over her visit. This was an unpleasant phase of her plan on which she had not counted. Curtis' name had been familiar to her through the pages of magazines and she had not felt it necessary to inquire of his publishers as to his desirability. Mrs. Allison's agitation, however, worried her. For herself she knew there was no slightest danger, however fascinating and attractive the man might prove to be, but Mrs. Allison's reference to Carol worried her. She knew her sister was bored, tired of their simple, uneventful life; that the man who was offering her his love was of no slightest interest to her, and Margeret realized that in beautiful, impetuous Carol a man such as her friend had described, might find fertile material indeed.

As the train rocked along, she almost decided to send Curtis a telegram regretting her inability to receive him, but the thought of the debts which she would have to meet, the worry she might save her mother, made her decide finally to let him come now that everything was arranged. She would warn Carol and rely on the girl's good sense and her own watchfulness.

"After all," she reassured herself, "how silly it all seems. A busy writer coming to us so as to finish some important work! What time or interest will he have for other things? He probably will not even know I exist, and as for Carol—well, he'll think she's pretty; he can't help thinking that if he has eyes, but he'll think of her as a child. Grace's warning was probably well meant enough but she may be prejudiced in both directions!"

BUT that night after she had undressed, she slipped a kimono over her nightgown and crossed the hall to Carol's room. The girl was brushing out the masses of red-gold hair that her sister never failed to admire.

"Well," she said as Margeret sat down on the edge of the bed, "did you have a very trying day? Seeme to me you've gone to no end of trouble for this old gentleman of ours!"

Margeret clasped her hands about her knees.

"Carol," she said seriously, "suppose this Mr. Curtis turns out to be young and attractive instead of the old gentleman you seem to be expecting?"

Carol tied a green ribbon about her hair, and peered at her pretty reflection in the mirror.

"So much the better," she said, "but that would be too good to be true!"

"But suppose he is," persisted Margeret. "Suppose he proves to be the most fascinating man you have ever met—will you try to remember, dear, that whatever attentions he may pay to you will not be serious?"

Carol turned and stared at her curiously.

"I must say, Margeret," she said, "you're talking rather queerly. Do you suppose I'm silly enough to imagine that every wonderful thing a man may say to me, is meant? Please don't be ridiculous, and besides, I'll thank you not to tell me what to do. If this man proves to be so marvelously fascinating, perhaps you will have to be careful yourself!"

Margeret rose, hurt, but she had done what she could here. The only other course was to keep her eyes open and hope that Mrs. Allison's warning had been unnecessary.

"I didn't mean to offend you, Carol," she said. "Neither mother nor I have ever had cause to feel that you were not capable of taking care of yourself. I have only been supposing, after all. Good night!"

But she lay awake until nearly dawn wondering if she had chosen a wise course.

III

MONDAY morning brought a telegram from Curtis saying not to trouble meeting him as he was motoring out in his own car and would arrive some time during the day.

Margeret spent the long drowsy afternoon under the trees reading aloud to her mother. Mrs. Dale loved to sit with her hands folded lightly in her lap, her eyes closed and let her mind wander where it would, soothed and quieted by Margeret's sweet, low voice.

"It never really matters what you read, dear," she said one day when Margeret had asked her choice. "I don't believe I always follow what you are saying, but it is such a comfort just to hear your voice."

To-day Margeret had chosen Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance." She felt she needed the strong, sure words, the comfort and sturdy courage breathed forth in every line, and as she read she felt her qualms vanish, her fear of this approaching stranger disappear. She knew that if the need arose, strength would be given her to meet any danger.

Her mother lay back in the wicker chair, listening to the sound of the low voice, her mind living over again days when she and the husband who had worshipped her, used to sit out here under these trees together. Margeret was so like her father in many

ways that Mrs. Dale always felt a peace and tranquility when near her. Her presence seemed to take away the sharp edge of a sorrow that could never be overcome.

AS SHE read, a big blue car swung in at the gates and rolled up to the veranda, and Margeret laid her book face down on the little table and went across the lawn to meet their guest. He held out his hand to her as she drew near, and she saw a pleasant, smiling face, with a pair of very blue eyes shining under straight dark brows, a well-shaped nose, a fine, rather boyish mouth, a tall well-built frame, with athletic breadth of shoulder, clean-cut straight limbs, and a cheerfully genial hand-clasp. Not at all the arch-villain Mrs. Allison had tried to paint.

"This is Miss Dale?" he said in a pleasant voice. "You are exactly as I imagined you would be!"

Margeret smiled.

"Can the man bring your bags up?" she said, indicating the chauffeur. "We are very simple here in all things, and I never ask old Hannah to climb the stairs unnecessarily."

Curtis, with the chauffeur carrying his bags, followed her up the wide stair and into the east room.

"I hope you will be quite comfortable." Margeret's housewifely glance was sweeping the room to see that everything was in order.

Curtis looked about with a sigh of content.

"It is delightful," he said. "It's as though one had wished for a thing and found one's wish suddenly come true!"

"You will find us on the lawn when you care to come down." Margeret was at the door. "My mother, of course, will be glad to meet you," and she left him, the memory of his eyes as they smiled into hers, making her conscious of a feeling of resentment against Grace Allison and her aspersions.

"HE SEEMS like a frank, genuine-minded boy," she thought as she went back to her mother, "a big grown-up boy who has all the ease and polish the world can give, without any of its sinister side. Grace must have been misinformed. He may be spoilt and I've no doubt he is, but I can't believe him the villain she describes." She smiled a little ruefully to herself as she remembered her friend's words—they had warned her against this very characteristic.

"He is so fascinating, so seemingly ingenuous, that even you with your clear brain will be deceived!" Grace had said.

Well, it was too soon yet to judge either one way or the other, all she could do was to watch.

Carol was with her mother when she reached the little bower under the trees. She and John had come in from a game of tennis and the girl's cheeks and eyes were brilliant, her bright hair clung to her forehead in damp little curls.

"What is he like, Margeret?" she asked eagerly as her sister resumed her chair. "Old and bald and fussy, or young and fascinating? I'm all excited!"

"Don't become so interested as to forget you are going to the Club dance with me to-night, Carol," warned John.

Carol laughed.

"I won't forget the dance, John, even if I should forget about you!"

BEFORE Howell could reply, a tall figure in immaculate flannels came down the steps and across the lawn toward where they were sitting. Mrs. Dale involuntarily adjusted her lace scarf, and Carol tossed aside the white tam o'shanter she was wearing and ran her fingers through her glittering hair.

As Curtis reached them, Margeret rose to introduce him, and when she saw the light in his eyes as they met Carol's, all her fears of yesterday returned. It only lasted a moment, but it had been there for her to read, wiping out for the fraction of a second the frank boyishness that had quieted her suspicions. He took the chair beside Mrs. Dale and with an ease that John Howell envied as much as he vaguely resented, fell in with their conversation as though he had been among them always.

"I'm a very lucky chap!" he said in his pleasant voice. "I simply picked out your advertisement at random, and have drawn a prize. It is really delightful here."

"I hope you will continue to like it," said Mrs. Dale graciously. "We are very quiet and simple, so you must not expect too much."

"I should be difficult to please, indeed, if I could not be happy here," he answered—but his eyes were on Carol's lovely flushed face as he spoke.

THEY talked of many things, of his work, his travels, their own life in the sleepy little town, and Margeret, sitting back quietly as a spectator, wondered at his amazing fund of knowledge, his easy flitting from one topic to another. Her mother she saw was interested and amused, and Carol listened fascinated. Poor John, who had been scowling in the background, at last rose to go.

"I'll be over for you at nine, Carol," he said.

The girl shrugged.

"I'm not quite sure that I'm going," she said. "Did I say that I would?"

John's face showed his disappointment so clearly that Margeret shook her head.

"Why, Carol," she said, "this is the first Club dance, and you've both been looking forward to it. There's really nothing to keep you home!"

"Nothing except inclination!" was the answer, and John was just turning away when Curtis broke in.

"Is it your Country Club?" he asked. "I should be very glad to join if it were possible, since I am expecting to be here all summer!"

Carol's face brightened.

"John will put your name up, I'm sure," she said, "and perhaps we can all go to the dance to-night!"

Margeret looked at her sister in surprise. This was really too bad of Carol, but John was saying with a poise that would have been worthy of the other man:

"I shall be glad if you will be my guest to-night, Mr. Curtis. At nine, then, Carol?" and he was gone.

WHEN Curtis, too, had left them for what he called a reconnoitering walk about the town, Mrs. Dale was loud in her praise of him.

"He really seems quite exceptional, Margeret. I think it was very kind indeed of John to invite him for to-night."

Carol lay back on the grass, her hands clasped behind her head. Above her the little fleecy white clouds of June were sailing tranquilly across the azure. She could see them through the lacy network of the branches. The voices of her mother and sister came to her in a wordless murmur; Carol was dreaming dreams.

And Curtis, too, swinging along the quiet streets and out into the country lanes, his hands deep in his pockets, a cigarette between his lips, was weaving the threads of another story which he had determined to build: a story in which a lovely, bright-haired girl was to be the central theme, a girl whose eyes had already told him she would not have the slightest objection to being made his heroine.

He was thinking of himself as more than fortunate. The book he had on hand must be finished, but Curtis was one of those men whose best work is done when there is alluring enough play within reach, and he had not hoped for anything so attractive as Carol Dale, when he made his random choice of a place in which to complete his task.

AT DINNER in the cool, quiet dining-room, Curtis put forth his most attractive side. He found himself, almost to his own surprise, making as definite an effort to interest and entertain these quiet people as he would have a New York drawing-room. Margeret's appraising eyes irritated and annoyed him, but the shining interest in the violet ones of Carol made full compensation, and when the sisters came down a little later ready for the Club dance, his aesthetic taste was fully gratified by both Carol's fluffy blue draperies that matched her eyes, and the quiet dignity and almost classic lines of Margeret's simple white frock.

John was persuaded to leave his little roadster and they all climbed into the big blue car which pulled away so smoothly through the town and out toward the open country. A full moon shone on the delicate tracery of the overhanging trees, and the lights of the Club House gleamed in the distance like colored stars against the gray-blue of the sky.

To Carol it was a most wonderful evening. Curtis danced as well as he seemed to do everything, and she grudged those few dances which John and some of her other friends claimed. Margeret declined to dance and sat quietly in a cool corner of the wide piazza. She seldom left her mother alone in the long evenings, but to-night it had seemed imperative for her to come and as she sat discussing her mother's health, the weather and a thousand banalities with those friends who strolled up and stayed for a few words, her eyes were always following the graceful figure of her sister floating about the ball-room in the arms of this stranger.

ONCE when John had carried off Carol almost by force, Curtis sank into a low chair at Margeret's side and after asking permission, lit a cigarette.

"I had no idea," he said, "that Paradise was so near New York."

"Paradise is always nearer than we think," she answered, "and so is the angel with the flaming sword!"

"Do you know," he said, "I never considered that much of a punishment—Adam and Eve left together, I mean. It was only a matter of seeking a new lodging. The punishment would have been if one or the other had been shut out alone!"

"Yes," she said, her grave eyes holding his steadily, "yes, you are right. The more beautiful the memory of Paradise, the deeper the regret."

He changed the subject abruptly.

"I feel that I shall be able to do fine work here," he said. "To-morrow you and your sister must pilot me to my little cabin. Miss Carol tells me it is a most delightful place."

"It is very secluded," she told him. "Mr. Howell built it for a whim when he came home from college. It stands quite alone in a grove of birches at

least three miles from us. But with your car that will mean nothing."

"It sounds as though I shall never want to leave this place," and he puffed contentedly on his cigarette. "I'm so thoroughly acclimated already, that I can't imagine wanting to go away!"

THEY sat for a moment in silence. Margeret, leaning back in the shadow of the vines that clung about the piazza, studied the handsome face outlined delicately by the moonlight. She tried to tell herself that the unmistakable signs she had seen in his eyes of admiration for her sister might be genuine. Carol was a lovely thing, a sweet, irresponsible child, selfish, but thoughtlessly so, for Margeret had usually only to point out to her her shortcomings, and with all contrition, she would try in every way she could to make amends. But not only the voice of Grace Allison, but the voice of her instinct repeated the warning.

As for Curtis, he sat quietly looking out over the moonlit vista, the end of his cigarette making a brilliant spark against the darkness. He was quite content with the pleasant lines in which his lot seemed cast, but this quiet girl at his side puzzled him. He saw and was attracted by the potential force of her; the smouldering spark in her dark eyes gave the lie to the placid coldness of her manner. He caught himself thinking:

"God, what a woman she would be if she loved a man!"

He had studied many things but none so thoroughly as women, and he knew that only love could ever blind eyes as clear as hers, and he knew too that he must go softly if his summer were to bring him what he had already planned it should. But her aloofness, the very fact that he knew unerringly that she was watching him and the treasured little sister, awoke the devil always dormant in him, the devil that mocked at women.

"EVERY woman has her price," had always been his philosophy, and he had gone through life as an Eastern monarch might go to the slave market. Women had no place in the work of the world. Frail, beautiful, delicate, with a power they were themselves unconscious of, they were only meant to amuse and to be amused, and when that power was gone—why need one or the other be bored? He scoffed at the idea of woman as a friend. It was ridiculous, absurd, impossible, a bloodless, sexless arrangement, and without sex there was no life! In the many affairs to his credit or discredit, he had always salved his conscience with the belief that there must always be two, he could not have gone alone. He told himself his search had always been for the One Woman who would not succumb, the One Woman "whose price was above rubies,"

The Great Adventure

By BETTY WALLACH

JOHN HARDY was born with the soul of an adventurer. Unfortunately for his ambitions he was the eldest of five children, and while John was in his tenth year his father departed this life, and the main support of the family fell upon John's youthful shoulders. He was a sturdy youngster, however, and stiffling his dreams of romance he bravely took up the less romantic, but more immediately remunerative profession of bootblacking. From that occupation, still cherishing his dreams of adventure "when Mom and the girls are settled," he graduated, via the rôle of district messenger boy, to a night operator's desk in the telegraph office.

Twenty years later found John still pounding the key. He was now manager of a small branch office, and though relieved of the burden of support of his mother and sisters by death and marriage, he had assumed other obligations of his own in the shape of a wife and three children.

All his life it was the same. When the children at last grew up and the girls married, it did seem as if a respite were possible. He was too old now for adventure, but in travel he might find the fulfillment of his longings.

Then came the accident that left his wife a cripple and for four long years John was tied to the bedside of a confirmed invalid. Death at last mercifully took her and it was with something of relief and awakening hope that John followed her on the last journey to the grave. He had loved her truly, but he honestly felt she was better off, and his age-old longing took a new lease of life.

At last everything was ready. The little house where he had lived was sold, his things packed, even his tickets bought. The morrow would see him set forth on his long-deferred search for romance.

* * * * * * * * * * *

When the char-woman who came in every day to tidy the house and cook his simple meals arrived the next morning, she found him stark in death, and she and the hastily summoned neighbors marveled at the contented expression of his countenance. "He died of a broken heart and is happy to join his wife," was the way they put it. They could not know that at last John Hardy had embarked on his Great Adventure.

but his cynicism told him that exorbitant though it might be, even she would have a price.

He was conscious, without looking at her, that Margeret's eyes were studying him, and though he resented the attitude, of which he was instinctively aware, he was so sure of his own powers that he was certain she would prove no insurmountable obstacle.

When Carol and John joined them a moment later, he rose and drew the girl's arm through his.

"We're going for a little stroll in the moonlight if you don't mind," he said, and turned away with her before Margeret could remonstrate.

For a time the two left alone on the Club piazza were silent, the lively music of the little orchestra punctuating their thoughts. Margeret's heart quaked at the prospect of the summer she had brought upon herself, and John sat scowling unhappily.

CURTIS and Carol went down the piazza steps along the little path that strayed beside the flowers. They sat down on a secluded rustic bench, screened by the trees from the Club windows, the warm June air ruffling the little tendrils of the girl's hair, the dainty flounces of her gown.

"What a wonderfully lovely thing you are," Curtis said with that bold frankness women love. "You look like some Dryad just ready to disappear again into the forest," and then he added, covering her hand with his, "but I'm not going to let you; I am going to keep you here, beside me!"

Carol's heart throbbed. She turned her hand in his and let her warm little fingers close about his strong, slender ones.

"I'm glad you came," she said simply.

Curtis let his eyes rest on hers with the look that experience had taught him was the most effective.

"We are going to be wonderful friends," he said. "Aren't we?"

TO CAROL he seemed the embodiment of that dream man whom she had evolved from her books. He was everything she had ever imagined the man she could care for must be. She listened almost breathlessly while he told her of strange lands into which he had journied, of adventures he had had, of experiences which had been his. A vague feeling of jealousy against those years of his life in which she had had no part rose in Carol, and her heart seemed for an instant to stop, as she mentally visualized the many other women whom he must have known and told his fascinating stories to, even as he was telling them to her.

"How wonderful to be a man," she said, "and be able to go and come as you please, to do the things you care to do and not have to be tied down to one tiresome spot all your life."

"Do you find Hampton tiresome?" he asked.

"It's *deadly!*" her tone was so vehement that he laughed. "Nothing to do from morning to night but the same old things over and over again!"

"But your friends," he said, "this young Mr.—Howell is his name?—he seems very fond of you indeed!"

"Oh — John," Carol shrugged disparagingly. "We've known each other since we've been born. John's as tiresome as everything else."

Curtis pressed her hand gently.

"Perhaps," he said, "while I am here, you will let me try and make Hampton a little more amusing. I'm sure I should consider it a great favor if you will let me do whatever I can."

SHE turned to him quickly.

"But you will be busy. Margeret says your writing will keep you at the cabin nearly all day."

"I work from ten to four always, five days a week," he said, "but that still leaves time for many other things, doesn't it?"

Carol was delighted.

"How splendid!" she said. "We can go to many lovely places, we can dance, and swim, and play tennis and—"

Curtis smiled.

"You are mapping out a truly interesting summer," he said. "Shall we go back to your sister? She will be wondering where we are!"

They found Margeret and John still sitting where they had left them, two rather disconsolate figures, and Carol was breathlessly profuse in her reasons why they had stayed longer than they thought.

"It's so beautiful out there, Margeret," she hurried on, "the moonlight and everything. Why didn't you two come along?"

Margeret rose and let John wrap her light coat about her.

"The musicians are preparing to leave—we must be going," was all she said. Curtis bowed and led the way to his car.

THERE were at least three sleepless people that night: Carol, lying staring happily into the moonlight; Margeret, wondering, thinking, fearing; and young Howell, a hopeless ache in his heart. But Curtis in the big east room switched off his light and slept peacefully, satisfied with this day and the prospect it held out for others.

John and Carol were to guide Curtis to the little cabin in the morning. Margeret, having many

things to do, begged to be excused, feeling that her sister could go where she pleased so long as young Howell was near. Curtis packed his small writing-trunk, his portfolio, his typewriter, and a luncheon put up in a dainty basket by Margeret, in the blue car, and they started for the cabin.

THE air was wonderful, as stimulating as new wine, and the country roads were lined with wild roses and daisies. The scent of the new-mown hay piled in great stacks in the meadows they passed filled their nostrils with its delightful perfume and along the fine roads the big car skimmed smoothly.

Carol was bubbling over with animation. She laughed delightedly at Curtis' sallies, and reproached John teasingly for his stolid silence.

Presently they turned into the woody path that led to the cabin, and the beauty of it made Curtis exclaim.

"By Jove," he said, "this is great! You must be taking me to an enchanted palace. Am I going to find a sleeping beauty here?"

"You are not, Mr. Prince," laughed Carol. "I'm going to weave a spell around you like Vivian did about Merlin in Morte d'Arthur, and you'll have to stay here until four o'clock!"

"Dear little enchantress," he said, softly, turning his head so that neither John nor the chauffeur could hear, "four o'clock will seem a very long time away!"

THE car pulled up beside John's little cabin and with the chauffeur's assistance, Curtis' materials were unloaded. Carol and John showed him about the tiny place. It was delightful, exactly what he wanted, and in spite of the lovely flushed face that smiled into his, he found himself wishing they would go and leave him alone. He could work here, splendidly, undisturbed. Already thoughts and ideas were seeking expression. If they would only go.

But the girl still lingered.

"Have you everything you want?" she asked anxiously. "This is very far away, you know!"

"Only one thing is lacking!" he said meaningly, and flushing, she turned and followed John out to the car.

"Until four," he called after them from the doorstep, waving his hand as the car disappeared among the trees. He sighed contentedly, and spreading his papers before him on the long deal-table, was soon deep in his work.

ARRIVED at her own home, Carol jumped out of the car, ignoring John's proffered hand and danced lightly onto the veranda. John followed her and sat down on the top step, his chin moodily cupped in his hand.

The girl tossed her hat aside and sank into a deep porch-chair. For a time they sat silent, she looking forward to the afternoon, he trying to visualize a much more remote future.

"Carol," he said at last, "I want to talk to you seriously. I can't stand this sort of thing. I want an answer now. When will you marry me?"

The girl looked at him a moment, cruelly comparing. The broad, good-natured face with its honest, dog-like eyes, its firm, generous mouth and sturdy chin, seemed to lose in comparison with that other that she was to see again at four. The rather stockily-built figure with its deep chest and rounded, muscular limbs seemed heavy and inelegant beside the graceful lines and slender suppleness of Curtis. Even John's clothes were somehow wrong and —yes, she decided—provincial-looking.

"John," she said, "I suppose we might as well settle it now as any other time. I'm never going to marry you!"

"Carol!" It was the cry of a wounded thing, but the girl only shrugged.

"Now, don't be unpleasant," she said. "We'll go on just as we have been or we won't go on at all!"

He rose to his feet, his shoulders squared to meet the blow.

"Alright," he said gently, "you know best. But Carol, if you ever need me, I'll always be ready to come!" He went down the steps, and along the path.

FOR a moment she had a wild thought of calling him back. Then she shrugged and watched him disappear through the gates.

"What's the difference?" she thought. "He'll come back any way, he always does." With which she dismissed him from her mind and began dreaming of the pleasant days that were to come.

Margeret came out on the veranda, a waist she was making for Carol in her hands.

"I've almost finished this," she said as she sat down. "Isn't it pretty?" She held it up for the girl to see.

"Very." Carol's tone was disinterested, and she relapsed again into her day-dream.

Margeret studied her for a moment.

"Where is John?" she asked.

Carol frowned.

"Gone home, I suppose," she said.

Margeret waited a moment for further confidences but none coming, she went on:

"Carol, I am afraid you will be sorry some day.

Friends are too few and precious to be treated as you treat John."

Carol flushed angrily.

"I do wish, Margeret, you wouldn't always preach," she said. "It's extremely tiresome. John wants me to marry him and I don't want to and that is all there is to it!"

Margeret sighed. "And you have sent him away?"

"I haven't done anything but tell him what I think; if he wants to stay away that is his own affair, not my fault. Carol went into the house, letting the screen door slam after her.

IV

IN THE delightful days that followed, Carol had no time nor thought for John, brooding sullenly over the breach that removed all the pleasant things of life from him. She was too filled with the exciting joy of the attentions Curtis was showering upon her. The long motor rides over the beautiful state roads; the stops for tea in some little wayside inn; the moonlight walks; the long chats on her own veranda; the rose at her plate in the morning; the sweetmeats ordered from New York; new books and magazines in fascinatingly mysterious parcels, and sometimes, most thrilling of all, the quiet hour in some secluded spot in the woods where he would read to her from his story. Carol was living in an enchanted world of sunshine, perfume, roses and a fairy prince.

"Just think," he said to her one day, "only a short time ago I did not even know that you were in the world, but my whole life has been leading me to you, you wonderful, golden girl!"

"Oh Dick!" she said, "suppose you hadn't answered Margeret's advertisement!"

He put his arm about her and drew her to him.

"Fate looks out for just such things," he said. "We simply had to meet!"

Her head lay back against his arm, he could feel her trembling. What a charming little bit of femininity she was—what a simple, credulous child. Suddenly he crushed her to him almost roughly.

"You lovely little creature," he said, his mouth against her lips. "I want you! I want you!"

Carol clung to him; a blinding joy seemed to have seized her. She answered his kisses with a passion that surprised even him.

MARGERET had watched the progress of events with misgiving. Curtis' manner was so irreproachable, so courteous that she had not been able to find anything upon which to hang her suspicions. She hated to deny her sister the pleasure of those afternoon rides with him, and his gifts were after all only the conventional ones entirely permissable. But once or twice she thought she had surprised a meaning look between the two, and one morning she found an empty, twisted envelope addressed in Curtis' hand lying on the floor of Carol's room. Even her mother had begun to notice the growing intimacy.

"Do you think it is quite right, Margeret, for Carol to be with Mr. Curtis so much?" she asked one day. "If he were serious—but—but Carol's only a pretty child, and he is so much the man of the world—"

Margeret reassured her gently, although she was far from feeling easy herself.

"He is only trying to be kind, mother," she said. "Carol has had so little enjoyment. We mustn't grudge her this!"

"Well dear, you know best," and Mrs. Dale subsided again into placid contentment. Margeret was capable of taking care of everything, even this impulsive and pretty younger sister.

BUT Margeret's uneasiness was growing. Curtis' attitude toward herself was always one of polite deference, though she fancied she could see through the veil and read his challenge to try and keep from him what he desired. It was very patent to her that he was amusing himself. Familiarity with his surroundings had worn away to some extent his mask of ingenuousness. Sometimes she fancied she caught a look in his eyes which seemed to say: "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

Carol's infatuation was growing deeper and

How My Heart Cries Out

By KENNARD KINCAID

BELOVÈD, how my heart cries out to you
Like some poor penitent upon his knees,
Who seeks new visions of old mysteries,
And thinks to raise his failing hopes anew.
Alas, the treasures of the earth are few;
Life is a wilderness wherefrom one sees
The sunlight far above the close-grown trees,
Wherein we feebly dream our swift days through.

Behind our smiles we hide our tears; behind
Our tears, our dreams . . . this much we own
If one possess the splendid gift to bind
Unto the spirit by his strength alone
That which he does not earn but lives to find
By taking chances with a dim unknown.

deeper, and Margeret felt that she would be the potential cause of it, if unhappiness came to her sister. She decided to go to Carol once more, before things progressed further.

One morning after Curtis had left for the cabin, she called Carol into the small room that she used as a study.

"Come in and close the door, dear," she said. "I want to have a serious talk with you!"

Carol sat down ungraciously. She hated to be lectured to and there were things she had determined Margeret must not know.

"I HOPE you are not going to be tiresome," she began, but Margeret cut her short.

"I talked to you once before," she said, "and you were cross with me. Try to listen now and know that what I am saying is only for your own good." She came over to the girl and put her hands on her shoulders. "Carol, dear little sister, please don't be carried away by the attentions of a very fascinating man!"

The girl jumped to her feet.

"I won't listen if you are going to talk about Dick—er—Mr. Curtis."

"You must listen." Margeret had caught at the proper name. "Carol, he is not serious with you. How can a little unsophisticated girl hold a man like him—a man of the world? He will go away when the summer is over and forget all about you, don't you know that? If you were not blinded you would see that he cares so much for himself that he hasn't room in his heart for anyone else!"

Carol flung away from her sister's hold, her cheeks scarlet, her eyes blazing.

"You are only jealous because he cares for me," she raged. "You think because you are clever he ought to like you, but he doesn't, he doesn't! It's me he cares for, me he loves! He's wonderful, wonderful! I'd give my life for him and you might as well know it!" Slamming the door after her, Carol ran out of the room.

MARGERET stood staring after her. It had gone further than she thought. Curtis had made love to Carol, made her believe he cared, and the girl, with the full impulse of her nature, was ready to plunge into a bottomless abyss.

Margeret knew that her sister never thought of anything but an honorable end to her love affair. She knew that the girl did not doubt her lover's good intentions; that Carol with all her impulsiveness, her fiery nature, was still too unsophisticated to dream of a love that had only its own selfish ends in view. There was yet time to save her; yet time to avert those regrets which would be inevitable.

But there was also the chance that in this affair Curtis might be serious. She would give him the benefit of the doubt. She would do nothing until she had the proof positive.

There was a train to town in half an hour. She could just make it by breathless hurry. Slipping into a linen suit, and making the excuse to her mother of a necessary visit to the lawyer's, she boarded the train, the one thought in her mind to see Grace Allison and find out what she knew. But she could not leave Carol free to follow any mad impulse which might flash through her mind.

"Mother has a headache, Carol," she said, knocking at the girl's door before leaving. "I have just had word that I must be in town for an hour or two, you won't leave her 'til I get back, will you?" Though her sister's promise was grudgingly given, she knew it would be kept.

SHE found Mrs. Allison alone, and with the nervousness that was calling her back to Hampton, she launched immediately into the reason for her visit.

"Grace," she said, "you warned me about Richard Curtis. Can you give me proofs?"

Her friend looked at her sadly.

"Has he played with you, too, Margeret?" she said. "I thought you were strong!"

Margeret waved aside the thought.

"Not me, Grace. I told you I had neither time nor inclination for such things, but—but—it's Carol." Her stiff lips struggled with the words. She hated to speak her sister's name. After all, the fault was hers.

Mrs. Allison gasped.

"I was afraid of that, but I thought he had *some* decency. Has it—has it gone far?"

Margeret shook her head.

"Carol is such a child," she said, "she has no thought of a love being offered her that does not mean a wedding! And after all—might he not have found the woman he could really care for?"

Mrs. Allison laughed a hard, mirthless little laugh.

"Dick Curtis is absolutely incapable of love. Women are fair game to him, nothing more."

"But Grace, every man finds the One Woman sometime; maybe—"

Mrs. Allison shook her head.

"Carol is not the one," she said; then after a pause, "shall I—shall I give you proof?"

HER face was drawn, haggard. She had lost the semblance of youthful freshness that had made her beauty. Her eyes burned with something tragic in their depths. Margeret looked at her startled.

"Grace," she said, "are you trying to tell me—"

Mrs. Allison nodded.

"Oh, Margeret, Margeret!" she said, "can't you understand how hard it is for me to tell you? But I must save that child!"

"Is that why you left George?"

"Yes"—Mrs. Allison's voice was almost a whisper—"I loved him, Margeret, I—I love him yet! Do you know what he said to me when he grew tired?"

Margeret's heart ached for the pain she saw in her friend's eyes.

"He told me that he never had felt the slightest affection for me, that he couldn't understand the whim that had made him urge me to run away. He said he never even had thought he loved me, that I was in no way the sort of woman he cared about, that it had all been a moment's temptation. He said he was sorry, and hoped I'd forgive him!" She laughed. "Those were his very words! He pointed out to me that he had never said he loved me, that he had nothing to reproach himself for, that I was old enough to know what I was about!" She rose and began pacing up and down the room. "He was right, I suppose, but I'll tell you this, and God knows it is true—even if he never said in words that he loved me, no man ever tried harder to make a woman believe it than he did! You know me, Margeret, I am no prude, but if I had not thought he cared, I would have killed myself before I would have—have done what I did!"

MARGERET put her arms about the tragic little figure and held her close in an understanding embrace.

"Dear Grace," she said, "how fortunate you are!"

Mrs. Allison raised a tear-stained face.

"Fortunate?" she echoed, astonished.

"To have found out what a cad he is! Surely you are no longer in love with a man like that?"

"But I am, and the terrible part of it is, he knows it. Margeret, he still writes to me, still keeps his hold on me!" Going to her desk she pulled out a little pile of letters, all in Curtis' writing. "Here is one that came only yesterday," she said. "Do you care to see it?"

Margeret rose.

"No," she said, "I haven't time, I must get my train. I have all the proof I need, and between us, we'll save Carol!" She stooped and kissed her friend. "Put him out of your mind, dear girl, as I shall put him out of my house—when I am through with him!"

THAT night Margeret determined to have one more talk with Carol, before she took more drastic measures, but the girl was stiffly ungracious, almost sullen, when she came into her room and closed the door.

"I want to beg you once more to listen to me," Margeret said. "I have every proof of what I am telling you. This man only cares for you to amuse himself. He hasn't the slightest intention of ever marrying, or even becoming engaged. You are only one of many others, Carol. Won't you believe what I am telling you?"

The girl's face was white and bitter.

"I told you you were jealous!" she said. "You want him for yourself, but you can't have him, he's mine!"

"He isn't yours or anyone's, Carol, there have

Begin Developing Your Personality

By CORA A. ANDERSON

IF YOU want to develop your personality, do these things:

Be interesting and interested. When you are talking, concentrate on what you are saying; put your whole soul into it and even though you are only giving a recipe for apple jelly, get as enthusiastic over it as though you were advising a general how to capture a stronghold. Then, when the other fellow is talking, listen to what he is saying. Listen with your eyes; look at him; don't bat your eyes, unless they are snapping with interest. Listen with your body. Don't be restless, but assume an attitude of concern about the matter under discussion, no matter how trivial. Follow every word the speaker says and make it easier for him to talk.

Be sincere. Personality will never amount to anything unless it rings true. Deal with people above board and in the open. Don't be afraid of anything or anybody.

See only the good in others. Close your eyes to their faults and deal with everybody just as though they were wholly good. Appeal to their best natures always.

Practice the golden rule and make it work for you.

Put a little pep into everything you do, everything you say, and into the way you look. Turn the corners of your mouth up all day; smile readily and laugh heartily.

Say to yourself once every hour: "How good it is to be living in such a wonderful world!" Then some morning you'll wake up and find you have personality.

been too many women for one to claim him. And I want you to believe this: a man of his type could have no more interest for me than the lowest criminal. I could only pity him as I would any other degraded creature."

CAROL'S eyes blazed.

"I want you to leave my room!" she said. "I don't want to listen to another word you say!"

"Carol!" Margeret's heart was in her cry.

The girl turned on her fiercely.

"If the things you say are true, why don't you prove them? Bring me proof and I'll listen to you!"

"I will!"

"Letters can be falsely written," Carol sneered.

Margeret shook her head.

"I'll let you see with your own eyes. Oh Carol, Carol, I'd give my life to save you unhappiness. Won't you believe me?"

The girl held the door open, her young body stiff and unbending, her eyes cold and bitter.

"It's only my own eyes that I *will* believe," she said. "Good night!"

BACK in her own room, Margeret walked the floor. There was only one way to prove her assertions. She hated to do it, hated the part she would have to play, but Margeret knew that she would do even more than this to save Carol's happiness.

She studied her reflection in the mirror. There were gracious lines to the full throat and shoulders, her eyes were handsome, and, though she had schooled them to be cold, Margeret knew what the smouldering light in their depths meant. She knew her own power and determined to use it deliberately. Curtis should be allowed to see that not only Carol was infatuated and easily won but Margeret, the severe, the indifferent, was also a woman and "therefore to be wooed!"

AT BREAKFAST the next morning she was especially gracious at her place behind the coffee urn. Mrs. Dale never came down early, and Margeret always presided in her place. Carol was silent, her pretty mouth drooping sullenly, but her sister pretended not to see.

"I have an errand near your cabin, Mr. Curtis," she said. "I wonder if you would take me in your car?" Carol looked up quickly. It had been an understood thing in the household that Curtis' day belonged to him until after his working hours, and even she had never ventured to overstep the rule.

Curtis assented graciously enough.

"I shall be delighted, Miss Dale," he said. "Could I perhaps do the errand for you?"

Margeret shook her head.

"No," she said pinning on her hat. "It's a very tiresome household errand, but one that must be done. Carol, will you mind taking mother's breakfast to her? I sha'n't be gone long!" And she stepped into the blue car, Curtis taking his seat in the tonneau beside her.

"Do you know," she said as they drove out through the gate, "I suppose you think it rather queer of me to encroach on your time this way, but —well, really I welcomed the opportunity. I seem to get so little chance to talk to you—and I imagine you might be rather interesting if one came to know you!"

He threw her a quick side glance. What had happened? Could it be possible the staid Miss Dale was waking up?

"You flatter me," he said. "I assure you the lack of opportunity has not been my fault, rather my misfortune!"

"There is nothing in this world that is irreparable, is there," she said, "except—?"

"Don't let us worry about the exceptions," he smiled. "Let us rather busy ourselves with the possibilities."

HER errand took her just to the edge of the wood, it seemed, and Curtis found that they had reached her destination much sooner than he liked. He wondered why he hadn't thought more about her before. These cold women were wonderful once they were awake, and she certainly was handsome. Jove, such eyes! A woman with eyes like that never was meant to be a nun!

"Blake can come for you and take you home," he said. "When shall he meet you?"

"You are good!" her smile was very winning. "I'll be here when he comes along. Thank you, Mr. Curtis, you've been very kind and I've enjoyed our conversation, and I hope—" she stopped and veiled her eyes.

"What do you hope?" deliberately choosing his best tone, but she shook her head and smiled as she stepped down into the road and turned into the yard of a farmhouse nearby.

Curtis watched her until the trees closed in behind the car. She was attractive! What fine shoulders she had, and the straight, sure way she carried herself! But Margeret Dale and a flirtation! Well, it only proved his theory. It was simple enough to carry on two affairs at once providing the women did not know each other, or even if they did there was sometimes the added zest of playing one off

against the other and relying on one's own ingenuity. But two sisters! That was rather a dangerous game, and lovely little Carol was still too alluring to be allowed to slip away.

ALL day across the yellow sheets on which he usually scrawled his first copy, he could see the smouldering, dark eyes that seemed to hold a provoking sort of promise, a half-hint of possibilities that turned even his seasoned senses a little giddy. He found himself wondering what she would be like once she overcame her scruples, and without the slightest intention of losing his footing with Carol he determined to explore a little in this new direction.

If he could have seen that she went no nearer to the farmhouse than the front step and there turned and came back to the side of the road to patiently await the recoming of the car, he might have wondered, but Curtis gave her no credit for subterfuge. Like all people sure of their own craftiness, he was apt to undervalue the subtlety of others. In addition, his interest, ever on the alert where the feminine gender was concerned, had been awakened.

Margeret knew she must work quickly. Carol was waiting for her proofs, and the slightest false step might send her into Curtis' arms. She was in an agony lest she had begun her campaign along the wrong lines. Had he divined her ruse, she wondered? Had she made her opening advances too marked?

THAT night after dinner, while he was waiting for Carol to go to the Club dance, Curtis sought out Margeret where she sat under the trees.

"Not going with us?" he asked, by way of opening the conversation, although he knew she seldom left her mother. "Do you know, I almost wish I were going to stay right here—with you!" The last was added in an undertone. Margeret waited a moment before she answered, and then her voice came very softly, very tenderly.

"I wish you were!" she said.

Curtis drew a chair up close to hers.

"Why have you kept yourself so aloof?" he asked. "Hasn't there been a lot of time wasted?"

She let her eyes rest on his, that provoking spark alluringly apparent. "The fault has not been mine," she smiled. "Your interest seems to have been centered elsewhere." She hoped to lead him into a disparaging shrug, a word that might show her she was on the right track, but Curtis passed over her remark as though he had not heard it.

"Perhaps we can find a way to remedy our shortsightedness," he said. "Will you go to tea with me to-morrow?"

"And Carol—?" she asked

"I can manage that, if you will allow me. A sin of omission brings more regret than any other kind!"

"I shall arrange my time to suit yours," she said. "But my little sister must not know, I—"

"Trust me," he said softly, as Carol came toward them, the ends of her lace scarf floating like mist on the light evening breeze.

Margeret rose hastily.

"I hope you will have a lovely time," she said. "Good night!"

As they drove away, she wondered at her own powers of dissimulation. How easy it was, she thought, how uninterestingly easy to attract a man like that. One had only to be a woman and smile. The thought disgusted her.

SHE found a note on her desk the next morning.

"I shall be waiting for you at the edge of the wood at three—we can have a beautiful hour trying to get acquainted.

Until then—D. C."

Margeret had to force herself to dress. Her clothes seemed to cry aloud at her duplicity. But she took particular pains to make herself as attractive as possible. Margeret had so few clothes that her choice was not a complicated one. She had always made her old things do that Carol might have the new ones, and now she found it rather difficult to find something to suit. She decided at last on a simple frock, the straight white lines of which followed her supple figure. Under the brim of a wide black hat, her dark hair waved to a loose knot on her neck.

HE WAS waiting for her when she came along the road.

"Too bad you had to walk," he said, "but I didn't dare send the car," and she realized that the little secrecy that had been established, interested and amused him.

She looked up at him with a direct challenge in her eyes.

"Are you really glad that I came?"

He drew her arm through his and let his hand rest over hers. "I wonder if you know *how* glad?" he asked, looking down at her.

They were walking along the woody path. The trees shut out the hot sun, the leaves made a soft carpet under their feet.

"Can't we sit down here awhile?" she said. "I mustn't keep you from your work too long, you know."

"Margeret Dale," he said when they had seated themselves comfortably under a tree, "how dared you hide your wonderful self from me all this time?"

She leaned toward him.

"Perhaps it was because I didn't want you to find me too soon," she said. The challenge shone very clearly in her eyes, her hand lay cool and white close to his own.

"Margeret," he said, his voice husky, "Margeret!" but she drew away.

"It's almost four," she said. "I must go back!"

"But you'll come again to-morrow? You'll give me a few minutes this evening? Margeret, you will?"

"Yes," she breathed, her face lifted to his, "yes—Dick!" and then she was gone, leaving him standing, staring after her with a thrill in his heart that was new to him.

THE next day and the next Carol found that new work had come to keep him busy, that much to his regret the usual four-o'clock meetings would have to be abandoned for a while at least.

"Don't look so sad, my dearest," he told her. "It's only for a little while and then I'll have all my time only for you. Come, smile and tell me that you love me!" And Carol put her arms about his neck and whispered the words, her lips close to his cheek.

"I am waiting for your proof, Margeret," she said to her sister one day not long after their quarrel. "You said you would let me see with my own eyes."

"I will," was the answer. "Wait!" Margeret's heart ached at the pain she knew she must cause the girl.

She made one excuse after the other, in order to slip away, but her ingenuity was taxed to the utmost for enough evasion to help her. He, in the meantime, had only to plead his work. He knew that the little cabin in the woods was sacred property where he would not be disturbed, and often Carol would lie in the hammock, a note from him under her cheek, saying how he missed seeing her but there was a chapter which had to be finished. The notes always began and ended with assurances of his love, and Carol let her fancy picture him bending over his work, while in reality he and Margeret were motoring through the lovely country or sitting over their tea-cups in some quiet inn.

ONE day they motored along the shore-road and found a quaint little place hidden away among a grove of trees, with the wide expanse of the Sound rippling at their feet. Margeret had left ostensibly to visit the lawyer in New York.

They were quite hidden in a secluded corner. He leaned across the little table between them and took her hand in both of his.

"Margeret, dearest," he said, "are you going to keep me waiting for you always? You know I love you. I'm no saint, I admit it, but there never has been a woman who held me like you do. I'm yours, every bit of me belongs to you—Margeret!"

She drew her hand away.

"Dick," she said, "how many women have you said that to?"

"Can't we talk of pleasant things?" he said. "I don't want to remember anyone but you. I want to hear you say you love me, that you'll come to me. Margeret, I want you so!"

She let her eyes rest on his. How she loathed this man. How she hated herself for her pretense of being what he thought her, but she forced herself to look at him tenderly, to smile into his eyes.

"Write to me, Dick," she said. "Put it all in a wonderful, beautiful letter, and—perhaps—I'll come—"

He half rose, his eyes burning, but she drew away.

"Write it to me—dear," she said. "Come, we must go."

A Cruel Parting

By L. B. BIRDSALL

"GOOD-BY, darling!" he muttered hoarsely, drawing the girlish form to him.

"It is very hard, I know, sweetheart!" he continued, kissing her tear-stained cheeks, "but I must go!" A determined note came into his voice.

"You must be a brave little woman and brace up!" he commanded, gently.

He held her trembling body from him, a hesitant, despairing look in his eyes. She faltered toward him like a frightened child, a pleading cry on her lips; but he pushed her from him—almost roughly—and clutching his hat, rushed to the door.

"Please, come back!" she wailed, piteously, her arms outstretched.

"No!" he answered, a sob of misery in his voice, "I must go!"

The door closed sharply behind him and the girl-woman sank weakly into a chair and buried her face in the cushions.

Thus the husband of a fortnight left his young wife for the first time to go to his work.

SHE would not let him touch her hand as they rode back to the edge of the wood. From here she must walk home so as to allay suspicion. She felt she would scream with horror of herself and him if he had put his hand on hers. But there was still the final step to be taken; still the absolute proof to be obtained before Carol would be convinced.

As she stepped from the car at the turning, he bent toward her and whispered:

"I shall have a letter on your desk in the morning. I shall write to Carol and say I am called to town—to-morrow night—Margeret!"

CURTIS walked his floor that night. Carol had become to him only a lovely child in whom he had lost interest, but Margeret—he had been right, he told himself; these women who held themselves in check—who seemed so cold and distant, they were wonderful! His imagination pictured her arms about his neck, her lips against his, and the thought sent him pacing his floor again. She would come to him, he knew. He never doubted that Carol would have come too, but Carol would have come not knowing, not understanding. Margeret knew, Margeret understood, and Margeret would come! He admired her splendid courage, the untrammeled freedom of thought that had brought her to him when he almost passed her by.

V

SHE found his note on her desk in the morning.

> "My own darling," it began. "If you really love me you will come to me to-night in the little cabin at ten— Prove to me that you care as much as I do. I shall be waiting, longing, counting the moments until you are with me.
>
> Until to-night at ten and ever after—
>
> D. C."

Curtis met her in the hall. His eyes glowed as he looked at her, and without words she managed to make him understand that the little note lay treasured near her heart.

She watched him drive away through the gates, and Carol, coming down later, made no effort to hide her disappointment that he had not waited to see her.

"He told me to tell you he had extra work to do to-day, but he left you this," and she handed Carol the letter, carefully resealed, which she had found on her own desk a little earlier. She did not wait to see the girl open and read it, but putting on her hat, hurried out of the garden.

ONCE out of sight of the house she turned swiftly in the direction of the Howell's home. John had been away for days but she had met him accidentally the afternoon before, and now as she rang the bell, she almost prayed that he had not gone away again.

Her hope was fulfilled. The boy himself opened the door.

"Margeret," he said, "what brings you here so early?"

She drew him after her to a secluded corner of the wide porch.

"John," she questioned, "do you still care for Carol?"

His glowing eyes answered her.

"Would you help her if you could?"

"I'd do anything in the world for her!"

"Then listen: I'm trying to cure her of this mad infatuation for a man who is not worthy to tie her shoestrings, and John, I think I can, but I need your help! Carol will be going to the little cabin to-night at ten—don't look so black, but listen to me. I want you to be near, and after you see what you will see, after you are sure that Carol has seen, say to her that this is the proof that I had promised, and she will understand. But you must promise not to say or do anything rash no matter what you see! Will you do this? John, we both need you, I as well as Carol. Will you?"

"Margeret," the boy's voice shook, "you know you can rely on me. I'll be outside the little cabin at ten!"

ALL day Carol went about quietly, her eyes shining. She avoided Margeret and her mother, but at luncheon she announced carelessly that she was going to spend the night with Katherine Forrest, a neighbor.

"But Carol dear," her mother said, "you know I never like to have you stay out over night."

"Let her go, mother," pleaded Margeret. "Katherine will be so glad to have her. Just this once can't matter." Mrs. Dale consented and Carol threw a perfunctorily grateful look at her sister.

"I shall be away for a little while myself, mother," said Margeret. "Old Hannah's daughter is ill and I'm going to take her some jelly, but I'll be back early. You won't mind, will you?"

"Not at all, dear," was the answer. "I have an interesting book and I'll probably be asleep, anyway, long before you come back."

The way was clear, the stage was set. Margeret longed to pack Curtis' belongings and put them outside on the porch, for if she had her way she would

never have let him set foot in the house again, but that was impossible.

Carol left soon after dinner and Margeret knew she would spend part of the evening with her friend so as to allay suspicion. She started away shortly after, her heart pounding, her pulses throbbing. After all, it was rather a risky thing she was doing. Would she succeed, or would Curtis, finding himself deceived, take revenge on her? There was nothing to do but go on with it, however.

IT WAS quite dark when she turned into the woods, but she had no fear of solitude; the shrill piping of frogs echoed a song of triumph in her heart. This man who had thought to make her his victim, would become hers.

It was not quite ten when she rapped softly at the door. Curtis opened it quickly, almost as though he had been waiting beside the latch.

"Margeret, you darling!" he breathed, and she found herself crushed to his heart, his kisses hot against her face.

Her ears were strained to hear any sound that would indicate the presence of Carol and John.

Curtis took her silence for shyness.

"My beautiful darling," he said tenderly, "my loved one, to think that only a little while ago I did not even know you were in the world—but all my life has been leading me toward you—"

There was a stifled cry from outside the window. Margeret sprang away.

"What was that?" she said.

For a moment they stood listening.

"It's nothing, dear," he said, turning to her again. "There's no one within miles!" But Margeret knew that Carol had seen and heard. Her task was done. She sank into a chair, her face in her hands.

Curtis stood for a moment looking down at her.

She had really come to him, she was his. It had all been so incredibly easy after all. The voice of the little devil within him mocked— "Women!" it said scornfully. "Women!"

Then she arose, her chin high, her eyes flashing. Something tightened in his throat.

"Where are you going?" he asked huskily.

SHE turned on him, the blazing light of fury in her eyes. All the hatred, the contempt of him ringing in her voice.

"Going?" she said. "I'm going to go as far away from a creature like you as I can possibly go! You miserable cad, you wretched thing, unworthy of the name of man, I've been playing with you as you have played with us! I've led you on! I planned all this so that my sister might see what a vile creature she was imagining she loved. I hate myself because I ever let you touch me—!"

Curtis' face was ghastly.

"You think you can play with me?" he said. "You came to me alone in the woods, and you are going to stay!"

He seized her roughly by the shoulders, and swung her against him.

"You are going to stay, do you hear?" he said savagely, "and no matter what you tell your sister, she'll not believe you!"

THE door behind them swung open. It was Carol, her face like marble, in her eyes a light of such deadly contempt that he shrank back in spite of himself. His arms dropped and John, who had come in with Carol, stood between the two girls and the furious man, whose smooth polish had vanished, leaving only the primitive fierceness of the thwarted brute blazing from his eyes.

"If it weren't for my promise to Margeret," said John, "I'd thrash you within an inch of your life." Carol looked at his breadth of muscle and limb with a new light in her eyes.

Curtis drew himself together.

"I'm very sorry," he said, his suave, charming self again. "I've made a mistake, a worse mistake than any of you will ever know, than I dreamed of myself! Good night!" He held the door open for them and they went out quietly.

"I am sorry I shall have to trouble you by coming for my belongings," he called after them.

Carol put her arms around her sister.

"Margeret, dear Margeret, can you ever forgive me?" she cried. "What a fool I've been!"

MARGERET soothed her.

"Hush," she said, "let's forget it all."

Carol put a trembling hand on John's arm.

"And you," she said softly, "will you forgive me?" He drew her to him very gently.

"Sweetheart," he said. "I know I can never compete with the fascination of a man like that, but even if you don't want my heart, won't you let me give you my protection?"

Margeret had walked on ahead and in the quiet of the woods the two were almost alone.

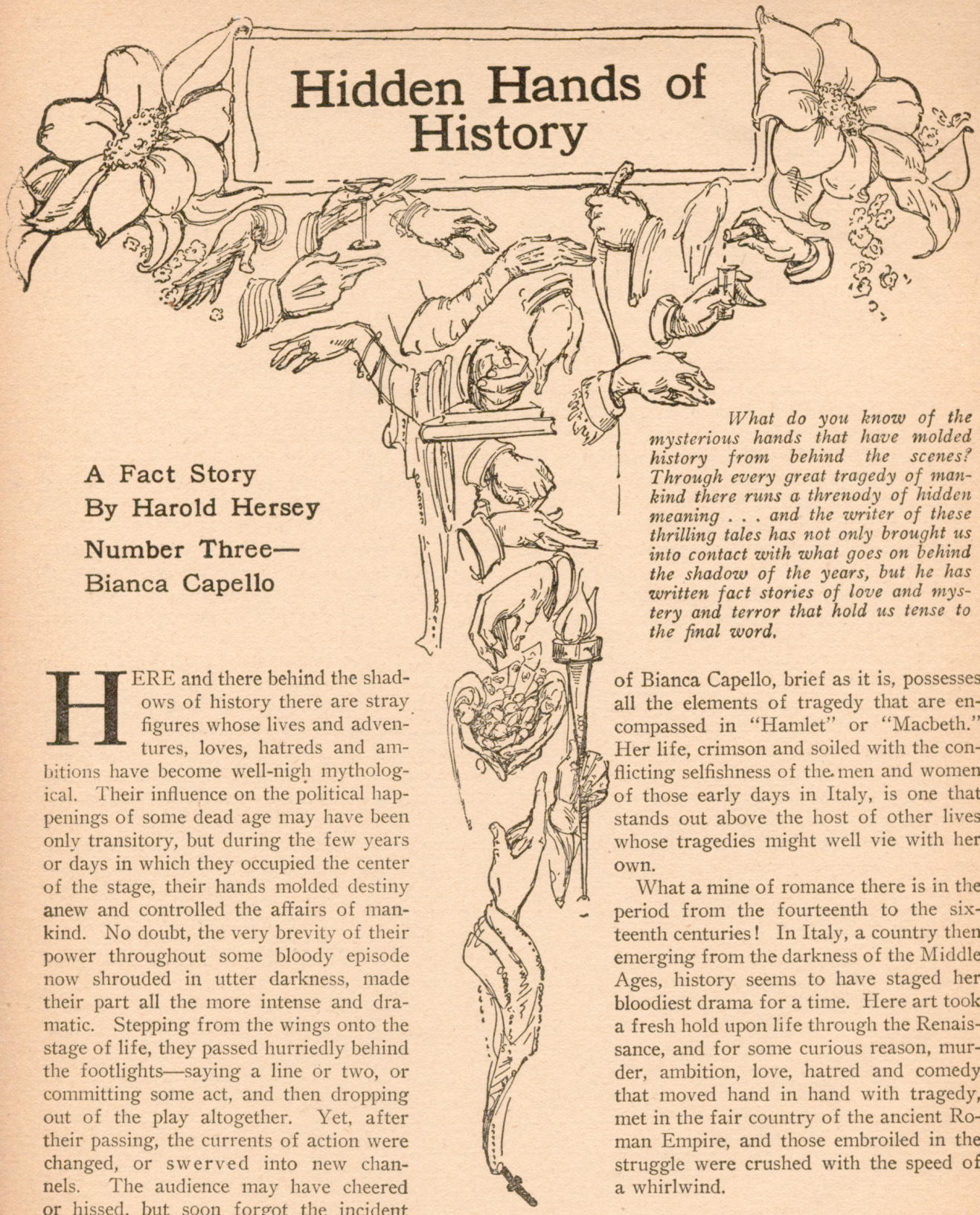
"John," Carol was very close to him, "won't you let me have both?"

* * * * * * * * * *

Inside the little cabin, a man lay prone on the board floor, his hands clutching in agony.

"God," he cried, "it has come to me at last! I found her, only to lose her! The angel with the flaming sword has shut me out of Paradise—alone!"

Hidden Hands of History



A Fact Story
By Harold Hersey

Number Three—
Bianca Capello

What do you know of the mysterious hands that have molded history from behind the scenes? Through every great tragedy of mankind there runs a threnody of hidden meaning . . . and the writer of these thrilling tales has not only brought us into contact with what goes on behind the shadow of the years, but he has written fact stories of love and mystery and terror that hold us tense to the final word.

HERE and there behind the shadows of history there are stray figures whose lives and adventures, loves, hatreds and ambitions have become well-nigh mythological. Their influence on the political happenings of some dead age may have been only transitory, but during the few years or days in which they occupied the center of the stage, their hands molded destiny anew and controlled the affairs of mankind. No doubt, the very brevity of their power throughout some bloody episode now shrouded in utter darkness, made their part all the more intense and dramatic. Stepping from the wings onto the stage of life, they passed hurriedly behind the footlights—saying a line or two, or committing some act, and then dropping out of the play altogether. Yet, after their passing, the currents of action were changed, or swerved into new channels. The audience may have cheered or hissed, but soon forgot the incident in the onrush of new excitement.

However, the Great Master of the Show knows that even the smallest of us have our well-ordered parts in the cast. It may be fortunate for the average person that this is so because the pathetic story of Bianca Capello, brief as it is, possesses all the elements of tragedy that are encompassed in "Hamlet" or "Macbeth." Her life, crimson and soiled with the conflicting selfishness of the men and women of those early days in Italy, is one that stands out above the host of other lives whose tragedies might well vie with her own.

What a mine of romance there is in the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries! In Italy, a country then emerging from the darkness of the Middle Ages, history seems to have staged her bloodiest drama for a time. Here art took a fresh hold upon life through the Renaissance, and for some curious reason, murder, ambition, love, hatred and comedy that moved hand in hand with tragedy, met in the fair country of the ancient Roman Empire, and those embroiled in the struggle were crushed with the speed of a whirlwind.

THERE is no reader who does not know of the bloody Borgias and their battles for power at the cost of honor and with continued crime to clear the path for their vaulting ambitions. To those who have read of Beatrice Cenci, and of many

others, the history of Italy is one that never lapses in interest. To me, the pathetic tale of poor Bianca Capello, and her terrible death stands out among all the stories of that day and time. Perhaps the short grant of power given her by the fates and the swift onrush of retribution for her sins, makes it the more absorbing, but at any rate one would have to be cold indeed not to have some sympathy for her fatal loves, and her more fatal desire to rise in affluence and power. There has been all too little written about her life. It is surprising how the historian passes hurriedly over the short interludes between the more stupendous adventures of men. Let us forget for the moment all the enormous figures of time and turn our attention to the fortunes of Bianca.

* * * * * * *

SOMEONE has described Bianca Capello as "a charming girl as loving as Juliet herself—in fact, waiting for the moment when a handsome Romeo would cross her path to say to her, as was said to the maid of Verona: 'I will give myself to you or the tomb'!"

All who have written about her agree that she was surpassingly lovely, with a dead-white complexion, over which at the slightest emotion a blush would pass like a rosy cloud; hair of that intense blonde that Raphael thinks so beautiful; black eyes full of fire, and a supple and firm figure. It is said that from the age of sixteen she swayed men with her beauty so that her father, the head of the Venetian house of Capello, was forced to watch over her carefully. Great plans were made for her marriage. In those days, the betrothal and the nuptial ceremony were of grave importance. The elders met in close conference and deliberated upon this lovely daughter, listening patiently to the stern father. But Fate —as ever moving where it is least expected—had prepared a different destiny for Bianca!

ABOUT 1560 a young man named Pietro Bonventuri came to Venice in search of his fortune. He was born of a good and honorable family, but in poor circumstances. They had secured a position for Pietro with the banking house of the *Signor* Salviati. The report is that Pietro made an instant success because he wrote a beautiful hand, could add and multiply with ease, and showed a natural aptitude for the business. At any rate, he found himself in a small but promising position and for the time being was content.

Fate, moving stealthily behind the curtains, pulled a few more strings and Pietro took lodgings across the street from the palace of the Capello family. There is no record of his first meeting with Bianca. It is shrouded in mystery. Some say that she saw him going to and fro; and others might claim with equal weight of authority that they met at some mutual friend's house and he moved purposely to be across the street from her. At any rate, Fate had her imperious way as usual.

THEY soon found themselves madly in love with one another and forgot discretion in the desire to be together. Bianca, if we are to accept the testimony of her future will power in matters of the heart, must have been the leader in arranging the details of their secret meetings. The risk they had to incur was great. Their discovery would have brought disgrace to her, and ruin to the young clerk. But in spite of this, she waited every night until the household was asleep and then with extreme caution stole downstairs with a dark cloak over her so as not to be noticed, and with mad courage darted across the street, where she would be met by Pietro, who after a hurried embrace would escort her upstairs to his room, where they would remain until the morning dawned. Then she would break away and going below, open the door softly and dart home once more. Her maid would find her sleeping peacefully every morning as if nothing had transpired in the meanwhile to disturb the even serenity of the Capello palace.

Indeed all would have gone well had not the baker's boy, or some other instrument of fate, accidentally locked the lower door of Pietro's house one early morning and when Bianca went below she found it impossible to get away. She dared not call for help: discovery meant ruin. Without stopping to consider she ran back to her lover and prevailed upon him to go away with her and take up arms against the world. Pietro loved her madly and with his whole heart. In the decision which he was to make, disaster faced him from every side. He would lose his position, and be marked as a villain of no value to honest men and women.

But so great was his love for her and so powerful her influence over him, that he did not remain undecided for any length of time. The eloping pair managed to steal past the guards of Venice and by hard traveling they reached Pietro's home in Florence. His father gave them a ready refuge, poor as it was, and the patrician Bianca was forced to exist on the barest necessities of life. With the courage that history claims is her right, she made no complaint, but is said to have observed even the demeanor of happiness under any and all hardships.

* * * * * * *

THE next incident in this unhappy woman's career leads to the closing one. Unfortunately, there are so many confusing reports of how it all

came about that I am forced to adopt one of them in order that we may advance our story to the tragedy that closed it. Esther Singleton, in her book of "Famous Women as Described by Famous Writers" chooses the narrative of Alexandre Dumas to illustrate this period in Bianca's career.

It seems that she remained indoors all the time after coming to Florence with Pietro, not daring to venture into the streets for fear of discovery. She found it vastly amusing to sit by her window and look at the life of the street. It soothed her restless disposition to look upon the activity of others. At this time, she was near the height of her magnificent beauty, and the first man to catch a glimpse of her in that upper window, was the Grand Duke himself—the son of Cosmo the Great.

Fate appears to have maliciously thrown the reins of power into this ambitious woman's hands. The Grand Duke looked up at her, reined in his horse, and without regard to the proprieties of the occasion deliberately stared upon her in all her loveliness as she leaned over the window sill. She withdrew quickly, but in doing so accidentally dropped a bouquet of flowers that she was holding. Poor Bianca! I have my doubts as to the "accidental" dropping of that bouquet. I fear that she was tiring of her poverty, and already regretting the hasty elopement with Pietro!

The Grand Duke, of course, jumped from his horse and picked up the bouquet, pressing it to his lips and bowing to the closed shutters of the window where the vision had been. Needless to say, he returned again and again to the same spot, but each time he went away unrewarded with a sight of the woman who filled his heart. He became restless and unhappy. He did not know that she stood trembling behind the shutters, afraid to make a sign of her presence. In spite of his entreaties, expressed in eloquent glances, he received no reward for his patience.

DUMAS tells us that the Duke then resolved upon another plan. He called to his presence a Spanish gentleman by the name of Mondragone. This young fellow was attached to the court of the Duke and had gradually become his intimate friend.

The Duke spoke of the mysterious woman in the window with the closed shutters. It was on Saint Mark's square at the corner of *Santa Croce* and the *via Larga*. He gave the young Spaniard explicit instructions and as much as ordered him to gain her ear, or steal her by force. In those days, the ruler of a principality was all powerful. His wishes were commands; his commands, laws. This will partly explain the speed with which Mondragone hastened to execute his master's orders.

The methods used to attain this object are not worthy of any praise. There are certain things in the lives of every one of us that do not bear close study. Perhaps the violent love of the Grand Duke led him on to excesses that otherwise he would never have committed. However, in those days standards were different. He soon claimed her for himself, and Pietro—poor Pietro who had torn her up from her home, almost "by the roots" as one writer of the past has put it—found himself conveniently placed so that he fell in love with a mysterious veiled lady who seemed ever to be near him when he least expected it. Little did he imagine that the crafty Mondragone had planned it all so that when Bianca left him he would not regret her absence, because of a new lady and her charms.

BIANCA became the power behind the power of the Grand Duke. She ruled him through the persuasion of her beauty and her wit. It is said that she was diabolically clever, being able to turn a phrase like a rapier and pierce the thickest hide with it. The Grand Duke had married the Archduchess Jeanne of Austria at the behest of his father, but had soon tired of her placid face and simple manners. He visited Bianca secretly and at night.

The news of this was carried to his father at the end of the first year and he ordered him to put an

Your Cool White Fingers

By KESTER NANSEN

YOU came to me laden with gifts, my sweet. . . .
The giving was so good, so clean a thing
That even I found virgin songs to sing
That were not echoes of some dead defeat.
Few loves there are that find us armed to meet
The wasted spirit's roused desiring;
Vain, vain were all the gifts that you might bring
Save love with her own hands performed the feat.

Ah! lay your cool white fingers on my face
That I might touch the love that stirs me so;
Hand in hand then let us fly through space,
Look back on earth where people come and go,
Remembering that we come of that same race
Yet have created worlds they cannot know.

end to the affair at once. The young Duke, ruler of his little Italian principality, having powers that were great, put her away *but very conveniently.* In other words, he put her where he could find her at any time. He purchased a house in Florence on the *via Maggio,* still to be seen, so they say. Although the father did not know of her whereabouts, Bianca was now so near the Duke that he had only to cross the Pitti Square to reach her.

ALL his promises faded in the wind, and the Grand Duke became more than ever infatuated with Bianca. The courtiers realized this and when they desired favors, or positions, or grants of money, they first exerted their influence with her.

The poor wife of the Grand Duke languished alone and was his consort only in name. Her attendants were those who despaired of gaining any privileges from the haughty Bianca. They were the usual coterie of disappointed ones. The Grand Duchess Jeanne was naturally of a gloomy temperament. What a contrast this must have made in the mind of the Duke: the home of Bianca glittering, full of life, brilliant with clever conversation and the attentions of alert people; and then the silent, preoccupied wife at his palace, with her frozen heart and tiresome bitterness! No one can tell how it all would have ended had not a merciful God removed Jeanne from the drama. Her death left the Duke repentent and this time he did give up Bianca for awhile. His conscience must have bothered him, that is, if the knightly buccaneers of that day and age possessed such an attribute. And why not?

AT THE deathbed of Jeanne he wept with grave dignity and promised the dying woman that he would never see Bianca again. She smiled, knowing that the promises of men are like the winds: changing continuously. She did not berate him but only allowed him to kiss her frail hand. As she died, she murmured a name over and over again—that of the Grand Duke.

For all of a half year the Grand Duke kept his promise. Bianca left the fair city of Florence and the wise historian would say that she knew her power well enough to feel that by her absence she would have more chance of gaining his affections again. It worked like a charm, as most of her schemes did. She returned, threw herself upon his mercy with many protestations of undying love, and so forth. The poor Duke—what could he do but be a gallant gentleman? He took her back into his graces and soon all was as before. Only this time he was getting a little older and somewhat conscientious.

THERE began to be talk to the effect that he planned marrying her. His courtiers, realizing that there was no use trying to block a hurricane, acquiesced and even cited examples of rulers who had married the hidden ladies of history. His father married Camilla Martelli in his old age, and if the great Cosmo did this why shouldn't he? People had talked at first but soon learned to keep quiet.

Romance has it that a certain wily and crafty Capuchin interfered in the problem and with the advice of Bianca wormed himself into the Duke's affections and advised him to marry her in order to salve his conscience. Be this as it may, Bianca was soon after married in secret to the Grand Duke. But it did not suit her plans to let the marriage remain unacknowledged. She was ambitious, and now that she had gained all that her heart desired, she proclaimed it from the housetops. Oh, that Bianca could have been satisfied with this. She had risen out of the darkness and been made the wife of the Duke himself. Could any heart have desired more?

FROM this point our story rushes to the end.

The Grand Duke had a brother, Cardinal Ferdinand, and it has come down to us that this gentleman was not happy as a high member of his faith, but desired the actual control of affairs. He was jealous of the power of his older brother. He would succeed to the throne provided there were no children from the union of Bianca and the Duke. Perhaps he first tried to form a conspiracy with her and was repulsed. Who will ever know? The fact remains that Bianca hated him and they became sworn enemies.

The problem was accentuated through the failure to provide an heir to the throne. Bianca wept many bitter tears in secret. She knew that the Duke would die before she did, and if so, his brother, the crafty Ferdinand, would succeed to the throne and cast her out of her position and her wealth. Enmities were keen in those days. If she knew anything of the past, as no doubt she did, I am sure that she was aware that Ferdinand might even have her put to death.

WITH the help of the Capuchin she endeavored to have a child smuggled into the palace, planning to announce it as her own. It was the last desperate move of the unhappy woman. But the Cardinal brother discovered it, and though he did not expose her to the Duke, he let her know of his knowledge and kept the fear of exposure alive.

She became excited and lost her head. There seemed nothing for her to do but to make an end to him. With characteristic force she arranged a great

(*Concluded on page* 311)

Betty had dreamed of romance—longed for it—but when it came upon her suddenly, swiftly and mysteriously, it took real courage to meet it—especially when Love lurked in the background.

The Most Eligible Young Man

By Eveline Nutter

MRS. HAMPTON saw Betty coming up the walk between the hydrangeas, and ran to the door to meet her. Betty dropped her bag and gave Mrs. Hampton a hug, wriggling away in time to avoid being kissed. Betty hated being kissed.

"If you had told me what train," Mrs. Hampton began.

"I know," Betty interrupted her, "but just as soon as ever I read your letter I started packing my trunk. I hadn't time to write—and of course you knew I'd come."

"Of course," agreed Mrs. Hampton. "How long can you stay, Betty?"

"A week, Ruth Hampton—a whole week! And if you want to make my bliss complete, don't tell a soul that I'm a school-teacher.

BETTY was walking around, frankly examining everything in the room.

"This is surely a perfect little love of a house. I never dreamed it was so dear!"

"It is—nice, isn't it?" Mrs. Hampton tried to assume an attitude of indifference that did not conceal in the least her young-matronly pride in the new home. "But the chief reason I asked you to come just now, Betty, is because Tom and I've discovered the most eligible young man. Oh, Tom's known him for years, but it took me to discover how eligible he is!"

Betty sank into a chair, her purple eyes dancing.

"But Ruth Hampton," she cried, "what good will that do you? Aren't you married?"

"You know what I mean. And honestly, Betty, next to Tom, Alvin Homer is the most delightful man I ever met. Big and handsome, you know, and he has no end of money."

Betty groaned.

"He's an artist. Oh, I don't mean a pink-tea artist—a regular one. He works like a Turk, and he's the kind of a man you can't help trusting—"

"Oh, I see! He is an—*angel!*"

Betty's cheeks were very red indeed.

"So I'm wild to have him meet you!" ended her hostess rather breathlessly.

"Well, Ruth Hampton—I shall hate him! I detest an ideal man—I'd rather marry a banana peddler—and I *loathe* being thrown at a man's head!"

Betty jerked off her gloves. Mrs. Hampton laughed good naturedly.

"YOU look perfectly stunning when you are in a tantrum, Betty, but it isn't very dignified for a teacher of English. I do wish Alvin Homer could see you now! He's coming to dinner to-morrow. If you don't have the most glorious vacation you ever did have—"

"Of course I shall, Ruth, I always do."

Betty was smiling again. "But it will be because of you, and not because I have fallen for the charms of this Gabriel Apollo or whatever you call him."

"Alvin Homer," Mrs. Hampton corrected her, patiently. "You must have heard of him."

"Never mind," said Betty. "I want to see everything—your kitchen cupboard, and your new clothes—and everything."

"Naturally," admitted Mrs. Hampton, "I'm just dying to show you."

HALF an hour later, when Betty's supply of ohs! and ahs! and adjectives ought to have been exhausted, if it wasn't, Mrs. Hampton mentioned casually that Tom took more pride in his horse than he did in the house.

"You don't mean to tell me, Ruth Hampton, that Tom has an honest-to-goodness *horse?*" cried Betty. "A *riding*-horse? Well, where is he—may I ride him? Why didn't you tell me the first thing?"

"I just didn't think, Betty." Mrs. Hampton answered the last question first. "You know I don't ride. He's in the stable. Come on, if you want to see him."

Cyrano de Bergerac—Cy for short, whinnied an eager greeting from the stable window.

"Oh," cried Betty, "you beauty!"

"It's a shame, too," said Mrs. Hampton. "Tom is so busy he doesn't have much time to ride him."

"Oh!" cried Betty again, rubbing the white star on Cyrano's forehead, "could I ride him, Ruth? Would Tom care?"

"Tom wouldn't care—he'd be glad."

ALL at once Betty's face fell. "Oh dear me!" she sighed. "I haven't any riding-clothes."

"Let me think." Mrs. Hampton drew her eyebrows together in a little frown. "We can manage somehow—a pair of Tom's military breeches—my mountain boots—after lunch we'll see."

Betty gave her an enthusiastic hug. "You're a darling—I don't care a snap how I look, and surely Cyrano is so beautifully sleek and shining that no intelligent person will give me a glance, anyway."

Cyrano tossed his shapely sorrel head in appreciation of the compliment, and Betty tore herself away from him, to follow Mrs. Hampton back into the house.

"YOUR clothes aren't quite—conventional," admitted Mrs. Hampton that afternoon, as Betty led Cyrano from the stable. "You look entirely too pretty. That green sweater is tremendously becoming—it brings out the red in your hair. I have no doubt you will have some sort of an adventure—but I don't mind, if you'll tell me all about it to-night."

"I won't," said Betty, mounting with the ease of one accustomed to the saddle from childhood. "I won't—but of course I couldn't resist telling you, Ruth, if I had."

But of course she didn't—that is, she didn't tell Mrs. Hampton.

In the first place, she had gone much farther than she realized when suddenly, to her utter dismay, Cyrano came to a halt, and told her quite plainly that something was wrong with one of his fore feet. Betty swung down at once to investigate. He raised his foot intelligently, watching her with his great limpid eyes. He had picked up a nail—a large nail it was, and it had gone in close to the frog.

"You poor thing," condoled Betty, straightening up and patting his sleek shoulder. "I wonder what under the smiling canopy I'm going to do for you?"

She led him on for a few yards. He limped painfully.

"This won't do," she said resolutely. "I simply must get help!"

SO SHE tied Cy to a pepper tree at the side of the road, and walked to the nearest house, and tried to telephone to Mrs. Hampton. But no one answered. Then she tried to telephone Mr. Hampton at his office, but he was not in. In despair she told her trouble to the people in the house, and to her delight learned that there was a veterinary hospital only a half a mile away. She promplty called that and explained her dilemma, and the man at the other end of the line assured her he would send someone at once to look after her horse.

Then she returned to Cyrano, and sat down beside him to wait. And she waited—and waited—and waited. But after what seemed considerably more than an age, the someone arrived.

He was a fat man, reeking with the smell of iodoform, and although it was not warm, he was puffing and perspiring.

"You think he's picked up a nail, do you?" he said, taking off his hat and mopping his round, purple face with a dirty red handkerchief. "Here, boy!" he puffed, "let me take a look at it."

At the first glance he whistled softly and reached into his pocket for a pair of pinchers. A long, steady pull and the nail was out.

"It's pretty bad," said the man, diving into his pocket again and bringing out a bottle of iodine. "He oughtn't to be used for a day or so. You'd better let me take him over to the barn, so we can put a flaxseed poultice on this."

"Dear me!" cried Betty. "Is it that bad?"

THE man grunted and started away, leading Cyrano. "Can't tell. I've known 'em to die of less."

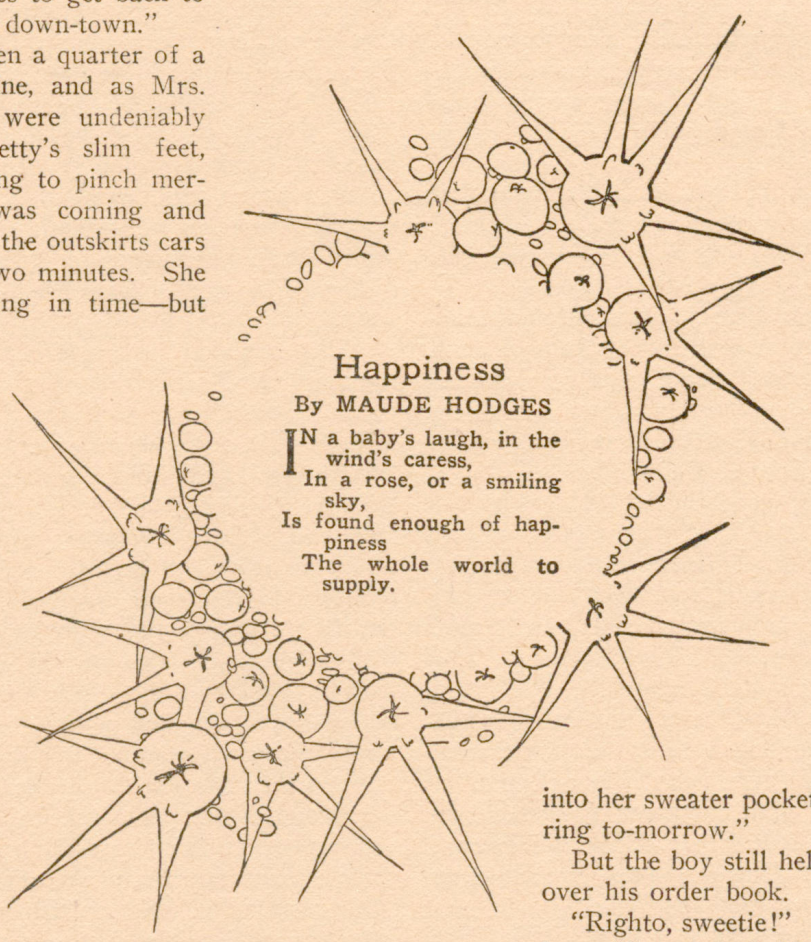
"Wait!" begged Betty. "How am I to go home? Will I have to take a car and go clear down-town?"

The man nodded. "Out on Forty-first street, you said? That is the only way you can make it—on the street-car."

"And then," Betty added to herself, "it'll take me all of forty minutes to get back to Ruth's after I am down-town."

It must have been a quarter of a mile to the car line, and as Mrs. Hampton's boots were undeniably too short for Betty's slim feet, they were beginning to pinch mercilessly. A car was coming and Betty hurried. In the outskirts cars don't pass every two minutes. She reached the crossing in time—but quite breathless. Automatically she felt in her pockets for her carfare—and when the car moved on again she was still standing with one hand in her sweater pocket. Of course she had no money with her.

"Well," said Betty, smiling a rather crooked little smile, "this is evidently not my lucky day! I'll have to walk back."



Happiness

By MAUDE HODGES

IN a baby's laugh, in the wind's caress,
In a rose, or a smiling sky,
Is found enough of happiness
The whole world to supply.

SHE started out bravely enough, trying to assure herself that it wasn't a great distance to walk, and to ignore her burning feet—but her feet persistently refused to be ignored. So presently, when she came to a corner where there was a drug-store, she admitted her defeat.

"I simply can't do it," she said. "I am almost sure I'll be blubbering if I walk another block, even."

With a sudden resolve she walked into the drug-store. The only clerk visible was a young fellow of about twenty.

"I wonder," she said to him, trying to speak in an off-hand way, as though it were a matter of everyday occurrence with her, though she felt her cheeks growing red, and her throat tightened up so she could scarcely speak—"I wonder—" she repeated, then cleared her throat and began again. "You see," she said, "I was out riding, and my horse picked up a nail. I had to leave him at the barn back there—" she waved her hand vaguely—"and I find I haven't carfare with me."

The boy put his hand in his pocket and grinned.

Suddenly Betty slipped off her ring and held it out to him. It was an old-fashioned one, with an odd carbuncle set in heavy gold.

"If you will keep this—as security — and lend me enough to go home on—"

HE HANDED her a dollar, and laughed, and it was not a pleasant laugh. He took out his pencil.

"What name, Miss?" he asked in a brisk voice.

"Never mind," she hurried, slipping the dollar into her sweater pocket. "I'll call for my ring to-morrow."

But the boy still held his pencil poised over his order book.

"Righto, sweetie!" The boy winked at her. "Sure it isn't Mary Pickford?"

Just then a tall, pleasant-looking young man, who had been standing gazing apparently into the show-case whirled around.

"If you're through there, kid, let me have a package of cigarettes."

The boy started to wait on him and Betty, her cheeks burning, but her head held very high, walked to the door. The man turned, hat in hand, and held the door open for her. There was something decidedly soothing in the grave regard of his glance. She felt grateful to him out of all proportion to the act.

"For two cents," said the man, paying for his

cigarettes and glaring down at the boy, as soon as Betty was out of ear-shot, "for two cents I'd give you the seventeen particular kinds of thrashing you deserve!"

"Aw!" apologized the lout, "look here, mister, I ain't no pawn-shop. A-course she'd hooked the ring —any fool'd know that—but she is some chicken, ain't she?"

"Any fool would know that she was a gentlewoman," said the young man with deliberate emphasis, "anyone but a—a *simp!*"

And he strode out of the drug store, forgetfully leaving his cigarettes on the counter.

IN THE meantime Betty had found that another car could not be expected for ten minutes.

"I suppose Ruth will be imagining that something terrible has happened to me," she reflected, and turned into a grocery store and asked permission to use the phone. She got Mrs. Hampton on the line, and that matron, after sundry exclamations of astonishment, assured her that she had done the right thing about Cyrano—and was almost cheerful in saying she did not mind missing the concert.

"The concert?" puzzled Betty.

"To be sure, you didn't know. Tom wanted us to meet him down-town—he has tickets for the most wonderful concert!"

"Oh," begged Betty, "but of course you must go! I won't have you staying at home for me!"

Finally Mrs. Hampton consented.

"If you're not here when I start, Betty," she capitulated, "I'll leave the door unlocked."

Betty came out of the grocery store to see her car disappearing, and she had to wait for the next one. It was like a nightmare. But even a bad dream must end—and at eight o'clock Betty was in the Pacific Electrical Building. In the hurrying crowd she did not feel conspicuous. She even tried to live up to her debonair costume, and strode along quite gaily until she saw a Eucalyptus Avenue car, swung onto it and relaxed into a seat by the door.

"THE grandest part of living in the suburbs," she soliloquized, "is the time you can spend going and coming. It'll be a good forty minutes before I get to Forty-first Street." Betty yawned. Then she yawned again. Presently she yawned a third time. The next thing she knew the conductor was touching her on the shoulder.

"Your street, lady," he said.

She thanked him with a rather sleepy smile, and he helped her off.

There was a misty fog in the air. The lights shone through it dimly, diffused and refracted until the whole air was slightly radiant. It was as though everything were wrapped in silvery gauze. It seemed unreal, reminding Betty of the fairyland of her little girl dreams.

"But then I always played the part of the princess," she told herself. "And now—I'm dressed for a different part."

BY THAT time Betty had reached the house, with the great clumps of hydrangeas in the yard, and the vine-covered porch. There was a light upstairs, but the lower story was in darkness. However, the door was not locked and Betty stepped inside and felt for the switch, first on one side of the door, and then on the other. She couldn't find it. All at once, for no apparent reason in the world, Betty was seized with a feeling of terror.

"Silly!" she scolded herself. "You're not afraid of the dark, are you?"

For a moment she shut her eyes and tried to visualize the room.

"Just opposite this door there is a table with a reading-lamp on it," the thought. "I can turn that on without finding a switch."

So she groped her way across the room, cautiously, unable to overcome the fear that was making her heart beat so uncomfortably. She bumped into the table and felt for the lamp almost frantically. Instead of finding it her hand came down with a discordant bang on the keyboard of a piano. And the Hamptons had no piano!

Instantly a man's voice from somewhere above called: "Is that you, Ono?"

All Betty's vague fear was gone. She must be in the wrong house, but her mind was alert now. She must make her escape at once, or she would surely be mistaken for a burglar.

Swiftly she felt her way back to the door—but not swiftly enough, for she heard quick steps on the stairs. The room was flooded with light just as she grasped the door-knob. Too late! She whirled, braced to defend herself.

HALF in the shadow of the heavy curtains of a low doorway she could see indistinctly the figure of a man. Betty drew a quick breath. Would the man call the police—or would he give her a chance to explain? If she were dressed more conventionally, she thought, it would be easier to manage a dignified appearance. She still clung to the door-knob, and she clenched the other hand to steady herself.

Then: "I must beg your pardon," she began, "I seem to have come into the wrong house."

She had intended her voice to be calm, dignified,

but in her excitement she had overdone it. Her tone was so cool it was insolent. She realized this, for her brain was working rapidly, just as they say the brain of a drowning man does.

"Now, Betty Staunton," she told herself, "there will be no persuading anyone that you aren't an adventuress!"

And then because she was nervous and tired and her feet hurt so, and because she wanted more than anything else to cry, she laughed.

The man stepped out of the shadow, and came toward her. At the first glance she saw that he was large and muscular. As he came well into the light, she knew at once that he was the same young man who had held the door open for her when she had "pawned" the carbuncle ring. How would his memory of that incident effect him now? The story as she had told it in the drug store had sounded so stupidly unconvincing.

BETTY gave a frightened glance around the room. It was decidedly a man's room, with its dark, heavy furniture and its restful open spaces. The fine pictures, the few rare pieces of bronze—the very absence of any bric-a-brac fairly shouted the fact.

The young man's gray eyes met hers, and she knew that he also remembered. He bowed gravely.

"Quite a natural mistake," he said, smiling a trifle. He moved a large chair a little. "You must be very tired," he said. "Won't you rest for a moment while you are explaining?"

"Oh!" said Betty, looking up at him gratefully, "I am so glad it is you."

That wasn't exactly what she had intended to say, though it was exactly what she meant.

"I mean," she tried to correct herself, "I am glad you are the sort of a person who can undestand."

He laughed. "Any fool," he said, unconsciously repeating his words of the afternoon, "any fool would know you are a gentlewoman."

"Then—" she said, timidly, "if you really don't think I'm a burglar, you will let me go, won't you?"

"No, young lady—I shall not let you out of my sight until we have found your friends. You've had enough adventuring for one day. Now, if you're rested, we'll be on our way. Where do your friends live?"

BETTY swallowed hard. "Honestly," she said, "I don't know. I thought they lived here—just off Eucalyptus Avenue on Forty-first Street."

"But this isn't Forty-first Street!" The young man burst out laughing. "It's Forty-third Street."

Just then the trill of a door-bell rang through the apartment, and in the sudden silence which followed men's voices outside the door were plainly audible.

"Thunder!" The tall young man looked down at Betty with a tremendously worried frown. "It's some of the fellows," he said.

Then suddenly he leaned over and took her hand. "Come," he said quickly. "I'll hustle you out of the back door."

Still holding her hand, he half led, half pulled her along with him.

"I don't intend to explain your being here—to anyone."

They were in the back yard now, a place of grape arbors and roses.

"If we go around the house we'll be seen," he said. He laughed delightedly. "Let's make believe we're honest-to-goodness burglars. If we can cross my neighbor's yard to the avenue, we may make our escape yet. We must keep in the shadows—and thank heaven for the fog."

AND they did it. They reached the Avenue, and then he let go of her hand.

"Now," said Betty, drawing a long breath, "you can go back."

But he only laughed. "I haven't had so much fun in a year. If you ever start out to burglarize the town again, take me with you."

"Oh, I promise!" There was a catch in her voice. "If you hadn't been such an understanding man, I might not have had such a terribly good time myself."

Serenade

(From the Spanish)

By MARGARET E. SANGSTER

THE light of the wan white moon
Is a beacon, set high above;
Pointing a path to my hungry soul,
To my heart that is torn with love!

All of the world is asleep,
You, with your mouth like a flower,
Lie still, on your fragrant couch—
I am alone, this hour!

All of the world is calm,
Only my eyes are wide;
Only my rest, with fear, is marred,
Only my hope has died. . . .

Searching over the dreaming earth,
The wan, white beacon above,
Sees only my hungry heart—
And my soul that is torn with love!

There was a long silence, which he broke at last with: "I know one thing! You are the gamest girl in this town. Any other girl would be in hysterics—"

But Betty stopped him.

"Here," she said. "This is the house where I belong!"

"I thought so," said the young man. "I mean—I have noticed that this house is rather like mine."

They walked up the steps together, between the clumps of hydrangeas. He opened the door for her. This hall was brightly lighted.

"I don't know how to thank you," she said, holding out her hand. "Good night!"

"Good night, little burglar!" he murmured gaily.

As he took her hand, he bent his head swiftly and raised it to his lips.

"Oh!" said Betty, flushing to the roots of her hair.

"Good night," he said again, as the door closed behind her.

In the hall Betty stood looking curiously at her pink finger-tips.

"He is such a *nice* young man," sighed Betty. "And I'll never see him again." She sighed once more. "I guess I'll not tell Ruth Hampton a thing about it!"

BUT she was not to pass it off so easily. All night her sleep was filled with dreams of clanging bells and dark, mysterious gardens through which she fled hand in hand with the "nice young man," and her manner the next day was so abstracted that her hostess could not but notice it.

"I declare, Betty, I never saw you absent-minded before," she exclaimed, as they were fussing over the preparation of lunch. "I've asked you three times whether you put mustard in your salad-dressing—well?"

"Oh, no!" Betty laughed, and put down the egg-beater. "I mean—yes—oh, yes. For lettuce salad—always."

"Oh, no! I mean—oh, yes!" mocked Mrs. Hampton. "Betty, are you in love?"

"Mercy, no!" Betty was extraordinarily emphatic.

"Mercy, no! Of course that means that you are!" Mrs. Hampton groaned. "I'm ashamed of you—after Tom and I've gone to the trouble of finding a perfectly eligible duck of a young man—and telling him all about you—"

"Honestly, Ruth Hampton, you will drive me to desperation! How often have I told you that I hate being discussed—and I refuse to be thrown at any man's head!"

"I'm not throwing you! And when I told him you were coming to visit us, and showed him your picture—"

"Oh, very well! I shall hate him! And if you care to know it, I intend to be rude to him. And to-night I shall wear the most hideous rags I possess." Then, after a little: "Was it that little picture—the one in the gilt frame?"

But Mrs. Hampton refused to answer.

BUT to be very rude and very hateful, one should also be very beautiful. So reasoned Betty, later that afternoon, when she and Mrs. Hampton had prepared the dinner so carefully that everything was ready for the woman who was coming to serve and to wash the dishes afterwards.

"If I wear my hair high, and put on my raspberry dress, I will look like a countess," Betty chuckled, and then perversely decided to draw her hair demurely across her brow and wear a softly beruffled dress of yellow-lined net.

"Oh, dear," she mused, sighing a little, as she surveyed her entirely charming reflection in the mirror, "why couldn't I have looked like this last evening? He was such a *nice* young man—"

"Betty, Betty, aren't you dressed yet?" called Mrs. Hampton softly from the head of the stairs. "Do hurry."

"Coming," answered Betty, smiling a little at the girl in the mirror.

HALFWAY down the stairway she stopped, her heart in her throat. There in the hall below her stood the tall young man of her adventure. Mrs. Hampton was talking to him, and he was evidently quite at his ease. What a time for an explanation—before all the other guests. Then all at once he raised his eyes and saw her.

"I don't care," Betty said to herself. "I'm glad! I'm glad!" And her heart, which had seemed to stand still, too, took up its beating to a gay little tune, and she walked on down the stairs to meet him.

"Betty," said Mrs. Hampton, "this is Mr. Alvin Homer. Please—" she added, "please be nice to him!" Her tone was almost too earnest.

Mr. Alvin Homer bowed.

"How do you do," said Betty, in a very small voice, holding out her hand. The color had left her face.

So this was Alvin Homer!

"I would have known you—any place. Mrs. Hampton showed me your picture, once—"

"Why must he begin on that?" thought Mrs. Hampton, turning away.

"Oh!" said Betty, in a still tinier voice.

His hand, holding hers, was actually trembling.

"You knew—yesterday?" asked Betty, very low.

"Yes," he admitted, his eyes suddenly grave. "No—I wasn't sure—until I saw you—in my own house."

"And then—" Betty prompted curiously. "And then—"

"And then I knew," said Mr. Alvin Homer, his eyes searching Betty's, "I knew—and I'm warning you that I intend to try mighty hard to make you see it that way—that you are the girl who belongs—right there—in my home."

"Isn't this rather—abrupt?" Betty drew a long breath and looked away. She was trying to remember that this was the result of Ruth Hampton's scheming—or was it?

"It is," he admitted, "for you."

"Dinner's ready, folks," called Hampton, and Alvin Homer bowed and offered his arm quite formally. "I am to take you in to dinner." Then he dropped his voice again. "But if you could know how long I've been dreaming about this—you'd think I'm pretty—deliberate."

WHEN at last the meal was over, and the last guest had departed, Betty lingered on the rose-covered porch.

"It's absolutely too beautiful to come in," she called through the open door to Mrs. Hampton. "Did you ever see such a perfect night in your life?"

Mrs. Hampton gave Tom a knowing look, and he grinned in answer.

"Um-hm," she answered, patting back a well-simulated yawn, "lovely—but I'm deadly sleepy. I'm going to bed."

Betty stood leaning against the porch pillar in the shadow of the roses. Somehow she knew he would come back. And yet, when she saw him coming, "I must go in," she told herself. "Now, of course, I must go in before I lose the last remnant of my courage."

And of course she did not.

"Oh," she said lightly, when he had reached the lowest step, "is that you?"

"It is," he said, stopping where he was, and speaking very rapidly. "I came back to tell you—I was so afraid you might have misunderstood—that I might have hurt you. I know I had no right to speak like that, when you didn't know me at all."

SUDDENLY, like a snuffed-out candle, the happiness in Betty's heart was gone.

"Oh," she said, and try as she would, she couldn't keep her voice quite steady, "any girl—even if she didn't know you—could understand that you were—just—talking nonsense."

"Nonsense? Good heavens! You didn't think that?"

He was close beside her now, peering down at her.

"Now you'll simply have to understand. Look here!"

Very gently, he put his hands on her shoulders, and turned her about until the light from the window shone in her face.

"I never was so—dead in earnest—about anything before—in all my life," he said, soberly, and with curious little halts between the words. "I should think—any girl—could see that!"

"Oh!" sighed Betty, but somehow it was not a mournful sound at all.

"So if you could just manage to forgive me for being so clumsy," he said, holding out his hand.

"Why," said Betty, meeting his eyes, as she put her hand in his, "I—I can."

And then, as his hand closed over hers, it was as though a hundred altar candles had been lighted in her heart. For a moment she thought he was about to kiss her hand again. Then—then they were both in the shadow of the roses—and he knew she had forgiven him.

"The Things That Are—And Dreams"

By CURTIS BURTON

I WEARY of the things that are
And joy in that which ne'er shall be;
The brilliance of the rainbow far,
The stuff of Dreams—and Fantasy,
The glamor of the will-o'-wisp,
And things old men—and infants—lisp.

Beside the course of moving life,
In some still pocket that the stream,
So wildly rushing in its strife,
Has made, I sit alone and dream.
What matter though my dreams be lies?
I have my dreamer's Paradise.

And what is all reality
But dreamer's dreams, made true by Fate,
Who gives with partiality
The strength our dreams to elevate
Unto a full accomplishment?
All dreams come true—and Fate consent.

So, if I, in my lonely dreams,
But add to all the power sent,
The will to follow Vision's gleams,
I shall have lived as Fate has meant.
But oh! the journey's end, how far!
How wearying the things that are.

A Tiger Hilt

願此小說見悅於君

By H. Bedford-Jones

Being the story of the third of The Six Jewels of Ling Ti, and of the strange fortune that attended those who sought them.

I

TOPTIT stood on the deck of a red-and-gold, silk-curtained river boat lent him for the trip, and gazed out over the most fertile and thickly-crowded plain in the world—that of the Min River below Cheng-tu. He was a Yankee, a palpable Yankee, long and loose-jointed and earnest, with a twinkle lurking in his eye which bespoke many unguessed possibilities in that fertile brain of his.

Toptit was on a dangerous errand. He was undoubtedly being trailed by yellow-skinned hounds, and he had a half-healed knife wound under his left arm. But all he thought of as he gazed over this historic plain, over the sweet, tree-lined river with its gorgeous pleasure craft and its crowded trading junks, was of a suitable rhyme for "Cheng-tu." Needless to add, he found none.

Toptit was a poet. You shall not be bored with examples of his art; suffice it to say that he made known everywhere that he was a poet. This was good for business, and he was in China on business only, and was conducting it along original lines. Chinese gentlemen have no particular regard for dealers and agents who seek antiques, old rugs, or fake Han bronzes; but they have an unqualified respect for poets, whose nature they understand thoroughly. Toptit was in the enviable position of making poetry pay.

AT THE present moment, Toptit was traveling down-river in search of a certain object taken from the grave of Ling Ti, an emperor of the Eastern Han dynasty. Toptit had left his partner, Jim Hanecy, back in Cheng-tu and was wandering forth on his own.

"Wandering" is the correct word. He was seeking the floating home of a river pawnbroker and pirate by the name of Kang Ho, who was in possession of a tiger hilt. Toptit had no idea what this tiger hilt was; he was operating on purely verbal information. Whatever it was, he wanted it. As an authentic possession of the emperor Ling Ti, it was worth a fortune to any collector.

His boatmen, who were quite reliable, would locate the craft of Kang Ho, and put him on board. After that, his fate was in his own hands.

"At the best my fate is none too good; business isn't what it used to be," reflected Toptit with a sigh, after failing to find any rhyme for Cheng-tu. "The interior decorators back home have educated the public up to relish being faked. The real stuff is going out of fashion. Fortunately, we always have markets with museums and collectors. I hope this Kang Ho chap will appreciate poetry! I must have an ode to the river all ready to paralyze him with."

He set to work translating his verses into the local dialect—which, luckily, required no rhymes at all. Toptit ignored the fact that agents of a rival dealer were after the tiger hilt; he also ignored the fact that the mandarin of the province was after it for himself, and after Toptit as well. Little things like these did not worry Toptit at all.

ABOUT fifteen miles down the river from Cheng-tu, his boatmen located Kang Ho.

The trading junks, after the usual river custom, were all huddled together irrespective of the fact that the river was wide. Pleasure craft darted about here and there. Gentry of uncertain business, like Kang Ho, went anywhere their houseboats could find enough water.

It was not hard to locate Kang Ho; it would have been hard not to locate him. His craft was a huge houseboat, almost a floating fortress. It lay by itself, near a little promontory. Alongside it lay the official revenue-cutter of the mandarin. Above the two craft hung a haze of black powder smoke, and muskets were banging gaily. As Toptit's little barge drew near, two revenue men were flung from the deck of the houseboat and the official cutter withdrew.

Toptit gazed curiously at the gigantic figure of Kang Ho, firing a musket after his late assailants. The riverman was a huge ruffian, nearly seven feet tall, and built in proportion. What his face lacked in refinement, it made up in force. Observing the approaching barge, Kang Ho bellowed to his men—a choice lot of scoundrels—and prepared to repel boarders anew. Toptit's head boatman hesitated and came to him for orders.

"Go ahead," said Toptit, with a smile.

Kang Ho regarded the foreign devil with a scowling suspicion. Ten feet from the floating fortress, Toptit ordered his rowers to back water. He stood in the bow of his craft and started to paralyze Kang Ho with his river ode, which he recited fluently.

II

YOU must not think Toptit crazy. Quite the contrary! Kang Ho learned a great deal from that ode, which Toptit had composed with cunning skill. He learned that this foreign devil was a poet, spoke the dialect fairly well, and was under the ban of the law besides. A powerful appeal in this last.

The humor of it struck Kang Ho. The Chinese, and particularly the lower classes, have a strong and rather Rabelaisian sense of humor. Perceiving there was nothing to fear from this foreign devil, feeling quite satisfied with his own recent exploit, and entertaining that fatal sense of curiosity which rules the primitive mind, Kang Ho laid aside his weapons and invited Toptit aboard.

Toptit clambered over the rail of the houseboat and then told his boatmen to go home. They did so without delay.

"I am honored," said Kang Ho, inspecting his visitor. "I am unworthy to entertain so distinguished a guest."

Toptit, who believed in politeness for a time, replied with the customary phrases. About him were clustered the grinning rivermen, exchanging pleasantries and obviously looking forward to his speedy decease. Toptit, however, remarked to Kang Ho, with his most innocent manner, that so powerful a man deserved to have a real rifle instead of an ancient musket. At this, Kang Ho threw two snarling words at his men, and they vanished. Kang Ho could take a hint.

"If it will please you to occupy my humble quarters," he told Toptit, "I shall be happy. I must change the location of this poor boat without delay. Presently I shall join you. If you would care to pass the time with a singsong girl or—"

Toptit blushed and said he preferred to be alone. Accordingly, Kang Ho led him to a cabin amidships, plainly that of the pirate himself. Here he left Toptit—and locked the door when he went out.

SO FAR, everything looked perfectly open and clear-cut. Toptit found the room arranged in barbaric splendor, with looted goods. On a table, beside an opium outfit, lay an object of bronze, elegantly chased in the shape of a tiger, and bearing a magnificently incrusted aerugo—a sheened coat laid on by two thousand years of earth action. Toptit picked it up, saw that it was a sword hilt, and realized that he held in his hand the tiger hilt of Ling Ti.

He gazed at it in silent admiration. It resembled malachite rather than bronze, so richly had its long burial enhanced its beauty. Here were red and pearl where the original bronze was exposed; elsewhere a sheen of baffling hues—turquoise blue, rich greens, yellow and white mottlings.

Sighing, Toptit laid down the tiger hilt. Another man might have thought the affair concluded,

finished save for the bargaining, the end in sight. Toptit knew better.

The boat was massively built on the exterior, but the interior was a flimsy shell. As he lighted a cigarette and reclined on a corner divan, the American could hear a musical instrument tinkling somewhere, with a woman's reedy voice rising thinly. From the character of the song, which would have done much credit to the palmiest composer of Gomorrah, he judged that the ladies aboard the craft were not exactly Sunday-school teachers on vacation. The opium layout was richly made, and probably belonged, like the ladies, to Kang Ho.

"All this is very illuminating if not precisely elevating," thought Toptit. "If there is nothing better to do, I'd better make myself solid with the tall gentleman."

A table held some fine mandarin's paper, with brushes, water and ink slabs. Toptit sat down and inscribed his ode in flourished ideographs. He was not too sure of his writing, and he certainly was no remarkable calligrapher with anything above six-stroke characters; but he turned out a product that could be read. With a larger brush and blacker ink he made a prominent inscription to his friend and patron, the heroic Kang Ho.

This done, Toptit pinned the paper to a brocade on the wall. He was still admiring the effect when the door opened and Kang Ho entered.

THE brawny pirate saw the paper and read the inscription. His face expanded in a grin of flattered egotism.

"Even as a great mandarin, I am honored by the memorial of a poet," he exclaimed. "Be seated, my friend! This is a lucky day. I believe that you have brought the luck of the five bats with you. Hai, offspring of turtles—hasten!"

In response to his bellow, two of the crew entered, bearing hot wine, cakes, tea and other light refreshments. Kang Ho emptied ten thimble-cups of hot wine, then he took from the table the tiger hilt, and leered at Toptit.

"I know about you," he said. "You are one of those foreign devils who go about looking for strange things of ancient times. Well, here is one of those things! I lent a man ten silver *liang* upon it, but he is dead and cannot claim it again. You have honored me with a great poem. Be pleased to accept this slight gift from me."

Toptit pocketed the bronze with fitting thanks.

"This is an auspicious day," said Kang Ho. "But there was some mention of a rifle."

"Exactly," returned Toptit. "I shall give you an excellent rifle if you will send a man to Cheng-tu when I return. The poem is less than nothing. The rifle is a fitting gift."

"The poem is to the rifle as jade to base stone," said Kang Ho politely. "None the less, I shall be pleased to have it."

TOPTIT reflected that with a poem and a rifle he had accomplished what all the power of the mandarin could not have done. None the less, he had an uneasy conviction that the end of this matter was going to be otherwise than the beginning. And he was right. Toptit had an unfortunate knack of getting his business done in remarkably short order—and there were usually complications. It does not always pay to hurry, in China. People take things for granted.

Kang Ho was just now taking something very much for granted. There was no way of changing his mind, either, without provoking unpleasant possibilities.

"There is a man with whom I have a feud," said Kang Ho, after his twenty-fourth cup of wine. "He is Ngig Po Tui, from the Yellow River, and he has no business on this river at all. So I shall make him eat gold, and you shall help me."

"To eat gold" does not obtain literally, although many white men think it does. Toptit knew better. He perceived that he was in for some throat-slitting.

"I would suggest," he said calmly, "that you remember I have enemies."

"Ah!" Kang Ho emptied another cup and grinned. "Enemies are sent to make life interesting for such men as we, my friend! Come, let us go."

He rose. Toptit sighed and followed suit. After all, there was something engaging about this giant ruffian of the river. Besides, Toptit could not go back to Cheng-tu until Kang Ho sent him. He had burned his bridges, and must take the penalty.

"I am a terrible coward," he said plaintively.

Marjaneh

By MIRIAM DE VOIGNE

WE should not be too soon
With swift demands,
Nor move too swift on noon. . . .
Yet, Love, thy hands!

We should not fail our trust,
Nor forge new bands,
But hunger in the dust. . . .
Yet, Love, thy hands!

"So am I," and Kang Ho poked him in the ribs with a jovial elbow.

They left the cabin together.

III

THERE was a sampan trailing at the stern of the craft, and into this Kang Ho dropped. He indicated that Toptit was to follow.

Toptit followed. He guessed that behind the seeming simplicity and ease of this affair was a good deal he did not yet understand. Also, he had his own method of doing things, and he had a surprising way of appearing most innocent when he was not.

So he climbed into the stern of the sampan. Kang Ho waved adieu to his genial pirates at the rail above, then took a pair of oars amidships. An ordinary sampan is not managed thus, but this was no ordinary sampan—it was a boat stolen from some river steamer, cleverly disguised with straw—and Kang Ho was no ordinary pirate.

Toptit could see nothing of any enemy. Kang Ho's floating fortress had been moored to the bank beneath some willows, and there was no other craft in the vicinity. Out in midstream a group of salt-junks were crowding each other like a string of silly sheep in a wide meadow.

Kang Ho bent over his oars and grinned. On his head was now perched a coolie's wide hat, and his huge figure was covered by a coat of roughly-plaited straw. Now he paused and vouchsafed his guest some enlightenment.

"Ngig Po Tui is smuggling salt and opium from Chungking," he stated. "He pays the mandarin at Cheng-tu to protect his industry. Further, he sometimes takes commissions to do certain business for the mandarin."

TOPTIT looked interested. Obviously, this good-humored giant of a pirate was nobody's fool! Ngig, whoever the fellow was, had undoubtedly ingratiated himself with the mandarin, who was enjoying a bit of easy graft.

Kang Ho rowed steadily up the river for a space. Then, pausing again, he completed his tardy information.

"Ngig Po Tui is a son of many devils," he announced. "It is understood that if you are given passage to your ancestors, somebody at the yamen will pay a thousand dollars. So Ngig Po Tui came to me and we agreed to divide the reward. Another five hundred dollars was offered for the bronze object now in your pocket. You will understand that I am taking you and the bronze object to Ngig Po Tui, who offered immediate payment of my half of the reward, on delivery."

"What the devil!" ejaculated Toptit. Kang Ho grinned at him with familiar assurance. He returned to the local dialect. "Then you and Ngig Po Tui are not enemies?"

"He has not yet awakened to the fact," said Kang Ho complacently.

"Is he near here?"

"Within a mile. Seeing us coming alone, he will suspect nothing. Leave it to me."

Toptit reflected. He had plainly chanced upon a tide in the affairs of men which bade fair to run to his liking—more or less. Springing that poem with the inscription upon Kang Ho had been a lucky stroke. A river pirate, however, even in China, does not throw up a chance at seven hundred and fifty dollars unless there is a prospect of much better pay ahead.

It was not unlikely that Kang Ho intended to obliterate his river enemy, then to destroy Toptit and kill several birds with one stone.

"The big rascal is letting me in for something sweet!" meditated the American, not altogether happily. "He thinks I'll be so grateful for the bronze that I'll be unsuspicious. Well, I won't!"

HE WATCHED Kang Ho but failed to detect anything but good-natured ease in the broad yellow countenance. There had been no question of weapons. This was a queer sort of raiding party, thought Toptit. At all events, he had the bronze in one pocket and an automatic pistol in another pocket—and the shore was not far away.

Kang Ho sent the sampan swirling upstream, keeping close in to the bank. Several times he paused to observe the drift, throwing in small bits of straw. Toptit noticed that there was a strong backwash along this bank, eddying upstream.

Ahead, there showed a small promontory, heavily bushed with willows. Kang Ho edged along the bank toward this point, making a gesture which enjoined caution on his companion. Toptit watched the proceedings curiously, and just before the sampan came to the end of the promontory, Kang Ho laid aside his oars.

From the bow of the sampan the brawny yellow man lifted a small keg. This he placed in the water; it floated nearly submerged. Kang Ho took a match from his pocket, struck it, and held it to the top of the keg. There was a spluttering as a fuse caught. Then, with a gentle shove, Kang Ho sent the keg away and took up his oars. A moment later the sampan was shooting out beyond the promontory.

There broke into view, just around the bend of the willows, a small junk moored out from the bank—a junk with half-furled matting sail, eyes and

devil-chasers on the bow and a coolie lazily fishing in the stern. The latter sent up a shrill yell at sight of the sampan, and the junk instantly erupted yellow figures.

Kang Ho laid on his oars, thirty feet distant, and surveyed the junk of Ngig Po Tui with an insolent grin. Toptit was uneasy, for weapons were much in evidence. Besides, Toptit had one eye on that floating keg, which was slowly drifting down past the sampan; he was gripping the edge of the boat nervously, and praying that Kang Ho had made some trials with that fuse before cutting it.

"Hei, Ngig Po Tui!" The bellow of Kang Ho lifted across the water. "I have brought the foreign devil, as I promised, and with him the bronze object. He does not understand our speech."

One of those at the junk's rail made answer. The first alarm was rapidly quieting.

"That is good, Kang Ho! Come aboard."

"Well said but ill done," responded Kang Ho, chuckling. "I do not come aboard. Meet me on the bank with the money, and the foreign devil is yours. But bring only one man with you. Shoot the foreign devil as soon as you like—after the money is in my hand."

"Very well," came the response.

Nieces

By BURTON HARCOURT

FROM opposite sides of the bed the two nieces gazed jealously at one another. The expected hour, the supreme hour, had come. Their aunt, barely breathing, lay upon the bed, weakly but shrewdly looking from one to the other. There was some malice in her gaze perhaps: about that one could not be sure.

"Sarah," she whispered.

Sarah bent eagerly down.

"My will is in the clock," whispered the dying woman.

Sarah flushed triumphantly.

"Mary," whispered the aunt.

Mary bent down to the trembling lips no less eagerly than had Sarah.

"My will is in the Bible," whispered her aunt.

Mary grew happily pink to the roots of her hair.

Then Aunt Sallie Travers died.

* * * * *

She was hardly cold when Sarah produced the will from the clock. One glance told her the bitter truth. *The money was left to Mary.* Without a moment's hesitation, Sarah dropped the paper into the grate and watched it burn to ashes.

Aunt Sallie Travers was still warm when Mary produced the will from the Bible. *The money was left to Sarah.* Without a moment's hesitation, Mary tore the paper to bits.

* * * * *

When Aunt Sallie Travers was thoroughly buried, both Mary and Sarah testified in the Probate Court that, to their personal knowledge, Aunt Sallie had left no will.

"But surely there has been a mistake," said Aunt Sallie's lawyer. "Miss Travers left her will with me six months ago."

And he produced and read it.

"To my niece, Mary Travers, one half of my property, provided she will produce and surrender the previous will left in her hands by me; otherwise, this share of my property to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund and to my niece, Mary Travers, one dollar.

"To my niece, Sarah Travers, the remaining half of my property, provided she will produce and surrender the previous will left in her hands by me; otherwise, this share of my property to the State Asylum for the Insane, and to my niece, Sarah Travers, one dollar."

The nieces stared savagely at one another.

TWO sampans lay alongside the small junk. Into one of them dropped a man. Presently, Ngig Po Tui followed him, bearing a bundle—which was evidently "silver-shoe" money. Kang Ho, in the meantime, was lustily rowing past the junk toward the bank ahead. Toptit glanced around for the floating keg, but could perceive nothing of it.

"Now," said Kang Ho to him, "if you have a weapon, be ready! And if you are not a fool, you have not come on such an errand unarmed."

Toptit merely nodded assent. The boat slid into the shore, which was gently sloping, lined with bushes and small trees, and from its general lack of cultivation seemed to belong to some temple.

The sampan from the junk, bearing Ngig Po Tui and sculled by his single follower, was rapidly nearing the shore. Kang Ho stood erect, flung off his wide hat and his straw coat, and lifted one arm in a magnificent gesture.

"Kang Ho strikes!" he bellowed, and the roar was drowned in a blast that rocked him on his feet.

Toptit, although warned, was not prepared. The concussion of the explosion caught him as he was half rising, and knocked him flat in the boat. Dazed, half stunned, he lay against the thwart.

A pall of black powder smoke from the floating keg-mine overspread the riverbank. Through this fog, Toptit saw the other sampan drifting in upon them, Ngig and his companion struggling up from the bottom of the craft into which they had been flung. Then Toptit was aware of the towering figure of Kang Ho, its arm moving swiftly. Two flashes of light sped from the hand of the giant. Knives!

Ngig Po Tui and his oarsman never knew what struck them. They collapsed together, and their sampan gradually drifted out from shore. Through the smoke-pall, Toptit saw the dim shape of Ngig's junk, slowly settling at the bows.

This entire affair passed with lightning rapidity. The explosion was followed by an instant of dead silence. It was in this instant that Kang Ho flung his deadly knives. With the next second, the sinking junk emitted a pandemonium of yells and oaths.

"My men will be upon them in a moment!" exclaimed Kang Ho, proudly. Admiration of the man's scheme flashed upon Toptit, who was rising.

Before he could speak, something dropped about his neck and dragged at him. A wild and furious shout from Kang Ho showed that a second noose had fallen. Through the thinning smoke, a horde of figures dashed from the bushes and crowded upon the boat.

They were the soldiers of the mandarin. Ngig Po Tui had arranged a clever trap for the river pirate, and also for the foreign devil, in order to get the whole reward himself.

IV

TOPTIT perceived that he would be murdered very nicely, and the blame would be laid upon river pirates—probably upon Kang Ho, who would be executed for the crime.

These provincial soldiers from the mandarin's yamen were not the excellent national army men, but they knew their business. Toptit saw the great figure of Kang Ho totter and go down, overturning the boat, and sending the whole crowd of assailants in a pile. As he himself went into the mud, Toptit felt the knotted-silk cord tighten about his throat, but he did not resist. He was already freeing himself.

Standing knee-deep in the ooze, he calmly held the muzzle of his automatic against the taut cord, and fired. If you think this an easy feat, under the best of circumstances, try it. Toptit's bullet cut the cord. His second and third bullets dropped two of the men above Kang Ho. The giant river pirate came erect with a bellow.

At this point, the yamen soldiers opened fire. If they could not capture, they could kill.

Toptit did not wait to see what happened next. He shoved the automatic into his pocket, gently dropped into the water, and went away from there as long as breath would hold him under the surface.

WHEN he came up, bullets splashed his face. He gasped new air into his lungs and went down again. He emerged to find himself a goodly distance from shore, where the powder smoke still clung thickly, cloaking the scene.

"This is very pleasant," he reflected, turning on his back and letting himself float. "I seem to have dropped into a private war in which torpedoes, pirates and soldier-bandits all take large shares. The only consolation is that I have the tiger hilt in my pocket. This proves that I am not dreaming. I think Kang Ho would be an excellent subject for an epic poem, or at least an ode in the epic style."

For ten minutes he swam unhurriedly—then a heartfelt curse broke from him. He perceived a small, swift craft bearing down to pick him up, and from the flags at the stern saw that it was one of the patrol cutters, under jurisdiction of the Chang-tu mandarin.

"A thousand dollars reward—strictly sub rosa—for the foreign devil!" murmured Toptit philosophically. "That means they'll knock me on the head, take me in and collect the reward—and the newspapers will tell how a promising young American was a victim of river pirates. Damn! This is my finish, all right."

V

THE American consul at Chung-king was on his way up the river to Cheng-tu, to investigate the beet-sugar industry. There was no beet-sugar industry there, so it would make an excellent subject for a special report which would fill many pages and keep the Government Printing Office busy for a while.

The consul sat beneath the awning of his steam-launch and watched the river. Something was always happening here—that was one beauty of the Chinese river life. There was no monotony. Since leaving Hsu-chow and starting up the Min to Cheng-tu on the final two-hundred mile lap, the consul had witnessed one murder, two free-for-all fights, and several other episodes of like interest.

Now, as he lighted his mid-afternoon cheroot, he descried an unusual incident ahead, and ordered his engineer to slow speed. The consul was not one of your careful sort who fear to make mistakes, and follow the line of least resistance. He was a pugnacious Georgian, and had made his official district one place in the world where Americans had no need to call themselves British in order to get consular protection.

He gazed with growing interest at the boat which was slowly floating down the river toward his own craft, and with a word to his helmsman, steered toward her. The boat, he saw, was one of the government river patrol, maintained to prevent salt smuggling from the mines near Chung-king, and she

was in some manifest confusion. Most of her crew were congregated in the bow, where they were engaged in striking at some object just underneath the curving prow, and out of their reach.

The consul picked up his binoculars and focused on this object. An instant later he was ordering full speed ahead and his boys were jumping to load the little brass gun in the bow, used for salutes. The little gun roared, and the patrol boat leaped into even greater confusion upon observing the rapid approach of the launch flying the American flag. The consul called his number one boy.

"There is a man in the water, a white man," he said. "Have him drawn aboard."

THE officer in charge of the patrol boat leaped into the bow and waved his arms hastily, but the consul took no heed. Clinging to a carved projection beneath the painted eyes of the patrol launch, was a senseless man whom the consul had recognized, and the Georgian watched as his helmsman laid the two boats alongside with nice precision. Then, seeing that his boys were attending to Toptit, the consul regarded the officer, who was dancing with rage.

"This is very fortunate," he observed suavely. "I perceive that you were about to rescue my countryman. I am the consul of America at Chung-king."

"He is not your countryman, excellency!" responded the officer angrily. "He is a man of France—"

"You are mistaken. I know him very well," said the consul, smiling.

At this, the officer changed countenance.

"Very well, excellency," he responded, bowing. "We saw him floating in the river, and came to his assistance. Undoubtedly—"

"Undoubtedly that was well done," interrupted the consul, who could be just as bland as any yellow man going. "I shall report your zeal at the yamen. You will be rewarded."

"A man of your excellency's position should not be troubled with drowned bodies," said the officer. "If you will turn over the man to us, we will bring him to Cheng-tu with all due respect and—"

"He is not drowned, and he is a friend of mine," said the consul. "The matter shall be duly reported at the yamen, so say no more. My papers are at your disposal if you care to see them."

"That is not needed; I have seen your excellency before this." The officer bowed and turned away with a shrug. The consul ordered full speed ahead, which the engineer made haste to obey. The launch had drifted in close to the east bank, where there were many shallows.

TOPTIT, whose position under the bow of the patrol boat had nearly drowned him but had turned most of the blows aimed at him, opened his eyes to meet the consul's smile.

"Hello!" he observed, sitting up. "Say, I've had a devil of a nightmare! Where did you come from, old man?"

"From here to there." The consul produced a flask. "Sit steady now, till I fix you up a snifter; you need it. What the deuce have you been doing, Toptit, to get the yamen after your hide? Those chaps would have finished you in another minute!"

Toptit felt for his pocket, patted it, and then relaxed with an expression of complete bliss.

"Me? Nothing at all," he said in an aggrieved tone. "I've just been taking an excursion to see the river. Hello! If that isn't—"

A familiar voice, lifted in a bellow from the receding bank, drew Toptit hastily to his feet. He observed the figure of Kang Ho, excitedly waving from the shore. He waved response, and pointed in the direction of Cheng-tu. The pirate waved in understanding, and vanished.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the consul. "What's all this wigwagging, Toptit? Who was that chap?"

"A friend of mine—name is Kang Ho." Toptit took the drink that was proffered him, then paused before the consul's look of incredulous consternation.

"Kang Ho? Man, you're crazy! It can't be the

river pirate of that name—the beggar with a reward of five thousand *liang* on his head—"

Toptit grinned suddenly. "See here, are you talking to me in an official capacity?" he demanded.

"You bet I am! If you're tied up with that pirate, there's going to be trouble all up and down the line, my son!"

TOPTIT swallowed his drink.

"Well," he said, "don't you worry about it! That isn't any pirate. That's just a big overgrown kid who got me into a hell of a mess. He'll probably be up at Cheng-tu in the morning to get a present I promised to give him. I'll introduce you."

"I think," observed the consul, regarding him gravely, "that you're lying to beat the devil, Toptit!"

Toptit chuckled. "Of course I am. Everybody lies to a consul. Of course, if you weren't in an official capacity—"

"Oh, I understand!" The consul dropped into a chair and produced cigars. "Here—my boy is getting out some dry clothes now. Tell me while—"

Toptit told his story. He told the exact truth and produced the bronze tiger hilt to prove his words. And yet—

To this very day, the consul affirms that Toptit is the most polished liar he ever met.

"WHO IS SILVIA?" (*Concluded from page* 233)

the face of stone he fancied he caught again the glimmer of her smile. "And when it is finished, I will come back. It is a promise."

A year later the symphony of Silvia was finished and was given to the world, and at its conclusion they who had listened, the inhabitants of the gray city, rose and called for the musician. But he was not to be found. In the tumult of the applause he had slipped away, and while his name was on every tongue he was seeking the image in the woods.

It was that darkest hour before dawn when he found the place where the marble nymph stood by the pool. Clasping his arms about it he put forth all his strength until at last it moved from its firm stand in the earth, tottered and fell into the blackness of the pool, and because he held fast to it he did not rise again.

THE next day someone coming out of the forest said that the marble wood nymph was gone, and so it must be that her month of life was come, since this was May. So a crowd of people, dwellers on the outskirts of the wood, hurried to the spot to see if this were true. When they came to the pool they found that the image was indeed gone, and they lingered about the place, wondering.

"Perhaps," said one at last, "it has only fallen into the water," and they crowded to the edge to look down. But the stone image was not there. Instead they saw the body of the musician lying at the bottom of the pool.

They made a litter of green boughs and laid him upon it, and silently started to return to the village. As they passed through the wood they heard a strange bird note, like a wandering voice, unfamiliar, exquisite, sorrowful. Involuntarily they paused and looked up into the thick branches.

"What bird is that?" each asked the other. But no one could see the bird, nor had any of them ever heard the song before, so they walked on with their burden. Then a few feet away, standing in their path they saw a young girl watching them curiously. She was dressed in a simple, clinging garment of wood-brown, and in her hand she held a bunch of the white wood violets.

"WHAT is it you carry?" she asked, and came close to the litter of green boughs.

"He was a musician, lady, he is dead," said one. And they all stared at her, for she was very beautiful.

"Dead," the girl repeated, but not as one that understood the meaning of the word.

"Alas!" cried a woman who had heard his music as she gathered sticks in the wood, "the poor musician, he played like one of God's angels. But he will never play again." And the tears sprang to her eyes.

The girl stared at her in wonder. "Will he not?" she asked in surprise. "But why?"

Then they looked from one to another in alarm, thinking the girl was mad. She bent over the dead man and laid the violets on his breast.

"He will find them when he wakes," she said, and before anyone could reply she had disappeared again into the woods.

Then a boy staring after her cried out: "Why, it was the marble wood nymph come to life! Did you not see her face?"

And some laughed, and others crossed themselves for fear. But no one ever saw the girl or heard the bird again. Only one thing they knew. The marble wood nymph never stood again by the pool in the forest.

Should an artist accept the inspiration of the evil one? This story carries one back to the unanswered problem of Trilby and Svengali—but with a new mystery and terror.

Armand

By Eugene Brooks

I

PHILIP GIBBON, ever since his return to New York, had been busy unearthing old and forgotten friendships. His native city had taken on the attributes of an overgrown, neglected garden; he went about spading it up, as it were. Sometimes his gleanings had no more life in them than so many bulbs left in the ground through a bitter winte At other times, however, he was rewarded by the brightest new blossoms—evidence that some of the former growths had been sturdy things, hardily armored against the frost of his protracted absence. Gibbon had been fretting the past five years away in unprofitable, back-water diplomatic posts. Awaking finally to the realization that he might succumb to some form of tropical malaria without ever attaining an advancement sufficiently gratifying to salve that lingering torment, he had chucked the whole annoying business and returned to the States.

GIBBON'S morning mail often gave him a hint or two of possible patches of earth yet undisturbed that might warrant a little digging. It was on the strength of such communications as Miss Gladys Ladd's announcement of "a private view" at the Knoedler Galleries that he shouldered his implements and strode off to work. Gladys Ladd! Gibbon perused the neat card and smiled with faint irony. The moment his eye had caught the name, he had recollected her. If the thing had been a wedding invitation, he probably wouldn't have been the least bit surprised; any possible wonder on that score would have shaped itself into the question: "How has she managed to stay single all these years?" *Still* Gladys Ladd! Moreover—he scanned curiously the catalogue of titles enclosed with the card of invitation—she had thirty canvasses to display. "Simply incredible," Gibbon reflected.

He jotted down the date; he wouldn't miss this opportunity for the world. He remembered now that there *had* been rumors of her artistic talent, even of her genius. "Nothing will ever come of it," people had said. "It's a pity gifts like that don't go more often with common sense—" Men had been for Gladys the breath of life; she would have been unable to survive without a goodly number of them in tow. As for her painting—it had been merely an ingenuous, dashing daub now and again to reconcile her somewhat to the chance disappearance of her swains. She'd never finished a picture during Gibbon's short apprenticeship in the band of her admirers.

"WILL wonders *never* cease?" the young man asked himself as he shook hands with Gladys at Knoedler's. He was thankful she had spotted him at the door. If she hadn't made the first advance, he would simply have passed her by with the blankest of stares. His failure to recognize her at once was not due to any dimming of her image that the years might have brought. On the contrary, she had been vivid to him as he made his way that afternoon to the gallery. Unfortunately, however, the modish Gladys he remembered had given place to a figure loosely arrayed in black serge with a voluminous cape slipping haphazard from her shoulders in ungraceful billows about her feet. That transformation in itself would have steered the man off; but the queerest part of her costume—the freak that had rendered

her quite unrecognizable—was the thick black veil that covered her face and was drawn over her hair in a loose knot. Gibbon had glimpsed, when she accosted him, only the gleam of her teeth. Then, as she turned her face away from the light, he had lost even that flashing signal.

"I wanted to postpone it indefinitely—" and she waved an explanatory arm at her pictures. "Armand wouldn't *hear* of it, though. So I gave in—as usual." Gibbon had an idea she was smiling at him after this confession of her unwonted humility; he returned the invisible salute. He had never before felt so completely at a loss. With a vague suspicion that her preposterous veil might conceal some hideous disfigurement, he looked away in haste.

GLADYS had noticed the quick deflection of his glance. "You avert your eyes with the sweetest courtesy," she remarked. "I'm really not so sensitive as all that, though I am in agony, I admit. You see," she elucidated with a gay laugh, "I'm *too* devoted to my calling. It's given me a nasty case of lead poisoning. Hovering over oils from morning till night does that, you know. My face is swollen and smeared with ointments and salves. It's the price of my high endeavor. I rather enjoy it—and it will wear off presently." She put a hand on his arm. "Let me show you my good things," she suggested. "I *have* my little peaks—would you believe it? I sha'n't tire you with my groping experiments—all my recent canvasses are blunders. I'm working up to a new level now; when I arrive I shall be somebody first-rate. This abominable infection marks the first sign-post on the road; I suppose there'll be other and worse milestones before I can sit down to rest on my new, actually *Alpine* crest—"

THROUGHOUT his peregrinations at her side, Gibbon was aware that a man in the small and sibilantly ecstatic press of "first-viewers" was following with sardonic pertinacity every gesture Gladys made. It was obvious that she, too, felt the impudent scrutiny. She was nervous and her conversation soon blurred into incoherence. Gibbon, out of the tail of his eye, kept watching the dark, swiftly gesticulating man who was so shamelessly dogging their tracks. The chap seemed to exercise a tyrannical authority over the polite guests of the occasion. Each time he darted at a new picture—with a view to establishing thereby a better vantage-ground from which to pry—the docile visitors surged after him with obedient murmurs. He would stand before a canvas, with his legs wide apart and his hovering hands coming to rest now and then on his hips. Intensely denunciatory here, mystically rapt there, he yet always kept his fitful flow of comment so well under control that the by-play of Gladys and Gibbon was audible to him. He seemed the official cicerone of the exhibition; more than that, he lorded it as if he were the acknowledged master here.

Gibbon stood it as long as he could. Then he remarked, without attempting to lower his voice—he was sure the other man could have read his lips, anyhow—"And *who,* pray, is that impudent customer?"

GLADYS pressed her fingers on his arm. "Hush!" came faintly through the black veil. "That is Armand!" She murmured it again: "Armand!" Manifestly, she deemed that one word sufficient to make all clear, for she dropped the subject there. Gibbon waited in vain for an explanation of some sort, for a descriptive phrase or two that, emerging through the impenetrable veil, would enable him to place to his satisfaction the annoying and enigmatical stranger. Gladys remained silent for a moment; then, tugging at his arm, she wheeled him around and led him up to a canvas near the door. "This is the nicest of all my things," she remarked with uneasy vivacity. "Even Armand himself grants me a good deal on it. You see how transparent, how radiant the afternon sunshine is as it rests on that hillside. No muddiness, no murk, in the colors—" Suddenly she glanced over her shoulder. "Ah—he's gone!" she exclaimed. "Isn't it queer? I can tell by instinct the *moment* he leaves a room. He's probably pursuing a commission for me all the way downstairs in the lift and out to the sidewalk. Nothing else would have induced him to leave us together." Her sigh of relief puffed out her veil; a ray of light filtered through the thick mesh and Gibbon caught again the glint of her teeth. Shaking her head reflectively, she murmured: "Poor Armand!"

ROBBED of their authoritative guide, the loosely clustered guests had fallen apart and were already scattering about the room in aimless groups of two and three. Three ladies were making a furtive advance toward Gladys. Gibbon felt himself impelled by the gentlest of pushes over the threshold and out into the corridor. "There! Now you've seen everything," Gladys was remarking with piercing distinctness. "Just *what* do you think of my work?" With that, she followed him out of the room. "Women ask me so many foolish questions—technical points—about my art," she explained.

"I never know how to answer them, unless Armand's on hand to help me through—"

Gibbon peered the length of the corridor, found it empty and put the straight query. "Who the devil is Armand?"

"Sometime I believe that Armand *is* the devil," she returned. "Certainly I am like one possessed. But it's such a long story, Philip. I can't tell you here; he'll soon be darting out of the lift to drag me home and tie me to a leg of my easel."

"Is he your husband?" Gibbon pressed in his persistent attempt to get at the bottom of the problem.

She laughed. "Mercy, no! He's much more pernicious than a mere husband. I'm nothing to him, you see, but an inspired machine; and he's nothing to me but a terror and a blight. Oh, we're unique, Armand and I; there's nothing like us in the whole wide world." She gave him her hand abruptly. "I hear the lift," she announced. "Good-by."

"But when am I to see you again? I sha'n't consent—" Gibbon protested hurriedly.

She interrupted. "I will call you the next time Armand goes on a spree. Those are my only free moments. You'll dine with me and I'll give you the whole outlandish tale—"

The Unreturning

By ETHEL M. POMEROY

OH I can give you back your heart,
And hold once more my own—
But there is no recapturing
The beauty that has flown.

When you reclaim your promises,
Your little gifts, your ring,
Can you restore to life the dream
That taught my heart to sing?

Now bitter silence holds us both,
With nothing more to say—
And how may we take back the word
That broke our hearts to-day?

II

GIBBON could have no doubt that he *had* unearthed something this time. By the end of three days his impatience had waxed great. If he'd only known the pernicious Armand's address, he would have presented himself on the scene and, putting to the test all the diplomatic tricks he'd learned in the past five years, he would have wheedled himself into the fellow's good graces and started him off on *the* spree of his malignant career. There was one consoling thought in connection with Armand; he looked the type whose nervous resistance is prodigally drained away and whose one refuge then from sheer madness is a smashing debauch. So Gibbon hoped on and reflected from hour to hour on approximately how much energy was left now in the febrile Armand. He took a diabolical pleasure in this question; it was almost as if he'd tapped a vein in the man's arm and were watching the life-blood flow.

It was on the evening of the eighth day that Gladys summoned him. "It's a quarter to seven now," she said over the wire. "Can you get here by eight? Forgive me for being so abrupt. Armand is erratic, you see. One can't count on the length of his absence. I shouldn't dare ask you for to-morrow night—"

THEY dined in her studio—an enormous room with a bare floor over which chill drafts stole. Gray cobwebs shook out their fronds from the corners of the high ceiling. The lights in the corroded sconces about the walls struggled ineffectually against the weight of gloom. The place smelt damply of clay. They ate at a table drawn up before the great fireplace; it would have been cozy there in the warmth of the immense logs if they could have lost sight of the dank shrouded spaces that stretched away beyond their circle of fitful radiance. Gladys was wearing a gown of an elaborate, an expensive sort—"My best bit of decaying finery—'rotting's' really the word," as she put it. Gibbon had a discerning eye; he'd realized, even before she had spoken, that it wasn't a creation of the present season. Over her frock she had thrown a wrap of some gorgeous oriental fabric; she explained at once and in all frankness that since they couldn't get actually inside the fireplace they must needs dress for out-doors. "Don't *think* of taking off your overcoat," she warned, and Gibbon, with the breezes dancing playfully about his legs, obeyed her without demur.

FACING her across the table, Gibbon had exclaimed: "Thank God you have lost that awful black veil. I was sure you'd lost your good looks. Frankly, I didn't believe the tale of lead poisoning."

"Am I still pretty?" She said it without coquetry.

"Prettier even than you were five years ago," he told her with conviction. It was true. In the past, her face had been plump and reduced to mere insipidity by her eternal simulation of infantile, guileless innocence. She was slimmer now and the dimple that had formerly played in and out of each cheek was apparent at present only as a rare and

instantly vanishing pin-point. Her eyes, set wide apart in the triangle of her face, seemed a deeper blue; her gaze was frank and candid.

"Oh—that dreadful infection!" she shivered. "It's a miracle it didn't turn into something malignant. I went right on with my work, you see—against the doctor's stern injunctions."

"Why did you do it? Aren't your looks more to you than your art?" He showed himself amazed.

"Armand's orders!" she returned.

Gibbon said nothing until the blue-faced, frost-pinched maid had cleared away the soup and been engulfed in the outer darkness. Then he leaned back in his chair, remarking: "Well, now *for* him. I can't stand the suspense a moment longer."

THEY had finished dinner a good half-hour before Gladys had wound up the unique chronicle of her relations with Armand. "The point is," she had begun, "Armand is a fanatic, a crazed devotee of art. Moreover, he's a *great* instructor, a master at drawing out and fostering and making sublime the gifts of another. I am that other, you see. I was born with a decided talent and with *no* ambition whatever. Armand is seared and consumed with the desire to touch celestial pinnacles. He knows everything about art; he can communicate it and he can drag another's aptitude into the light, fan it insanely and make it blaze. As for himself—he hasn't an *ounce* of creative genius. That's why he hates me; that's why he treats me so abominably. *Such* a dance as he's led me!"

She had gone on to trace the progress of their strange intimacy. It hadn't been a vulgar hypnotic spell. Armand was no Svengali and assuredly *she* was no Trilby. The talent was in her from the start. It had been the struggle of indomitable will against frivolity. After all, there *had* been something magnificent about Armand's determination to win for the world the gift that she was smothering. The man had rather fascinated her at first; it had struck her as amusing, this savage wooing of her genius coupled with complete disregard of her as a woman. It had been a reversal of the old saintly custom of exorcising a demon; this had been a case of expelling an imprisoned angel from the body of a devil. She was sure Armand thought of her as an evil little thing. He loved her genius, her angel that without his aid would have forever beaten its wings ineffectually; otherwise he loathed her. A unique situation, to say the least!

IT WAS no wonder she'd ended by becoming frightened and cowed and docile. "I ought to have realized how it would be," she confessed. "I was a silly, rattle-brained good-for-nothing. Flirting was my main activity—you probably recall as much, Philip. And my wiry, feverish, fiendish Armand is a titanic force. I was *doomed,* directly I'd consented to let him oversee my work." In six months' time, she was being ground under his heel. Escape had been out of the question, *would* be out of the question until she died from sheer exhaustion or he went actually and irrevocably mad. "He detests me, he really does," she repeated to the gaping Gibbon. "He's given the four supreme years of his life to me, and if I betrayed the trust he'd simply gloat over murdering me. Of course he's insane; he should be in an asylum at this moment. But *I* couldn't put him there; I think I'm stung with his dreadful virus. I must be, or I should have found the way out of my labyrinth. If you saw us work together, you'd understand how things are. I'm no longer simply Gladys Ladd; I'm more than half Armand by now. I've got to the gibbering, demoniac stage. Armand's no worse in his exactions than I am to-day. You say I'm still pretty; I *honestly* don't know. I never look in a glass; my eyes are rivetted on a canvas from morning till night."

And her clothes! She had bought nothing, literally nothing, for three years. Most of her income was rusting in the bank. "I suppose I could get a few new gowns—some morning when Armand is laid low from his drinking or his drugs or whatever it is," she reflected aloud. "But I haven't the inclination—" He didn't allow her a single comfort; only by fasting and freezing and maceration of the flesh could her angel be expelled adequately. "These logs—this dinner! Armand would be *furious!*"

She brought her astounding narrative to an ironic close. "Armand will know the instant he's tortured my best work out of me. His stern duty will be done then. He'll either spit upon me when that time comes—do it with the most satanic relish—or kill me outright. Good heavens! *What* do you suppose people say of us? I haven't a doubt it's admitted everywhere that I'm his mistress. And the poor harassed fiend hasn't so much as kissed me. Naturally, *I* couldn't bear that; and the thought would be quite unsupportable to Armand. Isn't it ghastly? Isn't it even uproariously funny?"

FOR reply, Gibbon had only a slow, amazed head-shake. They scrutinized each other in silence for an appreciable space. Then the man bent forward and announced: "The whole business is preposterous, Gladys. You've simply been starved and brow-beaten until you're giddy. Fancy letting the scoundrel bring you to such a pass. It's high time you ducked—high time!"

"But this is the queer part of it all," she remarked. "He's made me so *much* more interesting than I ever was before. If I'd been to-night what I was five years ago, you would have been dreadfully bored by now. Indeed, *I* like myself much better than I used to; for that I have Armand alone to thank—"

Gibbon was not listening now. He had all at once sat bolt upright in his chair. Without a sound, a window far away in the murky shadows of the studio had slid open; outside on the fire-escape, he had caught the gleam of eyes. Astonished though he was, he yet found himself reflecting half-humorously that it was for all the world like a scene in darkest Russia—he and the woman crouching over their fire, with Armand, in the rôle of lean timber-wolf, ranging hungrily about in the dreary distance. The queer thought arrested him for the moment; before he had shaken it off, Armand had slipped silently over the sill and was in the room. Gladys, too, had perceived her malignant preceptor by now.

"Good heavens!" she remarked under her breath. "We're in for it. He must be drunk; he'll raise an infernal row." She remained quite calmly in her chair, however, and raising her voice said: "You're *too* clandestine, Armand. What will my guest think of me?"

ARMAND made no response. He was still enveloped in the deeper gloom; only his huge, fantastic shadow lurching over the walls and ceiling showed he was unsteady on his feet. Without a word, he snatched a torch out of its sconce and advanced with it toward an easel in the center of the room. By the aid of the flickering, ragged flame he examined the brilliantly smeared canvas set up before him. Then he threw the torch down on the floor and walked uncertainly up to the table. He confronted Gladys, waving an uncertain finger at her and focussing his bleared, swimming eyes with difficulty into a concentrated glare. "You've—you've done *nothing* since yesterday morning," he muttered. "Why? *Why?*" On the last word his voice had risen unexpectedly to a shout.

Gibbon, with characteristic caution, had got to his feet and picked up the guttering torch. In all probability nothing in those dismal, chill spaces would have become ignited; but Gibbon, with his sense of fitness, felt there was something obnoxious, repellent about this display of morbid recklessness. He put the thing back into its receptacle with painstaking deliberation and swung around at the sound of Armand's quick fury.

THE man was hopelessly, nastily drunk, of course. From the instant his first yell penetrated to his mazed brain, he had lost all control over himself; it was as if that one sharp, strident sound had broken his taut resistance. With his hands gripping the edge of the table, he swayed from side to side. His face had a sick, greenish pallor and he shook uncontrollably. Though his utterance was thick and choked with furious, agonized sobs, Gibbon was soon able to piece together the incoherent words and get something of the general drift. At first, Armand complained whimperingly of the woman's selfishness, of her indifference to his every lesson. "Don't I—don't I sweat *blood* for you? What do you give me in return? You're too damned lazy, too—" Then suddenly Armand had veered to shrieking denunciation and at last to the filthiest imaginable abuse. Gladys sat, still and white, in her chair; she said nothing, but her eyes never once left the man's face.

Gibbon shrewdly bode his time. Armand in the end gave him his cue in no uncertain terms. Screaming out an insult that would have sounded not inappropriate in the lowest dive, he snatched his hands away from the table-edge and made a frenzied spring at Gladys. Then, with perfect coolness, Gibbon took two long strides forward and knocked the gibbering maniac down with a single crashing blow.

The Song of Songs

By E. J. HERVEY

WITH yearning heart I hear the song
Of love, played sweet and far away
Like murmuring of distant brooks,
Like bird-notes heralding the day.

The melody drifts down the wind—
Entranced, attuned, I follow on,
With heart's desire so near, so near
I lose my way, and love is gone.

Must I forever, on and on,
Search through the world for love in vain,
Forever hear those haunting tunes
Like joy-bells ringing in the rain?

Or some day in a flowering wood
Will I greet love with happy tears
And lose in sweet forgetfulness
The memory of these searching years?

III

GIBBON took things into his own hands after that. He smuggled the inert Armand down the fire-escape, tumbled him into a taxicab and delivered him up at a hospital. Once he had the man safely immured in the alcoholic ward, he breathed easily again. He was by no means surprised to learn on the following day that the patient had rallied from his own well-placed blow only to relapse into the maddest convulsions of delirium tremens. "That'll keep him out of our way for the time being, at any rate," Gibbon reflected. "Meanwhile it's up to me to provide a lark for *her*—" He pondered it and soon arrived at a conclusion. Thomas Gardner, his cousin, proved tractable; a week-end house-party at the Gardner estate up the Hudson was easily arranged.

GLADYS was ecstatic. She shopped joyfully, indefatigably, and Friday found her ready with a wardrobe worthy of her "salad days," as she dubbed the far-away period of frivolity and affectation. Still, on the train at last with Gibbon, she drooped, "Poor mad Armand!" she mused. "He's not to blame. I suppose your dreadful punch *was* the only solution; but I'm sorry it had to be." After a pause she pursued, "I'm still in his clutches, you know; I can feel his hungry, accusing eyes on me now. It will have to be a very gay party, Philip, to drown my remorse, my sense of unspeakable guilt." Abruptly she turned to him: "When will Armand leave the hospital?"

He shrugged. "Maybe in a week—not before, I think."

She showed her uneasiness. "Ah—but you don't know Armand. His recuperative powers are wonderful. Let me see—to-day is Friday; I *must* be back at work on Monday morning. I want to do something really fine to greet the tragic soul with when he returns—"

"Nonsense!" Gibbon commented.

She answered this with a slow, sad head-shake, and they let the topic drop there.

THE house-party ran the briefest course. That the dénouement failed to achieve the ghastly dignity of blood-tragedy was wholly due to the equable Gibbon. Armand himself might have carried the catastrophe off with a mastery worthy of a Renaissance figure. A Borgia touch on the banks of the Hudson! Somehow, though, the mere presence on the scene of Philip Gibbon made of Armand's insane attempt a bizarre anachronism. Melodrama and horror simply couldn't be put over with him about; it was for him to shoulder his way through the atmosphere of baleful murk and to blow the poisonous clouds to a distance. He was like the very guardian-spirit of the broad and prosaic Hudson, vindicating the unromantic integrity of his native river.

After dinner on Friday evening, Gladys and Gibbon had strolled about for a time on the terraces and at length had wandered away into the less formal spaces of the estate. They were courting the deepening twilight of the beech-walk. Gladys, in a pair of the daintiest evening-slippers, picked a gingerly way from stepping-stone to stepping-stone. "If I saw a drop of dew on the treasures, I should burst into floods of tears," she confessed. "And I thought I'd put pretty clothes behind me forever! Can it be that I'm forgetting Armand already?"

As if in answer to her casual question, a figure crashed through the thick branches nearby and lurched out directly in their path.

"Armand!" The cry was struck from her as if by a direct blow.

THE man's face streamed with sweat that made its pallor the more ghastly. He had evidently been running; his chest heaved and he panted sobbingly. Even in the cloistral dusk of the beech-avenue, his eyes showed the epileptic, swimming blankness of the madman. His clothes were stained and stuck together in places with burrs. He spoke, however, with deliberation; his voice half-intoned the words. It was evident that, for all his weakness and faintness and anguish, he felt himself on the brink of some magnificent act of vengeance.

"Yes—I got away," he announced slowly and incisively. "It was—quite simple. I watched you from your fire-escape. I saw you go off—together. And I followed. I am here—to teach you not to betray your gift!" That was all. He had delivered the speech he had so obviously rehearsed with a view to its supreme effect.

Swiftly his hand darted into a pocket of his coat. It was only then that his sick dizziness mastered him. He tottered, groped blindly and was unable for the moment to tear his hand free of the pocket. At length, however, he ripped the cloth with a scream of fury. His hand flew up above his head in triumph. The waning light glinted along a glass vial. Gibbon leaped forward. Armand, his aim deflected by a sudden convulsive recoil of all his muscles, yet hurled the vial with frenzy. The contents missed Gladys' face. Gibbon, as he fell to the ground on top of his antagonist, felt the venomous bite of the acid on the flesh of his right arm.

ARMAND, slack, wringing wet and gasping, was a pitifully impotent enemy now. Gibbon straddled him and, with his fists pressed against the other's loosely rattling chest, muttered: "You won't get away *again,* let me tell you—"

Armand emitted a strident sob, almost like a whinny of despair. It was the cry of a fanatic who has heard the doors of his Paradise clang behind him. He had listened to the decree of banishment from the shrine of his art. He was pinioned; he was spent. And the goal hadn't been far off—

IV

SIX months later, in the private sanatorium that Gladys had chosen for him, Armand cut his throat. He was already dead when the attendant found him.

Gladys was in Paris at the time. Gibbon wondered how the news would strike her. As for himself—he had only the deepest pity now for the crazed devotee of art as represented by this woman's gift.

Later, when he saw her in Paris, he was confirmed in his belief that his meddling in the affairs of these two had been in the nature of a desecration, of a sacrilege.

"Poor, poor Armand!" Gladys remarked. "Of course, I've given up my painting. I think, even if I could have gone ahead and done big things without him, it wouldn't have been right. My achievements should have come directly from him, should have been *his* achievements. Do you know, I often wonder if I guessed correctly—about what would happen when I *did* reach my Alpine peaks. I suppose I did hate him; I suppose he hated me, too. I sha'n't ever know, now; and I sha'n't ever stop wondering— But that's silly. Armand *was* a fiend and a drunkard and a maniac—certainly after *you* appeared, anyhow." She broke off abruptly. "I've gone back to flirting; I'm less interesting now than I was. We'd better not see each other often, Philip. I might set my cap for you. I've decided that I might as well get married."

She pointed to his arm. "You've got your very interesting scar, Philip. I shouldn't like you to get *me* as well."

TWO VOICES—(*Concluded from page 227*)

Ray's conversation with his wife. He heard the clink of a medicine bottle against a thin glass, and the gurgle of liquid being poured.

"Alice, won't you try to drink this?" urged the voice of the suspected man.

Old Dave was in danger of overbalancing. He shifted his weight and looked into the yard.

"Charles," said the woman. "Charles—"

"Yes, Alice."

"I'm going. I haven't—any—breath—"

"I'll get the doctor."

"N—o. Don't leave me— I'm—"

"Here, take this, Alice—please."

"N—o. I don't want anything. I— Charles— Put your arms back o' me. That's it. Now, sing something to me. Sing—*Ave Maria*—like you used to sing it— Oh, so—long—a-go—"

OLD DAVE secured a fresh hold on the water-spout, shifted his stockinged foot on the fire-escape's rail, reached forth the other foot, felt his toes touch the window-sill, and swung with a twirling motion.

Balancing himself by gripping the window-frame, he ducked his head beneath the sash, swept aside a swaying curtain and stepped into a kitchen.

Drawing his revolver, he tiptoed over cold linoleum toward a door beyond which showed a lamp, a bed, and a leaning figure supporting the frail body of a woman who was more like a child than a wife.

Old Dave heard Ray's voice singing *Ave Maria.* Clear the notes were—like a silver bell's. It was the same voice he had heard in Stag Hotel Number Two and—in the Connover Bank Building.

He thrust forth his revolver.

A look, caught from the dying woman's eyes—a flash of soul that struck over Ray's shoulder—reached within and melted the Old Plug's heart.

There was understanding in that expiring spark—and a mute appeal. It was as if all the woman's life, that was ebbing, welled forth to exact a promise from Old Dave.

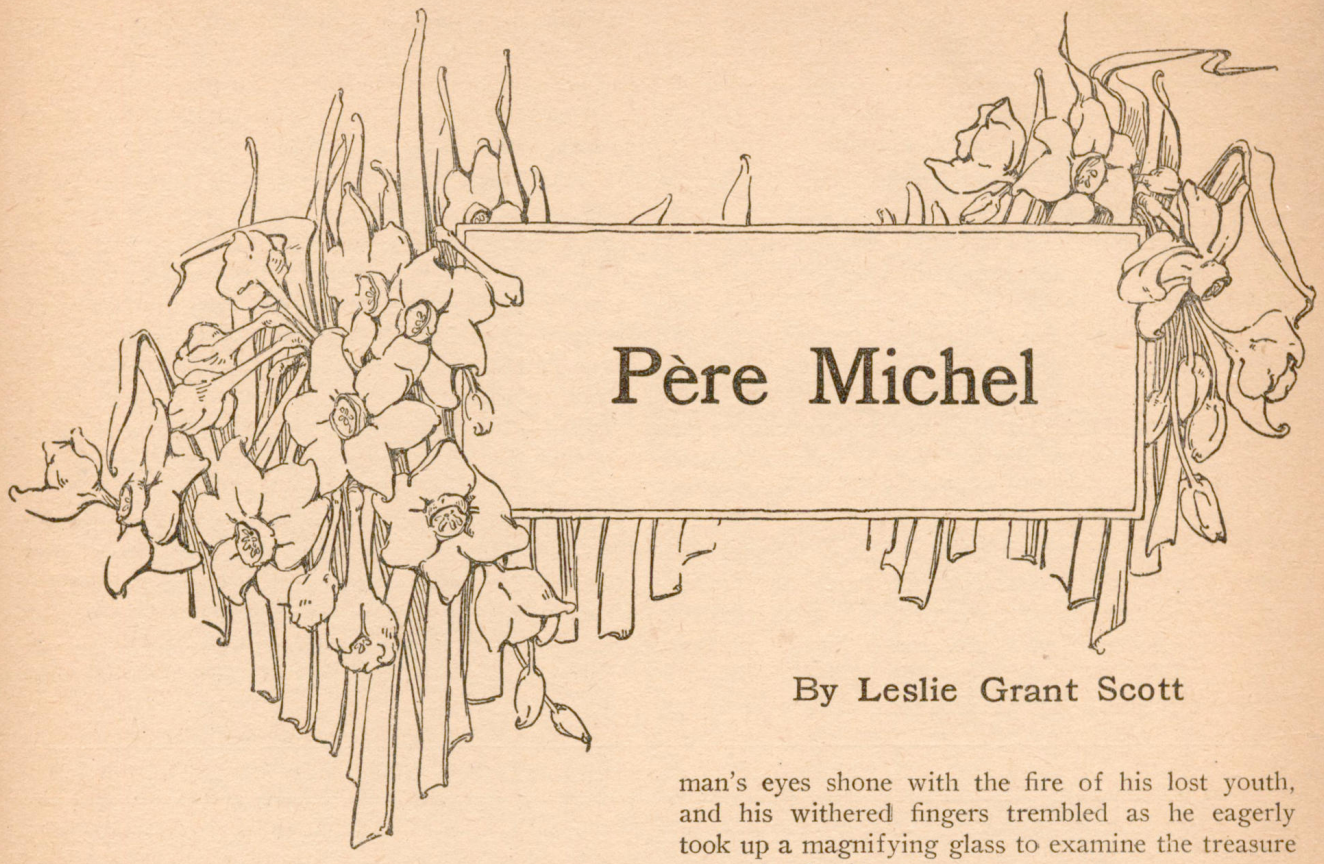
He saw her quivering in Ray's long arms. Then the song died, note by note.

OLD DAVE stepped backward noiselessly, brushed aside the window curtain, pocketed his "smoke-wagon," climbed upon the sill and reached for the fire-escape's rail.

He crossed the gap, knocked over his pipe, when he stumbled against a chair, strode through the bare apartment and lifted the receiver from the telephone-hook in the hall.

"Say," he said, when he was connected with detective headquarters. "Say, Sarg. . . . Dave talking Yes, th' Old Plug. Say—nothin' a-tall to that Ray affair. I'm movin' away. Ray ain't th' man. . . . do I know? Why—I just know—that's all, Sarg!"

Père Michel may have stood at the Door of Death, but age had not robbed him of his gallantry or his courage



Père Michel

By Leslie Grant Scott

IT WAS dark in the shop of *Père* Michel. The gas-jet was turned low and the old man was scarcely visible amid the flickering shadows. He sat in a carefully restored antique chair, fast asleep.

The sharp jangle of the door-bell aroused him. He sat up quickly.

"Hien?" he said. "What's that?" Then, as the bell gave another jangle: *"Oui, oui!* I come, I come! *Un moment, un moment."* Hurriedly he opened the door.

A young girl stepped in. Her face was flushed and she was breathing quickly, as if from running.

"Are you *Père* Michel?" she asked.

"Oui, mon enfant," answered the old man. "That is what they call me."

"Madame has sent me," she said, "to ask if you will lend her one thousand francs on this little box. It looks very small to me, but *madame* said: 'Take it to *Père* Michel. He will know its value.' "

The old man shook his head. "I buy things, my child, I am not a money lender."

"But *madame* does not wish to part with the little box forever."

"Show it to me," said *Père* Michel.

The girl unwrapped a small enameled box which she placed in the brown, wrinkled hand. The old man's eyes shone with the fire of his lost youth, and his withered fingers trembled as he eagerly took up a magnifying glass to examine the treasure more closely.

"Quelle est belle! Ah, yes, it is beautiful!" he murmured.

"Is it really so valuable, *mônsieur?* That little thing!"

"Valuable, my child? Valuable! Of course it is; but it is much more than that. It is rarely beautiful. I have never seen such a piece, so perfect, so delicate. I had one once but not so good. Unfortunately I was obliged to sell it. I kept it out of sight as long as I could, but one day someone discovered it and it had to go. Ah, my dear, that was a sad day. I remember it well."

THE girl's large brown eyes grew round with wonder.

"But," she said, "I thought that you had these things to sell them. I thought that you would be glad when someone bought them."

"Ah, *mon enfant,* you do not understand. Of course I must sell my wares. That is true, for poor old *Père* Michel must live so long as the good God wills it, and to live he must eat. Also he must feed his birds and his cat, for they too must live. But I love my beautiful things. Each one to me is like a child or a friend or a sweetheart, and when I am obliged to part with one of them, I suffer, *mon enfant,* I suffer."

"Then you will give me the money for the little box?" ventured the girl.

"*Oui, oui,* I will give it to you. Have a little patience, my child, have a little patience. I must unlock my desk. I do not carry so much money in my pocket."

THE old man lovingly put the little piece of enamel in one of his cabinets and began fumbling with his keys.

"Poor *madame!*" said the girl. "She is distressed. She, too, loves the little box. She hopes to get it back again before you are obliged to sell it, but she needs the money at once."

"You are fond of her, this *madame?*"

"Oh yes! How could I help it? She is so good to me and she has helped my Jean. He and I are to be married soon, but I hope that I shall still be able to serve *madame.*"

"She is pretty, *madame?*" asked the old man.

"But yes," replied the girl. "She is very beautiful. Never have I seen so lovely a face. Her skin is like ivory, and her eyes are gray with black lashes, and when they look at you they seem to draw your soul from you."

"And *monsieur?* What of *monsieur, ma petite?*"

"*Monsieur* is very grave and serious and of a terrible pride. He loves *madame,* of course. Everybody loves *madame,* but he is much older than she and of a reserve such as you never saw. She adores him but she fears him. That is why I am here tonight. Her brother is in trouble over cards, and she dares not tell *monsieur* for fear that he will feel it a disgrace to his name."

The merry brown eyes became clouded with tears.

"There, there, *mon enfant!*" said *Père* Michel as he handed her a roll of notes. "We will pray that the good God will watch over her and soften the heart of *monsieur.*"

When the girl had gone *Père* Michel took out the little box and examined it with great care.

"It is beautiful! It is beautiful!" he murmured tenderly, over and over.

IT WAS some weeks later that a tall, dark man of distinguished and austere bearing entered the shop of *Père* Michel.

"I wish to buy something rare and of value," he said. "May I look around your shop?"

"But yes, *monsieur.* I am at your service," answered *Père* Michel.

The stranger, after some deliberation, decided upon a quaint ivory carving, and was about to leave when he suddenly exclaimed: "What is this?"

"That," replied *Père* Michel, "is not for sale. I thought that I had put it out of sight. *Monsieur* has sharp eyes."

"Will you not reconsider? I will pay liberally."

"No, *monsieur.* It is my greatest treasure. I cannot part with it."

"Very well, but perhaps some day you will change your mind."

"I think not, *monsieur,*" said *Père* Michel.

The next day was one of sunshine and the shop door stood wide open so that the sun might come in. Just inside sat *Père* Michel with Minette, his cat, at his feet. In his hand was the little enamel box—his greatest treasure.

"Such delicacy! Such beauty!" he was saying to himself. "I have never seen such a piece."

A SHADOW fell across the door, shutting out the sunlight. Looking up, *Père* Michel saw the customer of yesterday. With him was a lady—a lady whose skin was like ivory, and whose gray eyes were fringed with black lashes.

Père Michel rose quickly and laid the little box upon his counter.

"*Bon jour, monsieur et madame,*" he said.

"Ah!" said the man, "here is the very box I told you of." He turned to the lady whose skin was like ivory. "Is it not exactly like the one you have lost?"

She raised her gray eyes to those of *Père* Michel and he felt his soul being drawn from him. Her lips trembled as she tried to speak. Then she bowed her head.

"I must know," continued the man in his even, cold voice, "how this box came here. Before I gave it to *madame* it had been in my family for generations. It is not possible that there is a duplicate. I say again I must know how it came here."

"That," said *Père* Michel, "is very simple. I stole it, *monsieur.*"

For an instant there was a profound silence. Then: "If you stole it," exclaimed the man, "why did you refuse to sell it yesterday?"

Père Michel drew himself up and a strange dignity came over the old figure.

"Because, *monsieur,* I am not a common thief. I do not steal for money. It was the great beauty of the little box that tempted me. My whole life is spent among beautiful things." His eyes swept the little shop with pride. "And I have learned to love them for themselves as a miser loves his gold. I am a little fanatical, a little cracked, perhaps. When I went to the house of *madame* to repair some old furniture I saw the little box and I could not resist its beauty. It called to me with an irresistable voice. I hope that you will be merciful to an old man, *monsieur.*"

THE serious face grew stern and the reply came coldly.

"Whatever you are or whatever your motives may be, you are still a criminal and a menace to society. It is my duty to call the police. I shall do so at once."

"Very well, *monsieur,*" said *Père* Michel. "It is as you wish. I am ready."

"Wait a moment," came the soft, low voice of *madame*. "I have something to say first."

"It will be quite useless to plead for him," said her husband.

"It is not to plead that I wish to speak. I have been a great coward, but I shall never be afraid again. *Père* Michel has taught me that. It was I who had the little box brought here. I needed money to help my brother pay a gambling debt and I was afraid to ask for it, knowing your pride in your name and fearing that you would think my reckless brother was bringing disgrace upon it. More than all else I feared to lose your love."

At her words the tall man had started back as if stung by a lash. Then he turned to *Père* Michel.

"And you would have ruined your life?" he asked.

"Why not, *monsieur?*" answered the old man. "There is only such a little of it left. *Madame* is so good, so beautiful, and she loves greatly. I have not always been old, *monsieur.* I can remember what it was like to be young and to love. Perhaps some day, *monsieur,* she will become a mother and have souls in her keeping. What better thing could *Père* Michel do than to give his life for her? You are very fortunate, *monsieur,* to possess such a treasure. Guard it carefully, for all treasures need tenderness and care."

Madame lifted her beautiful eyes to her husband and one little white hand fluttered timidly out toward him.

"Ah, may the bon Dieu forgive me!" exclaimed *Père* Michel. "I have forgotten to feed my birds. They will think they have no father. I pray you to excuse me for a few moments."

WHAT took place then no one knows but Minette, the cat, who as usual was sleeping with one eye open. That she told *Père* Michel I half suspect, for he was smiling when he finally returned to the empty shop, and seemed well satisfied with things in general.

On the counter lay, forgotten, the little enameled box. He picked it up tenderly.

"Quelle est belle!" he murmured. "Yes, it is indeed beautiful! Such delicacy of texture! Such finesse of workmanship! I have never seen such a piece."

OH, SHE WON'T? (*Concluded from page* 241)

When Brand let himself into the house that night, Leysa's voice greeted him from the landing. "Oo—oo, honey-boy, bring me something nice?"

Brand ran eagerly up the stairs and Leysa ran eagerly down, and they met half way. Brand caught Leysa and hugged her tight, and she kissed him so hard that she hurt her lip and made an awful time about it.

In the library, after she had drunk her cocktail, she turned on all the lights and preened herself before him like a little peacock.

"Like my gown?" she asked. "It's brand new—cost an awful lot of money." She came closer and flashed him a quick fugitive glance. "But I didn't think you'd mind buying it for me—I don't play the prodigal wife every day."

Brand flushed. For a moment they stood there silently looking deep into each other's eyes. Then Brand took her into his arms and kissed her gently. Her eyes filled with tears and his voice became uncertain.

"As your dad says, dearest—we're both young."

"Yes—but I was a beast to go off and leave my darling boy and my precious babies."

BRAND was about graciously accept what he presumed was her apology, with a magnanimous acknowledgment, when his good angel flew to place forbidding fingers on his lips. So he held his peace, just tightened his arms about his wife's slim waist and drew her close.

She felt her jet shoulder strap snap, and her main hairpin slip as Brand's cuff link caught in it.

"Take care," she warned him, "Leysa won't love you if you tear her pretty dress, and muss her perfectly good wave."

The cave man in Brand Chisholm stirred into sudden life. The muscles along his jaw tightened, so did his arms. He buried his face with savage recklessness in the piled-up glory of his wife's perfumed tresses. "Oh, she won't?" he said between clenched teeth.

Leysa looked up at him. Then she hurriedly put both her arms about his neck. "Yes, she will!"

Is Europe Molding the American Drama?

B

Lawrence Reamer

PROBABLY Mrs. Fiske did not in the least mind the chorus of critical disapproval which greeted her appearance in New York as the heroine of "Wake Up, Jonathan." She even praised in a curtain speech the two authors, Elmer Rice and Hatcher Hughes, as much as she did Edward Sheldon, Langdon Mitchell, Harry James Smith and others who were fortunate enough to have her interpret their plays before the laurels had settled on their brows. She must have realized soon that her admiration for the authors of "Wake Up, Jonathan" was not shared by the critics who saw the play. It is indeed a poor affair, obviously distorted from its original form that the popular comedienne may find sufficient field for her talents.

But it does not succeed in accomplishing even this purpose. There is no field in it for the talents of any actor. Its theme is the struggle between material prosperity and an enjoyment of the beauties of life that are not altogether dependent on money. It seems as if the drama must originally have been a serious discussion of this subject between the two men who in reality are its leading figures. But Mrs. Fiske has intervened and is a spokesman against the views of her indifferent husband and in favor of the idealist to whom she was in youth affianced. It was evidently the fear of being thought too serious that led the authors to garnish with all the familiar devices of the theater the action of the story. So there are Christmas greens to be seen, Santa Claus is a more or less frequent subject of discussion, sleigh bells ring outside and the children prattle constantly.

MRS. FISKE probably thought consolingly of the services she had done for the American theater in her younger days when she alone had the courage to present "Rosmersholm" and "Hedda Gabler" and, surrounding herself with the best actors of her time, acted "Maria of Magdala" by Paul Heyse; "Salvation Nell" by Edward Sheldon; "The New York Idea" by Langdon Mitchell; "Leah Kleschna" by Charles McClellan; "Mrs. Bumstead Leigh" by Harry James Smith and all the other promising American plays that were brought to her. She probably thinks she has done her share. Her many years on the stage have been busy and fruitful. She has earned her ease and seems to be taking it just now in plays that are aimed at the easiest theater taste to please. "Wake Up, Jonathan" is that kind if ever there was one.

A Play From England

NOTHING about "The Green Goddess" is nearly so surprising as the name of its author. The play which Winthrop Ames has temporarily reentered the theater world to produce is by William Archer, the veteran critic of the drama. Mr. Archer has gone so far as to write a guide to playwriting as well as helping to translate and introduce in England the works of Ibsen. Mr. Archer's

book will never be so helpful as "The Green Goddess" itself. When it came to writing a play from which he was to benefit, the critic did not crack his skull over the settlement of some burning social problem nor worry himself over the most reasonable solution of the relation between man and woman. Mr. Archer was writing a play that would draw the public and he was not taking chances. His experience had taught him that worthy as such dramatic efforts may be, they do not make money. He had also learned from his experience that melodrama is, in the long run, the kind of drama that is likely to be most generously patronized. Still calling on his experience, he remembered that no "situation" is more absorbing than the relief at the eleventh hour of heroes and heroines in peril.

Mr. Archer must have known this ever since he saw Boucicault's "Jessie Dean" or "The Siege of Lucknow." Maybe at the Adelphi Theater in London, he also witnessed "The Girl I Left Behind Me" by Franklin Fyles and David Belasco, with its famous stockade act based on the same posture of circumstances. Even later, he might have watched at the New Amsterdam Theater "The Dragon's Claw" by Austin Strong in which the old material was not used with sufficient deftness to bring the qualities of suspense and sustained interest to the compound scene with its American residents surrounded by the insurgent Boxers. Whether he saw all these plays or not, he knew the value of this theatrical scene. He knew moreover how much more exciting it would be to make the relief to-day come through the air rather than by military marching on *terra firma.*

KNOWING all these important facts, Mr. Archer showed how the critic as artist may sometimes be altogether successful. Certainly his play of life in India under a supercilious rajah, is most interesting. George Arliss has an excellent opportunity to reveal his skill in depicting sinister natures. The author's occasional indulgence in satire at the expense of the British not only improves the play but increases the kind of a task which Mr. Arliss so well performs.

Two Plays From the French

SACHA GUITRY has blended in "Deburau" which David Belasco has produced at his New York theater, history and fancy very alluringly. In this story of the famous mime who had all Paris at his expressive feet in the earliest years of the last century, the playwright has found a most human figure for the protagonist of his four acts. It was the verdict of the day that Deburau made pantomime human, converted Pierrot into something more than a clown and blended the tear and the smile on his powdered face. At all events, he was eminent in the theater chronicles during the days of the Romanticists. To his sessions in the little Theatre des Funambules, there flocked Alfred de Musset and Georges Sand, Alexandre Dumas, Theophile Gautier and the other bright lights of that period. David Belasco has them all before the eyes of his audience, gathered in the theater which he shows in the first act to witness the man that Jules Janin had made famous by his critical praise. This first act of "Deburau" which shows the exterior of the theater, its audience room and then what our friends of the cinema would call a "close-up" of the great mime playing the principal scene in "Marchand d'Habits" a famous wordless play of that day, is a triumph of the Belasco skill. In the smaller studies of the actor's life, there is no less fidelity to the realism of a romantic day. Sacha Guitry's drama shows the career of Deburau until its artistic end.

HE loved no less a beauty than the stage heroine created by Alexandre Dumas as Marguerite Gautier but in life the light o' love, Marie Duplessis. She is already the Lady of the Camellias when Deburau falls in love with her, but Armand has not appeared. When he does come to her ecru boudoir uncompromisingly Empire in its lovely decorations, she forgets the poor mime. In vain he waits for years her visit to his humble lodgings. Only the memory of her love remains to him. Her lack of loyalty has quenched the fires of his ambition. He has all but left the stage forever. But he will not allow his boy to take his place on the boards of the Funambules. In the end the beautiful Marie comes to his chair in which he has patiently sat so long only to hear once more the sound of the loved voice. It rings for a minute in his ears, rings out the name of the young man that she still so passionately loves and rings out for the waiting mime, the name of the physician that she has brought to heal him. The thought that he has been jilted sets his theater blood to flowing fast again.

He will act once more, show the present generation the incomparable skill of which it has heard. But the spark has burned black. The glow of his genius is gone out forever. After all, it were better that his ambitious son should take his place behind the smoking footlights of his playhouse. It is with his father's lessons on his art echoing in his ears that the young Deburau steps into his shoes to carry on the famous name. History says, however, that he never did more than keep its luster undimmed. He added no new glory to the title.

SACHA GUITRY'S play may not be important as a work of art but it is an uncommonly fragrant and dainty souvenir of a picturesque period of the theater's history. Granville Barker has translated the text into a kind of free verse with irregular rhymes that might well be dispensed with. There is no lack of sympathy with the author's intent and Mr. Barker plainly understands the purport of every line. It is the exigency of rhyme which seems occasionally to carry him far from the poet's meaning. But there is no other ground for criticism of this uncommonly harmonious triumph. Mr. Belasco has created with complete illusion of reality this impression of a vanished day of romance. Beauty not only abounds in the performance but the highest stage intelligence. He has wisely selected for the leading rôle Lionel Atwill who plays with engaging simplicity, the occasional delineation of deep feeling and an agreeable plasticity of action. Mr. Atwill is, moreover, free from disturbing mannerisms. Miss Mackay is a youthful Marie Duplessis to explain his hopeless passion.

Mr. Belasco's march along the way of the impresario has been triumphant this year. The bitterest of his critics has ever been willing to admit his preeminence in the field of the old-fashioned drama. It was not possible to deny his mastery of the conventional. But how about the newer theater? If there be a theater newer than those types represented by Edward Knoblock and Sacha Guitry, it would not be easy to find them. Mr. Belasco exquisitely interpreted the psychological moods of "One" which required the resources of the theater to express subtle mental states and supernatural inspirations to action. Then comes "Deburau" in which the manager paints in the most delicate and tantalizing colors the life of an era of the Romanticists for an audience at Sixth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, New York, in this year of grace. He does it, moreover, with a captivating beauty and illusion that holds his public in happy thraldom.

MORE characteristic of the French theater is the comedy of de Flers and Caillavet called "Papa" which has been seen at the Cort Theater in New York under the singular title "Transplanting Jean." The comedies of these two distinguished collaborators have never struck their roots deep in the American theater. "Decorating Clementine" which was famous in Paris as "Le Bois Sacre," "La Belle Aventure" and one or two other specimens of their theater enjoyed a fair degree of popularity. They have all the traditional lightness and gaiety of the French comedy writers, their finish is more exquisite than most of the others—compare them for instance with the writers of the merely machine-made French farce—their comedies are witty, mildly philosophic but above all free from the slightest tendency to teach. If there be a moral in the fiction they recite, let the hearer draw it for himself. They will not at least call his attention to it. They have written few serious pieces; they have written altogether about their own people and they have dealt in nearly every instance with problems which arise only in the polite course of worldly existence. Any of these characteristics would have served to keep them more or less remote from our theater. Combine the three and their strangeness may well be understood.

"PAPA" which is one of their most popular works abroad is now no less than a decade old —comparative senility for a contemporaneous work. The piece soon crossed the French frontier to find a welcome in all continental theaters. There was, however, no hospitality for it here. The late Charles Frohman, so inclined to welcome the play from Paris that held out the least promise of success, was wont to ponder over this piece as a means of displaying the finished art of John Drew. But he was never able to decide that the American public would find any saving graces in the character of this kind of a papa. He was not in the least the domestic and conventional parent of our drama. He was skittish and flirtatious, dividing his time with unusual impartiality between his duties as a diplomat and his pleasures as a philanderer. In one case, however, the pleasure lasted longer than it sometimes did. From this flirtation with the beautiful actress who crossed his path for a brief period, there came a son. But the joys of paternity rested lightly on the shoulders of this papa. The boy grew up as a farmer in the south of France while father grew in years and experience in Paris.

BUT the change came. In the first act of the comedy, the audience learns from the lips of the man most affected by it how the lover was suddenly converted into a father. A pretty woman laughed at his protestations of devotion. They were so, so amusing, coming from a gray-haired old man. All the world knows that ridicule and passion will no more mix than oil and water.

His thoughts thus turned on his age, had their reaction and settled on the almost forgotten son. He must be brought to the paternal fireside, adopted legally and fitted out with all the honors that legitimacy may bestow.

Here we have the *"donnée"* of MM. de Flers and Caillavet. It does not, however, develop along the

lines which the conscience of a reformed father might have indicated as the inevitable course. The son does come up to Paris from his southern farm rather indifferent to the worldly honors that are about to be tardily bestowed on him. His betrothed, a beautiful Rumanian who has happened through a course of cumulative misfortune to find herself in the same part of the world, also arrives at the capital. In the uncommonly ingenious and witty second act of "Transplanting Jean," this young woman makes the acquaintance of her father-in-law elect. He is still, in spite of his gray hairs, a polished and charming man of the world. Is it surprising then that the promised bride of his son should become instead the wife of the irresistible father? The younger man appears no more than moderately interested in the affair since he receives in exchange the heart of a sober and rural young woman of the neighborhood with whom he has already had some sentimental passages.

SUCH is a play that represents the best that authors of the day in Paris have been giving to their own audience for years. M. de Caillavet is unfortunately dead and there is to be no more of the same pleasant collaboration. M. de Flers was recently received into the French Academy of Immortals as an evidence of the appreciation in which he is held on the banks of the Seine. It would be encouraging to feel that some similar approval might crown his work here. The merits of "Transplanting Jean" as it is called, are, however, altogether French. The sophisticated lover of the drama may enjoy its high quality of comedy and wish that maybe our own writers about American life for the stage could impart something of the same distinction and quality to their plays. For comedy of this fine type is rare in our theaters.

No dramatist of the present day seems to be the least interested in this field and since Clyde Fitch wrote "The Girl With the Green Eyes" and "The Truth," there have been no other aspirants to this kind of authorship. Probably for the average theatergoer the amorous adventures of the sprightly parent, the comparative fickleness of his attractive fiancé and the stolidity of the farmer son, will lie too far out of their beaten track of life to be interesting. The greatest disadvantage of this view will be its effect in depriving such playgoers of the enjoyment of a very delightful importation even if their own experiences of life will find no parallel in the French tale. Arthur Byron plays very suavely the gay Frenchman who receives his family instincts so late in life. Margaret Lawrence exercises some of her old skill as a natural and spontaneous comedian and Richard Barbee is sufficiently serious and boyish as the third of this Gallic trio, this very Gallic trio.

"Mary Rose," by J. M. Barrie

DIFFICULT as they may be to comprehend, are these creations of MM. de Flers and Caillavet any less of our kind than the strange men and women that populate "Mary Rose," the latest stage work of Sir James Barrie? Luckily for this play, the vogue of the author compels a degree of notice. How much his recent plays have been saved from critical and popular neglect by the fame of Barrie, it is not easy to say. But it is certain that from the pen of an unknown author, they would have met with little approval. Eduard Hanslick, after he heard Sims Reeves sing in London, observed that it was difficult to gain the approval of the English but impossible to lose it. The present output of Bernard Shaw and J. M. Barrie suggest that the fate of the playwright may be as enviable as that of the tenor. They have contrived in spite of such mediocre specimens of their talent as they are now offering theater-goers to retain a notably powerful hold on their public.

When will the tiny voice arise in the crowd and proclaim with the child in the fairy tale that the prince is naked? Have not there been uneasy premonitions more than once that the Barrie fancy, the Barrie whimsicality, the Barrie poetry was traveling in a direction by no means easy for the old admirers of the author to follow? The way has not always been the same. In "The Legend of Leonora" which contained the charming idea of a woman so varied in fascinations and interests that she was equal to half a dozen of her sex, the turn was Gilbertian. Even the form of "Trial by Jury" was somewhat frankly borrowed for the second act. Yet there was in all of W. S. Gilbert's satire no such singular manifestation of the author's humor as the confession of the mother that she pushed a man out of the railroad train because he dared to keep a window open on her little girl with a cold. There were other specimens of the present estate of the Barrie muse equally disconcerting. Maude Adams as the heroine of "A Kiss for Cinderella" in the act of measuring a fat man for a frock coat and charging him a penny for it—here again the spectacle made the reason, well, if not totter, at least depart a little from its customary posture. There was something of Shaw in this fairy tale as well as in "Dear Brutus" which followed and lived so long as the Barrie fame combined with the popularity of William Gillette could keep it alive. In "Mary Rose" there seems to be felt for the first time the influence of another model: Maeterlinck.

SUCH appears to be the significance of "Mary Rose." Its fantasy is dreary. The execution of it is rather morbid than otherwise. The play is moreover dull. There is the usual literary distinction to the text. The quality of the Barrie workmanship is there. Then the new play has one other quality in common with the later plays of such poor quality. It begins so well. Into the deserted Sussex manor and even to the room haunted by his mother, a young soldier comes. He is looking under the eye of the caretaker at his family home. Here he was born and here was passed his infancy with his mother, the heroine of "Mary Rose." There is the promise here of interest just as there is in the picture of family life which the next scene reveals. But when the supernatural note is sounded, "Mary Rose" loses its power to interest. It was the same with "A Kiss for Cinderella" after the whimsical first act within the sculptor's studio and the same with "The Legend of Leonora" when the ingenious opening scene showed a woman of so many faces of charm. And the plot to trap the stealing butler in "Dear Brutus" was as delightful as any episode in the Barrie theater. Not only are the plays to-day inferior in quality but they tantalize us by some suggestion of the old power to enthrall. So far as a play can be saved by its cast, "Mary Rose" is fortunate. Ruth Chatterton blooms in her youthful beauty as the heroine of the performance at the Empire Theatre, and there are even greater skill and naturalness in the performance of the young husband by Tom Nesbitt, who has the most important rôle in the play.

HIDDEN HANDS OF HISTORY (*Concluded from page* 281)

hunting-party to which Ferdinand was invited. He was very fond of the chase and accepted gladly. As he was probably fully aware of her growing enmity toward him, I have no doubt that he rather more than suspected her intention, but not being a coward he wasted no time in useless cogitations. With a probable prayer to his patron saint, he set forth with the determination to enjoy his favorite sport, and keep his eyes open for possible treachery.

BIANCA was kindness itself and extended the full hospitality of the Grand Duke's palace to the Cardinal and his party. She went so far as to say that with her own hands she had prepared special tarts for dinner. Ferdinand said nothing, but at once he suspected those tarts and decided to pause before eating his. Report has it that he carried an opal which would turn dull at the approach of poison.

His suspicions were correct. The opal turned very dull indeed when the tart was placed beside his plate by an obsequious servant. Without a change of expression, the Cardinal announced that he had changed his mind; in fact, he felt rather ill and had decided not to partake of any sweets. I will wager a bet here that the gentleman, cool as he was, really did feel unwell.

The Grand Duchess Bianca turned pale. Not to be outdone in her plans, she held silence, feeling that another opportunity would show itself. What was her surprise when the Grand Duke, her husband, began insisting that his brother eat the tart, and when the brother refused again, he announced that he himself would eat it!

BIANCA'S heart stopped beating. She loved her husband in her own peculiar way, and did not desire to see harm come to him. Not only this, but his death meant the end to her reign of power. She made a gesture as though to stop him but reconsidered. It was the moment for a great decision and she made it. She looked into her heart and realized that life had given her all that any woman could desire: love, honor and wealth. In her position she would either have to acknowledge her guilty intention to poison the Duke's brother with the tart, or allow her husband to eat it and perish! With the prompt will of her nature she did not hesitate—she took a piece of the tart and ate it simultaneously with the Duke. Those who were present at the time, say that she smiled and looked fearlessly into the eyes of the sneering brother.

THE poison was slow. Twenty-four hours passed before the Grand Duke and his Duchess passed away. With a promptness that was scarcely in good taste, Ferdinand threw away his Cardinal's biretta and took over the power of his dead brother.

History has never been able to explain why Bianca, after winning all the glory and position she desired, still reached for more. Her little part in the great drama had been played. She had put an end to one ruler; set another one on the throne, and passed into oblivion herself. Her hands had molded one of the stirring moments of history. Perhaps there is a value in even her foolish abuse of power—at least, it makes an absorbing story of which we can never tire.

He helped her to raise the thick wooden cover and to prop it up with a short piece of timber lying beside it in the grass.

"The lantern, eh? I shall light that."

He lit the candle and held the wavering glimmer over the dark shaft.

"DO YOU see," she cried exultantly, "there is a ladder. Courty left a ladder."

"Ah!" he growled, "you will have the whole neighborhood about our ears. And you expect me to go down that ladder? You are lighter than I am. Listen, I shall hold the lantern while you go down. That is only fair, then you shall handle the jewels first."

She drew back with a shudder.

"There may be rats."

"True. You are afraid of rats," he said. "Yes, I remember."

"You remember how I screamed?"

"Yes, yes," he muttered sullenly.

The devil take her memory. It had been but a joke, a rough one, but still a joke. He had not thought she would have been so terrified, though he had hoped to frighten her into submission when he had locked her into the granary three years ago on a vacation in Normandy.

"Very well. Hold the lantern. I will go down."

GINGERLY he put his foot over the coping, and hanging by his muscular arms tried his weight on the ladder. It did not yield to his weight, and, reassured, he descended slowly, encircled by the moss-grown stones of the pit.

Below him as he peered down, he could see the darker shadows of the bottom of the well without a glimmer. It was dry. Good! His task would be easy. As he neared the last rung he was plunged into darkness still more profound. To his cry of alarm came her answer faintly from above:

"A minute. The candle blew out."

He waited impatiently, hearing her strike a match and then another. What was keeping her? He could wait no longer. He could feel in the dark—no light was needed for that. He stretched down a groping hand and trembled. He had touched something soft—a bundle, a cloth bag. His fingers closed upon it, but as he lifted it, his hand touched something cold and hard which on that moment seemed to leap up at him with a jar which shook his whole body. His wrist! God in Heaven! What had closed upon his wrist with that remorseless grip, biting into the bone, freezing it into numbness?

He set free his terror in a hoarse cry: "Louise!"

ABOVE him he could hear the faint sibillation of an indrawn breath.

His brain—if he could but think clearly for a minute—a second. Had she known—? This story of a cipher—had she invented it? Diamonds—had they existed only in her imagination?—the imagination of a revengeful woman—this woman who had been his wife—who had left him with a threat. He had been a fool to think she had forgotten, forgiven— If he could persuade her to bring assistance— He would cry again: "Louise!"

There was a faint sound overhead. She was still there—listening. From his lips came a babble of frantic supplication, cut short by a hollow thud overhead.

The well cover had been dropped into place. She meant to leave him there to die. And Monsieur Fusier, his wrist caught in a bear-trap chained to the bottom of the disused well, felt his senses flow away from him, as the excruciating agony of the pain ascended to his bursting brain.

BARB'ROUS TACTICS (*Concluded from page* 249)

most fainted. For, from the top of her head to the soles of her feet, Miss Moseby was arrayed in bridal finery.

It seemed to Mr. Gooldsby that Elias Brown's voice sounded awfully far away. He caught it in the middle of a sentence.

"—but Jeradine would insis' on waitin' till she had 'nough money to buy de propah kind o' weddin' raiments. She wuzn't makin' much at dat si'scription business, so, when I seed dat you wuz gwinetah have you a lady cashieress, or bus', I put her wise, an' she done de res'. We coulda hired her togethah, co'se, but—*I'd* a had to pay ha'f de sal'ry, den."

Elias paused for a moment to pull at his cigar. He looked at his watch.

"De weddin' won't be till nine o'clock, Mist' Goo'sby. You'll be 'roun', I reckin?"

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* * * *

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