"A MAGAZINE OF SPEED, SPICE AND SPARKLE"

TELLING TALES

First
March
Number

20c

Sparkling Fiction

Petting Preferred
by Alan Williams

Kisses Masqués
by Jeanne Laurent

Smothered Fire
by Sara Bartlett

It Happened to Music
by Arthur T. Munyan

Women I Have Loved
by the Count de K—

What the Open Door Showed
by Norman Sherbrooke

Calypso, a one-act play
by Harry Kemp
and a host of other
audacious tales

Has Kenilworth Told *Your* Fortune?
See page 126

MEMBER NEWSSTAND GROUP: COMBINED MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION, 1,500,000 COPIES

FREE!

Both 10-Piece White Enamel Kitchen Set and 9-Piece Enameled Canister Set

Wonderful 32-Piece Aluminum Set consists of: 2 Bread Pans; Doughnut Cutter; 2 Loose Bottom Jelly Cake Pans; Combination Teakettle and Rice Boiler with lid; Saucepan Set with lid; Dipper; Colander; Measuring Cup; Percolator; 2 Pie Pans; Castor Set; Tea or Coffee Strainer; Fry Pan; Cooker Set of 5 pieces, making 11 utensil combinations—Preserving Kettle; Convex Kettle; Combination Cooker; Casserole; Pudding Pan; Tubed Cake Pan; Colander; Roaster; Corn Popper; Steamer Set; Double Boiler.

NO MONEY DOWN!

Just mail the coupon and Hartman, the Largest Home Furnishing Concern in the World, will send you this complete 32-Piece Aluminum Cooking Set and with it, absolutely FREE, the 10-Piece Kitchen Set and 9-Piece Canister Set. When goods arrive, pay only $2 and postage on the Aluminum Set. **Pay nothing for the Kitchen Set or Canister Set—they are free.** Use all 3 sets *30 days on Free Trial.* If not satisfied, return them and we will refund the $2 and pay transportation charges both ways. Otherwise pay only for Aluminum Set a little each month. **Keep both the Kitchen Set and Canister Set as gifts from Hartman.**

FREE 10-Piece Kitchen Set and 9-Pc. Canister Set

Both Sets free with Aluminum Set. **Kitchen Set** includes: **Potato Masher, Mixing Spoon, Measuring Spoon, Ice Pick, Egg and Cream Beater, Can Opener, Vegetable and Pan Brush, Fork, Egg and Cake Turner, Wall Rack.** All have white enameled handles and hang on wall rack. **Canister Set** includes: **Large containers for Tea, Coffee and Sugar, small containers for Pepper, Cinnamon, Allspice, Nutmeg, Cloves and Ginger,** all enameled in colors with black lettering designing contents. Offer is limited.

Complete 32-Piece Cooking Outfit

Guaranteed for Life. Hartman's "Special" Set—made of heavy gauge aluminum. Will not chip, crack or rust. Light to handle. Bright as silver. Read above list of pieces. Everything for baking, boiling, roasting, frying. **And we guarantee it for life.**

FREE Bargain Catalog

Over 300 pages (of which 68 are in actual colors) of the world's greatest bargains in home furnishings, jewelry, furniture, rugs; also farm implements, and accessories, etc.—all sold on easy monthly payment terms and **30 days' free trial.**

FREE Gifts Book explains how you get **"Let Hartman Feather YOUR Nest"**

Nearly a Year to Pay

Only $2 on arrival, remember, and balance on Hartman's easy terms for the Aluminum Set only. Not a penny for the Kitchen Set or the Canister Set. 30 days' free trial for all and nearly a year to pay for the Aluminum Set.

Order by No. 417FMA9. Price for Aluminum Set, $18.95. No money down. $2 and postage on arrival. Balance $2 monthly. 10-Piece Kitchen Set and 9-Piece Canister Set are Free.

HARTMAN FURNITURE & CARPET CO.

Largest Home Furnishing Concern in the World

Dept. 5962 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Mail the Coupon Now!

HARTMAN FURNITURE & CARPET CO.
Dept. 5962 **Chicago, Illinois**

Send the

32-Piece Aluminum Cooking Set, No. 417FMA9, Price $18.95,

and with it 10-Piece Kitchen Set and 9-Piece Canister Set. Will pay $2 and postage on the Aluminum Set upon arrival. Kitchen Set and Canister Set are FREE. I am to have 30 days' free trial. If not satisfied, I will ship all 3 sets back and you will refund my $2 and pay transportation charges both ways. If I keep them, I will pay you $2 monthly until the price of Aluminum Set, $18.95, is paid. Title remains with you until final payment is made.

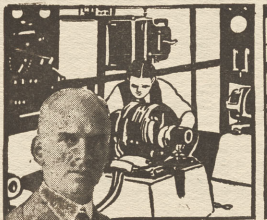
Name .....

R. F. D., Box No. .....
or Street and No. .....

Town ..... State .....

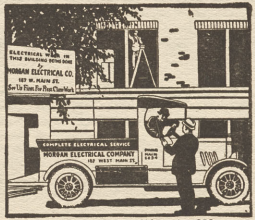
Occupation of Head of Household .....

How long have you lived at present address? .....



Herbert Dickerson, Warrenton, Va., makes $7,500 a year

Automotive Electricity pays W. E. Pence, Chehalis, Wash., over $9,000 a year



J. R. Morgan, Delaware, Ohio, makes $30 to $50 a day in business for himself

Electrical Experts Are in Big Demand

I Will Train You at Home To Fill a Big Pay Job

It's a shame for you to earn $15 or $20 or $30 a week, when in the same six days as an Electrical Expert you can make $70 to $200 a week—and do it easier—not half so hard work. Why then remain in the small-pay game, in a line of work that offers no chance, no big promotion, no big income? Fit yourself for a real job in the big electrical industry. I'll show you how.

Be an Electrical Expert
Earn $3,500 to $10,000 a Year

Today even the ordinary Electrician—the "screw driver" kind—is making money—big money. But it's the trained man—the man who knows the whys and wherefores of Electricity—the "Electrical Expert"—who is picked out to "boss" the ordinary Electricians—to boss the Big Jobs—the jobs that pay $3,500 to $10,000 a Year. Get in line for one of these "Big Jobs" by enrolling now for my easily learned, quickly grasped, right up-to-the-minute, Spare-Time Home Study Course in Practical Electricity.

Age or Lack of Experience No Drawback

You don't have to be a College Man; you don't have to be a High School Graduate. As Chief Engineer of the Chicago Engineering Works, I know exactly the kind of training you need, and I will give you that training. My Course in Electricity is the most simple, through and successful in existence, and offers every man, regardless of age, education, or previous experience the chance to become, in a very short time, an "Electrical Expert," able to make from $70 to $200 a week.

FREE Electrical Working Outfit FREE

With me, you do practical work—at home. You start right in after your first few lessons to work at your profession in the regular way. For this you need tools, and I give them to you absolutely free—a whole kit, a complete outfit, one that would cost you $12 to $15.

Your Satisfaction Guaranteed

So sure am I that you can learn Electricity—so sure am I that after studying with me, you, too can get into the "big money" class in electrical work, that I will guarantee under bond to return every single penny paid to me in tuition, if when you have finished my Course, you are not satisfied it was the best investment you ever made.

Guarantee Backed by a Million Dollar Institution

Back of me in my guarantee, stands the Chicago Engineering Works, Inc., a million dollar institution, thus assuring to every student enrolled, not only a wonderful training in Electricity, but an unsurpassed Student Service as well. It's this Service that makes "Cooke" training different from any other training. It's this Service, plus "Cooke" Training, that makes the "Cooke" Trained Man the "Big-Pay Man," everywhere.

Be a "Cooke" Trained Man and earn $12 to $30 a day—$70 to $200 a week—$3,500 to $10,000 a year.

Get Started Now—Mail Coupon

I want to send you my Electrical Book and Proof Lessons both Free. These cost you nothing and you'll enjoy them. Make the start today for a bright future in electricity. Send in Coupon—NOW.

L. L. Cooke, Chief Engineer,

CHICAGO ENGINEERING WORKS
2150 Lawrence Avenue Dept. 143 Chicago, Ill.

Use This "FREE OUTFIT" Coupon

L. L. COOKE, Dept. 143 — The Man Who Makes "Big-Pay" Men
2150 Lawrence Ave., Chicago

Dear Sir: Send at once, Sample Lessons, your Big Book, and full particulars of your Free Outfit and Home Study Course, also the Free Radio Course—all fully prepaid without obligation on my part.

Name .....

Address .....

Occupation .....

The "Cooke" Trained Man is the "Big Pay" Man

WATCH FOR THE SECOND MARCH NUMBER, ON SALE FEBRUARY 25th!

TELLING TALES

Vol. XXIII Contents for First March Telling Tales No. 1

Cover Design by O. Greiner

Single Copies, 20 cents This issue dated March 10, 1924 Yearly Subscription, $4.00

Published semi-monthly by Climax Publishing Corporation, 80 E. 11th St., New York. Fred Schiverea, Jr., President; S. W. Jenkins, Sec. Entered as second-class matter July 11, 1919, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Title registered as trademark in U. S. Patent Office. This magazine is a member of the Newsstand Group, of which more than 1,500,000 copies are distributed every month. For advertising rates address Newsstand Group—New York: 9 E. 40th St.; Chicago: 225 No. Michigan Av.

"YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD GIRL DOWN!"

In this case she brought home the bacon to the tune of $250.00. See announcement of the three prize winners in the $500.00 Authors' Contest, in this issue, page 110.

KENILWORTH reads the hand of Peter Chance, winner of the First Prize! See page 128.

Isaac Goldmann Company, Printers, New York

The Most Daring Book Ever Written!

Elinor Glyn, famous author of "Three Weeks," has written an amazing book that should be read by every man and woman —married or single. "The Philosophy of Love" is not a novel —it is a penetrating searchlight fearlessly turned on the most intimate relations of men and women. Read below how you can get this daring book at our risk—without advancing a penny.

WILL you marry the man you love, or will you take the one you can get?

If a husband stops loving his wife, or becomes infatuated with another woman, who is to blame—the husband, the wife, or the "other woman"?

Will you win the girl you want, or will Fate select your Mate?

Should a bride tell her husband what happened at seventeen?

Will you be able to hold the love of the one you cherish—or will your marriage end in divorce?

Do you know how to make people like you?

IF you can answer the above questions —if you know all there is to know about winning a woman's heart or holding a man's affections—you don't need "The Philosophy of Love." But if you are in doubt—if you don't know just how to handle your husband, or satisfy your wife, or win the devotion of the one you care for—then you must get this wonderful book. You can't afford to take chances with your happiness.

What Do YOU Know About Love?

DO you know how to win the one you love? Do you know why husbands, with devoted, virtuous wives, often become secret slaves to creatures of another "world"—and how to prevent it? Why do some men antagonize women, finding themselves beating against a stone wall in affairs of love? When is it dangerous to disregard convention? Do you know how to curb a headstrong man, or are you the victim of men's whims?

Do you know how to retain a man's affection always? How to attract men? Do you know the things that most irritate a man? Or disgust a woman? Can you tell when a man really loves you—or must you take his word for it? Do you know what you *MUST NOT DO* unless you want to be a "wall flower" or an "old maid"? Do you know the little things that make women like you? Why do "wonderful lovers" often become thoughtless husbands soon after marriage—and how can the wife prevent it? Do you know how to make marriage a perpetual honeymoon?

In "The Philosophy of Love," Elinor Glyn courageously solves the most vital problems of love and marriage. She places a magnifying glass unflinchingly on the most intimate relations of men and women. No detail, no matter how avoided by others, is spared. She warns you gravely, she suggests wisely, she explains fully.

"The Philosophy of Love" is one of the most daring books ever written. It had to be. A book of this type, to be of real value, could not mince words. Every problem had to be faced with utter honesty, deep sincerity, and resolute courage. But while Madame Glyn calls a spade a spade—while she deals with strong emotions and passions in her frank, fearless manner—she nevertheless handles her subject so tenderly and sacredly that the book can safely be read by any man or woman. In fact, anyone over eighteen should be *compelled* to read "The Philosophy of Love"; for, while ignorance may sometimes be bliss, it is folly of the most dangerous sort to be ignorant of the problems of love and marriage. As one mother wrote us: "I wish I had read this book when I was a young girl—it would have saved me a lot of misery and suffering."

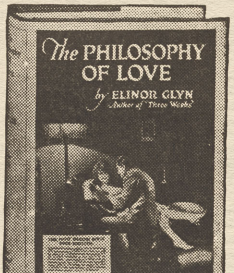
Certain shallow-minded persons may condemn "The Philosophy of Love." Anything of such an unusual character generally is. But Madame Glyn is content to rest her world-wide reputation on this book—the greatest masterpiece of love ever attempted!

SEND NO MONEY

YOU need not advance a single penny for "The Philosophy of Love." Simply fill out the coupon below—or write a letter—and the book will be sent to you on approval. When the postman delivers the book to your door—when it is actually in your hands—pay him only $1.98, plus a few pennies postage, and the book is yours. Go over it to your heart's content—read it from cover to cover—and if you are not more than pleased, simply send the book back in good condition within five days and your money will be refunded instantly.

Over 75,000,000 people have read Elinor Glyn's stories or have seen them in the movies. Her books sell like magic. "The Philosophy of Love" is the supreme culmination of her brilliant career. It is destined to sell in huge quantities. Everybody will talk about it everywhere. So it will be exceedingly difficult to keep the book in print. It is possible that the present edition may be exhausted, and you may be compelled to wait for your copy, unless you mail the coupon below AT ONCE. We do not say this to hurry you—it is the truth.

Get your pencil—fill out the coupon NOW. Mail it to The Authors' Press, Auburn, N. Y., before it is too late. Then be prepared to read the most daring book ever written!



WARNING!

The publishers do not care to send "The Philosophy of Love" to anyone under eighteen years of age. So, unless you are over eighteen, please do not fill out the coupon below.

The Authors' Press, Dept. 459, Auburn, N. Y.

Please send me on approval Elinor Glyn's masterpiece, "The Philosophy of Love." When the postman delivers the book to my door, I will pay him only $1.98, plus a few pennies postage. It is understood, however, that this is not to be considered a purchase. If the book does not in every way come up to expectations, I reserve the right to return it any time within five days after it is received, and you agree to refund my money.

De Luxe Leather Edition — We have prepared a Limited Edition, handsomely bound in Royal Blue Genuine Leather and lettered in Gold, with Gold Tops and Blue Silk Markers. No expense spared—makes a gorgeous gift. If you prefer this leather edition—as most people do—simply sign below, place a cross in the little square at the right, and pay the postman only $2.98 plus postage. ☐

Name .....

Address .....

City and State .....

IMPORTANT—If it is possible that you may not be at home when the postman calls, send cash in advance. Also if you reside outside the U. S. A., payment must be made in advance. Regular Edition, $2.12. Leather Edition, $3.12. Cash with coupon.

Were You Born Under a Lucky Star?

If you will send us your name and address, together with your date of birth, we will mail you information of great interest to you. Tell you what Zodiac sign you were born under.

You will find this a very interesting chart and game. It tells your opportunities in life, your future prospects, happiness in marriage, friends, enemies, success in all undertakings and many other vital questions as indicated by Astrology, the ancient and interesting science of history.

Our astrological interpretation is a wonderful game and is written in plain language and sent securely sealed in plain wrapper. A great surprise awaits you.

Do not fail to send birth date and twelve cents in coin to cover cost of this notice and mailing. Print name and address plainly and avoid delay in mailing.

Write Now—TODAY—to the

ASTA STUDIO

309 Fifth Avenue, Dept. 725 New York

Learn to Draw at Home

Trained artists earn from $50 to over $250 a week. Tremendous demand right now for good art work. Magazines, newspapers, advertisers, printing houses, etc.

Become an artist through wonderful new easy method—right at home in spare time. Learn Illustrating, Designing and Cartooning. Actual fun learning this way. Individual attention by mail from one of America's most famous artists. Learn to draw and earn big money.

Send for FREE BOOK

Just printed—a new book which describes the latest developments and wonderful opportunities in Commercial Art, and gives full details on this new easy method of learning to draw. Tells all about students—their successes—what they say—actual reproductions of their work—and how many earned big money even while learning. Write for this Free Book and details of special free offer. Mail postcard or letter now.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF ART
Room 402, 1115-15th St. N. W. Washington, D. C.

No craving for tobacco in any form after you begin taking Tobacco Redeemer. Don't try to quit the tobacco habit unaided. It's often a losing fight against heavy odds and may mean a serious shock to the nervous system. **Let us help the tobacco habit to quit YOU.** It will quit you, if you will just take **Tobacco Redeemer** according to directions. It is marvelously quick and thoroughly reliable.

Not a Substitute

Tobacco Redeemer contains no habit-forming drugs of any kind. It is in no sense a substitute for tobacco. After finishing the treatment you have absolutely no desire to use tobacco again or to continue the use of the remedy. It makes not a particle of difference how long you have been using tobacco, how much you use or in what form you use it—whether you smoke cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chew plug or fine cut or use snuff, **Tobacco Redeemer** will **positively** remove all craving for tobacco in any form in a few days. This we absolutely guarantee in every case or money refunded.

Write today for our free booklet showing the deadly effect of tobacco upon the human system and **positive proof that Tobacco Redeemer** will quickly free you of the habit.

Newell Pharmacal Company,
Dept. 980 St. Louis, Mo.

Tighten Your Grip on a Trade

Be An Electrical Expert

At $75 to $200 a Week

Every up-to-date fellow knows what a future there is in **electricity.**

Big pay—fascinating work on land or sea—rapid advancement in a field where jobs are ten times more numerous than trained men to fill them, where $75.00 a week is just a fair **starter,** where top notchers pull down ten thousand dollars or more a year—in a field, where any man if he wishes, can easily have a business of his own, have men working for him, **be his own boss!**

But what the average young man does NOT know, is what a **simple, easy,** A-B-C sort of a job it is to **get started.**

You Can Start Right Now!

Yes, you. You don't need a thing you don't already have! You can read. You can write. You can figure. You can **think.** And in your breast is the fire of ambition—the desire to get ahead! All right, that's all you need—we can help you just as you are—just as we have helped scores, yes, thousands of other two-fisted young fellows determined to get out of the rut and into the electric **field**—into work that will be pleasant—easy—and all in your home, during spare time.

Fascinating Home Study As You Hold Your Old Job

With the help we will give you, you can slip right into one of these big pay—he-man jobs and never lose a day's work. After a few weeks' start, you can earn enough in installation and electric repair jobs alone to more than pay for the Course and lay a foundation for an Electrical Contracting or Repair Shop Business of your own. When the proper time comes, we will tell you the easy way to go about doing it.

The Most Practical, Thorough and Condensed Electrical Course Ever Written

This is the only home study electrical course that gives you the combined practical and theoretical training you must have before you can be a successful electrician without which you cannot succeed—with which you cannot fail.

Written not by ONE man, with the narrow one-man viewpoint, but by 22 of the brainiest, most successful, electrical experts ever drawn from the field of practice and theory. Gives you the complete mastery of the subject—qualifies you as electrical expert to boss jobs—fits you right into the kind of a job you want—and does it in shortest time—at lowest cost—with the

Most Binding Guarantee of Results Ever Offered!

Satisfaction guaranteed or no sale! We not only SAY we can make you an electrical expert, we Guarantee it! If you are not absolutely satisfied when you have finished our Practical Electrical Course, we will refund every nickel you sent us.

FREE! **Experimental Outfit Worth $30** **Drafting Course Worth Another $30** **Big Electrical Library Worth $25**

Find out all about our offer. Find out about the thousands who have taken this course in preference to all others and MADE GOOD. Find out about the Electric Library—four elegant volumes—worth $25, but **free.** About the free *Drafting* Course worth another $30. The free Experimental and Demonstration Outfit, including a real, not a make-shift Electric Motor, Wheatstone Bridge, etc.—the most scientific, high-grade and complete Experimental Outfit ever supplied with a Course in Electricity. Get all the facts without obligation, without expense! Just send the coupon!

American School

Dept. E368 Drexel Ave. and 58th Street, Chicago

FREE Electrical Coupon

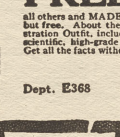
American School, Dept. E368, Chicago

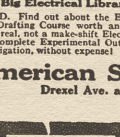
Please rush all information relative to your Course in Electricity. This obligates me in no way whatever.

Name.....

Address.....

.....





Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

A Long-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
—Omar Khayyam.

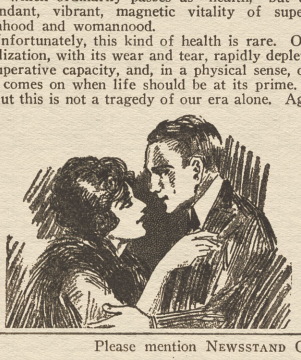
A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.

But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.



Now, after many years of research, science announces unconditionally that lives clouded by the haze of too-early autumn can be illumined by the summer sun of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has won the highest praise in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years with extraordinarily gratifying appreciation for the success it has demonstrated. It is now put up in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, for distribution to the general public.

Anyone who finds life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on years too soon, can obtain a double strength treatment of this compound, sufficient for ordinary cases, under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails to prove satisfactory and only $2 if satisfied. In average cases, the compound usually brings about gratifying improvement in a few days.

Simply write in confidence to the Melton Laboratories, 2148 Melton Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., and this wonder restorative will be mailed to you, sealed in a plain wrapper. You may enclose $2 or, if you prefer, just send your name without money and pay the postman $2 and postage when the parcel is delivered. In either case, if you report within ten days that you are not satisfied, the purchase price will be refunded on request. The Melton Laboratories are nationally known and thoroughly reliable. Moreover, their offer is fully guaranteed so no one need hesitate to accept it. If you need this remarkable scientific rejuvenator, write for it today.

No Bust Pads Now

Use the New National

"Bust developed five inches," says Mrs. Allendorf.

"The first three weeks bust developed 3½ inches," reports Dr. Swarthout.

Only Real BUST DEVELOPER

The National is the special Bust Developer Dr. C. S. Carr formerly recommended in the Physical Culture Magazine as the only safe, reliable method known for enlarging the bust in a natural way. Of this method Dr. Carr said:

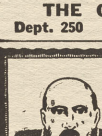
"Indeed it will bring about a development of the bust quite astonishing."

This has been proven over and over by those using the National. In reports sent us some have obtained as much as five inches development by following Dr. Carr's instruction in using this wonderful invention.

Valuable Book FREE

If you want a beautiful, plump, full bust, write for our valuable book on bust development containing the article by Dr. Carr, in which he tells specifically the cause of non-development and how the bust may be developed harmlessly to its most beautiful proportions. Sent free to every woman in need of development. If you wish book sent sealed enclose 4c postage.

THE OLIVE COMPANY
Dept. 250 Clarinda, Iowa

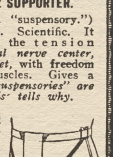


Young Man!

DON'T SLIP! KEEP FIT, enjoying the exhilarating comfort of a **LANTZ SUPPORTER.**

(Not a "suspensory.") Natural. Scientific. It takes the tension off *vital nerve center,* makes a man *light on his feet,* with freedom of action for mind and muscles. Gives a *refined appearance. Some "suspensories" are injurious; my prostatic treatis· tells why.*

Absorbent linen sack, elastic bands, nickel or gold adjusting clips and hook, weight 1 ounce, $1 or $2, post free; sizes: large, medium, small. Give waist. **Not Sold in Stores.**



C. C. LANTZ
Lock Box 17 Atlantic Highlands, N.J.

My anatomically illustrated treatise, every man should hold, sealed for 10 cents; free, with order.

TOBACCO HABIT

MAKE IT QUIT YOU

Not only is tobacco filthy and disgusting to your loved ones, but it contains a Deadly Poison which weakens heart, stomach, lowers vitality and invites diseases that may shorten your life. STOP! Regain Vigor, but don't shock your system by trying to quit unaided.

EASY TO QUIT

It makes no difference how long you have used tobacco, whether cigarettes, pipe, cigars, chewing or snuff, **Nix-O-Tine** (Wonderful Sanitarium treatment in new tablet form conquering thousands of worst cases) will free you from the craving quickly and for good. No more desire for tobacco. Harmless. Guaranteed. **Sent on Trial** Postpaid. Small sum if cured. Not a cent if it fails.

Write today for full remedy on trial

PERKINS CHEMICAL CO., 55-H St., Hastings, Nebr.

"They've tripled your salary, dear"

"I TELL you, Tom, it was a lucky day for both of us when you sent in that I. C. S. coupon. You'd never be where you are to-day if you hadn't decided to study in spare time just when you did."

Spare-time study with the I. C. S. is winning promotions for thousands of men and bringing happiness to thousands of homes all over the world. In offices, shops, stores, mines, mills and on railroads, I. C. S. trained men are stepping up to big jobs, over the heads of older men, past those whose only qualification is long service. There is a job ahead of YOU. Some man is going to be picked for it. The boss can't take chances. He is going to choose a trained man with sound, practical knowledge of the work.

Get busy right now and put yourself in line for that promotion. You can do it in spare time in your own home through the I. C. S., just as thousands of other men and women have done.

The first step they took was to mark and mail this coupon. Make *your* start the same way—and make it right now.

Mail the coupon to-day!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 2121, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please tell me how I can qualify for the position or in the subject *before* which I have marked an X:

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

☐ Business Management	☐ Salesmanship
☐ Industrial Management	☐ Advertising
☐ Personnel Organization	☐ Better Letters
☐ Traffic Management	☐ Show Card Lettering
☐ Business Law	☐ Stenography and Typing
☐ Banking and Banking Law	☐ Business English
☐ Accountancy (including C.P.A.)	☐ Civil Service
☐ Nicholson Cost Accounting	☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ Bookkeeping	☐ Common School Subjects
☐ Private Secretary	☐ High School Subjects
☐ Spanish ☐ French	☐ Illustrating ☐ Cartooning

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Electrical Engineering	☐ Architect
☐ Electric Lighting	☐ Blue Print Reading
☐ Mechanical Engineer	☐ Contractor and Builder
☐ Mechanical Draftsman	☐ Architectural Draftsman
☐ Machine Shop Practice	☐ Concrete Builder
☐ Railroad Positions	☐ Structural Engineer
☐ Gas Engine Operating	☐ Chemistry ☐ Pharmacy
☐ Civil Engineer	☐ Automobile Work
☐ Surveying and Mapping	☐ Airplane Engines
☐ Metallurgy	☐ Navigation
☐ Steam Engineering	☐ Agriculture and Poultry
☐ Radio	☐ Mathematics

Name .....

Street 11-21-23
Address .....

City ..... State .....

Occupation .....

Persons residing in Canada should send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada.

$3 DOWN And It's Yours

The Greatest Typewriter Bargain Ever Offered

Right now we are making you the greatest typewriter offer you ever dreamed of—an eye opener. This wonderful standard Shipman-Ward Rebuilt Underwood only $3.00 down. Ten days' free trial and the easiest monthly payments, shipped direct to you from our big factory.

Ten Days' Free Trial

Yes, only $3.00 down puts this genuine late model Shipman-Ward Rebuilt Underwood in your home. You can try it, test it, and then decide. See for yourself how new it is, how it writes. You must be satisfied. Your $3.00 unconditionally returned if at the end of ten days you are not satisfied. The entire transaction will not cost you one cent.

Easy Monthly Payments

Little more than rental. Balance of payments so small you will hardly notice them while you enjoy the use of this wonderful machine. You don't have to scrimp and save to pay cash. All at a big saving to you.

Five Year Written Guarantee

With every typewriter we give a written guarantee. These machines are rebuilt like new by the famous SHIPMAN-WARD PROCESS. Equipped with late improvements. You can't tell them from a new machine. The world's standard typewriter, the same models as sold by the Underwood Typewriter Company today, at a big saving to you. Act Now! Get this splendid offer and save money.

Free Book of Facts

Write for this free book of facts explaining Shipman-Ward's wonderful system of rebuilding typewriters. We show you exactly how it's done. How you are able to buy them. Complete and valuable information about the typewriter industry, both instructive and educational.

ACT NOW! Mail the coupon today.

From Factory to You

These machines are shipped direct from our factory—the largest typewriter rebuilding plant in the world. They are rebuilt by the famous SHIPMAN-WARD PROCESS. Developed through 30 years in the typewriter business. Through our money saving methods of rebuilding and elimination of a large expensive sales force we are able to make this wonderful money saving offer to you. ACT TODAY, take advantage of it and you will save money.

OUR FACTORY

All Shipments made direct to you from our modern factory—the largest typewriter rebuilding plant in the world

Free with Every Typewriter

A complete course in touch typewriting. You don't have to know how to operate a typewriter. You can learn to operate this machine in one day. We also give free a waterproof cover and all tools that come with a typewriter.

FREE BOOK COUPON

Shipman-Ward Mfg. Co.
1883 Shipman Bldg.
Montrose and Ravenswood Ave., Chicago

Send by return mail your wonderful offer of Shipman-Ward Standard Rebuilt Underwood, also your book of facts. (This is not an order and does not obligate me in any way.)

Name.....

Street or R. F. D. No.....

Post Office.....State.....

SHIPMAN-WARD MFG. CO.

1883 Shipman Building, Chicago, Ill.
MONTROSE and RAVENSWOOD AVE.

A despoiler of innocence, was what Norma thought of Jack Hale, yet one look in his eyes made her forget...

WHAT THE OPEN DOOR SHOWED

A Novelette

By NORMAN SHERBROOKE

I

NORMA was really not at all tired. Her lack of color was no indication of fatigue; the clear, ivory pallor of her skin was one of her chief claims to beauty. And her splendid vitality was proof against even the exertions of an unusually brilliant and exacting season.

But, in nine cases out of ten, if a person be told a thing with sufficient frequency and earnestness, the mere reiteration of it will at last engender the belief that it has some foundation in fact; and, at the end of a fortnight, Norma was ready to agree that perhaps she *had* overdone just a little, and that a rest would do her good.

"And it will be a real rest, up at Hemlock Lodge," her fiancé, the Honorable William Hobart told her. "No callers, no letters, no telephone jangling all day long, not even a newspaper. Complete freedom and relaxation; just what you need and must have, darling. It distresses me beyond measure to realize how dreadfully tired you are, although you bear up so bravely."

His solicitude was charmingly tender, and Norma was both touched and flattered by it. She told herself that she was an extraordinarily fortunate young woman to have won the love of such a man. William Hobart was a prominent, almost a national figure; his prestige was enormous. Yet he bore himself with a reserve and dignity that became him well, Norma thought, and he was devoting himself heart and soul to the public welfare, asking nothing, giving all: his advice, his money—above all, his time.

The demands upon him were endless. He was still in the prime of life; it was whispered that a magnificent future was before him. And he had chosen to ask Norma Sheffield to share it with him.

Norma had not hesitated over her answer; she had been only too proud and glad to say yes. Even as a child she had looked up to and respected the man of whom her father had predicted great things, and who had condescended to notice her now and then; it had been the avowed ambition of her younger brother to grow up to resemble the fine-looking, conservative young lawyer who carried himself with such commanding dignity.

Even then, the Honorable William Hobart had been something of a personage. He had many friends and admirers: but no one had ever been known to call him "Bill."

Fifteen years had wrought but little change in him. He was just as dignified, just as conservative, just as immaculately turned out; only, his condescension toward the child of nine had suffered a metamorphosis into passionate adoration of the woman of twenty-four. Norma had spent six years abroad. Her return, after the death of her parents, had been the signal for the beginning of a friendship that, after a few months, had culminated in an engagement. She had had other offers, of course, many of them, but none that she had even considered.

Hobart was the embodiment of all her childish dreams, the impossible ideal in the flesh. Proud almost to the point of arrogance, with him Norma Sheffield found herself curiously humble and submissive.

"It shall be as you wish, Will," she had answered, when, minor arguments failing, he had finally confessed that he was worried about her health, and begged her to go away for a rest for his sake. He wasn't given to imagining things, she knew, and if he really thought that she looked pale and tired, she must take care of herself, if only that she might appear more attractive to him.

Not that he would change toward her. Watching him as he stood by the open fire that late April morning, Norma Sheffield told herself, with a comfortable sense of assurance, that her future happiness was secure in the hands of this man.

His face lighted up with a smile as he met her eyes.

"I'm going to miss you very much, do you know that, dearest?" he said. "But I can't allow selfish considerations to sway me in private, any more than in public. I have a great deal to do in the next few weeks, fortunately—fortunately, because when I am very busy, I shall have less time to think about you, and wish that you were near me."

" 'Few weeks'?" echoed Norma. "Am I to be banished so long, then? Oh, but, Will, aren't ten days enough?"

He moved over to stand behind her chair, putting his hand lightly on her shoulder.

"No," he said, "ten days are not enough to bring the roses back to those pale cheeks, dearest." Norma had never had any roses in her cheeks, but the Honorable William Hobart was speaking in metaphor. "You must stay until you are thoroughly rested—until I am convinced that you are thoroughly rested, and able to take part in the activities that will be demanded of you during the summer.

"And how are you going to tell?" Norma lifted her hand and laid it over his as it rested on her shoulder; his fingers closed in a warm, confident clasp. "If I'm not to have any letters or telegrams or telephone calls—"

"With your permission"—and now he bent his head until his smoothly shaven cheek touched hers—"with your permission, darling, I'm going to run up over a week-end—to see for myself. To see"—his lips brushed her hair—"to see the loveliest, the dearest, the most exquisitely pure woman in the world—my wife-to-be. I couldn't let you go for so long without seeing you, Norma. Say that you want me to come. There will be some pleasant people there, of course; you will find plenty to entertain and amuse you; but I would like to think that you will be just a little lonely."

Pleasant people or no, Norma felt that she would probably be more than a little lonely. She would miss this tender and chivalrous lover a very great deal indeed. But it was only for a short time. In a few weeks, she would be back in town,

making ready for the busy summer ahead. Then the return in the early fall. And then—

And then, Norma Sheffield would be Mrs. William Hobart, a supremely, serenely happy wife.

That was how it looked to the very confident and sanguine young woman whom the Honorable William Hobart solicitously attended aboard the train at the Grand Central Station. But it was an eminent philosopher—Epictetus, to be exact—who said: "Appearances to the mind are of four kinds. Things either are what they appear to be; or they neither are, nor appear to be; or they are, and do not appear to be; or they are not, and yet appear to be. Rightly to aim in all these cases is the wise man's task."

II

In Gramercy Park, the tulips and hyacinths were in full bloom. The air was already languid, and close with the smell of sun-beaten pavements. But it was a shy and diffident spring that crept among the hemlock-clothed hills, the print of her reluctant footsteps hardly visible in the clumps of pink and white arbutus nestling under the leaves on the sunny southern slopes, or in the warmer green of the moss that softened the gaunt gray rocks with its emerald velvet.

Ravine and hollow still cupped unbroken drifts of white, and a sheet of ice still clung to the shore in the coves of the little lake that lay under the very windows of Hemlock Lodge.

The Lodge itself was not a hotel; it was far too small for that. Whether it had been built for a private camp, or for a small and exclusive guest house, Norma did not know; but, no matter for what purpose it had originally been intended, either its builder or its present owner had displayed considerable taste and ingenuity in its construction.

Built of enormous spruce slabs, with the bark left on them, and roofed with broad, dark green shingles, slanting down to a wide overhang, the house was in perfect harmony with its surroundings. To the casual observer, it would have appeared rough and primitive; but the policy pursued by the management—to say nothing of the rates demanded!—was such that the casual observer was conspicuous by his absence. Nevertheless, had he appeared, and, by some means found his way inside, he would probably have found nothing to lead him to alter his first impression. It took a more experienced eye to discover that, wherever one turned, the keynote was luxury; but luxury so refined and perfected that it appeared as extraordinary simplicity.

And therein lay the charm of the place. There was absolutely nothing wanting that could make for comfort or convenience; on the other hand, there was not one single superfluous thing, not one touch to suggest that one was not in one's own home or in that of a friend whose taste and discrimination were above reproach.

"Whoever planned it was a genius," Norma declared, after she had made sure that the rare excellence of the first dinner was not a happy accident. "And you, Mr. Abbott, have the soul of a poet. I've never been in such a ravishing place."

The manager was delighted. He was a very thin, very bald man, who had a way of cocking his head on one side like a nervously inquiring bird.

"I'm so glad you're pleased, Miss Sheffield," he said. "We try, you know. I hope you will like us well enough to remain for some time. You find the other guests congenial, I trust?"

"Oh, quite," said Norma carelessly.

She had not paid very much attention to them, nor, indeed, exchanged more than a few commonplace civilities with any except the Van Arnsdales, who played an excellent game of bridge.

Van Arnsdale himself was a huge, jovial-mannered banker, with a very ruddy complexion, a wide mouth, and an enormous appetite. Prohibition was, to use his own phraseology, the least of his troubles. He had an apparently inexhaustible supply of liquor, and indulged in it very freely. His wife was generously proportioned, but looked almost small beside him. The first evening after Norma's arrival, the couple had asked her to make a fourth at the bridge table, the other member of the quartette being a pleasant, rather quiet young man, about whom no one seemed to know anything save that his name was Hale, that his bridge was a miracle, and that he was the only person at Hemlock Lodge who dared venture out of sight of the lake unless accompanied by a guide. The guides, of whom everyone stood in awe, addressed him familiarly as "Jack"—a distinction which more than one of Mr. Abbott's other guests would have given much to achieve.

Norma liked young Mr. Hale. Just why he appealed to her, she would have been puzzled to say. Certainly it was not because he had shown her any especial attention, for he kept a good deal to himself, and seldom appeared in the big living-room until after dinner at night.

But he had an agreeable personality, a smile as whimsically infectious as it was infrequent, and, for the rest, a boyish charm of manner that made an irresistible appeal.

He had been very nice to Norma, but he had not particularly sought her out; but Norma was tired of being flattered and fawned upon. Her father's wealth and her own unusual beauty had combined to exclude from her relations with the men of her acquaintance, any such thing as frank and straightforward companionship, uninfluenced by sex or mercenary considerations.

This companionship she found, for the first time, with Jack Hale; and, before she had known the young man a week, she was ready to acknowledge that the restrictions with which her youth had been hedged about, had undoubtedly been the cause of her missing much that was really worth while.

Hale met her on a footing of open and friendly equality. Except for a certain unobtrusive consideration in his attitude toward her, she might have been a man. They took long tramps through the woods together, rode Abbott's wiry little ponies up and down the steep, confusing trails, fished one or two of the well-stocked trout brooks, and were as happy and carefree as a couple of children on a holiday.

It was all perfectly harmless and innocuous and delightful. They discussed every subject under the sun, save themselves. Norma, writing to Hobart amusing accounts of her daily doings with her "playmate," as she termed Hale, described their adventures exactly as if they had been those of a boy and girl in their early 'teens.

There was not the vaguest thought of guile in her mind. To mislead Hobart was the last thing on earth she intended; and she would have been genuinely shocked if any one had suggested to her that she was playing a rather dangerous game, in which the odds were against her. She would have been even more shocked had she been told that, in making no mention of her engagement, she was practicing a deception which, if tacit, was nevertheless unfair.

It is true that she had briefly consid-

ered speaking of it; but she promptly decided against that course. She and Hale had, as if by mutual agreement, observed a complete impersonality. To tell him of her engagement would, in a measure, personalize their relations; it would be bringing up a private matter in which he had no interest whatever, and, while accomplishing no good purpose, might mar a companionship the chief charm of which lay in its detachment from all things of the past and of the future.

At least, that was the route by which Norma arrived at her conclusion. She thought that in any event, her engagement was probably no secret to the guests at Hemlock Lodge. If it were, when her fiancé paid his promised visit, it would be time enough to make the disclosure.

Meantime, she was young, and it was spring in the great woods, and the air was like an invigorating wine.

She came upon Hale unexpectedly one late afternoon when she had started off for a short tramp by herself. Warned of the danger of straying away from the well defined paths, she had ventured a little way down a faint trail over which Hale had, a day or two before, taken her; and it was just at the edge of a deep hollow that she came upon him, sitting on a fallen log, a paint-daubed palette in his hand, and a canvas set on a portable easel in front of him.

He had not heard her approach, and she stood for some moments watching with surprise and interest the deft mastery with which he handled his brushes.

The westering sun, slanting low through the trees, lay in a flood of prismatic color across a great drift of snow that almost filled the hollow, the dark trunks of a clump of hemlocks loomed in sharp contrast in the background, their tops limned against an opal sky.

One moment, the scene spread in colorful beauty before Norma's eyes. The next, and the sun had slipped down behind the hill she had just crossed; the colors faded with an almost startling swiftness. There was only dull white and black and green. Unconsciously, Norma gave a little sigh.

Hale turned quickly, frowning, brush poised in mid air. When he saw Norma, his brow cleared.

"Oh!" he said. "So you remembered the turn at the big pine! Now I call that clever of you. Hemlock Lodge will make a real woodsman of you yet!"

"Give credit where credit is due," retorted Norma. "What has the Lodge to do with it? If I've learned anything about finding my way in the woods, it wasn't from those solemn signs, warning me not to lose sight of the Lake!"

She advanced a few paces toward him.

"Do you know," she said, "you are the first amateur artist I've ever known who paints snow as purple as it really is. It takes a master's eye to see color as it actually exists."

Hale stared at her for a second. Then he laughed.

"And you," he said, "are the first amateur critic I've ever known who didn't swear that snow was white, and that the man who painted purples in it was an idiot."

It was Norma's turn to laugh.

"Very, very nicely returned, sir." She dropped him a courtesy of mock submission. "But, honestly, I didn't mean to be patronizing. Only—it's true, you know. And do forgive me for being impertinent and watching you without your permission. I was just taking a walk, and—"

"It's quite all right," he assured her. "And I wish I had been taking a walk with you; but we're due for a storm tonight, and by to-morrow there won't be

a flake of this snow left. I wanted to finish up this canvas before my model put off her winter garments and vanished away on the wings of the south wind."

He put the palette back into his color box, snapped the lid in place, and, folding the wings of the easel over the wet canvas, tucked it under his arm.

"So much for so much," he said. "Encumbered as I am, I'll race you back over the hill."

At the crest, they met the sun again, filling the valley with a ruddy blaze, and when they reached the shore of the lake, the last rays lay in golden glory on the shimmering surface. In the little cove, Norma paused, laughing, breathless, to wait until Hale caught up with her.

"Oh, I know," she said, as he reached her side, "you're all ready with an alibi about stopping on the hill to watch the sunset. Or perhaps you were looking for that storm you predicted. Honestly, I don't think much of your weather forecasts. Just look at that sky!"

There was not a cloud in it. Like a huge inverted bowl of pale lapis, it arched above them, its blue reflected and intensified in the water of the lake.

"Listen!" said Hale suddenly.

For a moment, Norma could hear nothing. Then she became aware of a faint musical tinkling, like the chiming of a myriad tiny crystal bells. It rose and fell and rose again in strangely exquisite harmony.

"What—what is it?" whispered the girl.

Hale did not at once answer. He was looking away into the blue and gold distance, and his face was the face of a man who sees some vision of ineffable beauty. When his eyes came slowly to hers, there was something in their depths that made her catch her breath.

Quite without realizing what she did, she touched his arm. And so just for an instant's space, his gray gaze held hers.

"Don't you know?" he said, very softly. "It's the fairy orchestra, playing the prelude to the great love song of spring. And there is one of the soloists. Hear him!"

Above their heads, on a budding maple bough, an oriole burst into a flood of song. And the thousands of tiny ice particles, resting on the water close to the shore of the cove, tinkled and chimed, as the slow south wind swung them up and down.

"Beautiful!" whispered Norma. "Beautiful! And this is only the prelude."

"Only the prelude," he repeated. "God grant that nothing mar the harmony!"

His fingers touched hers.

And then, from somewhere far off, a motor horn honked raucously. The spell was broken. Norma withdrew her hand in some confusion.

"We shall be late for dinner," she said, with elaborate matter-of-factness, "and I am loath to desecrate one of that chef's marvellous soups by allowing it to stand for so much as ten seconds after he has it ready to serve."

"Race you to the Lodge steps!" said Hale promptly; and this time, he outdistanced her easily.

As they mounted the last steep incline side by side, Norma gave a sudden exclamation, stopped short, and then, with a hasty excuse, hurried on ahead, leaving Hale to follow at his leisure. She had caught sight of the tall, immaculate figure of William Hobart, standing on the veranda.

"Why, Will! How lovely!" She gave him her hand, and he took it in both of his. "I want you to meet—" She turned, to present Hale; but that gentleman had gone on around the corner of the Lodge and was nowhere in sight. Norma was

both annoyed and relieved, and she would have been utterly at a loss to account for either emotion.

"I had no idea you were here, Will," she said, "nor even that you thought of coming to-day."

"I'm a surprise party," Hobart told her, with his dignified humor. "And, judging from appearances"—he looked down at her with a tenderly possessive smile—"I'm not as unwelcome as such parties usually are. Eh, darling?"

But Epictectus said . . .

III

The storm began about midnight. Norma awakened to the loud drumming of the rain on the roof, and the swishing of the wet wind through the tormented branches of the hemlock trees outside her bedroom windows. Gradually, she became conscious of another sound, dull and intermittent: the sound of waves thudding against the granite boulders that bound the shore.

"Oh, dear!" she said aloud. "And to-day, we were going to climb—" She did not finish the sentence. The thought of William Hobart, no doubt at this moment impatiently awaiting her appearance at the breakfast table, got her hastily out of bed and scurrying into the bathroom.

She splashed into the tub and out again, hurried into her clothes, and then walked downstairs as nonchalantly as if she were not quite a good deal ashamed of herself. She would have said that her contrition was due entirely to her tardiness on this, the only morning that Hobart could be with her; but the truth of it was that she was disturbed because her first waking thought had been of another man. . . .

Perhaps it was this unadmitted contrition that led her rather to avoid the subject of Jack Hale. He did not appear during the forenoon, and, as he had been absent not only for dinner the night before, but all evening as well, someone inquired for him.

"Your 'little playmate,' Norma?" Hobart asked blandly; and Mrs. Forrest giggled.

"Is *that* what you call Mr. Hale, Miss Sheffield? Gracious! And does he like it—a grown man?"

"I don't know whether he likes it or not," said Norma shortly. "I've never asked him." She detested Mrs. Forrest, who was fat, flat-faced and lazy, and who talked interminably in a lisping voice, about her "family."

"Well, if I were Mr. Hobart, *I* shouldn't like it," the lady contributed. "Really, Mr. Hobart, he's *much* too attractive—oh, much! Although" — and she gave him a heavily kittenish smile—"one can understand why *you* feel that you needn't worry."

Norma rose deliberately and walked out into the hall.

"Going out for a breath of air?" queried Mr. Abbott, holding the door for her. "There's plenty stirring, Miss Sheffield. I was just saying that it was almost too heavy weather for the trout to be rising, and Mr. Hale went all the way up to his old camp on Big Beaver with Joe, the guide. He'll probably have his trip for nothing."

So that was where he had been! Norma stepped out on the porch and peered through the driving sheets of rain.

When she had gone to bed the night before, the lake had lain like a sheet of silvered glass, smooth and placid under a serene moon. Now, as far as the eye could see, there was a heaving, tossing mass of angry waters, the waves, froth-crowned, as high as a man's full stature. From the cove, where the afternoon before, she had stood with Hale and listened

to the tinkling music of that curious crystal orchestra, there came a full, deep-bosomed roar, punctuated by the shrill diapason of the wind, in shrieking dissonance.

What was it he had said—"God grant that nothing mar the harmony!"

"Norma, dearest," said Hobart's agreeably resonant voice behind her, "we are waiting for you. We shall have just time for a rubber of bridge before I leave."

"Surely, you're not going to drive twenty miles to the station in this storm, Will?" she protested. "Stay over until to-morrow at least."

"Impossible, darling. There is my work."

"But—"

"Surely you realize that I am the servant of the people, Norma, and not my own master? You would not have me neglect my manifest duty to the public, because of a few drops of rain?"

Norma shrugged.

"Well, if you catch cold and get pneumonia, the public may have reason to wish you had been less conscientious," she said. "But if you think that it is absolutely necessary, Will—"

"It is always absolutely necessary to do one's duty, darling," he said; and although he spoke quite tenderly, Norma felt as if he had administered a rebuke.

Deserved, of course. She knew perfectly well how important was the position he occupied, and she was quite as serious about it as he; only sometimes he did seem to think that it was more essential to be a leader than to act like a rational human being. What was it that Jack Hale had said the other night about reforms? Something about feather dusters—

She pulled herself up sharply. There was enough levity about her own attitude surely, without countenancing mere clever flippancy. At the time, she had frowned over the speech; there was hardly occasion for recalling it now. . . .

She was particularly gentle and submissive with Hobart during the rubber of bridge; she even refused to allow herself mentally to criticize him, when, as was habitual with him, he ignored her original bid, and plunged into a disastrous double that lost them the rubber. And when the automobile drew up in the drive below, and Hobart prepared to take his departure, she insisted on getting into a rain coat and cap and going down to the car with him. The downpour of rain had lightened to a fine drizzle. It was possible to see for some distance now, and Norma saw Jack Hale, in rubber boots and oil-skins, just coming around the bend in the drive.

"There's my 'little playmate,' now, Will," Norma said. "I wish you could stay and meet him. He's really been very kind to me."

"Who, that fellow?" Hobart stared hard at the dripping figure. "And you said his name was Hale?"

"Yes."

"An artist, eh?"

"I believe he does paint," Norma admitted. "But, Will—"

"And does that connote nothing to you, Norma?"

She shook her head.

"Why, no. What is the matter, Will? I've never seen you look so—so stern."

"Perhaps you have never seen me when I had reason to look stern, Norma. Hasn't it occurred to you who this man, this 'Jack' Hale, an artist, is?" He was looking at her searchingly.

"Why, no, Will. Do you mind telling me just what you mean?"

Hobart leaned over to pat her hand.

"There, darling, I didn't intend to criticize you," he said; "nor yet to seem to

dictate whom you shall choose for your friends. I shouldn't presume to interfere in any way, if you knew what you were doing. But, darling, really—forgive me if I say quite plainly that Mr. John Cornell Hale doesn't appear to me to be a very desirable acquaintance or—er—'playmate' for my promised wife."

"Oh!" said Norma weakly. "He isn't—he can't be—oh, are you *sure,* Will?"

"Darling!" He regarded her with gently reproachful tolerance. "Just consider! The nickname, the profession, the—the hiding, as it were, up here in the woods. And, besides," he added, "I have—er—seen him. There is no mistake. Now, I must not keep the car waiting any longer, dearest."

With one foot on the running-board, he turned to Van Arnsdale, who was descending the steps.

"I have just been telling Miss Sheffield the real identity of this man 'Jack' Hale, with whom you've all been so friendly, Mr. Van Arnsdale," he said. "He is John Cornell Hale, the artist, the central figure in that disgraceful studio scandal."

"No! You don't say!" ejaculated Van Arnsdale. "Why, the rotter! Funny, we none of us suspected." And then, hastily: "But you're mistaken in thinking we've been at all friendly with the fellow, Mr. Hobart. As a matter of fact, we've hardly spoken to him. An occasional game of bridge, perhaps—Miss Sheffield will tell you."

Norma threw him a quick little glance.

"I think I have been with him more than anyone else, Will," she said. "But I naturally supposed that anyone staying at Hemlock Lodge would be at least respectable—and"—with barbed sweetness—"Mrs. Van Arnsdale presented him to me."

"Well, there is only one course open to you now," Hobart said, climbing into the automobile. "I wish I could remain over; the situation is a little awkward; but I can trust you to handle it, of course."

"Of course," echoed Norma. "Of course, Will."

She stood on the steps, waving her hand until the car disappeared around a bend in the road. But it was invisible to her before the curve hid it from sight. Between it and her eyes there was a mist that had nothing to do with the fine drizzle of rain. . . .

IV

It didn't seem possible. Emory Topping, a colorless and inoffensive youth who seldom had a word to say for himself, insisted vehemently that it was *not* possible; while Mrs. Van Arnsdale looked properly horrified, and Mrs. Forrest, tapping her wide slipper on the rug, declared with ill-concealed satisfaction that *she* had suspected all along that there was something wrong with the fellow.

"Will you tell me what the management is about?" she demanded, transfixing Norma with her lorgnette. She always carried a lorgnette, not because her excellent eyes required any artificial aid, but because it afforded her a perfect opportunity to be insolent, without overstepping her bounds of conventional good manners. "To allow a character of that description in a place advertised to be for gentlepeople only? Upon my word, Mrs. Van Arnsdale, what *are* we coming to, when, going to a resort supposedly the most exclusive in the country, we find ourselves under the same roof with drunkards and libertines!"

Mrs. Van Arnsdale closed her eyes and shook her head slowly from side to side, while her husband, a silver flask in one hand and a glass in the other, nodded emphatic approval of the sentiments expressed by Mrs. Forrest.

"Disgraceful!" he boomed. "*Dis*graceful! Something ought to be done about it right away."

"*I* feel," said Mrs. Van Arnsdale, "that we have all been affronted and outraged by the mere presence of such a person. Robert, *you* must do something; you must take steps at once."

"Oh, you must, Mr. Van Arnsdale," chimed in Mrs. Forrest. "Since Mr. Hobart is not here to protect Miss Sheffield, who has been so intimate with this—this—" Her vocabulary proving momentarily unequal to the demands upon it, Norma took advantage of her pause.

"Thank you, Mrs. Forrest," she said. "It is really very good of you to think of me, but I really do not need a champion." She resented the leveled lorgnette, and the thin-veiled insinuation that there had been something not quite reputable about her association with Hale; too, she was not a little annoyed that Van Arnsdale should have taken it upon himself to drag into the limelight of a public discussion, a matter which she was sure her fiancé had mentioned only out of solicitude for her. Hobart, of course, knew that she would not care to associate with any man who had made himself unpleasantly notorious; but she was perfectly competent to handle the situation, and it was ridiculous to think of Robert Van Arnsdale, who had probably drawn not one strictly sober breath in years, and whose moral laxity was no secret, even to his wife, entering the lists on her behalf.

But Mrs. Forrest did not appear to regard the matter in that light.

"Oh, but really, Miss Sheffield! You really *do* need someone to make *your* position clear. Such a very dreadful scandal—such dreadful details—"

Norma rose with quiet decision.

"Unfortunately, I must confess to ignorance of the details," she said. "I did not read them, and so I know nothing about them. But—"

"*I* do," interrupted Mrs. Forrest excitedly. "It was simply disgraceful! Nothing but a cowardly *beastly* murder!" Her eyes glittered, as she rolled the deliciously salacious morsel in memory. "This girl, this model, had been posing for some picture he was doing—some allegorical thing that had been ordered for a decoration—and he had quite lost his head over her. She was nothing but a child, and he expected that she'd be dazzled by his fame and money. Bah!" Mrs. Forrest bit the word vindictively. "Famous—a licentious beast like that! It makes me ashamed for my countrymen that they would even *admit* this Hale's work to exhibitions! And then to call him a genius!

"Well, as I was saying," she hastened on, waving Emory Topping into silence, "the girl repulsed him. She had to work for her living, but she was good and pure, and she refused—er—well, she wouldn't do what he wanted her to do. So he decoyed her to his studio late one night, and induced her to drink something or other. He'd put knockout drops into it, you know."

"The papers said—" began Van Arnsdale eagerly.

"The papers said," went on Mrs. Forrest, ignoring the interruption, "that he finally became frightened and called a doctor, who worked over her for hours. Hale told this doctor that the girl had knocked on his door, and, when he opened it, had just pitched head first into the room. But *that* was a lie, of course. Nobody believed it for a minute. And the girl died. *Died,*" concluded Mrs. Forrest triumphantly.

"And then," began the colorless youth, who had been nervously fidgeting during the whole of the recital, "a complete denial was printed, and a—"

"And a coat of whitewash applied!"

Van Arnsdale's loud, compelling voice cut him short. "A coat of newspaper whitewash, that didn't and couldn't cover up the dirty complexion of the thing! There's no arrest, no indictment, and the whole thing is suddenly dropped. Why? *Why?"*

He thumped the bridge table with his fist so that the cards were jolted off onto the floor, and glared belligerently at the inoffensive Topping.

"I'll tell you why, sir!" he declaimed. "Money and pull! Before he got a chance to bribe and browbeat the publishers, the whole story was thoroughly aired!"

"It needed airing," put in Mrs. Forrest acidly.

"But after the first account, did we see anything more? No! The press was muzzled."

"But the retraction—the apology—" ventured Topping again.

"Money and pull!" shouted Van Arnsdale. "An abominable miscarriage of justice! Because this scoundrel has influence, he is able to bring pressure to bear on the newspapers! The story is at once suppressed. And this murderer, this defiler of innocent young girlhood, is allowed to go free, to mingle with decent men and women, among whom, under an alias, he flaunts himself as an honorable man!"

In his righteous indignation, Mr. Van Arnsdale was perhaps a little unfair. Hale had passed under no alias. To be sure, he had not advertised himself as John Cornell Hale, which, in view of his international fame, would instantly have stamped him in any community; but he had used his surname, and "Jack" is a recognized nickname for "John."

Nor was it altogether just to call him a murderer and defiler of innocent youth, since he had been convicted of no crime. That is to say, he had not been convicted in court. It was the newspapers that had tried, convicted, and condemned him; and irrespective of the justness of their verdict, it was certainly not legal.

But Van Arnsdale did not consider that, and certainly Norma Sheffield did not. Her lovely face was as cold and set as marble, and her eyes were hard. Inwardly, she was hurt and angry, and burning with a sense of injustice and wrong. The false position in which, through no fault of her own, she had been placed, was perfectly apparent to her. Apparent, too, was the malicious delight that Mrs. Forrest was taking in pointing it out, and ascribing to it a significance out of all proportion to its real importance.

The lady had hung on Van Arnsdale's every word, nodding and murmuring emphatic approval.

"Exactly!" she cried clapping her fat, pudgy hands together. "Just exactly what I say, Mr. Van Arnsdale! Think how easily he deceived poor Miss Sheffield! Really, we ought to do something to remove the unfortunate impression we've all so deprecated, and—"

Norma turned on her.

"Mrs. Forrest," she said clearly, "I don't know what you mean by 'unfortunate impression,' but from the hints you have let fall, I gather that you have done me the honor of discussing me behind my back. If you have anything further to say, do you mind saying it to me personally?"

Mrs. Forrest blenched and beat a hasty retreat. It was one thing to whisper veiled insinuations about Miss Sheffield when that young woman was not present to resent them, and quite another to repeat them to her face. The lorgnette went up hurriedly.

"Why—why, my dear Miss Sheffield you misunderstand me, quite!" she stammered. "Why, I—we never suggested—never dreamed, of anything that was—

that wasn't—did we, Mrs. Van Arnsdale?"

"Certainly not!" was the prompt response. "Never!"

"A fine, up-standing girl," Van Arnsdale soliloquized, *sotto voce,* as Norma turned away in disdainful indifference, "and nobody's fool, by Jove! But I wonder what she'll do? She's got to save her face, of course, but—hello! Here he is, now."

"Good evening, good people, all!" Jack Hale's cheery voice called from the doorway. "This is handsome weather, isn't it? But it didn't prevent the trout from rising, and old Joe and I brought back the prettiest string you ever saw. I've asked the chef to cook 'em for breakfast. I want you all to taste a trout out of Big Beaver."

In his boyish enthusiasm, he had not noticed that a sudden chill silence had fallen as he entered the room. Now, for the first time, he saw that something was wrong—radically wrong.

Norma, her eyes averted, was turning to the doorway; but Van Arnsdale's huge bulk barred her path.

"No time like the present, Miss Sheffield," he said. "He's going to speak to you. Let him have it!"

Norma could have struck him. She had intended to slip out unobserved, and so postpone meeting Hale until a more opportune time. But Van Arnsdale's interference had created just enough delay. Hale was coming directly toward her, and there was no possible way in which she could avoid meeting him. And the eyes of the room were upon her. . . .

"Good evening, Miss Sheffield," he said and smiled.

She lifted her head and met his eyes squarely.

"Mr. Hale," she said, in a low, clear voice that was distinctly audible to everyone, "since our last meeting I have learned certain things about you that make it impossible for me to regard you as a friend, or even as an acquaintance."

The smile vanished from Hale's face.

"Do you mind telling me just what you have 'learned'?" he asked slowly.

"Surely, I am under no obligations—"

"Forgive me"—simply—"but it's rather a public matter—now—isn't it? In ordinary fairness—"

He was perfectly right, and Norma could do no less than acknowledge it.

"Very well, if you insist," she said coldly. "I have learned about the disgraceful scandal in which you were recently involved. In the circumstances, I must ask you not to address me again."

Hale bowed. He had gone a little white under his tan.

"Just one question, please. How did you learn of it?"

"It is a matter of common report, is it not?"

"Then 'common report'—a newspaper report, to be exact, and quite unverified—seems to you to be sufficient evidence on which to condemn a man, without giving him an opportunity to speak in his own defense?"

"Oh, come now!" Van Arnsdale lumbered forward. "No defense would amount to a hill of beans against *circumstantial* evidence—admittedly the best, and the only reliable evidence there is. If—"

"I was not speaking to you, sir!" Hale told him sharply.

"No; you were speaking to a lady who had just requested you not to!" Van Arnsdale snapped back. "It's no use, Hale. The fat's in the fire, and the best thing you can do is to clear out. We've all had enough of you."

Quite deliberately, Hale turned his back on Van Arnsdale. His good-looking, boyish face was pale, and there was a strained

compression about his mouth. He ignored the group, murmuring and whispering behind him, ignored the hostile or curious faces as if they had not been there. He spoke to Norma, and he spoke exactly as if he and she were the only people in the room.

"Is 'common report' enough for you?" he asked. "Without investigating for yourself at all, you've decided that what you 'learned' was, and is, true?"

"Miss Sheffield doesn't have to investigate for herself," spoke up Van Arnsdale officiously. "She is perfectly satisfied with the source of her information. Aren't you, Miss Sheffield?"

Hale did not move nor speak. His grave gray eyes were fixed on Norma Sheffield's face, with odd intensity, as he waited for her to voice her own reply.

She bent her head.

"Perfectly," she said—and did not realize whose question it was that she had answered.

"Oh!" A strange little smile twisted Hale's lips. For an instant, he looked at Norma oddly, speculatively, as if she were someone whom he had never seen before. Then, without another word or a backward glance, he turned and quitted the room.

VI

She could have done nothing else, of course; Van Arnsdale's interference had made it impossible for her to act otherwise than she had; and, after all, in essentials, she had done exactly what Hobart would approve. He had made it quite plain that he expected her to have no further acquaintance with John Cornell Hale; and this end she had achieved.

But the means, she felt, were not altogether justified by it. She had neither intended nor desired to have a public scene; she had been virtually thrust into it, and compelled, against her will, to take a stand that was at once uncompromising—and uncommendable.

It was not the intolerance of her attitude that she found blameworthy; she had given John Hale the benefit of no doubt, because not for one second had the idea occurred to her that there might be a doubt. Van Arnsdale had spoken nothing but the truth when he had declared that she was perfectly satisfied with the source of her information. Had she reasoned about the matter at all—which she had not, so complete was her faith in her fiancé—it would have been to argue that Hobart was quite incapable of making any statement whatever unless he were sure of his ground. She had accepted his word in regard to John Hale, exactly as she would have accepted it on any other subject: implicitly and unquestioningly.

No; it was not that she felt herself to be intolerant, for a man of such moral turpitude as Hale was not entitled to tolerance. Her dissatisfaction with herself arose from a source difficult of analysis. She had been just, if merciless, fair if pitiless. Except for the unpleasantly public nature of an interview which she would have preferred to make private, she felt that she had nothing with which really to reproach herself.

Why, then, was she so ill at ease? Why was it impossible for her to dismiss from her mind the whole miserable affair? Hale was nothing to her; their acquaintance had been short, impersonal. Only that last afternoon, in the little cove, just for a moment she had been swayed by some new and strange emotion that had seemed to establish some subtle bond between them. She had put her hand on his arm, and he had touched her fingers. . . . .That was all. And, "God grant that nothing mar the harmony," he had said. He had been speak-

ing, of course, of the threatening storm, so evident to him who knew the weather signs of the region, so improbable to her. And yet, it seemed almost as if he had meant something quite different—as if, knowing his own guilt, he had prayed that she might remain in ignorance. . . . With an impatient movement of her head, Norma tossed back the splendid mass of her hair. Thick and long and lustrous, the coppery cascade fell far below her knees. From the oval mirror of her dressing-table, a lovely image was reflected back to her: a figure, thin and pliant as a young birch tree, girlishly slender, yet with all the gracious curves of perfect womanhood, its long superb lines revealed by the clinging drapery of the crêpe de Chine nightgown; a face clear-cut as a cameo, and as delicate in its modeling, warm, pale ivory, colorless except for the scarlet loveliness of the lips.

But Norma Sheffield saw nothing of her own beauty; she did not even see her own reflection in the mirror. It was quite another face that she saw: a white, boyish face, with mobile lips compressed into a strained line, and a look of intense, almost passionate appeal in the gray eyes. It haunted her, that face. She had not been able to forget it for one moment since John Hale had turned on his heel and left her downstairs in the living-room, three hours and more ago.

Norma took up the big tortoise-shell comb from the dressing-table and began mechanically to comb her hair.

After all, it had been needlessly cruel to subject him to the humiliation of a public repudiation. She hadn't meant to be cruel. She had only wanted him to understand, quite plainly, that even an ordinarily conventional acquaintance was impossible between them. He had sought her under false pretences; he had presumed on her ignorance of his real identity—and, for that, she despised him. But it was strange that he should have the power to hurt her so, strange that the disclosure of his degradation should have so shocked and distressed her. More strange still that she, Norma Sheffield, should permit any mere incident, however annoying, to disturb her poise. . . . Well, she would not even think about it any more; Will would not want her to think about it. He had expected her to dismiss the man and everything connected with him, promptly and finally. Which was what she would do. At once.

Resolutely, she turned back to the dressing-table. And then she suddenly became conscious of a sound which, she vaguely sensed, she had heard before, but which, because of her preoccupation, she had given no attention. She listened.

Yes, there it was again, not loud, but insistent: a *tap, tap, tap* on the door of her private sitting-room which opened into the main corridor.

Norma put down the comb on her dressing-table, slipped a satin negligée over her nightgown and, going out into the sitting-room, switched on the lights.

"Who is it?" she asked, her hand on the knob of the outer door.

There was no answer, but the low, cautious rapping was repeated. Wondering who could want her at such an hour, for she had not come upstairs until after midnight, she opened the door a little way.

"Who is it?" she asked again. "Is anything the matter?"

In the hall, stood Van Arnsdale.

"S-sh!" He put his finger to his lips to enjoin silence. "Just wanted to speak to you a minute, Miss Sheffield. Hope I'm not disturbing you. May I come in? I want to talk to you."

"I'm sorry," Norma replied, civilly enough, although it seemed strange that Van Arnsdale should come to her rooms

at half past one in the morning, "but I'm afraid it must keep until to-morrow, Mr. Van Arnsdale."

"Won't keep you a minute," he persisted, resting his hand on the door and giving it a gentle shove. "Just wanted to tell you something."

He had been drinking heavily; Norma saw that at a glance. But he was perfectly pleasant and good natured, and her first impulse, to shut the doo. in his face, was restrained by the fear that he might go on knocking until he rousec some of the other guests who would, quite naturally, wonder. . . .

And, even as she hesitated, undecided just what to do, a door down the corridor creaked. Then, instinctively, Norma stepped back, and Van Arnsdale, pushing his way past her into the room, shut the door and leaned against it, chuckling.

"Wouldn't do to have that flat-faced Forrest woman see me," he said. "Might misunderstand. People do, pretty easily sometimes."

"Just what did you want to see me for, Mr. Van Arnsdale?" Norma asked coldly. "I'm sorry to seem ungracious, but it's very late, and I am tired."

"Should think you would be. Been a pretty hard day for you, hasn't it? But you've got the pluck, by Jove you have! I like a woman with pluck. That's what I came to tell you—what a game little sport you were!" Not very steadily, he left the door, and crossed to a big chair, into which he lowered himself carefully.

"Mr. Van Arnsdale—"

"You see, it's this way," he continued genially. "To-day, there are mighty few women who'd be smart enough and nervy enough to do what you did. Most of 'em haven't the sand to do the right thing—they just flop and have hysterics, and say it's terrible—but they don't *do* anything. Once in a while, you run across one that sticks up for her class; and when I meet a woman like that, I'm going to tell her I admire her—I am, by Jove! That's what I'm here for—to tell you. I admire you for the stand you took. Plucky? Well, say! Been deceived and all that, but didn't let that faze you for a minute. I certainly admire you, I do, by Jove!"

"That's very kind of you, I'm sure, Mr. Van Arnsdale," Norma said, with what courtesy she could. "I appreciate your attitude. And now, will you please—"

"Attitude! That's the word!" He beamed on her benignly. "Attitude! I just couldn't remember it. Attitude. Well, yours was fine—mighty fine—I'll say!" He settled back in his chair, looking about the room with bloodshot eyes.

"Nice place you got here," he commented. "Mighty nice place. All rooms are pretty nice, but I like this one. Open fire makes it warm, though—mighty warm, by Jove!" Deliberately, he shrugged his big shoulders out of his loose Norfolk coat, and let it drop to the rug beside his chair.

"Really, Mr. Van Arnsdale—"

"Not at all, not at all!" He made an expansive gesture, as if waving away an apology. "I'm quite comfortable now. As I was saying, you know, we've all got to stick together, we have, and make a stand against this sort of thing. Drunkenness—seduction—awful! And if the best people don't just put their foot down, and say they won't have it, what's society coming to? Morality! There isn't enough of it in this day and age. We're too easy with these fellows who think they can lead the worst sort of loose lives, and then be received by society. We *can't* receive 'em—we've got to throw 'em out—throw 'em out!" He made a sweeping gesture with both hands, as if casting forth all such obnoxious individuals forever.

"That's why I admire your attitude so much, see? And why I had to come up and tell you. Hard position for you—mighty hard; but you carried it off like a house afire. Anybody'd be proud to act the way you did. Never mind whether Abbott knew anything about this bird or not, we can't have him around—won't do. Money and pull won't save him up here. When it comes to plain, low immorality like that—drugging an innocent young girl—we've got to make a stand. No! Now, you let me talk"—as Norma again tried to interrupt him. "I want to tell you how much I *admire* you for what you did."

He was very drunk indeed, and momentarily becoming worse. His speech had thickened, and his words blurred together until Norma could hardly understand him. But he would not let her speak. In his fuddled mind was firmly entrenched the notion that he and his class were the representatives of morality and decency and that all must make a stand together to expel impostors. He wanted to make that perfectly clear to Miss Sheffield, and also to assure her of his approval of her drastic action in the case of John Hale.

If Norma had not been so disturbed and apprehensive, it is possible that the ironic humor of the situation might have struck her: a lecture on drunkenness and immorality delivered at two o'clock in the morning by an exceedingly drunken man who, as she happened to be aware, had, on several occasions escaped the divorce court merely because his wife chose to be complaisantly blind. But apprehension destroyed her enjoyment of the situation.

But Norma did not know at what moment Mrs. Van Arnsdale might appear in search of her husband; and explanations would be awkward, to say the least. Somehow, she must manage to get him out of her rooms, before he was discovered there.

She said, very firmly:

"Mr. Van Arnsdale, I must insist that you go now—at once."

"But you don't understand," he argued. "You don't understand how much I admire you. That's what I'm here for. That's what I wanted to tell you—how much I admire you. You're a bully fine little sportswoman, that's what you are, and I want you to understand *I* appreciate it. Lots of these people here wouldn't. Wouldn't see the fine points of it all."

"Will you please go?" said Norma. Apprehension was rapidly giving place to anger. "Will you please go at once?"

"Yes; but I want to tell you—you know, that's why I came here—to tell you what a—"

"You *have* told me," Norma cut in crisply. "I understand perfectly. Now go!"

"Well, you don't have to be so disagreeable about it," he said truculently. "No occasion be disagreeable. You don't understand. I came here—"

"Do you realize that it's two o'clock in the morning, and that I have repeatedly asked you to go?" demanded Norma. "If you are a gentleman, Mr. Van Arnsdale—"

"Gentleman!" He sat up stiffly, blinking at her. "You 'sinuate I'm not? You better be careful! Anybody start 'sinuating, where you s'pose *you'd* be? You just be careful!"

His genial good humor had completely vanished; there was an ugly twist to his heavy lips, and his blood-shot eyes regarded her menacingly.

"You be careful," he repeated. "You're not the sort of woman that can talk about gentlemen. You just be careful. Understand me, I'm all right when I'm treated right, but you talk about gentlemen, and

I'm liable to tell that strait-laced beau of yours a few things."

"Oh!" gasped Norma.

"But c'mon, don't let's quarrel," he added, with drunken conciliation. "You can't afford quarrel with me, and I don't want quarrel with you, 'cause I like you. C'mon, let's kiss and make up." He leered at her evilly, and lurched out of his chair.

Norma was thoroughly frightened. Pride, anger, every emotion, were swallowed up in a terror that approached to panic. But by sheer will power, she steadied her voice.

"All right," she said soothingly; "we won't quarrel. And I'm glad you like me. But I really think you'd better go now. We'll have a nice long talk to-morrow."

"Oh, I'll go," he nodded, "but we've got to kiss and make up first, you know. Mustn't forget that." He staggered toward her, holding out his arms.

Norma choked back a scream. She was utterly at a loss. The whole ghastly scene was totally foreign to everything she had ever imagined. It was impossible and unreal, and unbelievably horrible. She tried to speak, and could not.

"Don't you look at me like that!" he warned her. "I won't have it. Women of your kind—I'm a gentleman, I am, and I've bought dozens like you. Cheap, too. Can't come any airs over me. Fool some of 'em, maybe, but not me. I'm wise." He leered at her again, with one of his sudden changes from ferocity to maudlin good humor.

"C'mon, now," he invited. "Be a good sport and I won't say anything about your capers with that Hale fellow. Oh, *I'm* wise—out all day, God knows where in the woods!" His cunning wink sent a chill of nausea over Norma. "Clever little skirt, you are, leading us on—clever, by Jove! Cute, too, in that pinky thing, with your hair down. Got nice hair. C'mon now, be nice!" He was a big man, with a powerful frame; and years of too much eating and too much drinking had fattened and coarsened him. With his bloated red face, his short neck, his thick torso, he looked a huge and forbidding figure.

Step by step, he advanced, and step by step, Norma retreated. He moved with a sort of shuffling stealth; the house slippers for which he had exchanged the boots he had worn downstairs, fell noiselessly on the thick rugs. There was no sound in the room save his stertorous breathing. His head was thrust forward between his big shoulders; his fingers were curved into claws.

Twice they made the circuit of the room. Then with a sudden spring, he was upon her. She screamed—once; the sound was stifled on her lips by his heavy palm.

"Can't fool me," he grunted thickly. "Lead me on and then try to sidestep! Know how to handle your kind—dozens like you."

Frantic with terror, she struggled to free herself. With both hands, she tore futilely at the fingers covering her mouth. There was only one thought in her mind now, and that was to summon help. She writhed and twisted this way and that, but she could not break his grip.

"Dozens like you. Know how to treat 'em. So!" He ripped open the fastening of her thin satin negligée, twisted his fingers in the shoulder strap of her crêpe-de-Chine robe and snapped it in two. She felt his hot, reeking breath on the bare flesh of her shoulder. . . .

One last effort she made, wild, despairing. He laughed at her—a laugh that ended in a choked gurgle. Quite without warning, his grasp relaxed; his arms fell away from her. He groaned, once, and collapsed like a bundle of old clothes at her feet.

VII

Faint and dazed, she stood staring down at the uncouth bundle. Shock and terror had benumbed her faculties; she swayed unsteadily, and caught at a chair-back for support.

"I mustn't scream now—I mustn't scream now," she kept repeating to herself over and over, in a sort of meaningless monotony. And: "I've got to think. . . . I've got to think. . . ."

But it seemed an interminable time before the whirling chaos of her brain began to resolve itself into something like clarity. Thoughts, impressions, fears, flitted in and out, batlike, in dizzying confusion. She set her teeth, clenched her fists until her nails cut into the flesh of her palms.

That *Thing* there on the rug. She must do something about it. Was it dead—or was it still alive? Might it suddenly rise up again and clutch at her with the hot, slimy hands? . . .

An uncontrollable shuddering seized her. She almost ran to the door. But with the knob half turned, she stopped, forced herself to a semblance of self-control.

Van Arnsdale had not moved. He still lay in the position in which he had fallen, face down, knees drawn up under him, one arm beneath his body, the other curled about his head.

Whimpering a little, like a child in mortal terror, Norma bent over him. She put out one shaking hand and touched his shoulder. The body sagged a little, slumped sidewise.

A low, quivering cry broke from Norma's lips.

The ruddy color had drained from Van Arnsdale's face; it was chalk white. His eyes were open, but the iris had rolled up, under the puffy lids, and his jaw had dropped, leaving the lolling tongue exposed. He was dead.

Dead. And, in death, scarcely less horrible than he had been in life—scarcely less menacing. Like a flash of vivid light, the thought seared her mind, swallowing up the momentary relief that had come to her with the knowledge that now he was powerless to harm her. Scarcely less menacing than he had been in life . . . much more so, in fact.

She sank into a chair, holding hysteria at bay by sheer force of will. She must not give way now; she must not scream. She must think—and act.

It was past two o'clock in the morning. She had left the living-room downstairs a little after midnight. If she called for help now, rang the bell for some of the servants, telephoned down to the office, how could she explain Van Arnsdale's presence in her apartments? How could she account for it—except by telling the truth? And would she be believed if she told the truth? Wouldn't there be someone to wonder, and question, and drop sly innuendoes?

She shrank from the inevitable publicity, the scandal. No; at all costs, she must manage so that there would be no chance of scandal. But how to avert it? How to get that horribly staring *Thing* out of her rooms? If Will were only there—he would have known at once what to do. If Will hadn't gone away, this terrible thing would never have happened to her. But Will was on his way back to the city, and there was no one to whom she could turn for advice or assistance. She must think and act for herself and by herself.

And she mustn't delay. Dead bodies get stiff, she remembered. The thought galvanized her into action. She must get *It* out. Somewhere. Somehow. She didn't know just where or how. But perhaps if she dragged it into the hall—and then telephoned downstairs and told the

servant on night duty that she had heard a cry—a fall—in the corridor? . . .

She was trembling so that she could scarcely stand; she could not bring herself to touch *It* again. But she made a rope of two towels, and managed to slip it under the *Thing's* arms. Foot by foot, she dragged it across the rug. . . .

There was no sound in the corridor. She extinguished the light in the sitting-room, and cautiously opened the door. All was quiet.

It was very heavy. She prayed for strength, for courage, as she bent again to her grisly task. The flowing strands of her unbound hair tangled in the towel rope. She stooped, wrenched them loose. Foot by foot. . . .

It was half way over the door sill now. But something had caught. She pulled and tugged, futilely. The towel rope slipped, she lost her balance and staggered backward, against . . . against a man's outstretched arm.

"Better let me help you," said a quiet voice.

VIII

For a moment, sick and exhausted, she leaned against Hale's arm. Then:

"Just hold the shoulders up that way," he directed, with perfect composure, "while I get this buckle clear. . . . There." The body slid free of the sill, out into the hall. "Now, take this towel thing and get back into your room before somebody wakes up and starts investigating."

"Oh, Mr. Hale—"

"Quick!" he ordered peremptorily.

But it was already too late. Across the corridor, a door swung open with a click, and Mrs. Forrest, wrapped in a voluminous dressing gown, appeared. She uttered a shrill little cry.

"Oh! What is it? What's the matter?"

"Mr. Van Arnsdale has been taken ill," Hale told her shortly. "Will you phone the house doctor to come over at once, please? . . . Thanks, very much, Miss Sheffield, I shan't need you any more." Deliberately, he moved between Norma and the light. "And ask Mr. Abbott to come also, please, Mrs. Forrest," he added. "I'm afraid it's serious."

"Oh! But what is the matter with him? Has he been sick long? Where was he taken?"

"*Will* you telephone?" snapped Hale. "The man may die while you stand there and ask questions!"

She began to cry.

"Oh, the poor thing!" she sobbed. "Isn't it dreadful? Isn't it terrible? His poor wife! I'll 'phone right away!"

Other doors were opening now, there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs, voices; crowding figures filled the corridor.

Norma shrank back into the doorway of her own living-room, mechanically adjusting the torn negligée. She was conscious that Hale was still standing between her and the light; that he was answering questions in a crisp voice, giving orders, directions. . . .

And above the hubbub of sound, Mrs. Forrest's shrilly artificial tones:

"And I opened my door, and there he lay, with Mr. Hale and Miss Sheffield trying to drag him along the hall, and—"

"Who found him?"

"Where?"

"Is he dead?"

"Why, the poor fellow hasn't any shoes on!"

"Where's his coat?"

"Oh, he *can't* be dead! That would be too horrible!"

"His rooms aren't on this corridor, are they? How did he get here?" Voices. . . . Questions. . . . Curious, crowding faces. . . . More voices. . . . A stir down the

hall. . . . Somebody—the doctor—pushing his way forward. And—and who was that, that tall, dignified figure at the head of the stairs?

"Will!" cried Norma, in a burst of hysterical relief.

"Oh! It's Mr. Hobart!" shrieked Mrs. Forrest, and fairly flung herself upon him. "Isn't it too awful? How *did* you get here? Did you ever imagine anything so frightful? We thought you had gone back to New York!"

Hobart's eyes were searching the hall.

"Where is Miss Sheffield?" he asked. "I thought I heard her speak."

"She's over there, in her room. It was just outside her door that I first saw poor Mr. Van Arnsdale—she was helping Mr. Hale drag him—oh, it was dreadful! *How* did you get here, Mr. Hobart?"

"I missed the train, and on the way back, the car blew a tire and skidded into the ditch," Hobart explained. "What *is* all this? Somebody hurt?"

"We don't know. We think he's dead. Miss Sheffield was holding his head. It's awful, isn't it? His poor wife! I must go to her. *Is* he dead, doctor?"

The doctor looked up, nodded curtly.

"Quite. I should say he'd been dead for fifteen or twenty minutes."

"Will!" breathed Norma. Would he never come to her? Did he mean to stand there forever listening to that woman? Didn't he know she needed him? "Will!"

"He left the smoking-room about an hour ago—an hour, or a little more," volunteered Emory Topping. "Said he wasn't feeling well, and guessed he'd go to bed."

"But his rooms aren't on this corridor!"

"He must have felt sick, and started out to get help. See—he's in his stockinged feet!"

"But why didn't he ring or telephone?"

"Where's his wife? Somebody ought to tell his wife!"

The doctor straightened up, dusting his hands one against the other.

"Who found him, and where?" he asked.

There was just the briefest space of silence. Norma took one impulsive step forward, then retreated, while she shot one glance of mute, agonized entreaty toward Jack Hale.

"Who found him?" repeated the doctor, tersely.

"I did," Hale answered quietly. "I had been downstairs in the office, talking to Mr. Abbott, and when I came along the hall, I saw him lying on the floor."

"You didn't hear him fall, then? How about you, Miss Sheffield?"

"I—I thought I heard something," Norma managed. She wanted to tell the truth; she knew that she must tell it now if she were going to tell it at all. But common-sense and good judgment were alike suspended. Her one thought was to save her reputation from even the suspicion of a stain.

Already she had noticed, or fancied that she had noticed, curious glances directed toward her. She was conscious of the hour, of the inadequacy of her attire, of the possibility—more, the almost inevitable certainty—that an admission that Van Arnsdale had been with her in her rooms, would open up a whole field of speculation, into which the scandal mongers would hasten to plunge.

Jack Hale's statement had paved the way for her; her own would make assurance doubly sure. If she lied, no one would know. If she told the truth—she dared not tell the truth—not now.

She said again quite steadily:

"I thought I heard something—as if someone had fallen. I was reading in my bedroom; I listened and didn't hear anything more, but I was nervous, and got up to see if anything were the matter."

"Hm-m," cried the doctor. "Well, there's nothing anybody can do for him now. Better have him carried to his rooms, Mr. Abbott. I'll go up at once to Mrs. Van Arnsdale."

"But what killed him? How did he die?" chattered Mrs. Forrest.

"Heart"—laconically. "Any strong excitement or over-exertion would have finished him. He went out like that!" The doctor snapped his fingers. "I warned him only the other day to go easy."

"He didn't suffer?" Mrs. Forrest had edged her way to the doctor's side. Her face was streaming with facile tears, but there was a curiously malignant glitter back of them. "He didn't suffer, did he, poor man? He—why, what's this?" She made a quick rush forward, and, stooping, caught up a red leather house slipper from the rug that lay inside Norma Sheffield's door. "Why, it's one of his slippers!" she cried excitedly. "I saw him the other day with that very pair on!"

IX

The Honorable William Hobart had knocked twice on his fiancée's door; and even then, before it was opened to him, there was a slight delay which his impatience magnified. He was frowning a little as he stepped over the threshold into Norma's sitting-room.

"Good morning, Norma," he said. "I thought it better not to try to see you last night, with all the excitement and confusion. I hope you rested?"

"Thank you, Will; a little." She looked rather wan and tired, but this morning she was entirely mistress of herself. "You haven't met Mr. Hale, I think?" She turned to Hale, who was standing beside the couch near the fireplace. "Let me—"

"I don't care to meet Mr. Hale," Hobart interrupted.

"Oh, but—Will—" Norma pleaded. "And after what I told you yesterday, I'm surprised to find him here."

Norma made a little appealing gesture.

"Oh, please, Will!" she said. "Mr. Hale has been very kind. He is trying to help me."

"Very good of him, I'm sure"—dryly—"but I cannot see in what way you can require his assistance. So, if he will excuse you—?"

"Please, Will," Norma said again. "You don't understand—"

"I think I do, Norma. But apparently, Mr. Hale does not, although I thought my meaning was sufficiently plain. Perhaps you can make it clearer."

Now, for the first time, he looked in Hale's direction.

The younger man turned to Norma inquiringly. Apparently, he was quite unruffled by the rebuff he had just received; but there was a certain significant narrowing of his eyes that belied his composed manner.

"I'm afraid there is something I must make clear to you first, Will," Norma said, in some agitation. "I haven't had an opportunity to tell you. Mr. Van Arnsdale forced his way in here last night—"

"What?"

"Yes. He was intoxicated and—and I had a frightful experience—with him."

"What do you mean? Was he offensive?"

Norma shuddered. The very thought of those awful moments shook her hard-won calm.

"Oh-oh, I can't talk about it!" she said tremulously. "It—it was awful. He attacked me—I had all I could do to defend myself."

"Norma!" Hobart started back in incredulous amazement.

"Will, I don't know what would have

happened to me if he hadn't been stricken just when he was."

Hobart stared at her blankly.

"Are you—do you mean that he *died* here—here in your rooms?"

She nodded.

"Yes. And I—I had to get him out. He was so heavy, Will. And—and Mr. Hale happened along the hall and offered to help me." There were tears in her eyes; her voice was ragged and uneven.

Hale glanced quickly at Hobart, who was still staring at her in dismayed perturbation. Controlling herself by a supreme effort, Norma went quickly into the bedroom, emerging with Van Arnsdale's coat and the mate of the slipper that Mrs. Forrest had discovered the night before.

"These things," she said. "Mr. Hale came down this morning to take them away—so there wouldn't be any question—"

"Question! My God!" Hobart burst out. "Then—that was what that Forrest woman meant by the look she gave you last night—what they were all whispering about downstairs this morning! They knew he'd been in here!"

"Oh, no, Will!" Norma protested. "They didn't know—they couldn't!"

"They could and they did! That's why they all stopped talking when I came into the room. I thought it was strange. I—my God, Norma! What have you done?"

"I couldn't help it, Will; I—"

"But why did you let him in here, in the first place?"

"I didn't let him in. That is—I didn't mean to. He came and knocked and I thought something was the matter. Then, when I opened the door, he pushed past me into the room."

"Well, why did you permit it? Why didn't you turn him out immediately?"

"Why, Will—I couldn't. Don't you see—he wouldn't go. He was terribly drunk, and I was afraid he'd rouse everybody in the house."

Hobart jerked his head impatiently.

"I never heard anything so indiscreet, so foolish! Of course, you could have made him go! But you didn't, it seems; and—well, what happened then?"

"I—he attacked me, I told you. I struggled with him—"

"Not—physically? He didn't lay hands on you?"

"Yes; he did, Will. I thought I'd explained that."

"But—what in the world were you thinking of to allow such a situation to develop? You must have been out of your mind!"

Norma held out a trembling hand.

"But, Will," she said pleadingly, "I've been trying to make you understand how perfectly helpless I was."

"A woman is never helpless, if she uses any discretion," Hobart retorted. "I repeat—I never heard of anything so indiscreet, so foolish! And you say he actually died in here?"

"Yes."

Jack Hale stepped unobtrusively to Norma's side.

"I think," he said in a low voice, "that I'd better take these things upstairs, Miss Sheffield." His eyes flickered at Hobart for an instant, and in them was a gleam of fierce disgust that he made no attempt to hide.

Norma held out the garments to Hale, but Hobart stepped in front of her.

"By all means!" he said, with heavy sarcasm. "Go on—make a bad matter worse, by choosing for your confidant a disreputable character. Involve yourself still further with him—"

"One moment," Hale interposed levelly. "It seems to me that this has gone about far enough. I don't like your remarks, you know. You've already seen fit, it

seems, to give Miss Sheffield certain misinformation about me. I want you to tell me where you get your authority for calling me a disreputable character!"

Hobart regarded him with haughtily lifted brows.

"Authority?" he said. "Why, everyone knows who you are."

Hale smiled.

"'Everybody' meaning the story that was written about me by an over-zealous reporter, and passed by an editor who lost his job the next day because he'd laid the paper open to a libel suit?"

Hobart waved his hand.

"I know nothing about that, sir. I—"

"No, you wouldn't!" Hale said contemptuously. "That I was absolutely exonerated in every particular, cleared from every one of those absurd charges the next day—doesn't matter to you. However, it does to me. I've endured just about as much of this sort of thing as I'm going to! If I hear one more remark such as you made a few minutes ago, or one more such slanderous statement as you made to Miss Sheffield and Van Arnsdale, I shall take steps to secure redress!"

Hobart smiled. It was not a pleasant smile. There was a sneer in it, and there was evident and obvious malice.

"Newspapers," he said, "first of all, print the news. They do not make stories out of whole cloth. Even if an editor was discharged, that proves nothing. A salaried man is always a convenient scapegoat; and where there is so much smoke, there is always fire."

Norma was looking at him oddly, curiously. Although she did not know it, she was looking at William Hobart exactly as Jack Hale had looked at her the previous evening: as if he were someone she had never seen before.

She said slowly:

"But, Will, according to that, you must believe that because there has been so much 'smoke' here—about me—there is some fire?"

"Nonsense!" he snapped. "I'm not accusing you of anything, except the most absurd indiscretion! You must admit that your conduct throughout has been very nearly inexcusable! Foolish, silly, unpardonably careless! You've laid yourself open to all manner of insinuations! My requests seem to mean nothing to you! My position doesn't weigh for a moment! Is it possible you don't realize that my promised wife must maintain a standard of conduct that cannot be attacked by gossips and scandal mongers?"

"I realized it perfectly, Will," Norma returned gently. "But aren't you rather overlooking the fact that I have gone through a terrible experience? You lay all your emphasis on what this means to you. You seem to be thinking entirely of yourself—"

"I've got to think of myself, since you do not!" he retorted angrily. "Here I am, a man constantly before the eyes of the public, a leader in a great national movement—and you do your best to compromise my position, when you compromise yourself!" Hobart's face was drawn into stern, hard lines; his hands twitched at his sides, but he controlled himself.

"For the better part of a month," he said, "you made yourself conspicuous with this notorious man. Whether knowingly or not, you led me to believe that your companion was a mere boy—your 'playmate,' you called him. Then, when I discover his identity, and order you to have nothing more to do with him—"

"Order?" said Norma quite softly.

Hobart plunged on:

"You promptly involve yourself in this disgraceful affair of last night, and call upon him to assist you in getting out of it! Not one thought of me, or of your

obligations as my promised wife! Upon my word, I think you *must* have been out of your mind!"

"Perhaps I was," Norma said, still very softly. "'Involve myself in that disgraceful affair of last night'—are you implying that you think I encouraged Mr. Van Arnsdale to come to my rooms at two o'clock—perhaps also that I met Mr. Hale in the corridor by prearrangement?"

"Norma! Of course not! But you have made my position intolerable."

"Then I must do what I can to render it tolerable again." She slipped his ring from her finger and held it out to him. "I'm very sorry, Will," she said, "that I've involved you in any way in my unfortunate affairs. The best way to repair the damage is to release you at once from your engagement. Then your public will understand that you are quite blameless—and repudiate all responsibility for my actions."

"But, Norma"—Hobart was staring down at the glittering jewel that lay in his palm—"this is madness! I'm not casting you off!"

She laughed a little.

"I understand that," she said. "We're just agreeing to differ."

"But I don't agree! You misunderstand me! This can be covered up. I didn't mean to be hard or cruel, but I was naturally upset, and I may have spoken rather harshly. Here—let me put my ring back, Norma."

She shook her head.

"No," she said. "That's over, Will."

IX

The rain had ceased. When Norma pushed aside the dripping branches of the laurels, and stepped out to the edge of the shore of the little cove, the dull gray hue of the clouds was already lightening. The raw chill had gone from the air, and the bare brown earth gave forth a pleasantly pungent odor, vaguely suggestive of young growing things.

With a little unconscious sigh of relief, Norma stood for a moment, relaxing to the quiet peace of the scene, so different from the atmosphere of the Lodge. All day, she had shrunk from the thought of facing that battery of curious eyes; she had been nervous, uneasy, depressed. It had seemed to her that the minutes dragged by with leaden feet, that night would never come.

Hobart had left on the afternoon train. There was no other until morning, and she had preferred to wait over, rather than to travel with him. That would have meant a reopening of the subject which she had definitely closed, a renewal of the pleadings and protestations, every one of which had served only to reveal more and more clearly the man's egotism and colossal selfishness.

All her life, Norma had looked up to William Hobart as a great and good man. Her faith in him, her trust, had been perfect and unquestioning. In one short hour, he had torn the veil from her eyes, and shown himself to her as he really was: an immaculate pillar of self-righteousness, a mass of biased opinions and wholly selfish desires.

Even in his real anxiety to heal the breach between them, his thought had not been for her, but for himself. He had reproached her with inconstancy, upbraided her, declared bitterly that he would not have believed it possible that she could fail him.

How utterly and completely he had failed her, he did not see. And Norma knew that he was, and that he always would be, incapable of seeing. The distress, the keen sense of loss that she had experienced in the destruction of her idol, was almost compensated for in gratitude

that she had discovered the feet of clay before it was too late. . . .

There was the sound of footsteps on the little path behind her. The laurels parted, and Jack Hale stepped into view.

"I thought I might find you here," he said. "They told me at the Lodge that you were leaving in the morning, and I wanted to ask you if you wouldn't reconsider."

She shook her head.

"No; I don't believe I'm quite brave enough," she said, and smiled wanly. "Of course, nobody *knows* anything, thanks to you; but they all suspect, and—"

"Let them! What do you care? And, believe me, it's not nearly so bad as you think. In a week, the whole affair will have been forgotten. That Forrest woman is the only one who was inclined to stir up any unpleasantness, and Mrs. Van Arnsdale has taken her in hand; so there'll be nothing more from that quarter. And, if it will afford you any comfort, I may tell you that I've managed to let it be known that I rapped on the nearest door —which happened to be yours—after I discovered the body in the hall. So—there's no real reason why you should go —unless you want to."

Norma turned misty eyes upon him.

"You are so kind to me," she said, "so thoughtful and considerate. And I was so—so hateful to you. I can't forgive myself for the way I treated you. But William had told me—"

"'He said—and she believed him'," quoted Hale whimsically. "Please don't talk of forgiveness, Norma. It was a perfectly natural thing for you to take Hobart's estimate of me, when you believed that he knew what he was talking about."

"That's it!" she cried eagerly. "I believed in him. But, even so—"

Hale interrupted her again.

"But even so, what has that to do with now—and to-morrow, and the rest of the week, with the storm passed over, and the clouds vanishing, and the sun coming back to us again?"

Even as he spoke, a long beam of sunlight, slanting between the trees, touched her hair and turned it all to lustrous coppery-gold.

Hale moved a little closer to her, looking down at her with eyes that were very boyish and wistful.

"If the harmony was broken for a little while, does it mean that it must end forever?" he asked, in a low voice. "Just for one moment the other afternoon, I thought . . . but perhaps I was just foolishly hopeful and presumptuous, and mistook the appearance for the reality. But I thought perhaps the fairy orchestra might be playing for you, too, Norma. Was it? Will you stay?"

Norma was tired. For forty-eight hours, she had been under a terrific strain. It had all been solemn and tragic and heart-breaking. Now, all at once, as a cork bobs to the surface of the water, her natural gaiety bubbled irrepressibly up.

"Are you asking me to stay and face the music?" she demanded.

For a moment, he stared at her blankly. Then he threw back his head and shouted with laughter.

"I am," he said, when he could speak. "To face it, if you will—with me."

He caught her hands; she did not try to release them.

In the budding branches of a maple tree overhead, an oriole burst into a torrent of song. . . .

CYNIC: A sentimentalist with a touch of dyspepsia.

T. T.

Zelda thought that feminine freedom was a myth, but Theresa had the courage of her feelings.

IT HAPPENED TO MUSIC

By ARTHUR T. MUNYAN

SCOTT AVERIL had always had a lurking admiration for those girls with crow-black hair and vivid dark-eyed beauty. But it had never carried him far. Such girls seemed always to have a haughtiness that rebuffed him even as he was attracted, and their eyes, with splendid changing lights, held emotions he could not fathom. The type stirred him instantly and yet seemed to find him entirely negative.

The girl who sat beside him now would probably be like all the others—only more so because she was the purest and most disturbing example of that type. The colorful charm, which in others was a mere chance possession, was the heritage of this girl. Her name—Theresa de Remey y Valdez—rang with the pride that curled her scarlet lips and burned behind her black lashes.

To Averil, who had just met her, she was the most fascinating—and doubtless the most unapproachable—of women. He wanted to speak to her, but Constance Tenney was playing the piano.

It was not exactly a musicale; it was too informal for that. Constance, who was giving a recital in a few days, was going over some of the numbers in the friendly atmosphere of a circle of a dozen or so of her friends. At the moment she was doing the rapid passages of a Rachmaninoff étude with pleasing smoothness.

A Chopin barcarole followed, and to this the player brought the same delicate fluency with, it seemed to Averil, very little depth of feeling. He stole a sidelong glance at the Señorita; he knew that she played.

"*Valgame Dios!*" she breathed, quite unaware of herself.

"Not so good?" he whispered.

She turned to him a face that revealed nothing but its characteristic hauteur; she appeared to be striving to connect him in her mind with the words he had uttered. But at length she smiled faintly.

"I cannot say. But I could show you." She spoke flawless English, marked only by an odd precision delightful to the ear.

Constance retired from the piano for a short intermission and Zelda Paige, across the room, called out. "Your turn, Theresa." Zelda's greenish eyes held a trace of malice, but then—she was an intellectual and was inclined to be a trifle waspish.

"Please play something for us," Averil seconded. Then, in a lower tone: "You can show me what you meant just now."

Theresa rose and faced him coolly. "Is that a sample of your sarcasm?"

"Hellno!" in surprise. "I mean, no. I'm just begging you to play."

Her superb eyes studied him a moment as though searching for any sign of mockery in his face. "Very well." She moved gracefully to the piano bench and bent over the keyboard. Her face in the brief interval wore a somber detachment, the advance mood of the composition she intended to play.

It was Chopin's Ballade in G minor. It would have been impossible for Averil to have described either the music or his feelings. He knew, in back of the chaos of his emotions, that he was hearing Chopin played as it should be played. From God knows where came this girl whose octaves tore him to shreds; her terrific climax was the sheerest ecstasy. Five minutes—perhaps ten—and she was back in the chair next his, looking miraculously the same as ever.

"It was magnificent!" he told her, conscious of the silliness of words.

"Thank you."

"And cruel!"

Theresa lifted arched brows.

"Think of that poor infant," he pointed out, "with a recital on her hands and *that* to discourage her now."

Theresa's eyes blazed, with what emotion he could not guess. There were calls to her for an encore from all about the room. Without another word she returned to the piano.

This time it was Rachmaninoff's G minor Prelude, a thing to make the blood race in the veins of an Eskimo. He had never heard it played with a more compelling fire. Zelda Paige was shaking her head about something; what a poseur she was! The third and greatest climax thrilled him to the roots of his being, even while he could have wept for little Constance.

It was useless to offer Theresa de Remey y Valdez more praise, and she herself sat rapt and somber, briefly refusing all requests for encores. Through the remainder of Constance's program, and the polite volleys of applause, he conjectured at what motives could have prompted the second ruthless display of genius in the beautiful Spanish girl. He left her abruptly after the music was over and was meticulously nice to Constance.

Four days later he called on Theresa, doing so with a feeling that he had tried and failed to hold out against a force that was too strong for him. He found her, a creature of even more imperative appeal than he had believed, in a dim, rich studio in the East Fifties.

"How do you do?" she asked in the careful intonations that were part of her exotic charm. "Will you have tea?"

"I'd be awfully pleased." Her quiet reserve, her distant politeness, made him feel like an intruder in the dim patio of some Spanish grandee of unquenchable pride of race. The flaming grace and delicacy of her person enhanced the feeling while it drew him.

"Do you know," he asked, "that Zelda Paige told me something quite odd? She said that you deliberately started that Rachmaninoff piece the other day at a tempo so fast that you were bound to break down in the middle."

Her eyes sought his, but he could not read their meaning. "Why should I do that?" she asked.

"To make Constance Tenney feel less unhappy about her mediocre work. Was Zelda right?"

"How absurd! Did Zelda call me cruel, too?"

"I'm sorry I said that the other day about your being cruel," he told her in genuine contrition. "Zelda made me feel cheap afterwards, I don't mind saying."

"But I did not break down!"

"That was just because you're too fine a pianist. Your motive was generous, though."

"What did you think before you talked to Zelda?"

"Well . . . I thought you'd been rather ruthless. Art should be ruthless, of course."

"But now that you've found out I really meant to be generous, you are relieved. Is that so?"

He smiled hopefully. "I think so."

"Perhaps,"—whimsically—"you would not have come to see me to-day if you had continued to think that I was cruel. Then I would have had one very frank and charming friend the less. I am afraid that you and Miss Paige are carried away by a pleasant theory."

"Tell me what was the truth of it!" he begged her.

She shrugged one smooth shoulder. "Who knows?"

He left her that afternoon with the sense of having been politely mocked and disliked. It was always so with women of that strange dark-eyed loveliness. Theresa was an enigma, an enchantment, and a torture.

Zelda said she was a "type." Zelda was in the way of being a novelist and was always dissecting people and finding types.

"Are you in love with her?" Zelda asked.

"What in the devil would be the use of trying to tell you I'm not? More than half, I suppose, if you'd be willing to take that as an honest answer."

"As honest as I'd expect from a man."

"Good! What d'ye mean—'type'?"

"Listen, Little Rollo! Theresa is a blooming miracle. Down where she comes from, women are emotionals. Their men keep them locked up on balconies where nothing can dull the fine edge of their sensibilities and where their emotions can't get them into any trouble. That's Theresa's background, and here she's been in America for the last four or five years where women do as they damn please—the ones with any courage."

"Has Theresa courage?"

"She has the courage of her feelings. Also, it isn't possible for a man to be half way in love with her. You can save that bright line for your Sunday school class."

"Ugh. What about the man?" he asked. (Theresa was going to a concert with him on Friday, at any rate.)

"Oh, she has her music. What would she want of any man?"

"Don't be risqué about it, darling. You just said . . ."

"Pooh!" retorted Zelda. "When it's all over, come to me. I'll feed you gin till you're normal again."

"You're an angel, Zelda. I believe feeding a man gin is about your limit at present, isn't it?"

"Unfortunately, yes. If I ever exceed it, I will have your manly beauty to blame for it, Scottie."

"Seriously," he protested. "You have such lovely ideas, Zelda! I would like to get the dead low down from you on feminine freedom."

"It's a myth," Zelda sighed. "At least it is now; it's too recent. All of us who talk about it are cursed with the old beliefs that were stuck in our infant minds and can't be got out. We want to jump bounds and we can't. I wish to God I had both my brain and Theresa's happy childhood far from Puritans. There wouldn't be any limit."

Well, that was that. Zelda always got way off the track of the subject, but she amused him with her sexless mind and refreshing chatter.

He looked forward to the concert with Theresa as *the* event in his immediate future, and was chafing to see her long before the time came around. As he called for her he was very happy and yet unhappy with the premonition that she would evade and misunderstand him, as always. It turned out rather worse than he had dreamed.

On the way to the concert their talk was perfunctory; the time was too short to come to intimacies. Neither did the restraint wear away much in the brief intermissions. Leaving the hall Theresa elected to walk for a distance up Fifth Avenue.

There was a legless man on the sidewalk, holding out some wretched pencils to draw the charity of passers-by. The constraint had not gone entirely, but Averil was delightfully aware of Theresa's nearness, her beauty, the mystery and provocative warmth of her hand on his arm. Without deliberately hardening his heart he passed the beggar. His minutes with Theresa were precious and—the poor ye have always with ye.

She whirled about and dropped his arm. "Pardon me," she said, and before he could reach her side she had crossed the sidewalk. He caught the flash of a greenback as she bent over the cripple's outstretched hat.

Fifth Avenue had the short spectacle of a niggardly escort being rebuked by a high-handed act of generosity on the part of a lovely lady. Averil's face flamed with mortification. All about him people were smiling.

"Did you have to do that?" he asked her.

"No," in some surprise. "It was an impulse. Was I wrong? Even in my Argentina a lady would do that."

"Oh!" he said. Feeling himself defeated, he turned and hailed a cab.

Inside he gazed straight ahead and avoided conversation while he frowned at his thoughts. Her act had outwardly been sheer kindly impulse, as she said. But her impulses were always of the sort that were hard to understand and in the nature of airy affronts to him.

"I can see you are not pleased," she said, and her voice was rueful and free from the laughter that might be in her heart. "When I am not generous you are sad, and angry with me, and when I am generous you are—not pleased." Upon that she commented with one of her tragic shrugs.

"I like American men," she continued. "You are so noble—and so terribly stern."

The cab drew up at her studio. Averil wanted to decline her invitation to come in and to leave her with a formal word or two. But he had not the strength of character; moments with her were too precious to waste for the sake of a gesture.

"You are always laughing at me!" he charged, once they were in her music room. Theresa had seated herself at the piano bench, and was fingering the keys in a preoccupied way. Doubtless she longed to be alone with her music, he told himself.

"No. There you are wrong. But you are strange. Sometimes I want to weep."

He could make nothing of that. "I am stupid when I am with you," he began gloomily.

"But that is not flattering!"

"I mean . . . You are so beautiful, and you are always in my thoughts. I look forward to seeing you, and then—when I come, there is some barrier and I'm awkward, and—I don't know. . . ."

She looked at him much as she had looked at the beggar, as though sympathizing with his misery without being able to enter into it wholly. "Is this barrier such a big one?" she asked.

"I don't know."

Her hand on the edge of the piano bench was quite near. He wondered if he would dare to take it. The trouble with him was that he was in awe of her loveliness.

She made no resistance as his fingers closed over hers, and the small conquest of her reserve quickened his blood and brought a wild surge of daring. Pressing his advantage on the crest of the adventurous wave, he swept her into his arms.

She neither resisted nor responded, but the utter vitality of her merged with his impetuous mood in a sort of harmony. He kissed her mouth and thought in a tumult of joy that her lips were not, after all, unattainable. The exultation of that instant was supreme. He laughed, a little madly. Just then he was game for the gods.

He knew, a little headily, that she glided from his arms with a single, passionate movement. Then he was facing her magnificent, blazing anger. Her lips curled and parted; he waited for the storm to break and destroy him. But she said nothing.

Merely her eyes swerved, flashing, to where his hat and stick lay near at hand on a table. There was no mistaking her meaning.

"Theresa . . ."

"Must I ask you twice?" in a small, fierce voice.

He scanned her face for a second or two for any sign of change, for any clue to her spontaneous fury. Then he bowed slightly and walked from the apartment without again looking back.

For three days, he wandered New York like a lost dog. Zelda Paige he avoided as he would the devil—until such a time as he would be a fit patient for her gin cure. In all those restless hours his mind could fashion no explanation for Theresa's relentless anger. She must know that in her adopted New York a kiss is not such a weighty matter!

On the third day he had an invitation from a journal for which he sometimes wrote to cover a test on some racing airplanes in Maryland. They wanted a firm reply; the tests would have to be reported by someone. He called them on the telephone and agreed to go the next day. Likely enough, he would do some flying; that would be better than plowing the pavements of Manhattan.

Her message came the same evening, a brief note of hand by a Western Union boy. "It was not nice of me to send you away as I did. If you are not too angry will you come and talk to me?" It was signed "T."

He thrust the note into his pocket and clattered out on the heels of the messenger boy. In fifteen minutes he was at Theresa's door. There, he thought for the first time that she might possibly have intended a little more delay; it was nearly eleven and not perhaps just the hour for a call. No matter.

Theresa, in a tea gown, opened the door, closed it softly when he had entered, and stood silently with her back to its dark surface, her hand still touching the knob. She was like a flame playing over black marble.

Scott Averil stood by the table and toyed with a paper knife with a long blade of dull blue steel. Theresa smiled her lovely, inexplicable smile.

"You are a little sorry, perhaps?" she invited.

He was about to agree. It was a small concession to make for seeing her again.

He was willing enough to offer any contrition necessary. But he stopped the words at the very tip of his tongue.

"No," he said doggedly. "I didn't intend any insult. And if I go to hell for it, I won't say I'm sorry for that kiss. It was the best minute of my life."

Happy thought. Theresa's lips curved mischievously and her soft, teasing laugh answered his defiance. "I should not like to send such a bold young man to that place," she mused.

"It isn't as if you couldn't!"

"But see! I do not even try. I simply wait."

"Yes. Theresa . . ."

"Then why," she wondered, "do you not kiss me again?"

He never would understand this girl, but at least he had heard her words. As he caught her swaying figure in his arms, the happiness that surged at the very touch of her banished all other thought.

That other kiss had been a pale, one-sided thing by contrast, for it had brought no real response. But now Theresa's hands, which even in touching a distant keyboard had the power to thrill him, were on his hair and face and shoulders, caressing, convulsive, provocative. The exalting sense of conquest had returned, but fiercer still was the wild joy of her surrender. Her lips breathed upon his a new madness.

The first morning light, infiltrating the side street from the East, touching the wide, French windows of the studio, saw the end of that reckless kiss.

Theresa raised languorous eyes, heavy-lidded and black-lashed. "Now you must go," she whispered. "See. It is to-morrow."

Scott Averil, kneeling beside her, pressed his lips to her fingers.

At home, he bathed, then slept for an hour or two, to awake to a sense of unreality. Theresa. He had no intimation of what the future might hold now.

Suddenly his commitments for the day flashed into his thoughts. Those damned flying machines! He had promised to attend the flying tests; the people on the technical journal had put themselves entirely in his hands in the matter.

He dressed hurriedly, dispatched a huge mass of roses to Theresa, and caught a ten o'clock train for Baltimore. Once settled in his parlor chair he had the first real chance to turn his thoughts to the recent events.

This was no ordinary affair in which he was involved. He saw himself, for the first time in his life, in a drama in which Theresa, with her unalloyed passions, was the salient character. He tried to bring a sense of the dramatic to bear on his situation and hers.

She was the enigma. What would she do? It was a disturbing question, not because no answer suggested itself but because too many uncomfortable ones came to mind.

Theresa had gone the limit which Zelda, with her inbred, orthodox fears, would not have gone. But wouldn't Theresa's reaction be the more violent and more debilitating? Her inbred notion of penalties would be swift and cruel.

Suddenly Averil leaped from his chair and dashed to the vestibule, to look out over the landscape in a vain attempt to get some clue to his whereabouts. In a swirl of images had come the vision of that deadly paper knife. . . . Hadn't the Spanish peoples some stock proverb about a woman scorning to survive her honor?

Theresa's moods were sharp and spontaneous. What might happen at any moment? What might have happened? Averil knew that he would never reach Baltimore in the company of such acutely torturing thoughts.

At North Philadelphia he left the train, and in the short interval he had to spare, wired an appalling lie to his journal. Then he hopped the New York express and settled himself to two more hours of intolerable suspense.

At the Pennsylvania Station he caught a cab and wallowed through the traffic to Fifth Avenue and thence north. Time seemed endless. At Theresa's he flung a bill to the driver and dashed up the single flight to the studio. Poignant in his imagination was the vision of her, the cruel knife poised. . . . Sometimes, in his apprehensions, he was just in time to avert the disaster; at other times he was just too late.

As he threw himself against her door he fancied he heard the last echoes of a chord of music, and took heart. Yes, there was her step.

"Scott! I am so glad!"

She flung her arms about his neck and gave him an exuberant kiss. Her simple delight at his return was uncomplicated with any other emotions.

"I thought you must be going to see the green-eyed lady who does not like me. I do not like her either," she laughed.

Scott shook his head, wondering.

"But the green-eyed lady likes you so very much," she went on. "Some day I shall have to kill her, perhaps. Pah! How I talk when I have the most wonderful thing to tell you." She clasped her hands and her eyes danced. "Something very wonderful has happened. I wanted so to tell you."

"What?" he demanded, finding his voice at last.

"You shall sit there." Vivaciously she drew him to a chair near her piano. "There! Do not go away until I come back and tell you." Her lips brushed his lightly before she whirled about and sat down at the keyboard.

The fire of the opening octaves made his nerves tingle, but even while the spell of the music grew, his puzzlement increased. It was not Chopin, though it had a certain breathless rapidity and fulness of harmony. Nor was what she played the work of any of the modern Russians, although a tempestuous verve and power suggested that at times. The truth dawned startlingly upon his quickened interest. The composition he was hearing was the first movement of a de Remey y Valdez sonata!

Swept entirely out of himself, he listened while he scarcely dared draw a breath. It was the music of unremembered dreams, of dreams one dared not remember. It was fleeting ecstasies, imprisoned. It was . . . it was Theresa at the peak of love and life!

God! What an artist. Inevitably *he* reduced all emotion and experience to some moral whimwham; Theresa wove them into music and translated them into permanent beauty. It was just given to him to understand.

The finale left him feeling intolerably futile. He had fancied himself so important; what was he? A stupid key to her magnificent emotions. An interlude in the life of a genius. Not a damned thing else!

"Scott! Can't you speak to me? Oh, I thought you would like my music. And you say nothing." Already he had hurt her deeply.

He rose. "What I felt can't be put into words," he told her sincerely. "It was heavenly. It was glorious. It is silly for me to try to tell you how great."

She smiled a little. "That makes me very happy. But—but you are sad."

"No. It is nothing," disconsolately.

"You must not say 'It is nothing.' That is wicked. Tell me why you are sad. Quickly."

His eyes met hers for an instant. "I am sad because I love you—"

"Is that, then, so very awful?" she interrupted.

"And because all that my whole life amounts to isn't *that* compared with what you have just played to me."

"But I love *you*, Scott." Her voice had a lilt in it that begged him to consider that.

"Do you mean . . . Theresa, I tell you that you are one of the great composers of to-day! Knowing that, are you still willing to marry me?" A flicker of hope died quickly at her sullen moue at the mention of marriage.

"But that is not necessary. Artists do not make nice people to marry. Why cannot we just—go on—as we have been?" She blushed, but her eyes were steadfast.

"Yes," dully. "We can do that—go on—as we have been. It will be wonderful. I know," he added, "that that is what Zelda Paige would advise; she has a good common-sense view of everything."

"No!" Theresa's chin lifted and her dark eyes flashed with haughty disdain. "I was wrong. We shall be married. That will be much nicer; now I am very sure."

No, certaintly Theresa was not all artist. And he, perhaps, was not merely an interlude.

SONG

By E. A. Chaffee

IF we must separate, Love, let it be
Not with the borrowed mirth of yesterday,
Nor with the lingering sadness of farewell
That seeks in vain the first quick tears to stay.

But come to me with dreams still in your eyes,
That I may look deep into them, and see
Our magic castles—for a moment touch
Their fragile fabric to reality.

Kiss me in silence, lest some spoken word
Should prove us false, and in a moment blot
To nothingness our strength, before the flame
Die on our lips, and all else be forgot.

John thought Harriet was offering him an unblemished life, but Harriet admitted that any girl who had survived so many petting parties...!

PETTING PREFERRED

By ALAN WILLIAMS

AT THE frat house, since most of the boys were on the "street," they rated the debs and the subs according to ticker quotations. They ranged all the way from Ethelyn King who was a total loss at any price, who could eat up a larger investment—literally eat it up—and pay less returns than a wild-cat oil stock, to Gwendolyn VanTyle, who was so cheap as to be almost undesirable. The fun is in the gambling.

Taken by and large, Harriet—"Harry"—Warren, was the one absolutely preferred stock. With a reasonable investment of money, sagacity, and daring, which is necessary in any business, she was sure to pay dividends. She was a stunning thing to gaze upon; she was a loving kid; she sparkled and crackled with a fiery line. She was always ready to start a party, and had never been known to break up one. She was never hungry, and always thirsty.

But all this was wasted on John Cummings. To him she was just another flapper. They were all extraordinarily beautiful, intriguing and dangerous. Especially dangerous—and John Cummings hung up a mental sign in red letters—"Strictly business." For John was an ambitious young Englishman who had gone to South Africa after the war, had made good and was now in New York for the interests of his company.

Those interests required that he accept certain invitations, and he had encountered Harry on several occasions, but it was not until the Wilberforce dinner that their acquaintance really began. It was an absurd dinner party—a grab-bag assortment of guests that made everyone present, and most of all this conservative Englishman, speculate if there was any possible justification for the so-called social life.

There were foreigners, no two speaking the same tongue; there were old women trying to be young, and very young men trying to be old; there were several artists—one in black and white, one in blackmail. At the last moment, Mrs. Wilberforce realized she had only one pretty girl, so Harry was assigned to John, as Mr. Wilberforce had said the Englishman was important. Mrs. Wilberforce

prided herself upon her social astuteness, but she was failing as do almost all great leaders. She was attempting the impossible.

"Did you ever see anything so grotesque?" Harry drawled. "Some night I expect to come to Marge Wilberforce's and find the Rev. Dr. Stratton bringing in Peggy Joyce. Look at that poor one talking poetry to Dotty Gibbs, when she hasn't read anything except the 'Racing Form' for twenty years."

John Cummings smiled. "At least," he said, "our hostess was kind to me."

"And now having got that off your chest!" Harry observed. "What is the matter with you Englishmen anyway?"

"Everything, I daresay," John retorted, "judging from the general opinion of Americans."

"I'm not prejudiced," Harry insisted. "I adore England, and English women, and—and the old men, but your young men are simply impossible. I've never met one of you who could make love!"

"I think you're rather right," John Cummings admitted unexpectedly. "Particularly in our generation. Consider myself—"

"Yes, let's," Harry interrupted. "The right age; the right appearance; the right accent, and the result—this is the fifth or sixth time we have met, but our very first conversation. Obviously, it must be my fault."

"You are pulling my leg, of course, but really I don't know what to say to you. Any of you. I feel ridiculously *gauche*."

"You mean we are."

"Not in the least. I don't think Englishmen, modern Englishmen, have ever been at ease with women. You see we go to private school, and then to Harrow or Eton, and so on to Oxford and Cambridge. Or else we have tutors. In either case most of us don't know anything about women until we're ready to marry them. Chaps of my age went off to war, and completed the isolation."

"But the war has been over five years!"

"Yes, but I went off to South Africa and have been at the mines most of the time. I haven't led exactly a monastic life, but—the colonial girls are different. They say our flappers at home are even more outrageous."

He had the grace to blush, and she laughed with him. "So you do think we're outrageous!"

"Outrageously beautiful, and alarming," he hastened to amend.

She smiled. "For a frightened one who has led the cloistered life, you're doing beautifully," Harry encouraged. "I'm going on to the Vanning dance; you must crash along."

"I haven't a bid," John objected.

"As if that mattered!"

"But I don't even know the people."

"That matters less, and I won't bore you by introducing you. They're quite terrible, but they'll have Jo Smith's orchestra and floods of liquor."

"But our hostess here—won't she expect us to remain?"

"You *have* been in Africa. You don't know Marge Wilberforce; she'll establish herself at bridge with the three best players here, and everybody else can go to the devil."

"And so you suggest that I go with you!"

"Right!"

And if they did not go to the devil, at least they went a lively pace. The Vanning dance, a mixed, hectic affair with the flood of alcohol that Harry had promised; and then a selected few dashing madly from roadhouse to roadhouse. Some one always knew a place more brilliant than the one being visited. One of the Vanning boys was along, and since the party

had been at his home, he insisted upon being host at the roadhouses. John gasped at the expense; it would have financed a mine.

They rode packed in one limousine; the men held the girls, others were on the floor, and finally one intrepid youth insisted upon riding on top. Harry, incessantly smoking, lounged on John's knees, not affectionately, but nonchalantly—a place to sit. But as daylight sneaked up on them, she succumbed and rested her tired head against his heavy coat.

He kissed her gently, and she responded —eagerly, violently, viciously. . . . He was amazed, and drew her close—very close. He could feel her heart, and it beat normally, quite normally, not racing madly, excitedly, like his. Her hand, her slim fingers pressed against his chest, and up, up . . . He felt first the coolness, and then the dig of her pointed nails against his neck above the collar. With each feverish, exciting kiss the fingers tightened, until he almost gasped for breath, and then relaxed.

It was old stuff, but new to him. When Harry embraces, the experts said, a fellow doesn't know whether he's going to be kissed or choked. But John knew nothing of that; to him it was primitive, savage, blood-stirring. He thought of Africa, and the thin veneer of civilization.

And then they were home, her home. "Good night, Johnny Bull. You've had a hectic introduction to the species flapper, haven't you?"

"Hush," he commanded, and held her firmly. "You're unbelievable. I'm craven; abject, beastly, so . . . when may I see you?"

"Oh, at the Lorraine to-morrow, if you like," she said, casually. "Tea time."

And he was at the hotel promptly at tea time, and found her surrounded. He had only bits of a dance here and there.

"This is quite beyond me," John complained. "I'm outclassed by these youngsters. Can't we clear out?"

"No, I'm afraid not," Harry replied. "I have just a few minutes. All sorts of things doing to-night, and the little mother is crabby about this morning."

"And you are busy this way all the time?" he asked.

"Mercy, no. When do you want to play?"

"I have diggings on Fifty-third Street. Can't you come there and have a quiet tea to-morrow?"

He looked at her narrowly; she was waving to someone across the room, but she heard him. "All right," she said. "Scribble your address on a card for me, and I'll blow in about five to-morrow."

No qualifications at all to her acceptance. John Cummings scribbled the address, but his hand trembled as he did so. It was unbelievable. He had given the invitation, feeling that it was a caddish thing to do. But he had not cared. This girl was nothing to him except a beautiful, passionate, feminine creature. She had met his love-making without any reserve. He had determined to put her to the immediate test. He understood that American men accepted such passionate love symbols without any expectation of further favors. He was not an American, he reflected grimly.

But he had not been sure. With all her fire there had been a certain, intangible reserve—a reserve at the crucial moment when the flame was about to consume. Now, this casual acceptance of his invitation to visit him alone . . .!

And yet—what sort were these child-women? He went to another dinner that night; Harry was not there, but he was paired off with another exquisite flapper, and later, on a dark bench beneath a sweeping stair, he discovered that her af-

fection was equally frenzied. This one had a peculiar gasp, as she clasped her hands on his shoulders. And then—she abruptly drew away.

"Don't be ridiculous!" She was irritated.

"Ridiculous?" he echoed.

"Yes," she said, getting up. "I like a petting party, but—heavens, man! Let's not become biological."

And so as John Cummings waited for his guest he was not certain, not quite certain. He would be certain in a very little while. She had taken full responsibility when she accepted his invitation. He was not a petter. He had told her that he had no finesse. His training had not been in the school of flirtations.

Tea and sandwiches and pastries had been sent up from the dining-room. There was a filled cocktail shaker, and a decanter of Scotch. He had placed in each of his rooms a vase with dozens of long-stemmed red roses. Some finesse, after all. And he wore the most correct Bond Street afternoon clothes, with a velvet lounging jacket replacing the morning coat.

The bell rang. She was exactly on time. A rather unexpected virtue, that. She stood there—adorable, sparkling, chic, and not alone. A tiny, fluffy blonde, an excellent foil, was with her.

"You didn't say anything about a chaperone," Harry drawled. "So I brought along Midge."

She looked him steadily in the eye. John had sporting blood, and laughed.

"You win," he said. "And yet it's nice to have you here—both of you."

"Give me a drink or two," the little Midge began.

"Or three," Harry interrupted.

"A drink or two, I said," the little one continued, severely, "and I pass right out of the picture, so as a chaperone I star."

But it did not matter whether she passed out of the picture or not. John knew he had been rebuffed, that Harry was another girl who "liked a petting party, but—heavens, man!" That understood, as a companion she was certainly jolly—sympathetic, intelligent, marvelously keen. When the evening was over, John felt that he would never penetrate the mystery of this new type of woman.

But he tried with the same dogged determination that had made him so successful in South Africa. They were together constantly in the weeks that followed, and it was a glamorous, thrilling companionship such as the hard-working Englishman had never known or dreamed of. He had surrendered abjectly; he accepted her kisses, her favors, gratefully, but when she bestowed them elsewhere he was as meek as any blushing collegian. He had quickly learned that jealousy was useless; he must take what she offered, or nothing. He longed for her moments of abandon, but he could not tell whether she really cared, and that was torture.

His business was finished. In fact, he had lingered for several weeks, because he believed there was a new note in their relations. All her time was his now. She was never busy, never insistent upon flying to this place or that. She had no suggestions to make. It was a new Harry, a docile Harry, but she could not quite drive away the recollection of the old wayward, flippant tease.

They were dining in a private place, one of the hundreds that have come into existence all over New York where the food and the drinks are both excellent, and the prices prohibitive except to wanderers from South Africa, South America, and Upper Broadway.

"I am sailing," John said slowly, as he refilled her champagne glass, "a week from next Saturday."

She sipped the bubbling liquor. "I shall miss you," she said, so very honestly. "I think I'll run over to Paris, or maybe up to Montreal for the last of the snow."

"And then you won't miss me many days?" he questioned.

"No," she admitted. "I won't permit myself to."

"You can govern your emotions so perfectly?"

"I will try. I don't know. I never had an emotion quite so strong."

"Oh, come now, Harry. I know you're pulling my leg."

"You know I'm not. You know whatever I may or may not be, I'm honest. But—I've been in love before, and I've gotten over it. Somehow—it has never before been the same. You see you are so very different, my English Johnnie."

"Harry, will you go back to South Africa with me?"

She took a long draught of wine. "Are you asking me to marry you, John?"

"No," he said, deliberately. "Unfortunately I have a wife—in England."

"I thought you weren't," she said, cutting deep ridges into the table cloth with her fork. "I have felt there was—something."

"And the answer?"

"The answer is no; you knew that."

"How should I know?" he challenged. "You mock everything that is established and customary; you make all your rules as you go along. I thought you would consider marriage obsolete, Victorian."

"I would probably make my own rules of marriage as I went along," she admitted. "But I have always conformed in the non-essentials so that I might do as I please in the things that really count. I made my début; I live at home; I never travel without a chaperone, but otherwise . . . If I were going into business with a partner there would have to be a contract, an agreement. Marriage is a business with a partner, so there must be a contract. Later, as with all contracts, it may be abrogated."

"And you say you love me!" John interrupted bitterly. "Yet you can be so absolutely cold-blooded."

"Yes, fortunately. That is part of our training. Yes, I love you, John Cummings, but I haven't lost my reason. That is why I am pretty sure it is a real love; I love you with my head as well as my heart. But I wouldn't give up the world for you, John. It would mean too much. I might forget that I loved you."

"Marriage means so much to you, then, after all?"

"Don't be an ass, John! My name means a great deal to me; my family means a great deal, although they'd never believe it; my country means a great deal. In going to South Africa with you as your mistress I would be severing every tie, everything in the world. There may have been loves that could stand that strain; maybe mine would, but I'm not going to put it to the test."

"And in spite of all your defiance, then, you are really a coward in the battle of life?"

"Maybe, John. There has always been a rather fine distinction between cowardice and caution. It's quite no use for you to be sarcastic or—or British. My love for you is the greatest thing in my life, but I am going to put it to one side, and go on living. I may even marry and have children, but the feeling I have for you will always remain something different."

"How do I know what to believe?"

"It doesn't matter; we have a short week left. Let us make the most of it."

With that he had to be content. And again she subtly changed. The old flip-

pancy returned. In spite of the fact that only a week remained, she plunged him into the social whirl again—dances, teas, all night journeys from roadhouse to roadhouse. She had dreamed a dream, seen a vision, and awakened.

It was Thursday; he was to sail Saturday. He was having breakfast in his apartment, and the bell rang. She stood there with a tiny bag. He drew her into the apartment, and kissed her gently. She clung to him.

"I have come to stay until you go," she explained. "Mother thinks I have gone to Norwalk; everything is arranged for."

She removed her hat, and tossed the bag on a chair.

"Give me a cup of coffee," she directed. She was entirely calm, and had never been more beautiful.

"Harry," he said, "I can't let you do this. You are carried away—"

"Not in the least," she denied. "That is the reason I came to you early in the morning. If it were after a hectic party when I clung to you with the heat of booze . . . But it isn't. I've had my cold shower, and my daily dozen, yet I present myself."

He laughed. "Present yourself with flippancy."

"Yes, John, we're not going to make a funeral out of this. I teased you at first, but I soon learned to care. . . . I *am* a coward. I won't go with you, and it may be worse with a memory, but I'll take that chance."

"It's a greater chance! I can't let you take it. To give yourself this way, and then face everything alone, when I will be on the other side of the world. . . ."

"I am not afraid to face anything, John, except never having come to you."

"But suppose I am afraid. I have a conscience."

Her eyes twinkled. "Above all you are a gentleman, and a gentleman cannot refuse—"

"Oh, yes, he can!"

"I will not bother your conscience. You are taking much for granted; I am a very modern girl you know, John—"

"You cannot pull my leg," he said, finally. "You are offering—sacrificing—an unblemished life."

"Ah, no, John!" she cried. "Not that; at least not that. I may be giving you what is stupidly regarded as you describe it. I won't admit that . . . but no girl who has survived petting parties as I have . . . You have charged me with that yourself. It has always been in your eyes. But you are so stupid. Talking! And we have forty-eight hours!"

"No, by the gods! We have all of life if you will have a rotter—a liar. Harry, my wife in England is in the churchyard. I have wanted you so very desperately, and yet because I didn't know . . ."

"I understand," she said, gently. "Because I didn't conform to the standards laid down by William the Conqueror."

"Can you forgive, and marry me, and go with me Saturday?"

"Yes, I can do all that, but are you sure now?"

"So very sure, beloved."

"But I'm not," she said crisply. "Oh, I'll marry you, but if I don't like South Africa, and if you don't make up to me for everything I'm leaving, I'll chuck it. It isn't any until death do us part business. I am offering you a memory of a passionate moment; if you insist upon the risk of a lifetime of monotony . . ."

"You could never be monotonous, Harry. But I surrender, completely. Must I sign a contract that you can have a divorce whenever you like?"

"Whatever you do," she warned, "don't become intelligent. I can stand anything—except being understood."

Echo wanted to get everything and pay nothing, but Vanburgh's scruples took wing.

The HOUSE *of* VENUS

By W. CAREY WONDERLY

PAY NOTHING

MONEY was her god. None other than Monsieur said so and Monsieur was the last person in New York to speak an ill word of a girl in his employ.

Not that Monsieur considered Echo worse than she should be. Just mercenary; money-mad. It really was no longer *chic* to fix one's heart on meretricious things. To be sure Echo wasn't exactly the spirituelle type, but on the other hand, how she'd clown for a tip—or even grovel! Popular, yes. Echo had a way of treating Fifth Avenue like a *cocotte* and Broadway like Madam Knickerbocker that was delightfully refreshing and pleased everyone concerned.

Talk, talk, talk. A chattering magpie whose breakfast dish was gold and silver coins.

"Didn't I see you last Wednesday coming out of the Algonquin at lunchtime?" she'd inquire breezily of a society matron, as cold and virginal as a mid-Victorian heroine. "She was the image of you! Well, then, it must have been that notorious vamp they brought over from Paris to show our American movie stars how to subjugate the men. Liane de—something. She don't look respectable. The kind that makes you wonder about her favorite indoor sport. Or outdoor, for that matter! Demi-vamp, the papers call her, but honest to John, she looks even 'demi-er' than that!"

No one had ever accused the society matron of being a vampire, not even her young husband on their honeymoon, and she fairly thrilled to every word that Echo uttered. There was something quite heart-warming in being compared to a *cocotte* when your life was as bleak as a New England winter. After that Madame always waited for Echo.

Reina Rialto was fed a different stimulant.

"How did you come out on your Street Fair, ma'am? I saw your picture in *Town Talk* last month and recognized you at once as one of the patronesses of the Park Avenue Street Fair for Indigent Pelicans. I knew you by your rope of pearls—it's long enough to hang every pelican in—well, wherever they come from. Pearls are so satisfying, like a high instep, Monsieur says. Well, blood will tell every time, ma'am."

La Rialto smiled like a cinema duchess. She had just come in from an all-night session at the Folly Farms Inn on the Boston Post Road and needed every-

thing but her pocketbook revitalized. What a sweet, clever little trick Echo was! There was an extra ten-spot in her purse somewhere that Reina would be glad to put in the young woman's hand. Really, some of these shop girls were quite discerning!

"Did you leave her carfare, child?" Monsieur murmured almost reproachfully, as Echo flashed her more than generous tip before the eyes of the other girls.

"I don't know, Monsieur," Echo said demurely. "But she has her personality and that seems to be all anyone mentions when they speak about Reina Rialto."

Tiny, pert, bronze-haired and perfect-complexioned. Echo caught Raoul Vanburgh's eye the day he came into the House of Venus with Sonya D'Eve. The diva had been persuaded to try her fortune in the movies, but a nose more Roman than *retroussé* played havoc with her profile and Sonya had brought her troubles to Monsieur. While he explained the operation to the actress, Raoul Vanburgh strolled next door into the Momentary Club. But as it was he had lingered in the beauty shop long enough to carry the memory of Echo's gamine-like charm away with him.

Vanburgh ordered some White Rock, ice, and a couple of glasses and producing his own flask, made himself as comfortable as possible while waiting for Madame D'Eve. Before to-day he had never even heard of the House of Venus, which Sonya had assured him an hour ago was the most complete beauty shop in New York. Now he had made a careful notation of its address—the West Fifties, just around the corner from Fifth Avenue and right next door to the Momentary Club. Raoul Vanburgh had been to the Momentary Club once or twice, but had never noticed the House of Venus because it resembled a private dwelling, with its old-fashioned brownstone façade and window-boxes, rather than a place of business.

There was a little door cut in the wall which connected the beauty shop with the Momentary Club and those regulars of a sporting tendency were willing to wager 1 to 10 that Echo appeared in their midst before Vanburgh had been seated half an hour at his table. Echo had a way of doing that very thing. Exhibiting her pert, bronze beauty to susceptible males. She had caught Raoul's eye as he walked off, after leaving Sonya in Monsieur's hands; now Echo attracted his attention once more as she wandered among the tables of the Little Club.

Too early yet for the orchestra; too early even for the luncheon crowd. A few young women waiting for men; a few men waiting for girls. Broadway and Fifth Avenue, society and the stage, meeting for once on common soil, in the most Bohemian atmosphere in New York.

Raoul Vanburgh watched Echo through a tobacco cloud. The girl was most bewitchingly dressed in a frock of pale blue, slate and white, so cunningly combined that they gave the impression of space—of sky and sea and earth in sympathetic communion. Monsieur, who named his girls, clothed them in character. In spite of her cool aloofness, there was something mockingly familiar in Echo's manner.

By the time she arrived at Vanburgh's table, she had paused thrice, once to accept a cigarette from a chinless youth in the band, next to wheedle a tip on a horse-race from a successful turfman, and then to attempt to have Saratoga Sue take her bet without the money in advance.

"Nothing stirring, ducky," announced the amiable lady bookmaker. "Heads you win, tails I lose. Sorry, but you'll have to put up the cash first if you want to bet with Susan."

Echo raised her right shoulder and made a moue—at Sue, but for Vanburgh's benefit.

"I don't want to gamble, I want to win some money, dearest," she cooed, and then, before he realized it, she was at Vanburgh's elbow.

"Your fiancée is waiting for you."

"Meaning who?" Vanburgh demanded in a voice which annihilated leading ladies and supernumeraries alike.

"Madame D'Eve."

"Eve, eh? Well, do I look like Monsieur Adam?"

"How can I tell in that Kuppenheimer scenery?" Echo said coolly. "And before we go any further, let me remind you that while the Momentary Club has been called many hard names, it has never been mistaken for the Garden of Eden. Need I continue?"

"No, I'm way ahead of you," retorted Vanburgh dryly. "And what would you say if I were to remind you that I am Sonya D'Eve's manager and not her—er—admirer?"

"I'd try to believe you in spite of your uncertainty," Echo told him.

His red, generous lips twitched. "Has it never occurred to you that perhaps you are wasting your time next door?"

"Oh-h, I don't have to work in a beauty shop," she shrugged.

"That's right; you can starve," Vanburgh observed. "Have you seen my new revue at the Jewel Box?"

"I've never seen anything that a gentleman is filled with a burning desire to show me," Echo returned graciously. "By the way, are you interested in the turf?"

"No. I lose my money producing Shakespeare," Raoul Vanburgh assured her, as they went back to the House of Venus.

Sonya D'Eve was so thrilled at the idea of the operation she had decided to undergo in the interest of her art that she forgot to scold Vanburgh for having kept her waiting ten minutes. Ignored, too, the fact that Echo was young and lovely.

Monsieur followed the actress to the door. Then came back, voicing his scorn.

"Such a creature!" he sighed, waving his hands. "She's had her face lifted, her hair bobbed, and a new gland put in. Now she looks so young she's afraid of infantile paralysis. But that's not the half of it, dearie. Now she wants to cut off her nose to spite her race!"

There came a little gleam in Echo's slate-color eyes and she met Monsieur's gaze a bit defiantly.

"If Sonya D'Eve is going to have an operation, that means she will be invisible for about three weeks, doesn't it?"

"Yes, child. And while Rome wasn't built in a day, we are assured that the Creation only required six. Has Raoul Vanburgh been telling you you are too good for my business?"

Echo smiled warmly. "Perhaps. He has invited me to go to the Jewel Box to-night."

"Be careful, sweetheart! He's trying to make you—I saw it in his eyes! And even if Sonya is having her nose cut down, she will still retain her claws. Understand me; I'm not intimating there's *that* between 'em, but thank heaven our thoughts are still sacred, even in America. Be careful, child!"

"Just a little party," Echo murmured, with a thoughtful, far-away expression on her *gamine* features which momentarily gave her a spirituelle air.

Home is where the heart is, according to our poets, and there was little "heart" in Echo's home. A flat up at One-Hundred-and-Tenth Street. A brother who complained bitterly of his lack of "luck" instead of pursuing that elusive jade with a bludgeon; his wife who clerked in a

Times Square drugstore and sided with her husband only against Echo; delicatessen food, airshaft chambers, constant wrangling. Such was Echo's home.

To-night Echo opened the door in a frame of mind that suggested lurking smiles. But not happiness. Determined, and just a little hard. Her sister-in-law, Gladys, opening little paper bundles of cooked ham and potato salad, for supper, sniffed her amusement. When Bart came in with a covered dish of steaming chop suey, the evening meal was pronounced ready.

"Any mail?" Echo asked briefly, as she drew up her chair.

"If you're speaking to me, I didn't see any," Gladys answered.

Gladys was going to the theater. But not with Bart. A girl friend. Gladys met so many actors in a business way and won their regard by sheer personality. They were always giving her passes and she had seen all of the failures of the season from the last row in the orchestra.

Echo was going out after supper, too, which meant that Bart would stay at home and wash the dishes. Good heavens! Bart ought to do *something*. When Glad stood all day on her feet, listening to bum cracks from cheap hams, and all the time looking like the cat that et the canary! It wasn't like Bart had a *job*. Bart just sat at his typewriter all day and wrote plays which nobody wanted to produce.

"If he'd only listen to me!" Gladys expostulated. "Cripe! I could write a play myself, after all the nifties I've heard. If you don't sell this one, are you going after a job on a newspaper? It's tough, having to juggle dollars the way I do."

Having swallowed her supper whole, Gladys repaired her complexion and changed her clothes and was out of the house before Echo or Bart could ask her to help with anything. Letting her mind dwell briefly on her sister-in-law, Echo decided that she was no worse off than Bart. Yet something was to be said for Gladys. Bart was . . . a mollusk.

"I kind of thought I'd surely hear from Buster to-day," Echo ventured, lingering in the doorway, while her brother commenced to clear up the supper dishes.

He wasn't an engaging picture in shirtsleeves and apron. Watching him, Echo knew that she loathed the sight of men doing housework.

On the spur of the moment she said, "I'm going out with Raoul Vanburgh tonight. I met him at the shop to-day and he asked me to look at his show at the Jewel Box. You've never had an interview with him, have you, Bart?"

"No such luck! And what's more he's turned down every script I've sent him."

"Vanburgh deals mostly in girl-and-music shows."

"I'd like to bet my good right arm he's never read the second page of any of my plays," Bart complained. "Unless you've got a friend at court—pull, Echo—an unknown playwright has got about as much chance being heard as the proverbial snowball you hear about."

For a second the comic figure in apron, piling soiled dishes, was touched with tragedy. Echo felt suddenly sorry for her brother—wished there was something she could do. But the moment passed. She had troubles of her own, with no word from Buster, and the monthly bills due. If she failed with Vanburgh, what was to become of Buster? Where would she turn next?

While she was dressing, Bart opened the door. Echo was neater than his wife, nor was the atmosphere heavy with stale patchouli.

"I was thinking," Bart ventured, "that if I could get one of my plays on, how much it would mean to—Buster! I know

how heavy the expenses are and I only wish I could help you, old girl."

Eyes and voice grew bitter. "Sickness costs so much money! Only the wealthy can afford to be ill. Somehow, when the doctors said Arizona, I had an idea of . . . camping out—sort of roughing it. Certainly I never dreamed of a sanatorium at fifty dollars a week!"

"If I had a play on Broadway—royalties coming in—you could go out and join Buster. If Vanburgh would only consent to read one of my scripts, read it and judge for himself . . ."

Echo nodded quickly, briefly. "I'll see what can be done," she promised.

She took the subway to Times Square. Later, Vanburgh would feel like a criminal until he paid for her taxicab down from One-Hundred-and-Tenth Street. Five dollars. But every nickel counted with Echo now.

At the Jewel Box, Vanburgh had left a ticket and a note for Echo in an envelope. He asked her to come to his office after the final curtain.

How old was Raoul Vanburgh? Echo stood in the doorway and waited to be invited to cross the threshold. Broadway gossip had it that Vanburgh had come to New York from London, but his olive skin and black, curling hair suggested a homeland farther east than Britain.

"Come in, come in!" he cried at last, rising to his feet and waving Echo to his own big arm-chair. "How nice you look! What did you think of my show?"

A really chic hat and smart slippers and stockings—a woman's salient points are her head and feet. The fur collar on her coat Echo had made from an old fox scarf. Her gloves were neatly mended. Yet she looked well-groomed, elfin, intriguing.

There was something about her that had caught Vanburgh's attention from the moment he saw her in the beauty shop. It rested with Echo whether she was to hold that interest or not. Mere prettiness couldn't do it, for he had known the fairest women in Europe and America. But just as we say a successful play packs a "punch", and a good wine hides a "kick", so, for want of a better definition, Echo must be described as radiating charm. It made Vanburgh enjoy being in her company.

During supper at the Montmartre he learned a little about her; heard about the flat uptown where she lived with her brother and his wife. A word here and there and he guessed how uncongenial were her surroundings, yet she was careful to emphasize the fact that she lived at home. What did she want with him? Money, of course, but—how? The girl was far from being a fool. And she was attractive enough to go to work in the Jewel Box revue any old time she said the word.

When the moment came to go home Vanburgh put her into a Checker cab and said good night. He had a charge account with the company, he explained, and Echo was welcome to call a taxi whenever she felt so inclined. But what Echo wanted was the cab-fare, and not the permission to charge 'em. The subway was good enough for her, with Buster needing at least fifty good American dollars every week of his life.

Bart came to the door to let her in. He had been waiting up for her, torn between hope and despair, until he was a nervous wreck. Echo felt too downhearted herself even to be sorry for him.

"Not yet!" she said a bit sharply. "I can't blackjack a man and take his watch the first time I meet him."

Without a word Bart handed her a letter and went back to bed. Echo caught her sister-in-law's shrill laughter, full of

mockery, as she hurried to her little room with the precious letter.

As usual, Buster dripped tears. Only Echo, with a far greater dread of sickness than of death, wept over him—struggled against their poverty as a linnet beats against the bars of its cage.

" . . . It is this awful homesickness as much as anything else that is killing me. I mean it; I find myself getting weaker every day, more inclined to let go of things and face the inevitable. You have your theaters, Broadway and its throngs, even your work, while I have nothing but—Arizona. I'll tell the world, it's the land that God forgot. I wish you would send me . . ."

She made a careful list of the things Buster asked for. Presumably it never occurred to Echo that the best little thing he did was to "wish" for this and that.

Monsieur met her next morning with a twinkle which would be characterized as "naughty" in the eyes of a soubrette.

"Where's the Rolls-Royce?" he demanded.

"Mr. Vanburgh has a charge account with one of the taxicab companies," Echo said demurely.

"Where's the taxi, then? Good Godfrey, child, didn't you take it upstairs and park it in your flat?"

"It would be easier to get our apartment in the cab, Monsieur," she smiled. "As a matter of fact, we had only a little party—"

"A party!" murmured Monsieur, head on one side. "There are two kinds of parties—one where you are politely pie-eyed and the other where you are impolitely poisoned. Never was there a truer word spoken than be sure your gin will find you out. As Dempsey would say, I know all about it, child, I've been through the ropes. Isn't that precious?"

Following her operation, Madame D'Eve went into retirement and Raoul Vanburgh found himself with sufficient time on his hands to study Echo to his heart's content. To himself he insisted that it was the brain rather than the heart that was interested. He wasn't in love; the girl merely intrigued him, like a Franz Molnar play. Such things rarely attained a successful climax.

Every day Vanburgh came up to the Momentary Club for luncheon and while it was impracticable for Echo to lunch with him, they usually managed to see each other. The manager stated that he made the trip to the West Fifties solely to inquire after Madame and to get the information from Monsieur himself. But Saratoga Sue remarked that after Sonya's nose healed, Vanburgh would be sure to find fault with her ears or her chin—anything to send the actress into retirement for another three weeks. Echo, with the cat-that-ate-the-canary expression, was much in evidence, when Raoul Vanburgh lunched at the Little Club Next Door.

So far it was a scoreless game, with honors pretty evenly divided. They had advanced to the "Van" and "Kittens" stage, but that was as far as they'd gone. Vanburgh called her nothing but "Kittens"—which, after all, wasn't such a misnomer. No one could purr so contentedly and there wasn't any doubt about the claws.

Whenever she got the opportunity Echo picked his pockets. A common little pilferer, with no amount too small. It wasn't unusual for her to palm half the tip he left on the table for the waiter. If Vanburgh saw her, she merely shrugged and laughed. It was his custom, too, to slip her a coin when she retired to the ladies' lounge, but the maid in charge there never received more than a dime for her services.

Vanburgh was conversant with her methods.

"If I send you a basket of fruit, you re-

turn it and ask for the money back," he complained, albeit, half-humorously. "When I order you flowers, you sell them to Monsieur for half-price to decorate the shop. Of course I know better than to offer you jewelry—a diamond tiara . . ."

"Yes," Echo concluded quickly. "Gladys would take it over my dead body and wear it to the drug store."

She had scored, turned the blade against himself, and wrung a smile. It was that which held him, her nimble wit.

"I can't see why a clever girl like you continues to live with her brother's wife and takes the abuse you do," Vanburgh muttered.

"Where would you suggest that I move my trunk, to the Jewel Box Theater Building or would you recommend sea-air?" she struck back.

Vanburgh maintained a bachelor apartment near the theater and owned a beautiful country place down at Belleport on the Sound.

"Well," Echo continued, after a moment, "like the heroine in the good old melodramas, I stand a lot for another's sake. For Bart. I only have to see Gladys at meal-time, but my brother . . . I believe you'd like Bart."

"Probably."

"Though we'd rather you liked his play. Wait! Don't run! You haven't an engagement with the Rajah of Hoboken and you daren't keep him waiting. Hoboken's been waiting ever since Mr. Volstead tossed his hat in the ring." How she clowned to hold him, spouted audacious speeches, when all the time his interest was a matter of life or death. Another letter from Buster that very morning and Buster swore he was fast getting to the end of his rope. "If Bart's masterpiece isn't worth listening to I'll let you buy me the best dinner in New York, Van! What could be more sporting than that? And even take him along with us! And Gladys—Glad would love you, Van. You've no idea how many gentlemen introduce themselves to Gladys every day of her life! I think her drug store caters solely to male patrons. At least, you never hear of Gladys having a woman customer. Read Bart's play and thumb your nose at Hamlet."

He was smiling, yet his eyes were as grim as a mourning envelope.

"Haven't got time."

"To thumb your nose—*a la gamin*—thus? If time were money I'd be a millionaire. Van, I'd never have to pinch tips or anything petty again, if Bart had a play running on Broadway. I'll tell you what I'll do . . ."

"No, you won't, Kittens. I don't need another play—wouldn't know what to do with a script of Lonsdale's."

"Wait! I'll read it aloud to you myself. You won't even have to turn the pages."

Like a war horse scenting battle, Raoul Vanburgh lifted his dark head. His eyes, half-closed, met Echo's and she caught a glimpse of white teeth between lips like pomegranates.

"That's a good idea," he observed slowly, "if you mean it."

"Cross my heart, old son."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Vanburgh, then. "I'll meet you after the show on Saturday night and we'll motor down to my place on Long Island? We'll have all day Sunday to read and discuss the play. What do you say to that arrangement?"

"Splendid!" Echo said coolly. "I'll tell my brother what you've suggested."

But she didn't say anything to Bart and Gladys about Vanburgh's proposition until the last moment. There wasn't a letter from Arizona on Saturday morning and Echo started to business, planning to tell her brother what she was going to do when she returned to look for her mail in

the evening. All day she was just a bit unbalanced. Monsieur sent her to lunch at noon and told her not to come back until her feet were on *terra firma* once more. Even then Echo only went next door to the Momentary Club, where Vanburgh joined her.

"Did Raoul propose?" Monsieur inquired, when the girl returned at three o'clock.

"Yes."

"Ah-h-h!" He made a hissing sound through his front teeth. "What?"

Yet he was sympathetic, willing to share anything but his heart, and give anything but his money, to help Echo.

Six-thirty at last and home. Gladys was there before her. There was vegetable salad instead of potato to-night, and Hamburger steak with Saratoga chips. Gladys and Bart had their heads together when Echo came in, but she was too occupied with her own problems to notice this unusual attitude.

She had to unburden her mind at once, or not at all. "I'm going down to Raoul Vanburgh's place for the week-end. He says I'll have time to read the play to him there without interruption. I'm to meet him at half-past eleven."

Silence.

Echo tossed her hat down on the day bed, threw her coat down beside it, and turned quickly to catch Bart and Gladys exchanging glances.

"What's the matter?" she demanded.

"Nothing the matter with me," Gladys returned airily.

"Any mail from the West?"

"Haven't seen any."

"Bart—'

Her brother took a quick step forward. His face was like chalk; his voice high and shrill.

"For God's sake, sis! What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to Vanburgh's house and sell him that play," Echo answered grimly. "The only stipulation I make is that Buster gets his. When Vanburgh pays you the advance royalty—when the weekly checks begin to come—Buster must be taken care of. I'm not doing this for myself, or for you and Glad, but for him—that poor, broken, wretched boy, fighting the white death in a strange country. Vanburgh will take your play, never fear! Now swear that you won't forget Buster."

Bart's lips stuck and Gladys spoke for him. "We swear! Honest to God, honey, we'll never forget you if you bring home the bacon! No matter what folks say about you, Bart and I'll stick."

Glad's words filled Echo with a wild desire to laugh, and really saved the situation. A sense of humor is to be valued above rubies. "Thank you, Gladys," Echo said, with mock seriousness, and they sat down to the supper table.

Vanburgh drove the big closed car down to Belleport himself, which required all of his attention, for he was a nervous driver. Since he had left his mechanician in New York, it set Echo to wondering just who would be at his country home. The cook and housemaid, at least. The long ride, which was made almost in silence, got upon her nerves and before they arrived at their destination Echo felt that anything—even promiscuous love-making—was preferable to this waiting and suspense.

Set back from the road, in an old-fashioned garden, Vanburgh's house had been a farm house now converted into a delightful, homey dwelling. A brick walk, a sun dial, pigeons—and even the ceaseless roll and drone of the nearby surf. There was nothing of intrigue about this homespun spot.

At the threshold Vanburgh turned and put a last question to Echo. "You have the play?" he asked.

And she replied between bloodless lips, "Yes, I have it, of course."

Vanburgh himself escorted her to her room. There was a high, four-post bed and a fire in an open grate. But there was also a bath-room, modern in every respect. Something like regret seized Echo that she should have come to this charming old house under these sordid conditions.

"Supper in half an hour," Vanburgh said as he left her. "I know you must be hungry after our drive. Come right down when you're ready."

Echo was ready in an unbelievably short time. The experienced bather knows that a quick plunge into the icy pool is far better than to approach the water step by step. There was to be no wading out beyond the depth by Echo; just a splash and have it over with.

Coming down to the living-room Echo found Vanburgh smoking a cigarette in a long fantastic holder. He had replaced his coat with a purple lounging robe which gave him a distinctly Oriental appearance. As he offered her a cocktail it occurred to Echo that he had never produced a scene in the theater which suggested the melodramatic possibilities of this one.

"I adore your little house," Echo said, at supper. "You're very selfish to keep it just for yourself."

"It isn't large enough for a family," Vanburgh returned, helping himself to bountiful portions of everything on the table.

"Ah! I see you look ahead," she mocked. "The way I see it, you must either curtail your ambition or move into a bigger place. When you produce Bart's play, you will be able to afford Southampton and an estate."

He raised his eyes and met her glance.

"What did your brother say?" Vanburgh asked.

Echo closed her eyes like a child and shook her head vigorously.

"He didn't. But Gladys . . . Ah, if Bart could—would—only put Gladys into a play! My sister-in-law assured me solemnly that no matter what folks said about me, she'd stick—as long as I sold you the play."

"The woman's a fool," Vanburgh growled. "Look here, Kittens, you know that I—"

He stopped short, frankly confused by her mocking eyes which burned into his flesh like hot coals. Never had she appeared less beautiful in the accepted sense of that much abused word, and never had he felt her charm so poignantly. Elfin. La Gamine. Peter Pan in skirts.

"Surely you're not trying to make love to me with a platter of cold cuts between us!"

He removed the offending dish. "I never *try* to do anything," Vanburgh began, and then swore a picturesque French oath when he realized he had fallen into her trap like a *gauche* school-boy.

"It is because I know how splendid our friendship is that I have accepted your invitation to spend the week-end here," Echo told him coolly. "All New York understands that you and Madame Sonya are *en rapport*. I've been thinking that probably Bart's play will fit her—if the operation isn't entirely successful, you know, and she loses her fight for film honors by a nose. Shall I begin to read now, while you smoke?"

"Not now," he answered. "As a matter of fact, I have read your brother's play, Kittens—had the office secure a copy from the Drama Agency. Just how anxious are you to see this piece in rehearsal?"

Now the color of chalk, Echo thought

that her heart had stopped beating. He had scored beyond question and her face showed it.

"The success of Bart's play means more to me than anything else in the world, I guess," she said at last. "It means more because everything else depends on it. I need hardly remind you that if you buy it, I'm 'in' on the transaction. Anything for money, yes. Mercenary Kittens—who is pretty sure to develop into an avaricious old cat. Well, that's me."

The man seemed as unnerved as she—white under his olive skin, with cigarette burning unheeded to the amber holder.

"If I told you I loved you what would you say?" he ventured finally, watching for a laugh, a shrug of shoulders.

"I suppose all bootleg liquor isn't poisonous, Van, yet the wages of gin are death."

"Can't you be serious?" he cried in a sudden fury.

Echo opened her arms with a poignant gesture of surrender. "I have touched Calvary," she said simply. "Nothing matters much now, so long as I—I bring home the bacon. For God's sake, end this unnecessary talk! Can't you see you are torturing me? You say you've read the play. Well, what next?"

Vanburgh rose and walked toward the door. "I think you'd prefer to go to your room," he said. "You're not yourself to-night."

"No, I'm not myself. If I had a gun, I believe I'd shoot you, Raoul," the girl muttered in an odd little voice.

"What good would that do you?" he returned coolly. "A dead man can't buy a play, and that's all you want me for."

"That's all," Echo nodded.

Vanburgh took a step toward her and his words cracked like a whip. "I know all about you, my dear—far more than you suppose. The best I can say is that you're not the mercenary creature you pretend to be. But you are a cheat, a liar. I have made investigations and I know you are a married woman with a consumptive husband in the West. You met him while he was in the band at the Momentary Club and after his health failed, you went back to work at the beauty shop. You thought I'd never find out about 'Buster' Kenton, who won you with the 'wickedest' saxophone on Broadway. Because you are the boyish type of woman, small and vivacious, you have passed yourself off as a single girl. You never gave a thought to anyone but yourself — and him. You haven't given a damn for my feelings! Well, double-dealing is a game that two can play, my dear Kittens. I have known for some time that you have a husband. I knew you were a married woman when I brought you down to this house. Whatever scruples a man may have on the score of innocent girlhood take wing when he comes in contact with a woman like you."

She was all ablaze now, fire from crown to heels.

"If you touch me, I'll kill you—if it takes the rest of my life . . ."

"There's a pistol in the table drawer behind you."

"I'll kill you, Van!"

He said nothing, waiting.

Then Echo covered her face with her hands and began to sob like a little child.

After a second, Raoul Vanburgh opened the door and spoke to someone in the next room.

"Mrs. Kenton is tired and wants to go to her room, Clara. . . . This is my sister—Miss Vanburgh. In spite of the relationship, I'm sure you can trust her implicitly."

Returned to One-Hundred-and-Tenth

Street, Echo found the familiar neighborhood just opening its eyes at noon. Too early for the afternoon movies; the morning papers already old; a little group on the church pavement near the corner of Broadway.

Bart and Gladys hadn't expected Echo so early and Gladys in curlers and kimono was reading the comic sheet by the window, while the head of the family foraged for his breakfast. Echo was such a grim, stiff little figure, all youth and insouciance gone, that Gladys, glancing up from her paper, scarcely knew how to greet her. Did this forbidding appearance indicate success or failure?

Without a word Echo drew off her gloves and threw them down on the table beside her purse. Discarded her hat and coat. Her every action held Gladys fascinated, like a bird under the spell of a cat's eyes. Presently their eyes met and Echo's lips formed a crooked, three-cornered smile.

"Bart's to call to see Vanburgh at eleven o'clock to-morrow. The contracts will be ready for him to sign," Echo said, and turned abruptly to go to her room.

"Oh, you darling!" shrieked Gladys. "Bart! Bart! Never mind cooking any eggs and bacon for me. We'll all go down to the Ritz and celebrate. Vanburgh has bought the play, dearest. Contracts to-morrow."

Bart hurried in from the kitchenette, grotesque in shirtsleeves and apron.

"Honest?" he asked his sister.

Echo nodded her head and Bart sat down on a chair—quickly—as if his legs had suddenly given way.

"Well," he said at last, in an odd, choked voice, and looked at his wife. "Well—"

"Echo's tired, poor dear," murmured Gladys soothingly. "I always say there's nothing so strenuous as a little week-end party—though I've never been on one, of course. If you want to lie down, honey . . . And shall we call you when we go to the Ritz?"

Apparently Echo didn't hear her and only paused when Bart spoke her name sharply, at the bed-room door.

"Echo! . . . I think there's—something for you. . . ."

"Oh, yes! A telegram—just delivered," Gladys supplemented, fishing the ominous yellow envelope from behind a pile of glassware on the buffet.

Echo looked at the envelope for a moment or two without speaking, moving. But there was a faint pink in her cheeks now and she looked like a rejuvenated beauty, fresh from Monsieur's shop.

"Glad thought we'd better open it, in case there was anything—important," Bart ventured uneasily, when she didn't speak.

"We'd have 'phoned you at Raoul Vanburgh's house," Gladys said glibly. "In fact, we were just considering it when you walked in."

Now Echo found her tongue, raised her strange, unhappy eyes. "But this telegram was delivered on Saturday."

"What? Honey, no! Just before you walked in. Ask Bart."

"It was delivered Saturday, before I went down to Long Island—here's the mark on the envelope. You held it back! You opened and read it and then didn't tell me . . . lied, for you said there was nothing when I asked for my letters. You held it back!"

"Sis, if you'll let me explain . . ."

"Is Buster—dead?"

"No! No, of course not! Listen, Echo, we thought . . ."

"Don't you think if your husband was dead we'd have told you? My God, we're not stone, honey! That was just it! Buster isn't dead and—"

With trembling fingers, that seemed all thumbs, and nerves stretched to the breaking-point, Echo opened the telegram and read its stark, brutal message.

"I have reached the end of my rope and when you receive this I will be on my way to Hawaii with the most wonderful girl in the world. I met her at the sanatorium here and she's worth a million in her own right, so you'll never have to hustle for me again."

The hands which replaced the enclosure in the envelope were steadier. Her eyes were dry. But she said nothing.

"If you'll just listen a minute . . ." Bart began hysterically.

He was such a sorry-looking figure that Echo suddenly discovered she was ashamed of him. Influenced by Gladys, of course, but still . . . a spineless jellyfish.

"I don't want to hear anything else now, please," she said as gently as she could. "Nothing you can say will help matters or make any difference. And—since . . . *he* doesn't need my help any longer, I'm 'out' on the play, of course. You, Gladys, can thank your stars I didn't receive that message when it was delivered on Saturday; else . . ."

Dusk found her in a familiar street in the West Fifties. All through that long Sunday afternoon Echo had sat in her cheerless room and thought things over. Tried to bring order out of chaos. Prayed for peace. Hoped for happiness. At five o'clock, all fuss and feathers, Gladys had gone out to dinner with Bart. They hadn't even called to see if she was awake. Now Echo was sitting in Daphne's pretty apartment up over the House of Venus, pouring out her heart to her friend.

"Philosophers tell us that life is what we make it, Daffy, but . . . am I to blame for this? I tried so hard . . . stood for all the knocks and smiles and hard names. Money for him. And now . . ."

Daphne was like a beautiful youth, but she understood human nature and she had rubbed shoulders with life.

"Dearie," she said, covering Echo's cold fingers with her exquisite hand, "Kenton wasn't on the level with you for a minute, even in New York. Don't waste your tears over him. He isn't worth it. Believe me, I know . . . because Buster Kenton made a play for me right under your good-looking nose, darling."

There was silence, such a long silence that Daphne was half-afraid she had said the wrong thing.

Then, shaking herself like an impatient terrier, Echo rose and walked to the telephone.

"May I?" she asked Daphne.

"Certainly. I don't know where the directory is unless it is under those magazines."

With her old *gamine* smile, Echo shook her head.

"Thanks, old pal, I don't need it," she answered. "I rather guess I carry Raoul Vanburgh's telephone number in my heart."

ROMANCE: The silver lining youth gives to cast iron reality.

A powerful story of a man's revenge on the betrayer of his wife.

INFERIOR MATERIAL

By SCAMMON LOCKWOOD

THE MAN'S name is Smith—just plain Jeffry Smith. He is an expert on concrete. Almost every Sunday he takes the elevated out to Astoria and walks about under the huge structure of the Hell Gate Bridge. No man knows why he does it. Does he admire the beauty of the design?

It is a majestic span of steel, superb, enduring, arousing in the beholder an exquisite awe. Perhaps for this reason the man likes to visit the spot. The mighty arch is approached by smaller arches of concrete, like a procession of white robed acolytes. They bend across the fields and houses and swamps and wastes of Astoria in a long curve that makes you think of painting a ten league canvas with brushes of comet's hair.

Have men such as those ants scurrying about beneath this serene magnificence, built so mightily and splendidly, so far nobler than themselves? Has a human brain conceived and human hands created the sweep of that superstructure and the curve of those austere and stately arches upon which it rests?

Standing beneath it, as in the nave of some magnified Sanctus Sophia, you would gaze aloft and marvel that men should have done this.

But does Jeffry Smith stand there to marvel? He looks up at the beautiful, clean flowing lines of the arches. He looks out across the swirling waters of Hell Gate at the huge steel span of the bridge and then his eyes return to the abutments upon which the arches rest. He stands thus meditative for a few moments and then slowly he turns, walks away, gets on the elevated and goes back to his home, only to repeat the program the following week.

And so let us look into the past, which must carry the explanation of all things.

Nine years have now elapsed. Nine years are thrust back into that incomprehensible immensity from which they came. We are on some star where, as yet, Belgium has not been invaded; some star to which the light of July first, 1914, has not yet penetrated. It is nine years ago. It is a summer evening. The work on the huge Hell Gate Bridge has been under way for about two years.

And here, along one of the streets of Astoria, Jeffry Smith, the concrete expert, is approaching the house in which he and his wife have made a temporary home for the period of the job. He is approaching this home with mingled feelings of eagerness and a vague anxiety. His wife did

not expect him for nearly a week and yet he was coming because—well, he would not tell himself the reason.

The feeling of a man who suspects his wife and yet loves her so much that he declines to give conscious thought to definite suspicion are almost too complicated for analysis. Shakespeare has summed them up in those lines which Iago speaks after he has planted the seeds of suspicion in Othello's mind.

"Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday."

Jeffry Smith would have denied emphatically that he had the slightest suspicion of his wife. Yet he had come back from a long journey without telegraphing ahead. He told himself that he was doing this to surprise her. He really believed this consciously, but subconsciously there was something else.

Perhaps he was beginning to suspect that the manner in which he had been sent away was peculiar. Perhaps he was beginning to see that there was really no reason for Hardie Roscommon, his chief, having sent him down to Cuba on a rather trifling errand. Perhaps he suspected Hardie Roscommon more than his wife.

Jeffry Smith was a type of man that is as ancient as the eternal hills. He had all the primordial instincts. What he thought had been thought by his fathers and grandfathers unto the third and thirtieth generation, and what he felt was felt before the Flood.

He had just two passions—his wife and his profession. He loved his wife and for his profession he had perhaps an actual veneration. He was a concrete expert. He could tell more about the quality of a mix by letting a little of it run through his hands than could all the chemists and all the test tubes in a dozen laboratories. Good concrete was an obsession with him. He would travel hundreds of miles to visit a job, on which he had superintended the mix years before, to see how it was standing up, to see how it was bearing out his judgment. And so far his judgment has not failed.

He would often say, "I'm thinking of the future when I try to make this concrete as good as it can be. We are building for the future and no inferior material should be allowed. We are building more permanently to-day than man has ever built before. Many of our structures could start with the Pyramids and outlast them ten thousand years. But not with any inferior material in them. We must keep inferior material out of everything we do for the future."

Such was Jeffry Smith, a good citizen as men go, a man with a single, simple ideal—good concrete—when he met and married Rhea Latour.

After his marriage, although he was tremendously in love with his wife, he had continued to take this work just as seriously as ever. He acknowledged no superior in his particular specialty, and that meant to Jeffry Smith that no man was his superior. It is true that he took orders from others higher up in the organization which was building the great Hell Gate Bridge, and had taken orders from the heads of other organizations by which he had been employed, but as a man he felt himself a good equal to all other men.

It did not matter much to him that on his salary he could not keep an automobile, that he could not buy expensive clothes and flashing jewels for his wife as other men did for theirs. This, in his philosophy, was merely the ordination of

fate. It did not change him, and it did not make the millionaire or the multi-millionaire in any particular his superior. He expected his wife to live upon his salary, to accept its limitations without complaint. He was the biggest man in the world in his particular line of work. It was merely an accident of fortune that being the biggest man in the world in that particular line, did not make him wealthy.

About concrete he was as conscientious as a saint about venial sins. If he thought that into a piece of work over which he had supervision a single shovelful of inferior material had gone, he would lie awake night after night worrying about it. Once or twice unscrupulous contractors had tried to bribe him to pass inferior materials on large public jobs, but they never tried it a second time.

But now as he walked along Ditmars Avenue toward his home, which was merely a portion of one of the old Astoria mansions somewhat renovated as a temporary habitation during the period of the job, he was conscious of a greater uneasiness than he had ever before experienced. He remembered all he knew and had heard about Hardie Roscommon, the man of whom he was now suspicious — perhaps entirely without conscious thought, but suspicious nevertheless.

He knew that Hardie was, as the phrase has it, a devil for the women, but he had always believed that Hardie had a man's code of honor, as far as the wives of his friends were concerned. And he knew that Hardie Roscommon had led a very different sort of life from the life of plain Jeffry Smith.

Roscommon's had been what the correspondence schools described most glowingly as the life of every civil engineer. He had watered the desert and drained the swamp and carved a pathway for the rails of commerce right through the heart of the living rock. He had had a finger in the Assuan Dam, and several fingers at Bitter Root and Keokuk. He was the man who grew famous overnight by beating all contenders in the race for a certain western right of way by laying eighty-four miles of track across the Mintoco Desert in eighty-four days. Before he was thirty, he had come to be regarded as a man with the brains to conceive great projects and the executive ability to get them carried out.

Jeffry Smith knew therefore that Roscommon was a thorough engineer and this in Smith's eyes would have covered more sins than had yet been charged to Roscommon even by the recording angel. He and Roscommon had worked on many other jobs together. They had first encountered each other in the Philippines on some government bridge work. This was before Roscommon's name was known to two continents and before Smith had made much of a name for himself as a concrete expert.

And now, as he walked along, he remembered how soon after his arrival at Astoria, Hardie had begun to find excuses to drop in. He remembered how Hardie several evenings a week would happen to be leaving the work just as Jeffry was leaving and made it seem entirely natural that he, the superior in his racing roadster, should pick Jeffry up and deposit him at his home.

And then he recalled how he had been sent away. One day, shortly after the Astoria job was well under way, Hardie had accepted a small bridge and viaduct contract from the Cuban government. It was such a trifling thing, the sort of job that might be handled by any good general contractor, that they could not see why Hardie took any interest in it. He

had gotten it well under way and then told his general manager to send Jeffry Smith down there to get them rightly started on the concrete. Jeffry had gone down and been absent about six weeks. Then, without definite orders, but because he felt that he had done everything necessary, he came back. Hardie greeted him cordially, asked him if things were all right and indicated that he was to continue on the job at Astoria that had been interrupted by his trip. He even professed a little chagrin because his general manager had sent Jeffry away.

But a few weeks later Jeffry got another summons back to Havana and this time he asked Hardie personally about it. Hardie had explained that it was only for a short time, that he personally would look after the concrete in Astoria during Jeffry's absence, and begged him to go. And so Hardie had managed to work his will without arousing suspicion.

Whatever suspicion Jeffry had was due to a letter he had received from his wife. He had not been gone more than two weeks on his second trip to Havana when the disturbing letter came. He had frequently before been obliged to be absent on business, and although he earnestly longed to have his wife write to him that she was lonesome and wanted him back, no message of that sort had ever come. But this letter closed with just a very brief paragraph saying, "I wish you'd come home. I have been needing you. There is a steamer on the fifth. I looked it up."

This was such an unusual sort of statement. Jeffry's wife was like most women as far as time tables are concerned. She always turned them over to him and said that she couldn't make head nor tail of them, and here she was looking up steamer sailings. It struck him as very peculiar. That was perhaps one of the reasons why he did not wait for the steamer on the fifth—why he got a boat to Tampa and returned by rail, arriving at Astoria in consequence nearly a week sooner than he could have arrived if he had waited for the steamer to which his wife had referred in her letter.

All of these events, all of these recollections, had turned through his mind as he walked along Ditmars Avenue toward his house. He reached his street and turned the corner. It was dusk. He saw the red tail-light of an automobile in front of his house. As he came nearer he recognized it for Hardie Roscommon's fast roadster. He turned and went up the steps of his house, but his latchkey would not admit him. The door was bolted. He rapped loudly. He heard a scurrying upstairs. He rapped again. Then he stepped over to one of the porch windows, and without thinking what he was doing he smashed the suitcase he carried through the glass, reached in and undid the catch, raised the window and stepped into the living-room. He stalked over to the wall switch and turned on the electric lights. As he did so he heard the back door slam and the next instant he heard his wife's voice calling from upstairs, "Who is it? Who is it?"

"What's the matter?" he replied. "Why was the door bolted?"

"Oh, Jeff! Oh, Jeff! Come up here! Come up here quickly!" she responded.

Then he heard the roar of a high powered engine; he looked outdoors and saw Hardie Roscommon's roadster dash away. He turned and rushed upstairs.

"Why—why how did you get home so soon?" his wife faltered.

"What is the matter?" he replied, at the same moment taking in at a glance the disordered condition of the room, the ex-

treme dishabille of his wife's attire. He was entirely unconscious of what he said. Too much was bursting within him.

Suddenly all his vague misgivings had crystallized into definite suspicions. All through his body there was an instant hardening of muscle and ligament and cord. Before the eyes of his wife, who stood shrinking in all her delicate pink and white beauty, in all the seductive disarray of a pretty young woman, he was going through a rapid metamorphosis. He was dashing back through a million years; he was stripping away the thin and brittle varnish of civilization. He was accepting the heritage of the tiger, the wolf. Back, back a million years and he was again howling through the jungle in search of his enemy.

In him love and hate were battling. Love? Yes, he still loved his wife. Hate? Yes, over in one corner, tumbled on the floor beside a little high heeled slipper, was Hardie Roscommon's pith helmet. It was unmistakable. It was a sign by which Roscommon was known all over the job. Ignorant workmen could pick him out by it a quarter-mile away. He had first gotten into the habit of wearing that particular style of hat in the tropics, where it was the usual headgear, and he had clung to it in summertime wherever he went. There was no mistaking it.

Rhea's soft brown eyes followed the blue flame of his glance.

"Jeff! Jeff!" she pleaded. "Don't—don't think what you're thinking!"

"Why not?" he very slowly inquired, walking over and taking her by the throat.

"Jeff! Wait! What are you going to do?" she gasped, as she felt the strangling hold of his iron fingers. She had never before considered him as a particularly muscular man. Now she felt as if she were in the grip of some utterly relentless and unfeeling piece of machinery. It filled her with terror.

"What are you going to do?" she gasped again.

"I want the truth, the whole truth! I want no lies, nothing held back. How long has he been here?"

"All afternoon. Oh, Jeff! I was afraid it would happen! I wrote to you! You'll get the letter!"

He knew this to be the truth. His joy increased. He loved her more than ever. He hated his enemy more than ever.

"He's been here all afternoon and you dressed this way?" he said.

"I wasn't!"

"Didn't he just leave?"

"I mean I wasn't when he came. He did it! I fought him! It must have been the headache medicine!" she stammered.

"Headache medicine?" he slowly repeated.

Her glance guided his to a small phial on the window ledge. He stepped over, picked it up and smelled of the few drops that still clung to its interior. It bore no label.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I don't know. It was after I took it that—that—I couldn't fight any more."

"Tell me the whole business, right straight through from start to finish," he commanded.

"Oh, Jeff, it goes way back to when you first met me. Did you know that he tried to get me to go away with him? He wouldn't marry me, then, but he said he would later."

"Go on," he said.

"So then I married you and we went to Vera Cruz and I forgot all about him. And then we came here. He said he brought you here on my account.

"And as soon as we got here it began. You know how he used to bring you home

in his car and then stay for tea or dinner. Well, sometimes he'd stop in of an afternoon when you were not here."

"Why didn't you tell me?" he demanded.

"I was afraid you'd lose your position, Jeff. I thought I could handle the situation. And then he sent you to Cuba."

"Who says he sent me?" he suddenly roared.

"He told me so; he boasted that he'd keep you at the other end of the world until he had made me love him."

Jeffry Smith began to be vaguely conscious of plans forming; of a definite something taking shape entirely without volition on his part. He stepped over and picked up Hardie Roscommon's pith helmet. "Go on," he muttered.

"But I began to be afraid this last time and I wrote you to come home. I told you there was a steamer on the fifth, but that would have been too late. He came this afternoon. I was always pleasant for your sake, Jeff. I gave him tea. He always liked that.

"But then I told him I had a headache and must go upstairs. 'You have lots of headaches,' he said. You see I had often used this as an excuse to get away from him when I saw things—when I saw things going wrong. 'You have lots of headaches,' he said, and I think he was sarcastic, but I only said, 'Yes.' 'Well, I have been thinking about your headaches,' he said, 'and I've brought you something for them,' and he pulled out that bottle and poured it out in a tea cup and made me swallow it right there, and a swallow of tea after it.

"Oh, Jeff!" Her head sunk upon her bosom. "After that I had no strength to fight! You came just in time." She shook with sobs and fell over upon the bed.

Now the plans were taking clearer form. Now he saw quite plainly, as though on one of his familiar blue prints, every step that he must take.

It was all comparatively simple. He had only one uncertainty. Yet it was not an uncertainty, it was a conscientious scruple. It worried him. It bothered him. It irritated him, and as soon as it began to irritate him, he thrust it aside. He would let no conscientious scruples interfere with what he was determined to do.

So now his plan was almost entirely complete. Only a few details still required working out, and those could be attended to later. Everything was clear. How simple things become after a definite decision is reached. How complicated and baffling is vacillation.

He stepped over to his wife, picked her up in his arms and carried her downstairs.

"Now telephone to the office—Astoria 8291. He's there by now. Lie to him. Don't be afraid that I will despise you for lying. Sometimes women have to lie; it's their only protection. Lie to him. Be nice to him. Tell him that he needn't have hurried, that the noise downstairs was only a peddler who came to the house. Can you do all that?"

She nodded. "Yes, yes, Jeffry; I will do anything you tell me to do."

In a moment she had Roscommon on the wire and she spoke to him as her husband had directed her. Roscommon seemed quite satisfied and unsuspicious. So presently she said good-by and hung up the receiver.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

Without replying he again picked her up and carried her upstairs and laid her on the bed.

"You are to stay here and make no noise or disturbance of any sort until I return," he said.

T. T.

He went over to a bureau, opened the top drawer and took out an automatic pistol. She followed him with her eyes.

"Oh, please put that back!" she pleaded. "You must not use it!"

"I probably shall not use it," he said slowly.

Then he took possession of the phial and Hardie Roscommon's pith helmet. He went downstairs and hunted around for a piece of wrapping paper. Having found this he wrapped the helmet loosely in it, descended to the basement where he had a small tinkering shop with a few tools and selected a pair of long nosed, wire cutting pliers.

He proceeded as deliberately and mechanically as a man following a set of blue prints. And this was almost precisely what he was doing. His plan was quite complete. Every detail was settled upon in his mind. Yet it did not seem to be his—Jeffry Smith's—plan.

It just seemed to be a plan that had suddenly been given to him complete and quite perfect of its kind. He never could have laid out so clean cut and definite a plan to do anything else than the thing he proposed doing.

From where do such plans come? Perhaps it was a matter of stimulus. Perhaps if we could discover a stimulus for the average human mind under normal conditions, equal to that which had keyed up Jeffry Smith, the whole race of man might leap forward a hundred thousand years in a generation.

This was a very perfect plan and there seemed no chance of its going awry. True, one conscientious scruple continued to prick Jeffry Smith, but it did not disturb the formulation of the plan. If, at the last minute, his conscience would not let him go through with it, he could stop, but at least the plan went on. Your conscience never stops you from making plans. It merely inhibits their execution.

He took his package containing the pliers and Hardie Roscommon's helmet and walked down the street to the corner druggist. As he entered the shop the druggist came forward from behind the prescription counter, but Jeffry waved him back. "I want to see you in there," he said, as he walked back of the counter. He produced the phial and handed it to the druggist.

"What was in it?" he said.

The druggist smelled of the phial, rubbed his finger along the inside of the neck and touched it lightly to his tongue. "Have you any idea what it is?" he said.

Jeffry nodded. "I have."

"Well, that's what it is," said the druggist.

Jeffry turned and strode from the shop. He considered the case complete. His wife was quite innocent. His hate need not be divided by one particular hair. And now his plan was not disturbed even by that conscientious scruple which had formerly troubled him. Now even this had been swept away.

He walked over to where they were pouring the concrete into one of the huge arches that was later to support the approach to the bridge proper. The second shift was on. One of the things Jeffry had done on this huge job was to arrange for a continuous flow of concrete into every arch from the moment it was started until the last spoonful was poured. Many engineers said that it didn't matter if the pouring was interrupted, as long as there were no lateral stresses, but on the jobs he superintended Jeffry took no chances. Huge concrete mixers worked on the ground fed by continuous streams of material from freight cars run onto elevated sidings. These cars were taken out by

switch engines as soon as they were emptied, and full ones substituted. As the thoroughly mixed and almost fluid concrete poured from the mixers, it was taken by belt carriers up to the top of the enormous wooden moulds and there discharged in an almost continual stream until the whole arch had been poured.

They were just beginning to pour one of the arches. There was no one at the top. But there was a huge sputtering arc light which clearly illuminated the end of the carrier and showed plainly the stream of concrete pouring from it into the mould. There was a little platform of boards around the opening, and the wire which led to the light was flung carelessly across the platform, just as he had remembered it to be, just as it appeared on this plan which had come to him so perfect and complete.

Jeffry laid Hardie Roscommon's pith helmet to one side in a shadow. Then he sat down and scraped the light wire bare in two places. These he joined together. Then between the bare places he had scraped he cut the wire with his pliers and formed the ends into a hook that would hold together temporarily. Next he separated the parts that he had originally joined. He had accomplished the feat of cutting a wire and leaving it in such a condition that it could easily be separated. Yet he had not interrupted the light. Any electrician will immediately understand what he had done.

Now he climbed down from the structure and went to the temporary office and called up the main office of the work over on Ditmars Avenue about a mile away. He knew that Roscommon had just been there and had probably not departed. He asked for him and without a tremor heard the voice of his enemy answer at the other end.

"Hello, Hardie," he said. "I just got in and hiked right over to see how the job was going."

"Why, hello, Jeff," came Hardie's cheery voice, perhaps with a note of relief in it that Jeffry could never have detected had he not known it might be there.

"Could you drive over here for a minute before you go home?" said Jeffry. "I think they have laid the mould for this arch they are pouring out of line, but I don't want to stop them until you have seen it."

"Oh, that's all right," came Hardie's voice over the wire. "I was over there this afternoon. That's been checked and double checked a dozen times."

"That makes no difference; it's wrong, and you had better come over and see it," Jeffry insisted.

Hardie Roscommon had tremendous faith in Jeffry's judgment, so he finally said, "All right, I'll be right along." and hung up the receiver. Perhaps something within him—something of which he was entirely unconscious, told him that he might as well say, "I'll be right along." Perhaps he had some mysterious knowledge that there was no escaping the operation of the plan.

So Jeffry walked down to where he knew Roscommon would have to stop his car and waited. Presently the big roadster came along and Roscommon turned off the engine, leaving the switch key in the lock as he nearly always did, jumped out, came over and shook Jeffry warmly by the hand.

"Glad to see you back. Didn't expect you for a week or two."

"Well, everything's all right down there," said Jeffry. "And if this thing is the way it looks to me, it's lucky I came back."

"You'll have to climb it," Jeffry said

as they reached the arch under construction. "That's the only way you can get the slant on it that I got. And then in the morning, if you think it is advisable, you can have them put their instruments on it."

"Oh, Lord! I'm not going away up there!" said Roscommon. "Close down for the night if you think you had better."

"No," said Jeffry, "I don't want to do that. We have started pouring that arch and you know I never stop pouring once I start. Come along! It's easy after you get started. I want to get through. . ."

He was so quietly insistent that Roscommon, more to humor him than because he believed it necessary, followed him as he climbed the triple ladder that took them to the top of the structure.

Jeffry noted that Roscommon was not wearing the pith helmet which always marked him so conspicuously whenever he got out on the work.

"Where's your helmet?" he said in quite an offhand manner. He surprised himself by the ease with which he was carrying out his plan.

"Oh," said Roscommon, "I left it down at the office. Picked up this old cap instead," and he tugged at the vizor of the cloth cap he was wearing.

They reached the top. Now Jeffry turned and pointed down the long line of arches already completed—the long line of beautiful, clean lined concrete arches which formed that magnificent sweeping curve on which the railroad would approach the bridge.

"Now can't you see what I see?" he said. And as he spoke he stepped down and disconnected the light wires.

For an instant the whole job was in darkness; *only* an instant, however. The workmen down around the mixers shouted and then paused in their activities, waiting for the light to come on. Interruptions from the power house had happened before.

But almost immediately the lights flared up and they saw the familiar figure in the pith helmet standing on the structure. They saw him wave his arm as much as to say, go ahead, and then turn and start down the ladder. They gave no further thought to him. The work went on. The crushed stone, sand and the Portland cement poured into the mixers and the fluid concrete poured out of their huge snouts and was carried in a continual stream up, up to the mouth of the mould and precipitated in a continuous cataract into the huge cavern which would one day be a superb arch.

The next morning Hardie Roscommon's car and his pith helmet were found down on a little point of land which projects out into the narrowest part of the Hell Gate channel just under the arch of the bridge. It was finally decided that, finding the evening warm, he had gone in for a swim, as he was known to have done several times before, and that the battling tides of Hell Gate had been too much for him. Some tramp had appropriated his clothes, but left the pith helmet.

Jeffry Smith lives happily with his wife. She worships him, as she had never loved him during the first five or six years of their married life. In only one particular does his conscience ever trouble him and that is because just once in his career he allowed what he regarded as very inferior material to be mingled with his beloved concrete.

Yes, his conscience troubles him. He considers it a great wrong to allow any inferior material to enter into the making of concrete. Often that thought troubles him; nothing else

It may be romantic to indulge in love-making with an unseen gallant, but it sometimes leads to complications.

KISSES MASQUES

By JEANNE LAURENT

"AT THE dance . . . you will tell me then?"

The words were whispered tensely across the top of a small table in an ultra-fashionable tea room—whispered amid the blare of a jazz orchestra and the hum and buzz of conversation, and yet it seemed to Emmeline that everyone must have heard them. She looked about hastily before replying.

"Yes, I will, Bobbie," she rejoined at length, when she had made quite certain that the couples nearby were far too much engrossed in their own affairs to be lending an ear to her words. "I'll tell you at the dance."

"That will be wonderful—if I can manage to possess my soul in patience until then. But, darling, how will I recognize you? Hadn't you better tell me what sort of costume you intend to wear?"

She shook her head firmly, even while she smiled at him.

"I want it to be a—a surprise," she replied. "And since I shall recognize you immediately, why, it will be all right. You will certainly be the only man to wear a red satin domino and a white rose. And besides—if I were to come up to you and whisper 'yes,' don't you believe you would know who it was?"

"Can you doubt it for an instant? Ah, how I wish to-morrow night were here!"

In order fully to understand exactly why Emmeline was deferring the announcement of her decision, at which she had already arrived, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the complicated mechanism which made up Emmeline herself. She was twenty-two—a delightful age! She was blonde and blue-eyed, and her skin—well, it was exactly right for a blue-eyed blonde, while her tiny mouth, half open like a child's, did nothing to mar the *ensemble*. In a word, Emmeline was adorable.

But—she was also romantic.

Romance it was that caused her to elope with Vernon Wade on the very eve of her formally announced wedding to —Vernon Wade! Romance which had taken them, for their honeymoon into a camp in the wildest wilds of Canada where, of course, they became bitter enemies in twenty-four hours! Romance, aided this time by a pinch of common sense, caused Emmeline to forsake temporarily the bed and board —or rather the supremely uncomfortable army cot and highly unpalatable culinary experiments of her husband, in the middle of the night while he was prosaically snoring, and hie herself to the nearest village, which was, fortunately, very near, and thence to the nearest town (in a jitney)

and thence to the railroad station . . . with the result that you may imagine. Young Mr. Wade followed on the next train.

And now, after three years of marriage, it was again romance which made her stage her surrender to Bobbie Allen on the night of Vivian Shaw's big masquerade ball, instead of simply and solely saying "Yes" to him in so many words.

Emmeline had every intention of succumbing to the charming importunings of her lovesick young admirer. In the first place she had heard it said that no woman was really mature until she had been loved by—and had loved—several men, and thus far her amatory experiences had been conjugally bound on the north, south, east and west, with never, never a tangent!

In the second place she had reached the stage of "primary boredom" with Vernon, which every woman reaches automatically at the end of three years, unless, indeed, she has reached it long before. She could always, for example, tell just when he was about to take her into his arms, just what he would say when he got her there, just how he would act, and just how he wouldn't. In a word, there was nothing unexpected—nothing left for her lively little imagination to do!

She was not thus handicapped when it came to Bobby, however, about whose caresses she knew nothing, save via the route of imagination, and about which she, quite frankly, desired to know more. He made such beautiful, exquisite love from a distance that she did not believe, observed closer, it would prove disappointing.

As Emmeline walked homeward through the lightly falling snow, she was well content with life and its immediate outlook. As he had placed her fur about her slim shoulders, Bobby had given them a heavenly, thrilling squeeze and whispered into her ear: "To-morrow night, my darling, and—oh, I'll be so happy if—"

After dinner that evening the subject of the morrow's dance came up—conjugally.

"I suppose you will wear that Cleopatra thing you wore last year, hon," volunteered Vernon and Emmeline—well, Emmeline permitted him to suppose so! Immoral? A lie? Emmeline charged it all up to Romance!

As for Vernon, she had that very day received back from the cleaner his white satin domino, black lined and marked with a peculiar pattern along the edge, a pattern which she would always be able to distinguish—and fight shy of—in any crowd!

Dawned the sun of the great day—set the sun of the same day, and lo, it was time for the dance.

Emmeline, being a woman, and therefore primarily concerned with her appearance and only secondarily with the possibility of attracting attention on the way to the dance, dressed at home, shrouding herself carefully in a huge cloak which entirely concealed her save for twinkling toes and no less twinkling eyes.

Vernon, being a man, was occupied with his ultimate appearance not at all, but to an extreme degree with the horrible possibility of attracting attention on the route danceward, so that he carried under his arm a bulky package containing the domino, mask, and other accouterments. He wore a dinner jacket and an overcoat, like a sane person!

"Let's see how you look, hon," he demanded half-heartedly, just before they left the house, but Emmeline only drew her cloak more closely about her and mumbled words to the effect that she could not disarrange the existing arrangement—or something of that sort.

However, when, in the ladies' dressing room of Vivian Shaw's spacious mansion, she stepped from the shimmering folds of her evening cloak, it was not Cleopatra who stood there revealed, but an elfin, black garbed, gauzy-filmed creature, bedecked with stars—a sprite of the night. Had Vernon but glimpsed the gleaming shoulders of this, his wife, it is probable he would have lost his apathetic attitude. But how could he know how charmingly Emmeline had been metamorphosed since, at the very moment she emerged from her cloak, he was changing from—he was changing into—well, he was changing his suit!

"You are beautiful, beautiful, do you know *how* beautiful?" It was later, and Emmeline was dancing in the arms of—a red satin domino, with a white rose stuck jauntily in the collar. She thrilled blissfully to the words as she snuggled closer to her partner.

"Do you think so," she cooed. "Do you *really?*"

"I do really," replied the satisfactory scarlet domino. "And the words are far too mild. Holding you in my arms is like a bit of paradise, and I am the most fortunate of poor mortals to be so blessed."

How nicely Bobby made love, reflected Emmeline happily.

" 'On such a night as this'," she quoted naughtily, 'on such a night as this'."

In reply he pressed her closer until she could hear his heart beat. It was just when she was blissfully lost in the happiness of surrender that she caught sight of a white satin domino which was making determined efforts to attract her attention, a white satin domino, black lined and with a peculiar pattern along the edge which she could never fail to recognize.

"Don't allow that horrible white domino to cut in on our dance," she pleaded in a whisper. "I don't want to dance with him. All I want in the world is to be in *your* arms."

"You darling!" whispered the red domino passionately. "Let's get out of here. I know where there is a little room . . . we could be alone . . . even if only for a few moments."

"Oh, but do you think it would be wise? Someone might see us—might miss us?"

"They are far too busy either to see or miss," he urged her. "As for wisdom—what does wisdom matter to us? If you would be safe from unwelcome intrusion, if you would be safe in my arms, beautiful fairy of night, then come with me."

Thrilled to the very marrow of her small bones, Emmeline followed the fascinating red figure in and out the labyrinth of halls until they reached a small room separated from a larger one by a heavy velour portière. Although not a soul was in either room, the red domino pulled the curtain shut, and Emmeline gasped. Here was adventure, indeed—here, here was romance.

"Your mouth," the red domino was passionately whispering. "Ah, my star of the night, your soft, red mouth."

And slowly, Emmeline yielded to a masterful kiss.

"Your eyes now, my glorious one—I must have your eyes," and he made as though to tear aside her mask.

"Wait, wait—my hair," gasped Emmeline. "I will take it off myself, and you remove yours at the same time."

It was all intensely thrilling, she reflected, as she undid the tiny velvet knot which held the mask in place, although it would have been still more thrilling had she not known all along who the red domino was. But when Emmeline raised her eyes to the face of the man before her, she gasped. And so, for that matter, did he.

It was Vernon!

Emmeline gasped, and Vernon gasped,

but to their everlasting credit be it stated that neither one asked any questions concerning costumes, although Vernon wondered where the hell she had got it and why, and Cleopatra—I mean Star of the Night—wondered what the—what on *earth* he was doing in Bobby's domino. And after the manner of woman she recovered and lied first.

"Of—of course, I knew it was you all the while, Vernie," she faltered.

And, after the manner of man, he recovered and lied more slowly but far more thoroughly.

"You did? Well, I got a glimpse of your costume in the taxi coming over. Thought I would see how far you would go with another man!" And never a quaver in his voice while he said it!

They went home. And after a while they retired. And then, after a while they got up and Vernon left for his office while Emmeline was left to her reflections. They were moody reflections; the morning after the night before that wasn't!

She had lost Bobby, that much was certain. Or had she? Of *course* she had, since she had promised him his answer last night. Last night . . . oh, darn! Why, *why* hadn't she told him in the afternoon in the tea room? To which the answer was . . . romance.

At this moment the telephone rang and listlessly Emmeline took the receiver from the hook.

"Hello," she called dully, but her apathy vanished as though by magic as she recognized the voice at the other end of the wire.

"Darling!" It was Bobby. *Bobby!* "My own! Are you all by your lonesome?"

"Yes, I'm alone," replied Emmeline in a small voice. "What is it, Bobby?"

"What is it?" he was palpably surprised. "Why, I want to tell you how I love you, after last night. . . ."

"After last night?" echoed Emmeline stupidly. Who had gone mad, she wondered, Bobby or she herself?

"Yes, my own darling. Such a wonderful night. I simply had to call you up and tell you again—what I told you then."

"Oh, yes," she agreed, "I'm so glad you did."

"You looked so perfectly adorable as Little Red Riding Hood," he continued, "although I will confess it was rather a surprise to me. And some fool left a white domino instead of my red one. But of course I knew it was you as soon as you kissed me. Ah, your kisses, my beloved, how happy they made me! And how intriguing it was for you to refuse to unmask. How *romantic.*"

Little Red Riding Hood . . . kisses . . . romantic!

"But—but you were quite certain it was I all the while in spite of the mask, Bobby, weren't you?"

"Yes, indeed, my darling, I never could be mistaken. And you will, won't you?"

"I will? Er—what will I, Bobby?"

"Why, don't you remember?" His voice was hurt. "Come to me here—in my place—at five o'clock, as you promised?"

First Emmeline went white, then she went red, and then she went white again. After quite a long pause she replied.

"Just you stay home and wait, Bobby," she said slowly. "I'll have a little surprise for you, at about five o'clock. You like surprises, don't you?"

And Emmeline wondered, as she replaced the receiver on the hook, how Bobby was going to enjoy his tête-à-tête with Little Red Riding Hood—interrupted this afternoon at—say—twenty minutes after five?

Hilton Sterrett boasted that he had never desired a woman, and then—

The WHITE ROSE *of* JULONG

By JAMES PERLEY HUGHES

KUALA LUMPUR with its snow-white mosques coruscating in the tropic sunlight. Kuala Lumpur with its tall palms and spreading banyan trees. Kuala Lumpur, the heart of Selangor, with its teaming Malay life, its scudding 'rickshaws and creaking ox carts.

Except where European life touches the Oriental and spurs it on to strange activities, age-old ways still prevail. From the joss houses of the Cantonese settlement come the odors of incense. From the balconies of the needle-like minarets, lifting themselves toward the brazen sky, are heard the calls of the muezzin, summoning the faithful to prayer.

Thus for centuries had Kuala Lumpur basked in perpetual summer, unmindful of the passing world, the rise and fall of empires or the kings that reigned in splendor, only to be laid away, forgotten in some narrow niche.

Then came the outside world's demand for tin, rubber and gold, and ever more gold. Slow moving, the heart of Selangor was quickened with new riches in its veins and strange men with blue eyes and white skins came in ever increasing numbers. Came foreign gold, for gold begets gold in all lands, under meridian skies or amid artic wastes. And with it came Hilton Sterrett.

About a rattan table upon the veranda of the club sat Sterrett with the leading planters of the Federated Malay States. A gigantic consolidation of rubber interests was to be effected and the financier had grudgingly come out from New York, when it was discovered that additional concessions must be obtained. The trouble lay largely with the Sultan of Julong, a native up-country potentate, whose rank forbade that he should deal with anyone but principals.

Sterrett looked down upon the crowds milling in the narrow street as he waited for belated members of the party to arrive. These veiled Mohammedan women piqued his curiosity with their flashing eyes that spoke of concealed beauties of feature, their loose flowing robes only hinting at the voluptuous figures for which they are noted. Flitting Malay boys placed cooling drinks before him, but he kept his eyes upon the street, realizing almost with a start that here was the setting for the Arabian nights of which he had read, with devouring eyes, in those far off boyhood days.

A stirring among the men at the table announced the late arrivals. Martin

Baker, who represented the Sterrett interests in that region, introduced him to a trio of sun-burned men and they launched into the details of the conference.

"But we must get that concession from his Majesty of Julong or be open to a flank attack at any time," declared McNab, who kept a canny eye on a number of British holdings.

"That's what I came out here for," Sterrett spoke brusquely. "I shall run up to Julong and get the concession while you fellows are wondering whether you will take soda or Tan San with your whisky. Then we will fix up the final papers and Baker can carry on in my place. I've already booked my return passage on the Granite State."

"When does she sail from Singapore?" inquired Savage, one of the late comers.

"The thirtieth. I allowed plenty of time, as I wanted to try my hand at tiger shooting while I am out here."

The others did not laugh. Sterrett was too big a man in world affairs for that, but they exchanged meaning glances.

"I've arranged for an audience with the Sultan," Baker informed his chief, "so if you expect to leave Singapore by the thirtieth you'll have to start to-morrow. The negotiations will take some time."

"I can't see what will take so long. If I were doing business with Morgan & Company for twice the amount, it could be done over the telephone in fifteen minutes. I don't propose to be niggardly. I'll pay his price if he doesn't try to hold me up. What sort of man is the Sultan?"

The eyes of the party centered upon Savage, who had been in the Federated States for many years.

"His Majesty of Julong is a bit old-fashioned," he began, speaking to all rather than Sterrett alone. "You know that he won't allow a railroad to enter his capital and that it will be necessary for Mr. Sterrett to make his entry on an elephant. I dropped the hint when Baker and I were up there that our friend here is a potentate of considerable caliber in his own land—in fact, nothing less than a prince of the blood. His Majesty speaks a little English taught him by a former British resident, but his knowledge of the outside world is fragmentary and elemental."

"*Mais, oui*—but he is one great lover of the women," added Francois des Plaines, who represented the French holdings in the prospective merger.

"A subject that does not interest me," grunted the American.

"Then you are married—*hein?*"

A negative shake of Sterrett's fine head.

"Ah, then—a grand passion in America, what you call affinity—*n'est-ce pas?*"

"They never appealed to me," the cold gray eyes were now of steely hue. "I've been too busy. Women and capital are antithetical. They are affined with dissipating wealth, so I have preferred to woo Fortune only."

The little Frenchman gave his guest a pitying glance, shrugged his shoulders as can only a Parisian, and then in a tone of mock horror:

"Monsieur, you have not lived—scarcely existed."

Conversation lagged for a few minutes. They discussed the prospects for the enlarged consumption of rubber throughout the world and the fear that the American government would take steps to introduce the industry into the Philippine Islands.

"I think I can take care of that through our connections in Washington," Sterrett announced boldly.

From this, they turned to the coming

audience with his Majesty of Julong. The subject of presents, a feature of far eastern diplomacy that looms large, proved a stumbling block for the American.

"I've brought out a limousine that is the last word in luxury," he told them.

"Wasted," was Savage's succinct comment. "There isn't a road in Julong that a car can run on and the streets of the capital are so narrow that it is difficult for the royal elephants to turn a corner without wrecking a building."

"Then what can I give him—jewels?"

"His Majesty is the possessor of the Annam ruby and the Mahmud diamond; both are literally priceless. The diamond —I have seen it—weighs more than a hundred carats. So you can see."

"But there must be something," the financier broke in with an impatient gesture.

"You might exchange similar gifts," was Des Plaines' suggestion.

"Yes," Savage supplemented. "He will probably insist on presenting you with at least one of his most beautiful slave girls. He has one of the largest and finest—er —collections in the Malay States, which is saying quite a bit in these days when rubber and tin have made millionaires out of coolies and water boys. He specializes in Burma girls, I am told."

"He'd better not give me one," growled Sterrett. "I'll make her polish my boots."

The Englishman did not continue the conversation, but there was laughter in his eyes as he glanced at the others in the party. They arose when a Malay boy announced that motors were waiting to take the distinguished guest for a drive.

The American was about to climb into the tonneau of a big French touring car with Des Plaines when a striking girl with dark skin and wonderfully large eyes passed the machine and continued on her way to the rear of the club house.

"Rather pretty girl, that," ventured the visitor to Savage, when the Englishman had taken a seat beside him. "Almost seductive, some might say, in her proper sphere."

"You are evidently not familiar with Burma girls," was the laughing rejoinder. "The word 'seductive' was not written until the author of the dictionary saw one of those houris from Mandalay. You remember what Kipling said. Well, he knew."

"What! Those dark brown wenches?" snapped the financier.

"*Oui, monsieur,* they do look a little dark when you first come out," mused Des Plaines, who was seated on the other side of their guest.

"In the beginning they appear coffee colored," Savage carried on. "Then after you have found that it is not so hot as you believed and get to like the rains, you suddenly discover that the girls are cream-colored brunettes and are inclined to pulchritude. By the end of the first year, you are ready to declare, with your hand on the Bible and your eyes toward Mecca, that they are lily-like. Besides that, they have that way—"

"Do you mean to tell me that reputable men in this country have affairs with native women?" burst out Sterrett.

"That is a question one gentleman never asks another," Des Plaines answered for his friend, and then with another shrug of the shoulders. "So, who can tell?"

"No. They don't go around bragging of their—er—conquests," Savage laughed uneasily.

"For my part I have no hesitancy in announcing the fact that I have yet to meet the woman who even attracts me," boomed Hilton Sterrett.

"Lucky dog!" was the Englishman's subdued ejaculation.

"Poor devil!" Des Plaines whispered to himself.

The next morning Sterrett boarded the Singapore-Bankok express with a party of native servants provided by Martin Baker, who accompanied his chief on the expedition. They traveled through miles of rubber plantations with their teeming hordes of coolie caretakers. Baker pointed out the mills where tapioca is prepared for the market, the world's supply of this succulent boarding-house dessert being grown in a comparatively small area in the Malay peninsula.

The Sultan's principal present had been nothing less than an inspiration on the part of Des Plaines. After buying a few less important gifts, Sterrett had flat-footedly refused to buy a slave girl for his Majesty from the oily Chinese and Parsee slave traders, who operate in open defiance of British authority. So a radio outfit had been purchased that would put Julong in touch with the outside world and at the same time preserve intact the Sultan's oath that never would he permit a telephone or telegraph wire to be strung in his possessions.

"They are broadcasting now from Singapore," Baker explained as their train rushed on through the jungles, which were now becoming thicker. "We tap in on them in Kuala Lumpur and all the rubber men have their own outfits. The Sultan will get a bit of jazz that he has missed in his gay, care-free life."

As the train stopped at a way station, Sterrett got his first view of elephants handling teak logs. The great animals were laying them in orderly piles. He watched them with the fascination of a small boy. Travels throughout Europe had failed to awaken the dreams that had once been his, but now, surrounded by the exotic scenes depicted in the books of his adolescence, there swept before him panoramas of fancy that had been forgotten for more than a score of years.

The tales of Haroun al-Raschid and Scheherezade, the magic carpet, Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves. . . .

"Open Sesame," he muttered to himself. "Perhaps this will be an 'open sesame'."

"I beg your pardon," Baker laid down the map that he had been studying and looked with anxious eyes at his chief.

Sterrett awoke with a start, rubbing his eyes as one who has been sleeping, instead of day-dreaming, as the train rushed through the jungle.

"I didn't say anything." The financier colored confusedly.

"Pardon me, I thought you spoke," and then, after consulting the map again, "I think that we had better get off at Kwali. It's the nearest station to the capital; we can send a runner to inform his majesty that we have arrived."

"I suppose that we can get cars and motor down to the capital," the other ventured.

Baker smiled. He had made the journey before. Two days trip either by camel, which made him seasick, or by horse, which was worse, were the prospects that he held out.

"Damn," snorted Sterrett. "Why didn't you get the Sultan to come down to Kuala Lumpur and avoid all this trouble?"

"Because he is the Sultan," was his aid's aphoristic reply.

But Hilton Sterrett enjoyed the journey through the jungle as he had never enjoyed anything before. An escort met their party at Djerang and royal elephants awaited them a short way outside the capital. The financier thrilled as he scrambled up a light bamboo ladder into a howdah that was crusted with gold and

precious stones. Even the jerky movement of the great beast proved intriguing, while the fantastically colored cavalcade of outriders and the shrieking, clanging music gave him the sensation of being the central figure in some great spectacular drama. Instinctively, he looked for the tripods of the motion picture camera men, for as a man of importance he had been photographed frequently by the news reel weeklies. None was in sight, nor did he have a glimpse of a single white face among the brown Malayan throngs that crowded the streets.

Forced into the cares of big business through the death of his father before he had finished college, Sterrett had been cheated of those rare days of care-free young manhood. Always had he been surrounded by men of affairs, and there had been little time for play. Now he let his fancy run rampant. The weird tones of the reeds, the clanging cymbals, the shouts of the outriders, forcing back the crowds, the plaudits of the multitude, lifted him from a work-a-day world until he was living the day dreams of youth.

"That is the Sultan's harem," Martin Baker informed him as they alighted within a high walled enclosure.

Around a domed and minaretted building of the finest marble, glistening in the intense light of the tropic mid-day, were gardens filled with flowers, whose heavy perfumes lulled Hilton Sterrett and yet awakened a new sensation in his heart. Fountains, whose figures can not be described to an Occident world, poured forth their streams of limpid water. Picture the playgrounds of Nero and Caligula and you will have a suggestion of the grounds surrounding this sybaritic palace.

Tall, lean black men with squeaky voices ushered the party into an antechamber through richly carved portals like the work of the Italian masters.

The financier looked inquiringly at his companion.

"Eunuchs," was Baker's laconic reply.

To be sure! How foolish that he had not remembered. He had read about them in the books of his boyhood, although his travels had never thrown him in contact with these epicene beings.

Rich robes of heavy silks were laid out upon low divans. The slaves stood silently to one side awaiting the white men's pleasure.

"The Sultan objects to European dress," Sterrett's man of affairs told him. "I forgot to mention it. We'll have to rig ourselves out in these things."

Panoplied in the jeweled garments prepared for them, the Americans were ushered into the audience chamber. The glaring sunshine of the out of doors was dimmed with silken curtains that tinted the light streaming through the windows until the scene had the beautiful unreality of a gorgeous stage setting. In the center was a fountain that played in tinkling undertones, while at the further end of the room was a dais to which the financier was conducted. His entrance had been marked with the muffled beating of a drum and the plaintive notes of an instrument that sounded not unlike a flute. As he mounted the steps, the purple curtains behind the throne were parted and the Sultan of Julong appeared.

Baker, who had been given a place lower on the dais, arose and presented his chief.

"Your American highness is welcome to my humble abode," the Sultan began in stilted English as he advanced. "I have had prepared a small repast in your honor and some slight entertainment. To-morrow we can talk upon affairs of state."

Hilton Sterrett bowed low. In his own attire, he probably would have been ill at ease, but his rich costume and the exotic

scene were effecting a metamorphosis that was astonishing to Martin Baker. Under other circumstances, the financier would have been piqued at the prospect of delay and in his brusque manner might have thrust aside the etiquette of the Orient to bring business immediately to hand.

"I am at your Majesty's command," is what he did say, and then adding, "but first I wish to present some small token of my admiration and that of my countrymen to the ruler of Julong."

A gesture and Baker clapped his hands. Four of the native servants that had accompanied them from Kuala Lumpur brought in a phonograph of the finest workmanship, and with a swift movement set it in operation.

The potentate's eyes widened in surprised admiration as a Broadway jazz band blared forth through the sound chamber.

A platinum wrist watch, ablaze with small diamonds, was next presented to the Sultan with many salaams. He accepted the trinket with childish pleasure.

Then followed the radio set. His majesty's English was not equal to the explanation of its uses, but with the services of an interpreter, the mysteries of broadcasting were soon explained.

"I cannot voice my gratitude," the Sultan said at the conclusion of the presentation ceremony. "Let us dine."

He tapped a gong that hung by his side. The music that had been silent during their conversation, now began with that pulsing drum beat that finds a colorless echo in the jazz of the Occident. With a gesture, the monarch waved Hilton Sterrett to a richly upholstered divan upon which he half sat and half reclined. Eunuchs brought forth a low table of richly carved teak, heavily inlaid with mother-of-pearl and jeweled at the four corners and along the sides. Fruits and cakes appeared in golden vessels set with rubies, emeralds and sapphires. Wine, mixed with honey and rare spices, filled the jeweled goblet at his right and the slave in attendance never permitted it to become empty. Behind them, a huge incense burner of rare workmanship poured forth a haze that filled his nostrils with seductive odors, while the wine quickened his pulses, yet lulled him to forgetfulness.

His host was murmuring highly colored compliments and words of self-depreciation in the custom of the Orient, when Sterrett noted a quickening of the pulsing rhythm and silken curtains on the other side of the room parted, as a score of dancing girls trooped in. Like a well ordered ballet, they danced in graceful cadence before the dais and then, as the throbbing notes grew wilder, leaped forward and prostrated themselves before their master.

A rustle of the curtains behind the throne came as the music ceased and a woman, whose diaphanous robes of shimmering silk stressed the perfection of her beauty, entered and seated herself at the feet of the lord of Julong. Jewels crowned her head, while her arms were encircled with gems worthy of an empress. Her fingers scintillated with diamonds.

"My favorite," smiled the Sultan as the financier fixed his eyes upon her in wonderment. "Is she not very beautiful? She is a Burma girl."

"Fascinating — intoxicating," Hilton Sterrett found himself murmuring. The cold gray eyes of the banker were ablaze, as Martin Baker saw to his amazement when he looked up at his chief.

A fanfare, and the dancing girls swept back to the curtains through which they had entered, and again the folds parted. A girl of not more than sixteen, dressed in a filmy white robe that accentuated her youthful grace, leaped into their center,

and as the music increased in its abandon, she raced toward the dais with the others in her wake. Much lighter in complexion than her companions, the girl's rare beauty shone out amid the houris of the harem. Her body had that elfin slenderness that is so rare in the women of that clime.

As she danced, the music swelled in gusts of wild passion and then it sank into diminuendoes of tender whisperings, while the swaying bodies enacted every phase of the changing tempo. The Sultan's jaded eyes looked on with cool indifference, but Sterrett's gaze widened, as the girls moved in rapturous ecstasy or tripped daintily to the tinkling tones of the minor passages.

Now the dance took on a wilder measure and the drums beat hysterically, the pulsing notes making the very atmosphere throb with sybaritic intoxication. The dancing girls whirled into a new step and the filmy garments that had swirled around them were cast aside until but one remained.

The American looked down from the dais, fascination written upon every feature. Occasionally Martin Baker glanced at his chief, but was himself unseen. Hilton Sterrett saw not the score of beauties dancing before him, each a picture of grace, but only their leader whose shimmering veils were being thrown aside as the melody swelled louder, faster and more barbaric.

The music was now throbbing in a mad, paphian furore. The girls were springing in long, light strides, like nymphs at play in a woodland, when suddenly they whirled and retreated—all but their dainty leader. With the final crashing crescendo, she poised like a living Aphrodite and then threw herself at the feet of Hilton Sterrett.

"My little present to your American Highness," whispered the potentate. "She is called the White Rose of Julong."

Hilton Sterrett looked down upon the girl. He noted the creamy pink of her skin as she bowed before him in utter subjugation. A mantle was thrown over her by a waiting slave and she crept closer, clutching his knees, as she looked up with great black eyes that were deep as midnight pools. Her slender arms were outstretched and her lips, red and full, half parted as she drew near.

The music was now only tender whisperings. The man's hands trembled as he touched her warm arms and lifted her to her feet. Martin Baker looked on with cynical eye.

"And she is mine—mine?" Sterrett turned to look into the mocking eyes of the Sultan of Julong.

"Yours—for a plaything—a slave, a toy—anything."

"Where's Mr. Sterrett?" was the question that greeted Martin Baker upon his return to Kuala Lumpur a few days later.

"He stayed up there."

"And the contract?"

"Gone blooey. Sultan tried to hold him up. Gave him a slave girl as a present. I've heard of her—the White Rose of Julong." Baker looked wise.

"The old, old story, *n'est-ce pas?*" the little Frenchman could hardly contain his mirth. "A born misogynist sees just one pretty face too many and then—*pouf!* He is human, *hein?* Perhaps he is going to stay and play awhile?"

"No, I wouldn't say that," Baker weighed his words carefully. "You see he was wild when the concession fell through. Now he's going to take that girl and back her in motion pictures. She'll make some of those Hollywood vamps take to character acting. The chief figures that with a little publicity, he can make this trip pay a handsome profit, after all."

All the wealth and power of Paris were at her feet yet Celestine chose—but, what was it that Celestine chose?

THE PASSING OF CELESTINE

By BERNARD GUILBERT GUERNEY

"HE IS a true *gentilhomme,*" Mother Gouchard would say, after Colonel Joudine had passed. "He is one of the old school—and the school has long since been closed down!" she would add.

And she was right. Unimpeachably was the Colonel a gentleman, and indubitably of the old fashion. He it was who bestowed an air of gentility upon the shabby rooming house, gave an atmosphere of respectability to the entire dubious warren. You scarcely dared surmise, even to yourself, that it was the modesty of his annuity—a modesty exceedingly great—which made him favor our *pension* with his choice. His mere presence redeemed, nay, transformed the place. When he stood in the sunlight on the front steps, its ugly brick and the pathetic plat of xanthous grass disappeared. He was standing upon the balcony of an ancient white chateau, its tall windows opening on a vast garden with fancifully clipped emerald shrubbery, velvety grass, walks of crunching gravel, plashing fountains, and deep pools with swans and century-old, moss-backed carp. . . .

That is the sort of man the Colonel was. He was the only one to whom Mother Gouchard was civil; she would courtesy to him, all deference, to which he would respond by lifting his soft, black felt hat, with a stately bow of inimitable grace.

No other man in all Paris had handsomer mustachios and imperial—nor the Colonel's complexion, that a woman might envy. His rosewood cane with its green silk tassel and jasper head was scarcely ever used for the ignoble office of support; its general uses were to reach a spray of lilac, or to summon a flower girl. Scarcely ever was he without a debonair boutonnière.

A black silk windsor tie gave him a certain air of distinction, just as it would have failed to do in the case of a Bohemian. His long frock coat of broadcloth was close-fitting; his sharply creased trousers of the same material were smartly caught with straps underneath the glistening patent leather boots—a graceful, if ancient, fashion that hid and yet revealed a well-formed calf. There was always a wholesome, faint odor of ambergris about him—the odor of good,

honest, old things, well-preserved. And a not unpleasant odor of Habana cheroots. Oh, he was a true dandy, was the Colonel. There was a look of frank admiration in the eyes of women when they turned around for a second look at the Colonel, as they always did.

"*Mon Dieu!* What a man!" I once heard the younger of the Amoretta Sisters murmur as they rustled past the bareheaded Colonel on the stairs. To which the other murmured as earnest an assent.

His room was just below mine; mine, to be quite frank, was the mansard. To be sure, there was plenty of air and sunlight in it, although I often wished for more substantial fare. Then there was the vista of Paris roofs, with the distant Seine, sparkling in the sun, for a background. Aren't garrets the traditional dwelling places of poets, where they can be nearer their blue sky by day, and their beloved stars by night? Of course, there were days when the sky was not blue, nights when the stars did not appear. . . . But, as a rule, the dawn was mine to watch, as I tightened my belt; I could behold the evening sun redden the sky—as I drew the belt in another notch or so.

The sounds of Paris floated in at the window—shrill sounds of the gamins at play on the *trottoir;* the cries of the street hucksters; a jangly hurdy-gurdy; an area singer with a cracked voice, or *duettisti,* strayed from Italy—the man with a huge guitar, and the woman nearing her hour of travail. All these with the constant, dull, rumbling hum of Paris for an overtone, like the surge of a distant surf. I was one with the birds on the tiles outside my one window, the birds to whom I threw my crumbs—when I had them.

But a poor devil of a beginner in literature must shift as best he may among the stubble and pick up what he can while waiting for his own harvest. And since the mansard was the cheapest place that Mother Gouchard had to offer, it was only natural for me to take it.

Sometimes I would muse upon my fellow-lodgers. The Amoretta Sisters were my neighbors on the other side of the thin partition; they must have bumped their heads on the left slope of the roof, just as I did mine on the right. I caught only fleeting glimpses of them on the stairs; usually, all I saw was an arm (a fascinating arm, plump, white, rounded, with a jade serpent at the wrist, and the sleeve of the *peignoir* falling back to reveal a dimpled elbow), thrust out to water the sorry pot of dusty, hectic gerania outside their window. And it was a constant source of speculation to me whether the arm was always the same one, and which of the sisters it belonged to. Sometimes I heard suppressed laughter, with the unpleasant suspicion that I was its object; sometimes, hummed snatches of the latest songs. Once, in the night, I awoke and heard low sobbing. All I knew about them was that their means of support became fully visible every night, in purple tights, at a cabaret that was shady, to say the least.

"But what they do outside the house is no business of mine, *monsieur,*" Mother Gouchard had added, after volunteering this information. "And, what is more" —stabbing viciously with her broom at the dust in the corners of the steps— "they always pay their rent promptly, which is more than I can say of some others I know!"

Then, on the floors below, there were: a sleepy, bushy moustache that practiced lugubriously, hour after hour, upon a dolorous flageolet, and at night played it at a suburban beer-hall; an anæmic melancholic, with *garçon* written large upon him; a couple who went out in evening clothes every night—"professors of—

dancing," Mother Gouchard sneered, significantly—the woman with the broken nose of a prize-fighter, and smelling of iodoform at the distance of several yards, the man with grizzling hair and the physiognomy of a philosophically amused hyena. Then there was a yellow, warty, tired bookkeeper from a fashionable *couturier;* a "commercial man," with one round spot, perfectly white, in his perfectly black hair. And the transients—all the queer flotsam and jetsam that Paris tosses about, coming to rest for brief space, and then away again, to parts unknown. But there was never a one of them, if Mother Gouchard was to be believed, who was not promptness itself in the matter of rent.

In my moods of indolence—after the luxury of a plethoric meal, or some such occasion—I would sometimes take my pen-holder, frayed at the end into a brush from being chewed during the agonies of creation, and, dipping it in the ink, draw silhouettes upon the slope of the white-washed wall: of the Amoretta Sisters; of the aristocratic profile of Colonel Joudine; of the other lodgers. Or the gross one of Mother Gouchard. But the last, half-ashamed, I would hastily change into a landscape. For she had been treated cavalierly enough by time and fortune; not for worlds would I have hurt her feelings.

Poor Mother Gouchard! As the reader has no doubt surmised, she was our *concierge.* She was old, and she was ugly; she was slipshod, and she was decrepit; she was addicted to that most pathetic of all vain deceptions—palpably false reddish hair, with her own dirty white peeping through, straggling out from underneath a frowzy cap; she was out-at-the-elbows and down-at-the-heels. She must have been married at one time; only conjugal poverty can make some women so hideously bloated, and give them so horrible a waddle.

"Let me be your manager, Mother," the street arabs would jeer at her. "I am sure I can persuade the Circus Busch to discharge their quarter-of-a-ton Emma when they see you!"

"I could get you into the zoo, Mother," another would volunteer, and pass subtleties about hippopotami. "Look, Mother, can you do this?" And he would perform a series of handsprings and somersaults. And all Mother Gouchard could do was to shake her broom at them and say: "Be off, you filth of Paris!"

She was always philosophically inebriated, save on rent days, when she had an ugly trick of becoming viciously sober. Oh, those eternal wrangles about the always overdue rent! She would come into the room and vigorously commence sweeping, and, quite rightly, I admit, contrast its book-strewn disorder with the white neatness of Colonel Joudine's chamber. For a while there would be ominous silence, save for the swishing of the broom. Then:

"When does Monsieur the Scribbler propose to pay the rent that is so long overdue?"

"As soon, Madam, as certain of my efforts—"

"Yes, I know, I know. Monsieur Neverwas, of *The Morning Will-of-the-Wisp,* desires you to write a series of *feuilletons;* and Mlle. Nonesuch, of the *Theatre Imaginaire,* has commissioned you to write a song for her. But what I am desirous of knowing, *Monsieur,* is when I shall feel the actual coin in my palm?"

Then, without giving me an opportunity to reply, for which I was by no means sorry—she would wag her head and sigh:

"Ah, this youth, this youth!"

I could never comprehend this pity

which old age shows for youth. Does it find therein a species of cold, mock consolation? For youth is a precious cargo that is consigned to the port of the past, and shall never be seen again; but old age is a ship that will inevitably come in, freighted with death at the bottom of its hold.

"Madam is unjust to reproach me with a fault which she has not yet abandoned," I would say. Whereupon Mother Gouchard would brighten up, and I, perceiving my advantage, would pursue it.

"Furthermore, I could, were I so inclined, reproach madam with something none can accuse me of—and that is beauty!"

And poor Mother Gouchard would brighten up still more, and say:

"Monsieur is a fabricator of fiction!"

"Nay, Madam, a teller of truth!"

"As far as beauty is concerned, Monsieur is unkind to mock a bankrupt."

"But Madam, to be bankrupt is not necessarily to be destitute! How many bankers have we not known who have built their villas along the Riviera after their bankruptcy?"

Upon which Mother Gouchard would style me "an incorrigible!" and waddle out of the room, broom and all. But there would be no more talk of rent that day.

Gross flattery? Perhaps. But I have never held it a sin to make the unfortunate happy, even if it be necessary to—well, stretch the truth to some extent in doing so. So my ulterior motives were really subordinate. I flattered her even when I did pay my rent on time—oh, rare occurrences! Then, too, I was not deliberately falsifying, for there were times when a smile—a tired, unhappy smile, that felt itself a stranger and fled in an instant—would illuminate Mother Gouchard's face; and as at a carnival one may glimpse a pretty face when a breeze sways a hideous Japanese mask aside, so the pouches under the bleary eyes, the series of quivering chins, and the wrinkles of Mother Gouchard would disappear. Although the years had been remorseless creditors, for one second, one would catch a faint trace, a hint, of a former wealth of beauty. Imagination, fancy perhaps, but so did it seem to me.

Colonel Joudine, too, bore pity for my youth; he did not, however, evidence it bluntly, as Mother Gouchard did. It was not offensive; it was scarcely perceptible, but nevertheless it was present.

Take, for example, that May morning when he told me of Celestine.

The Colonel had arrived at that time of life when every trifle, every minute action, is deliberate, is carefully calculated to fill in the time, till the days go by as the hours, and the years as the days, in unruffled, tranquil succession, and so to the end. The only things that were never the same (and this is to the glory of the Colonel) were his stories, and the things that suggested them. Nor was it in a spirit of salacious senility that he would make one the confidant of the amorous adventures of his youth; rather was it as one who knows well that the matter he treats of is interesting. He was just as chaste in his recitals of his submissions to Venus as he was unassuming in his stories of his conquests under Mars. His were true, gentle tales of languishment—as Keats, I think, has it. And yet, he had been a great gallant in his day, had the Colonel.

On this particular May morning the sparrows somehow conveyed the impression that they were so hilarious because they picked up the spring sunshine together with the scattered grain and crumbs. I had met the Colonel near the gates of the park, and at his invitation

had joined him in his walk. Near the entrance was a kiosque where the Colonel always purchased his newspaper, folded in that packet-like manner the Frenchman affects. The kiosque was one of those round pillar affairs of iron, plastered all over with *reclames* and *affiches* of circuses and concerts, of Pierrots and Columbines, of wines and Herculean wrestlers.

I drew the Colonel's attention to that of a ballerina who was crowding one of the largest theaters in all Paris, and creating a most indisputable furor.

The Colonel had not had the extreme pleasure of having witnessed her performance. But when we were seated he reverted to the topic.

"Have you ever seen Celestine, Monsieur?" he asked—and then added quickly, "But pardon me, Monsieur—I forget." His manner left it to be inferred that in all probability I had not even been thought of at the time that Celestine had been—whatever she had been. But since she seemed to have been a celebrity, I deemed it prudent to be silent, not to betray my ignorance, as well as to save the Colonel's feelings.

"Celestine," he resumed, lighting his cheroot, "was a *danseuse*. To have seen her, Monsieur, was to have seen a joy of life. But perhaps the garrulous reminiscences of an old man bore you?"

"Ah, monsieur!"

"Well," he went on, after the briefest of pauses, "never did I realize the full meaning of the phrase 'the poetry of motion' until I had beheld Celestine dancing. She was grace incarnate, of a certainty. I remember a party of us discussing her feet—the little, little feet that all Paris was lying at. 'They are as light as a butterfly's wings,' said Pigaud. 'How coarse you are, my dear Pigaud,' Brelion, another poet, remonstrated. 'Surely nothing as gross as that; rather are they as light as flame!' Oh, to have seen her in *Les Papillons!* Or, better still, in *The Romance of Philomel.* You would have said that there had been no dancing previous to Celestine; you would have said that there was no dancing possible after Celestine. And you would have been right, Monsieur.

"To perform in Paris, month after month, at nineteen; to make a tour of the continent at twenty; to be greeted with frenzied raptures; to have the horses taken out of your carriage and to have it drawn with reins of flowers by your admirers; to be showered with honors and presents by royalty and to be deluged with bouquets and testimonials by the public; to draw a salary that was fabulous for that day, and that would be more than noteworthy even now. Would you not consider that genius? She was one with the gods!

"She was beautiful, like some delicate white flower, of a frailty, oh, so seemingly etherial! But hers were the ankles of steel, and the limbs of iron, Monsieur.

"She was but vague as to her biography; the journals sent up their best interviewers, but they generally came away with only the necessity of exercising their ingenuity. Thus, some said that her mother had been a—a beauty, and her father—or, rather, her mother's husband —a broken-down *croupier.* But Paris does not look too closely at the maker's name on its idols, but worships wholeheartedly—as long as it does worship, that is.

"Of course, like nearly every genius, she had had her trials and tribulations. Once, in a burst of confidence, she had told us of the countless hours of patient practice, after the performances, when the other coryphees had gone away, laughing and chattering, with their cavaliers,

and of her joy when Maitre la Parre told her that she would surely have the world at her feet some day.

"She had more than the world, Monsieur; she had Paris, after her stormy début in *Les Nymphes et Narcisse,* when the audience nearly tore down the *Theatre Lyrique* in their enthusiasm.

"I forget just which one of our witty cynics has said that virtue has its own reward at the ballet. You may laugh at the idea of a danseuse, especially of that day, being virtuous, monsieur, but so it was. It was the manager of the *Lyrique* himself who was heard to remark, with a half-wry smile of admiration, that she was the only one who had not paid the usual price for her opportunity.

"Celestine! How fit that name was! The dressing room of Celestine—Celestine, the youthful, the charming, the witty, the magnetic, the fragile, the beautiful, the celestial—soon became a salon where gathered all the wealth, the wit, and, yes, Monsieur, the gallantry of France, of Paris: all admirers and hopeless suitors.

"Everything was tried—even offers of marriage; and all met with equal success, or, rather, lack of it. It was Pigaud who said that she was wedded to her art, and that bigamy, evidently, had no appeal to her.

"Morgendaal, the banker, had sent her a bunch of violets, tied with a string of black pearls. She kept the violets—and Morgendaal ground the returned pearls underfoot in his rage.

"Van der Veer—Master of the Bourse, the journals called him—was somewhat cruder. He sent her his autograph affixed to a check, made out to bearer, for two hundred thousand livres, in a box of bonbons. She thanked him personally for the bon-bons—and he received a letter of thanks from an orphan asylum for his *donation.*

"Prince Rokhmalinov, impatient as most Muscovites are, had grown weary of laying so protracted and hopeless a siege, determined to attack the fair fortress by storm. He was beaten about the face with a long-stemmed, many-thorned bouquet of Jacqueminot roses, and was compelled to beat an ignominious retreat. He was graciously forgiven when he made a public and princely apology the next day, and had to content himself with smashing all the mirrors in the Café de l'Opera. I do not in the least mean to impugn the prince's sincerity or valor, but I must say something for his prudence. Celestine could have had all the best pistol shots and the best swords in all France at her disposal, at a mere nod."

For a second the Colonel's hand rested on his cane, as if it were a sword. Then he continued:

"And now, Monsieur, how shall I tell you the rest? With all the world—all Paris—at her feet, standing at the topmost pinnacle of success, young, fairy-like, do you know what Celestine—Celestine of the toes divine, Celestine of the heavenly feet—do you know what Celestine the woman did, Monsieur? Oh, it is a thing to make the demons laugh and the angels weep!

"Listen, Monsieur: she eloped with a cuirassier!

"A cuirassier, good heavens! One who used to stand like a statue in the wings in case of fire! A common cuirassier whose chief—and sole—claims to beauty lay in a chest like a barrel—a barrel as empty as his head—and a pair of mustachios, that were like blond antennæ! Why, a water-bug could show as much, and has a natural cuirass, to boot!

"It is to gnash one's teeth to this day. I can still remember the funeral gathering on the night we heard the news. It was at Laguillion's atelier—the same Lag-

uillion who took the first prize at the Spring Exhibition last year, if you will recall. He, poor fellow, was standing before a slashed canvas of Celestine in *The Oasis of the Stars,* staring at it with an unseeing gaze.

"Gavonn, who is now besieged by *entrepreneurs* and publishers every time he writes three notes. Gavonn was sobbing on the key-board of the piano, his head buried in his arms; Celestine had danced to the music he had created for her.

"'Ye weep, my friends?' Pigaud was saying to the gloomy circle. 'Be consoled, *mes amis!* I, even I, who have conceived and done the beautiful phantasy of *Notes of the Moon* for her, I write no more! Finis! Think of what the beautiful letters of France lose, and *then* weep, my friends! See, I break my pen—so!' And he took an ebony treasure of Laguillion's and broke it over his knee. He was crowned by the Academy five years ago for his *Galliad.*

"As for me, Monsieur, I was pacing back and forth, biting my nails and cursing my fate. Why had I not joined the cuirassiers, whose uniform was twice as attractive as the one I graced, apparently! Or, better still, some corps with a uniform twice as gaudy as that of the cuirassiers.

"I may remark in passing that there was a panic on the Bourse the next day, and runs on several banks. Ah, Monsieur, you must forgive an old man his sigh, for she was one of my defeats. But —good heavens!—think of it: Celestine and a cuirassier! A common cuirassier!"

And with that the Colonel became silent. Slowly, I came back to the everyday. The scent of the lilacs came back, the laughter of children at play, the crunching of gravel under their feet. The sparrows impudently chirping in the sunlight, and, back of it all, the humming overtone of Paris. . . .

I, too, sat in silence for a space. To tell the truth, I was just the least trifle disappointed. The Colonel's story lacked the usual verve, the customary zest, the element of the unexpected that I had been taught to expect in his stories.

"And what," I asked after a while, more to mask my disappointment than out of real curiosity, "what became of Celestine?"

The Colonel patiently excavated a pebble from its bed in the gravel with the ferule of his cane, turned it over, and, just as painstakingly, replaced it. That, I thought, is the similarity—and the difference—between youth and age. Both do useless things; but while youth tries to grasp the blue sky that sings promises to it, age fusses with the gray earth that is soon to cover it and that croons dirges for old ears.

"Celestine?" the Colonel repeated, slowly turning around to me. "Why, Monsieur, she now goes by the name of Mother Gouchard."

LOVE

By Mary Carolyn Davies

WE didn't know that we liked it so
Or that we ever would feel it lack;
We smiled that day as we watched it go.
Please, Fate, we want it back!

This story began in the Second January number. The synopsis will enable you to follow it, or for fifty cents we will send you the issues containing the first three instalments.

SEX-SHOALS

By LILIAN BENNET-THOMPSON and GEORGE HUBBARD

A Serial Novel

Part Four

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

Margaret Reynolds has been brought up by her aunt, Dr. Jane Reynolds, to know all the facts of sex and of life. She sees, graphically demonstrated in her aunt's hospital, the tragedy of her friend, Lucy Harris, who had "gone wrong" and whose family had tried to hush up the consequences until the ignorant girl's life was sacrificed.

Armed with knowledge, Margaret feels safe in pursuing a dramatic career in New York, with only one protector, Lloyd Hamilton, a producer, who is a friend of the family but who has the reputation of a roué on Broadway. Through him she meets Stephen Garrison, a wealthy publisher, and an intimacy springs up between her and "Garry," as she calls him.

Margaret's play opens and she scores a decisive success. Stephen Garrison's attentions to her become so pronounced that Margaret is amazed when she discovers that he is married. She tells him she cannot see him; he protests that his is only a marriage in form. Lloyd Hamilton tries to prevent the intimacy. After a short separation Garrison and Margaret realize that they are in love; they resolve to sacrifice their love. An accidental meeting throws them together, Garrison returns to Margaret's apartment with her, and all resolutions are forgotten in the realization of their love.

Once launched on this illicit love, Margaret can see nothing but justification for her conduct. Doctor Jane tries to dissuade her, but Garrison and Margaret are too happy in their infatuation. Gradually, however, the brunt of the burden is deposited on Margaret's shoulders, and she feels that the last straw has been laid on her when Garrison's wife stumbles across Margaret and Garrison in a restaurant and refers to her as "a little theatrical friend of Stephen's."

XVII

THE QUICK blood rushed to Margaret's face, stinging tears to her eyes. She blinked them back, keeping her gaze fixed on her plate, crushing her hands one against the other in her lap, until, little by little, she regained her self-control. But she could not eat, and her attempt at conversation was a pitiable failure. Lorna Garrison's voice rang in her ears, its very nonchalance lending the speech a barbed significance.

"A little theatrical friend of Stephen's!"

Not anyone who mattered or who was to be taken seriously; just "a little theatrical friend," dismissed with airily amused contempt. A light o' love, a fortnight's fancy, of so little consequence that the idea of being jealous of her would never occur to one! "A little theatrical friend of Stephen's."

Mortified, Margaret felt that only pride kept her from covering her face with her hands and sobbing like the child that she really was. But it was not until dinner was over, and she and Garrison

were safe from observation behind the locked door of her apartment, that she broke down and wept in a very agony of shame and humiliation.

Garrison put his arm about her quivering shoulders and led her to the couch, where he drew her down beside him.

"Don't, oh, don't, dearest!" he begged. "It breaks my heart to see you cry. Don't; it's not worth it. Nothing's worth it."

"I—I know," choked Margaret. "But, Garry, I—I—she—"

"We won't talk about it, sweetheart. I feel like a brute to have let you in for such a thing. I wouldn't have had it happen for the world. But, God knows, I never dreamed of meeting my—of meeting Lorna down there. I thought it was about the last place we'd be likely to meet anybody who knew us. And then, to run into her, and the Clyde-Wheelers and Jimmy Finch—what damnably bad luck! 'Slumming,' were they? Watching the funny little human animals eat! And eat a rotten dinner, too! It *was* a rotten dinner, wasn't it? Suppose we make some coffee and stir up a rabbit on that gas stove of yours? What do you say?"

"I—I'm not hungry, Garry. But if you'd like it . . ."

"I should like the coffee. Come, now, darling; dry your pretty eyes and don't cry any more." He bent his head and kissed the drops that gemmed her long lashes. "Tears because of me, Margaret," he said. "Because of me, who would give everything to save you a moment's pain! When you gave yourself to me, I registered a vow that never, God helping me, should you suffer through me. And now—what can I do to make up for this? I am only making you miserable."

"Don't say that, Stephen." It was the first time she had called him by his given name, but neither of them noticed it. "Don't say that, when you make me so happy! It was silly of me to cry. I'm ashamed of myself for being such a baby. Only"—she caught her lower lip between her teeth to stop its trembling—"only it was so unexpected—like a slap in the face. We were having such a jolly time, and then—"

Garrison scowled.

"Oh, why the devil didn't they stay uptown where they belong?" he burst out. "They've got the run of every decent restaurant in the city, while we have to poke about in any dingy hole we can find—and even then we're spied on! Yes, and insulted! Good God! Anybody'd think that I was in the habit of running around with women, the way she spoke! Why, I've never looked at one since—Margaret, may God forgive me, I didn't mean that the way it sounded! You know that, don't you, darling?"

She nodded, unable, for a moment, to articulate.

Garrison went on, remorsefully:

"I was so upset, so angry, I didn't realize. Please, dear, don't let's talk of the beastly thing any more. Let's go out and make the coffee, shall we?"

Margaret might have reminded him that it was he who had done most of the talking about "the beastly thing"; but she forbore. He was, she told herself, terribly distressed because of her unhappiness; and it wasn't fair to blame him, even tacitly, for a display of irritation that was perfectly natural in the circumstances. Certainly it was little short of absolute disloyalty to harbor for an instant the thought that he appeared to be almost as much exercised over a rather bad dinner and the unfortunate necessity for eating in inconspicuous places, as over the fact that his wife had openly and insolently sneered at the girl he loved!

She made the coffee and they drank it before the log fire in the living-room,

each striving to speak and act as if nothing untoward had happened. But there were awkward pauses in the conversation, which neither seemed to be able easily to fill. Silences would fall between them: not the old, sweet silences of perfect communion, but of new and uncomfortable constraint. Margaret was almost glad when Garrison, after a surreptitious glance at his watch, rose from his chair.

"I think it might perhaps be a bit wiser if I—if I—well . . ."

Margaret cut short his embarrassed groping.

"Of course, Stephen. They'll be looking for you and wondering where you are, if you don't put in an appearance."

"Margaret!" He caught her hands and drew her into an almost convulsive embrace. "You are wonderful. How many women would have understood? It's best that they don't wonder—best for us both. And you saw that!"

"I'm not quite a fool, Stephen, even if I did act like one to-night. I'm sorry I made a scene. We'll just forget about it, and pretend that it didn't happen. I suppose we ought to have been prepared for something of the sort; we can't expect that everything is going to be just as we'd like to have it."

"And you won't worry?" he asked. "You won't get yourself all worked up again, and fret over this?"

She shook her head.

"No, Stephen. I shall be quite all right. I think you had better start now; it's getting late." She smiled up at him affectionately, returned the tender goodnight kiss he gave her.

But after he had gone, she sat for a long time gazing with somber, brooding eyes into the fading embers of the fire.

XVIII

"Stephen, may I come in?"

Garrison frowned and glanced at the clock; the hands pointed to a quarter past two. What could Lorna want with him at such an hour?

"Stephen, do you hear me?" There was a hint of impatience in the clear, high-pitched voice.

"Is that you, Lorna?" He rose and reluctantly opened the door. "Is anything the matter? Are you ill?"

"No; certainly not. I am never ill. May I see you for a few moments, please?"

Garrison stepped back, and his wife came into the room, closing the door after her. With covert uneasiness, he watched her as she swept past him with a whisper of silken draperies, and seated herself on a small Jacobean chair of carved and blackened oak.

"That isn't very comfortable," he suggested. "Won't you—"

She waved him silent.

"Thanks; this will do very nicely. I shan't keep you long. Sit down, please" —with a faint contraction of her brows as he walked to the opposite side of the room and selected a Meerschaum from a rack on the wall. "I dislike talking to anyone who prowls about."

Reaching to the tabouret at her elbow, she took a cigarette from the humidor and lighted it. Then she leaned forward, resting one arm on her knee and looking at Garrison steadily from beneath her thick, light lashes.

"Stephen, who is this Miss Reynolds?"

The Meerschaum slipped from his fingers and fell to the rug. He stooped to retrieve it.

"An acquaintance." His voice was perfectly calm. Beyond that first involuntary start, he had given no indication of the surprise and dismay that had gripped him at the mention of Margaret's name.

"Have you known her long?"

"For some months. She is a very special protegée of Lloyd Hamilton, the niece of one of his old friends. Why do you ask?"

Lorna Garrison flicked the ash from her cigarette.

"For this reason," she said deliberately. "Several times of late, people have mentioned to me that they have seen you lunching and dining with her. I have no wish to pry into your private affairs, Stephen, but your—intimacy, shall we call it?—with this young woman, seems to be exciting remark."

"I should hardly call it 'intimacy,' Lorna." He was sure she could have heard nothing but gossipy conjecture; they had been very, very careful. But, even so, why should she be concerned about it? She had never troubled herself over him; she had not entered his room in over three years! He glanced at her in perplexity; her profile was half turned toward him, and the long, pale oval of her face was outlined against the dark wood of the straight, high chairback.

"We'll call it what you like, then; there is no need for us to quibble over shades of meaning. But it occurred to me, Stephen, that since you appear to take an interest in Miss Reynolds, it might be well for me to call on her. She is, I presume, the sort of young woman on whom one might call?"—with brows raised in guilelessly polite interrogation.

"Your presumption is correct," Garrison returned shortly. "But I won't trouble you, Lorna. It is kind of you to think of it, but unnecessary for you to do it. Miss Reynolds is, as I told you, a protegée of Lloyd Hamilton; and if I have occasionally taken her to luncheon or dinner, I performed only an act of ordinary courtesy, not worth 'remarking' by anyone."

Lorna Garrison shrugged her white shoulders.

"Then let us say no more about it. But, Stephen, in future, I think it would be advisable for you to be—well, rather more discreet in performing your acts 'of ordinary courtesy.' People sometimes misunderstand, you know, and it is so much better to avoid misunderstandings, is it not? I am not exacting, I believe; it is seldom that I ask anything of you. But you are overlooking one thing: any rumors that may be circulated regarding you, touch me very closely; I cannot dissociate myself from them. So—don't let's have *too* much talk about it, please."

Garrison's teeth closed sharply on the stem of his pipe; but he met her eyes steadily—those deep, cold blue eyes, in which negligently mocking laughter lurked. He started to speak, but she went on, as if he had offered no interruption.

"I'm not complaining, you understand, Stephen. I simply thought it better to drop a hint to you—for your own sake. Now, I must leave you; it's quite late." She rose, flicking her cigarette into the fireplace. "Oh, by the way," she added from the doorway, "I accepted an invitation to motor out to the Clyde-Wheelers' for dinner to-morrow night. That will be agreeable to you, will it not?"

Garrison hesitated. If he acquiesced he would be obliged to disappoint Margaret again; he had promised to drive her out to the little inn in Westchester. Sunday was the only night that she was free, the only day that business did not require his presence at the office.

"It will be agreeable to you, will it not?" repeated his wife. "Or have you perhaps another engagement with the young person the mention of whose name causes you to turn purple in the face and drop your most cherished pipe?"

Was there more than easy banter in her

tone? Was it malice that lurked in her blue eyes and touched the corners of her mouth with an ironic smile? Garrison was not sure—and he dared not speculate.

"Of course I shall be glad to go, Lorna," he told her with cold civility. "It is some time since you have honored me with such an invitation."

"Then I must see to it that the next interval is not so long. At least half a dozen women have lately complimented me on my very attractive husband. I must try to find out for myself what it is about you that they find so irresistible.

"You're not a bad looking chap, Stephen." She drew back a little and regarded him critically. "No; really, you might be quite handsome! I had not suspected it. I am very fond of handsome men, do you know? Well, good-night!"

"Good-night, Lorna."

He held the door for her, and with a smile as dazzling as the glint of sunlight on ice, and as cold, she passed out of the room. He heard the sweep of her trailing garments along the polished floor; her door closed gently.

In blank dismay and consternation, Stephen Garrison stood staring into the dimness of the empty hall. . . .

XIX

During the weeks following the first note of discord that had sounded between them, Margaret exerted herself to please Garrison in every way. If he telephoned her that it would be impossible for him to keep an engagement with her—and with increasing frequency this happened—she bore the disappointment cheerfully, to all outward appearances, at least, and assured him that it made no difference.

His business was absorbing more and more of his time during the day; scarcely ever could he manage to get away from his desk before late afternoon; and some social obligation was continually cropping up to occupy him at dinner or after theater in the evening. Then, too, his wife was not very well. The winter had been an unusually severe one, and a cold, contracted during pre-Lenten festivities had proven difficult to shake off. Lorna Garrison filled to perfection the rôle of graceful convalescent; but her demand for attention and entertainment to enliven the hours of her enforced confinement to the house, was one that her husband could not very well ignore. If either he or Margaret suspected the convalescence to be deliberately prolonged, the suggestion was not mentioned between them.

Margaret had accepted without question his explanation of the temporary necessity of his remaining more at home; but in her heart, she rebelled at any circumstance tending to throw him into the company of his wife. She was well aware that, had he been contented and happy in his home life, he would never have given a thought to her. But, in spite of herself, she was beset by a haunting fear that the strength might be sapped from his love for her, that ultimately he might return to his first allegiance. It was a fear that, time and again, she put from her, with scorn for her own weakness in entertaining it, only to have it clutch at her unexpectedly and with augmented power at some chance word, a frown, a gesture, that showed her that Garrison was chafing under the strain of being drawn two ways at once.

With steadfast resolution, she addressed herself to the task of making the hours he spent with her pleasant and carefree. He hated displays of emotion; very well, she would show none. Demands on him, implied or direct, annoyed him; she would avoid them, helping herself to do so by constantly reminding her-

self that she was making no sacrifice he had not equaled, and that there was no need to ask, since he was giving without reserve all that it was possible for him to give. The significance of the necessity for that constant reminding of herself, was something that she entirely missed. . . .

She had laid down for herself a rule that always, in everything, she must try to do that which he wanted her to do, deferring to his opinions, subordinating her own inclinations and desires to his. Accordingly, when he had commented rather irascibly on the imprudence of his calls at her apartment, where the observation of the telephone operator and the superintendent could not very well be avoided, she had agreed with him that it would certainly be much better for them to see each other elsewhere.

But it was mortifying to be obliged to meet him in public places, to stand and wait for him in draughty elevated and subway stations, to sit alone in the waiting room at the Grand Central Station or the lounge of some hotel, or to pace up and down a secluded path in the Park. The attention she attracted, the stares, bold, speculative, curious, of the passers by, made her blush to think that she should be compelled to submit herself to such unpleasantness, sometimes amounting to indignity, in order to pass a few stolen minutes in the company of the man she loved.

She realized, too, that he was irritated by it, more on her account than on his own, to be sure, but the irritation was there. It showed itself in a dozen different ways; and Margaret was obliged to keep up a ceaseless vigilance lest, in an unguarded moment, her pride, smarting under innumerable pinpricks, each in itself insignificant, in the aggregate considerable, should betray her into a display of angry resentment. Not at Garrison; with quite unfeminine logic, she acquitted him of blame; but at the false position in which she was placed, at the net of circumstances which seemed always spread about their feet, and which, by their very efforts to disregard its presence, tripped them the oftener.

It was humiliating to have to give an assumed name when she wanted to telephone to Garrison at his office; to be obliged to speak in a brisk, businesslike voice, to talk and listen to meaningless commonplaces, when she was yearning to hear the tender note that vibrated so appealingly in his voice. By nature direct and frankly straightforward, she shrank in acute distaste from the subterfuges she and her lover were forced to employ; she hated them, and she hated herself.

But there were the two horns of the dilemma: there was no other choice. Either she must not see Garrison, or she must see him in such circumstances and under such conditions as prudence dictated.

She accepted the alternative; but it was at the expense of a constant and wearing war with her pride.

XX

The boisterous March wind, driving the rain in an almost solid sheet before it, nearly whirled Margaret from her feet as she stepped out of the taxicab. Breathless and bespattered, she scurried across the sidewalk and into the lobby of the theater. She shook the raindrops from her coat, loosened the collar, and took up a position in a corner near the door, where she could see better than she could be seen, to await Garrison's arrival. He had promised to meet her promptly at three o'clock; and although it still lacked fifteen minutes of the hour, she had preferred to be ahead of time, rather than to risk

his having to wait for her. "Miss Margaret Reynolds, the lovely ingenue of *The Girl in the Window* company," was not now entirely unknown on Broadway; but she was no such conspicuous figure as was Stephen Garrison, who, if he walked for five consecutive city blocks, would probably be recognized by half a hundred different people.

Margaret had not seen Garrison in over a week; but late the night before he had telephoned to say that he had tickets for a joint recital of two famous artists, and that he thought it would be worth hearing.

"It being Sunday afternoon, nobody of any consequence will be likely to be there," he had said, "so we'll take a chance. And couldn't we have some dinner sent up afterward to your apartment? I'm tired of this hole-and-corner business."

Margaret thought that he could hardly be more tired of it than she was. She told herself with a wry smile that most of the time when she was with him, she felt like a conspirator in a melodrama, to whom at any instant might come the historic warning: "Hist! We are discovered!" Discovery and disgrace seemed always dogging her footsteps. For herself, she did not so much care. From the very first, she had been convinced of her readiness to face any eventuality, if she might face it with Stephen Garrison's hand in hers, and the assurance of his love, unchanged and unchanging, to strengthen and uphold her. True, she shrank from the thought of grieving her aunt; but she was sure that even if society did point to her as an outlaw and a pariah, Doctor Jane would concede that a great love was its own justification; she had said as much. George Eliot and Sarah Bernhardt had made to their public no apologies for the irregularity of their private lives; and while Margaret did not delude herself with the idea that she was either a Bernhardt or an Eliot, she knew that she possessed dramatic ability far above the average.

Within her, she felt the insistent urge of an ambition to climb higher and higher in her profession—an ambition coupled with a serene conviction that the power to reach the very top of the ladder was hers. Every day saw her develop an added poise, a finer technique, a more nearly sure and comprehensive grasp of the essentials of her art. She loved it with an ever increasing passion. The music, which, less than a year before, she had thought the goal of her striving, had now shrunk to a purely subsidiary consideration. She kept up her lessons because both Traymore and Hamilton told her that they were good training for her speaking voice; but she had definitely abandoned all idea of using it, save as a means to an end.

The nameless, indefinable fascination of the theater had grown on her strangely; the peculiar pungent odor that permeated everything back-stage, and which at first she had found so disagreeable, now stimulated her. She had not only gotten used to it: she liked it.

Her happiest hours were really those she spent in the theater. It was a sort of happiness entirely different from that which she experienced when she was with Stephen Garrison, and marred only by a feeling, real or imagined, that the attitude of the members of the company had undergone a change toward her since Broadway had begun to whisper about her relations with Garrison. She would have been at a loss to define the change, but she was sure that it existed. It had the effect of making her withdraw more into herself; always she was on the defensive, a little aloof.

People began to stream through the lobby. Despite the inclemency of the weather, a large crowd had turned out for the recital, and the auditorium promised to be well filled. Margaret glanced at her watch in some impatience. The lobby was wet and draughty, and she wished that, for once, Garrison would manage to be a few minutes ahead of time.

At last, she caught sight of him. He came in hurriedly, cast a quick, surreptitious glance about, and then approached the corner where she stood.

"I suppose I'm late," he said, "but I couldn't help it." He spoke rather as if he expected Margaret to reproach him for his tardiness. "I had something of a time getting away at all. Maude Clyde-Wheeler telephoned, and announced that Lewis was on his way to the house to pick me up. I left word that I had an important engagement, and slipped around the corner, just as their car drove up to the door. Another minute, and I'd have been in for it for the afternoon! Have we missed much?"

"Only the first group of violin numbers, I think."

"Well, let's not lose any more. Come on; we'll go right in."

As they crossed the lobby together, Margaret noticed that his brown eyes were dull, and there was a little downward quirk at the corners of his mouth.

"Tired, Stephen?" she asked. "Aren't you working too hard?"

He shrugged.

"No, not really tired; just out of sorts. And—I say, look here!" — tapping the programme with his forefinger. "Did you notice this? We come to hear a contralto who is a recognized artist, and they palm off a substitute on us! I've a good mind to—"

"Oh, perhaps she'll be all right," Margaret interposed soothingly. "I'm rather partial to sopranos, myself, and I daresay this one may be worth listening to. Cheer up, Stephen! You look like a thundercloud. And we haven't been together for days and days. Have you missed me?"

"I always miss you when I'm not with you, Margaret. I plan and scheme, and try to arrange to get a few hours free, and then something turns up and upsets everything. If only you knew — Good Lord, she's even worse than I expected! If it weren't for the violinist, we'd leave right now!"

Margaret listened in appraising silence until the solo was finished. Then she turned to Garrison with a roguish smile.

"And Signor Augustini told me I hadn't a voice! Really, I think I'll have to go into opera, after all! You've heard me sing, Stephen; shouldn't you say that I—"

"Hush!" He was not looking at her; his eyes were fixed on the stage. "There's a woman I know. Don't talk to me!"

Margaret drew back as if he had struck her. His manner had been brusque; he had spoken harshly, sitting straight and stiff in his chair. What must that woman think? She had just entered one of the stage boxes, and was looking directly at them. Garrison's actions had made it appear as if he were repulsing the overbold advances of some cheaply flirtatious young person.

Margaret's eyes grew bright and hard. It was unpardonable that he should dare to give anyone such an impression of her! If he were afraid to be seen with her, why had he come? Was he ashamed of her—or merely too weak to act the part of a man when confronted with an unexpected situation? Did he intend always to shirk his share in the responsibility they had mutually assumed, as—she shut her teeth tight at the realization—as he

had shirked and evaded it almost from the very first moment of her surrender to him? There was a great deal of difference between caution and cowardice, and it was time that he saw it, time that she made it plain to him! If he held her in such light esteem that, in order to save himself some possible slight unpleasantness, he could put a public affront on her, it was time that she showed him his miscalculation!

She sat through the remainder of the programme without hearing or seeing a thing that went on upon the stage. When the first sounds of departure rustled through the audience, she slipped unassisted into her coat, brushed past Garrison as he fumbled beneath the seat for his hat, and hurried up the aisle.

At the door, the crowd was congested; she was obliged to go more slowly. A hand fell on her arm; Lloyd Hamilton's voice, clear and distinct, sounded beside her.

"If we slip out the door on the left, Margaret, we shall be nearer the car, and avoid the traffic jam. . . . Not worth turning out for, was it, after all our anticipations?"

There was a purpose in his words, in his deliberately raised voice, but she was in no condition to recognize it, or even to know that it was there. Half blinded by the tears that she could no longer keep back, she clung to his arm and suffered him to lead her through the crowd. Not once did she look back to see what had become of Stephen Garrison. She did not speak. There was a strangling lump in her throat that threatened to burst in a sob.

"I won't! I won't! I won't!" she kept telling herself over and over. It would be childish, silly, disgraceful, to break down now.

On the step of Hamilton's limousine, she stumbled, saved from a fall only by his steadying hand. He spoke briefly to the chauffeur, stepped in beside her.

"Yes, I'll say it was a pretty poor sort of entertainment," he said. "The audience who had to listen would have been quite justified in asking for its money back. If we offered any such mediocrity in place of our advertised programme, we shouldn't be allowed to play the piece through. All of which reminds me that the new play is finished, Margaret, and I'm promising myself the pleasure of reading it to you before very long, if you'd care to hear it. I believe you're going to like it. It's quite different from *The Ladder*. You remember that, don't you?"

Without waiting for her to reply, he plunged into a description of his success of the previous season. She had seen it, and he knew it, because he had sent her tickets for a matinée in Newark. Margaret did not know whether or not he had forgotten the incident, and she did not care; she was just dumbly grateful for the opportunity his recital gave her to pull herself together again.

At her door, he took the umbrella from the chauffeur's hand, and half led, half carried her across the pavement.

"Where's your key?" he asked; and then searched for it among the feminine trifles in the purse she mutely handed him. He opened the door of the apartment, bowed her courteously in. Then, as she turned to him with lips that quivered piteously, despite her efforts to form some conventional speech of thanks, he put his two hands on her shoulders and gripped them firmly.

"Buck up, old lady!" he said, smiled, and was gone.

He knew, then! He must have known all the time, and had joined her in a successful endeavor to save her further em-

barrassment and humiliation! She remembered vaguely something he had said on the homeward drive: about sitting directly behind her. He had seen, perhaps heard, Garrison's rude interruption. Purposely, he had followed her, spoken as if they had attended the concert together. He had wanted to protect her. The dreadful part of it all was that she had needed protection, and that Stephen Garrison not only had failed to give it to her, but had actually created the situation which made it necessary! She shivered a little, as if with cold. . . .

No, she told herself with passionate conviction, she was not being super-sensitive—"touchy," Garrison had remarked, not so long since; nor was she "unreasonable," another of his characterizations for her whenever she did not agree with him. She was merely—and quite naturally—resentful of his quickness to disavow all connection with her, all knowledge of her; at his readiness to avoid some private and personal discomfort, at the expense of public humiliation for her!

The bell rang sharply. While she hesitated, it rang again. Then someone rapped on the door. It was Garrison.

Ties once made are frequently difficult to break, and once broken, often lead to new ones. See the Second March issue of Telling Tales for the next development.

WORDS

By Barbara Hollis

I LOVE words.
I like to see them glide across the page,
I like to hear them singing in my heart,
And rushing into my throat
To speak to you.

I love words.
I like to feel them on your lips
When they are laid
Against my cheek.

Is a man more attracted by the love of a good woman or the passion of a bad one?

SMOTHERED FIRE

By SARA BARTLETT

I

CORALIE LINTON always got what she wanted and she wanted the moon with the stars thrown in for good measure. Even as a baby she had an irresistible pout and before she was five years old she had learned the value of her kisses in a trade.

She had been left an orphan before she reached her first birthday and had been adopted by her uncle, Dr. Tom Linton, and his wife, a childless couple. She was fairly smothered by love in her new home. Both the doctor and his wife made doormats of themselves for Coralie's small feet to stumble over. Her little hands were never stretched out in vain and as she grew older, it became increasingly plain that the little hands had the knack of grasping.

When the child reached school age, Mrs. Linton planned and contrived and worked far into the night with her needle in order that Coralie should have the dainty, lovely clothes that she craved, and the doctor even forced himself to the hated task of sending out bills in order to give his darling the best advantages.

But her own household was not the only world the small Coralie conquered. She lived in a small southern town and the south has always paid willing tribute to beauty. Her gorgeous eyes, blue as the heavens in October, with unbelievable lashes so long that they tangled; her blue black hair; her creamy cheeks with the color burning far under the skin, like a banked fire; above all, her alluring mouth, scarlet and arched and exotic—all these charms gave her the indisputable right to queen it over less favored mortals. By the time she was old enough to go to high school, her careless smiles were treasured by every male creature in the town and she had learned anew the lesson of her babyhood—how to value her kisses in a trade.

Peter Briscoe was the most favored of her suitors. Peter, with his fine, upstanding young manhood, his steady gray eyes, his fair hair that no amount of brushing could quite subdue, was a figure to catch any feminine fancy. Then, too, he was the only boy in the town with an apparent future, and this counted tremendously with Coralie, whose growing desires were sweeping citywards. Peter went away to college; he was to study law and later seek his fortune "out in the world."

When he came home for his first vacation, after his freshman year, he brought Coralie his fraternity pin. It was a heady, moonlit night when he gave it to her and she rewarded him with one of her warm, perfumed kisses. Peter had no way of knowing that it was not the

first kiss she had given—nor would be the last. To him it was an accolade. His eager young voice was husky as he stammered out his crude, boyish love phrases.

"Then you'll wait for me, Coralie. We are engaged, aren't we, dear?" he said finally.

Coralie hesitated delightfully. Peter thought it was shyness.

"Ye-es," she said, "but we won't tell anyone yet. People get so tired of engaged couples when the engagement just smolders, and it will be years yet before you will be able to marry me. So let's just have it a secret between you and me."

This was Coralie's secret way of making sure that Peter stayed securely engaged to her, while she was free to look about for any better chances that might come her way. And that was the way the arrangement worked out. With his quiet fidelity he dreamed of her through his college years and was so impervious to other feminine charms that he was nicknamed "the Monk" by his classmates.

Meanwhile Coralie exercised her powers of fascination with a daily dozen on all the masculine citizens of her home town, and also laid careful plans for wider conquests. She had discovered that she had "a voice"; not the sort of voice that makes for opera, but a pleasant mezzo soprano that would do nicely for parlor concerts. Coralie figured—and figured correctly—that with her beauty and her personality, the voice would carry much further than its highest note. So she teased her Uncle Tom into sending her away for an expensive musical training. When she came home, after two years of "voice" in a conservatory of music, she proceeded to the second step in her well laid plans.

A couple of miles out in the country from Dr. Tom Linton's modest home was the Mortimer Greene estate. Mortimer Greene had inherited it when it was not an "estate," when it was simply the old Greene place. But after he made his spectacular fortune in New York, his wife, whom he had also acquired in the metropolis, saw the social advantages of a southern ancestral home and brought down a whole flock of landscape gardeners, architects and interior decorators, and created the estate of Greenlea. Every spring and fall the Mortimer Greenes came down for a month, importing their guests by the private-car ful. Coralie had a bowing acquaintance with the great lady—nothing more than the inevitable recognition of the small town. Now, with her voice, she proposed to widen that acquaintance. When Mrs. Greene arrived, for a month of successive house parties, Coralie went to call on her, scribbling on her visiting card that she asked only five minutes of Mrs. Greene's time "on a matter of business."

Mrs. Greene received her and was startled by the exotic beauty of this little "country girl." Coralie had put on for the occasion a modest, simple little gown, but like all her clothes it had good lines and that elusive quality, style. She had also put on an appropriate manner for her errand. She was quiet, gentle but not at all confused. Briefly she explained to her hostess that she was seeking professional engagements as a singer; mentioned the famous conservatory at which she had been trained and the name of the teacher there. Mrs. Greene nodded appreciation.

"I know that you engage paid entertainers sometimes for your house parties and I want to leave my name with you," Coralie concluded with one of her loveliest smiles.

Mrs. Greene, who really loved beautiful things, fell promptly under Coralie's

spell. She patted her on the shoulder.

"Why, of course, child, I would love to have you. And soon. Could you come to us next Wednesday night?"

Next Wednesday night found Coralie happy and confident at her professional début. She was entirely without stage fright, for how could the radiant creature that looked back at her from her mirror ever fail? She wore a cream colored gown, with just a hint of silver gleaming through its chiffon. Her exquisitely curved throat and arms were bare. Her soft black hair was dressed high. The color that seemed to burn beneath her skin brightened and flickered like a fire that is fanned. She was altogether perfect; such was the unanimous verdict of Mrs. Mortimer Greene's guests. Coralie's voice was creditable, but it was her scarlet lips and not the notes which issued through them that won her audience. But she was careful not to overplay. Her manner was gentle, girlish; she wore a deceptive modesty.

Among those who heard her were the fabulously wealthy Renshaws. George Renshaw, who played with railroads like a boy with his toy trains, building and wrecking them to suit his purposes, was edging close to seventy years and had almost enough money to count his millions with his birthdays. He was still vigorous and his keen intellect made his face look ten years younger. His wife, frail and white, with lines of physical suffering etched deeply in her thin cheeks, looked all of her sixty years. But as the colorless moth is drawn to the flame, she was attracted to the glowing beauty, the vital youth of Coralie Linton. She drew the girl aside for a long, private chat. She wanted to know all about her ambitions and her life here in this little southern town. Coralie played up to the situation. She told the old lady about her dear uncle and aunt and intimated that it was for them she had taken up her professional career; drew a picture of sweet, earnest girlhood. Mrs. Renshaw was charmed. She had never had children of her own and Coralie seemed to her all that she would have wished her own daughter to be. She stroked the girl's beautiful white arms; it seemed as though she could not keep her hands off her. And before the evening closed, she had exacted a promise from Coralie that she would come to them in New York for a visit during the next month. A song of triumph sang itself in Coralie's heart as she saw her plans shaping out even beyond her hopes.

During the weeks which followed Mrs. Renshaw did not forget her; from New York she sent beautiful gifts which she described in her notes as "love-thoughts for my beautiful little friend." Dr. and Mrs. Linton fretted about these; they did not wish Coralie to accept such handsome presents, for which she could never hope to make adequate return. Their sturdy independence could not understand Coralie's attitude. But they could not bear to spoil their darling's radiant delight in the beautiful things that came to her from her rich friend.

Just before she started on her trip, Peter Briscoe, who was now in law school, came home for a week-end. He was plainly worried about the whole affair, not merely the gifts but the trip itself. And he was less hesitant than her adoring foster parents in voicing his feelings.

"You know, Coralie, if you run around with the rich, you will get accustomed to all sorts of luxuries—the sort of things that we can't have for years and years, if ever. And I'm so afraid, dear, that you won't be happy. The first few years of our married life will be pretty hard, you know, until I

begin to get ahead. And it will be harder for you if you have lost the art of being contented."

"Oh—'contented'," Coralie shrugged her shoulders with a cynicism that she seldom permitted herself with Peter.

They were sitting before the open fire as they talked and suddenly she stretched out her lovely arms toward the flames.

"Contentment is all right for commonplace people. But for me! Look at me, Peter. Can't you see I was never meant to smother in the middle classes? Why, I want—I want . . ."

She never finished her sentence with her lips, only with her stormy eyes staring into the fire. But Peter Briscoe never forgot the scene—Coralie stretching out her hands to the red flames and repeating, "I want—I want . . ." A picture of Desire.

Coralie's visit to the Renshaws lengthened from the expected ten days to a month. A few days after she arrived, Mrs. Renshaw, long an invalid, was stricken with one of her "spells" as she herself called them in the old-fashioned, homely speech that she had never entirely lost. Prostrating headaches, quickly succeeding one another, sentenced her to a dark room for days at a time and her only interest seemed to be in Coralie's visits to her sick room. She liked to imagine that Coralie was the daughter she had longed for and never had, and Coralie played her filial part well.

With Mr. Renshaw, however, she was emphatically not daughterly. Her quick perceptions had taken in the situation in the Renshaw menage. Here was a man who in strength and virility was ten years younger than his actual age; a man of limitless ambition and driving intellectual power, tied to a faded, ineffectual invalid, whom he had outgrown many years before. It was a situation that needed only a match to explode, and Coralie supplied the match. In the beautiful gowns which Mrs. Renshaw had given her, against the background of the Renshaw home, her beauty flamed into new perfection. Renshaw was a connoisseur of beauty; his art collections were internationally famous. And here was a woman who crowned and justified the exquisite background his wealth supplied. Added to his impersonal, artistic desire to possess her was the personal desire, which Coralie stimulated daily by clever, subtle methods. He was a man with few illusions; he was not for a moment deceived by the girlish, sweet manner which she had used to bait his wife. And he made more than one suggestion—only slightly veiled—that they might come to some "arrangement." Coralie made it perfectly plain that nothing short of marriage would enter into her considerations. This seemed to bring matters to an impasse since a divorce from the all too faithful wife of his youth seemed out of the question.

Then Coralie in her quiet way showed him the solution. They were having after-dinner coffee *à deux* in the great paneled library one night. Suddenly Coralie leaned a little forward and held his gaze.

"Isn't there some danger?" she asked, "that Mrs. Renshaw's headaches, these days of unbearable pain, may be affecting her mentally?"

It was her manner, the direct look with which she accompanied her words, that showed him the meaning behind her apparently casual suggestion. And Renshaw had made his millions by his quick decisions. Within a week after this conversation he had a consultation of doctors to determine his wife's mental condition. It was perhaps a coincidence that all the doctors called in were in some fashion

under his control. The three doctors declared Mrs. Renshaw insane.

The old lady, feebly protesting, was hurriedly carried to a private sanitarium for mental patients. Coralie went back home, but with a definite promise from George Renshaw that as soon as he could procure his divorce, on grounds of his wife's insanity, he would come for Coralie.

Back home again, Coralie found distressing conditions in the little household. Her aunt was fighting a heavy cold which showed symptoms of developing into pneumonia. Pneumonia won the battle against all Dr. Linton's love and skill.

In his loneliness, taking up again the burden of his endless, ill-paid service, and carrying the load of debt incurred by Coralie's "advantages," the old man turned to his adpoted daughter for all his comfort. And for the first time he began vaguely to feel the lack of response in Coralie. She was affectionate to him in her lovely, careless fashion, but his instincts, sharpened by his suffering, cried out for something true and fine and found that something lacking in his long-worshipped idol.

Six months later, the great Renshaw descended on the little southern town in his private car, collected Coralie, the most beautiful of his whole array of "art treasures," carried her to the nearest city and married her. She wrote back to her "dearest uncle Tom" and enclosed in the letter a check for a fabulous sum to "pay for all the terrible expense" she had been to him. Dr. Linton tore the check up and returned the pieces to her. He never communicated with her again.

Peter Briscoe, who had come back home and hung out his modest lawyer's shingle, moved up to the Linton house to live with the lonely old man. There were sudden, sharp lines about Peter's mouth and a look in his eyes that kept anyone from speaking to him about his lost love. Even to the doctor he never mentioned Coralie. But he tried in an inarticulate way to make things less unbearable for Dr. Tom, and the latter, always before so independent and upstanding, clung to the younger man in a pitiful dependence. It is often said that one cannot die of a broken heart. But Tom Linton was a doctor and he knew better; he did it. Just at the last he tried to tell Peter something. "Coralie—Coralie—" he began, but he never finished the sentence.

Leaving this wreckage in her wake, Coralie sailed out into her sea of uncharted desires. Reports came back through the newspapers of her fairy-tale life. The infatuated Renshaw gratified her wishes before she framed them. He built new palaces for her—one at Newport, one in Florida, one in Washington. When they traveled abroad, he fairly plundered European cities of their choicest treasures to please her increasingly fickle tastes. Literally "everything that money could buy" was hers. And admiration was hers, too—unfeigned and unbounded. Everywhere they went Coralie attached a train of admirers. Men of all ages paid facile tribute to her beauty and her charm. But they were all men of the same stamp, idle men, "wasters," who shrewdly exchanged their admiration, which Coralie craved, for the advantages to be gained by association with the Renshaw menage. Some of them merely sought social prestige; some sought more tangible rewards and maneuvered in various clever ways to obtain "loans" from Coralie. She was generous in her careless fashion, and none of her "suitors" ever appealed to her for money in vain.

Her husband observed them tolerantly; he was not afraid of their rivalry and he rather liked to have them hanging on. He had bought this jewel and he wanted to see it admired. However, he soon gave up any attempt to keep step with his young wife; he knew that the pace would be a killing one for his seventy years.

Coralie was feverish, insatiable in her pursuit of joy. After a few years of it, even her superb strength began to need reinforcements. She found the reinforcements in stimulants. She began each day with a cocktail and dittoed the prescription at frequent hours during the twenty-four. Then she began buying sleep every night with a narcotic. Her wonderful eyes were losing the fresh brightness of youth, but they were still bright—with alcohol.

When she had been married several years, she received one day a note written in a feeble, tremulous hand. It was from her husband's first wife, the kind old friend she had supplanted. Many and many a letter had the old woman written her, but they had all been caught and stopped by the nurses at the sanitarium in which she was confined. Finally, in some way, she had managed to get this note through. It was a pitiful, almost childish appeal for freedom. If they would just give her back her freedom, she assured Coralie that she would go quietly away somewhere and never bother either of them. Over and over she repeated this promise; over and over the cry for freedom. It seemed almost that the cruel blow which had been dealt her had really unhinged her mind.

Coralie, who had serenely put the old woman out of her mind during the intervening years, must now remember her at a time when her own nerves were unstrung by late hours and a succession of cocktails. But Coralie would not tolerate discomfort, even the mental discomfort of unpleasant thoughts and memories. Moreover, she had found how easy it was to cheat life. So she now sought forgetfulness by the easy path she had found. When her maid came to dress her for dinner a few hours later, she found her in a stupor, all her beauty temporarily washed from her sodden face by a mixture of whiskey and drugs.

Coralie never answered the letter from Mrs. Renshaw, but in her curious backhanded way she soothed her conscience by trying to make amends for another wrong. With a great blare of trumpets it was announced that in memory of her uncle, the late Dr. Thomas Linton, Mrs. George Renshaw would give a million dollars to the medical school of his state university. Coralie herself went down for the presentation ceremonies. It was the first time she had been home since her marriage, and this was not really home, since the affair was staged in the state capital, where the governor would officially receive her gift.

Peter Briscoe was at this time serving in the state legislature and, drawn by what he felt was a morbid curiosity, he went to the presentation ceremony. His fine, clean young lips tightened and his eyes darkened with emotional battles he had thought long since won, as he watched his old love. Graceful and gracious, Coralie moved about the platform, greeting the Governor and other state officials, overcoming their moral prejudices against her by her invincible charm. She had changed, far too great a change for the short span of years. Peter saw. Her beauty which had been warm and alive like a rose, was now polished and shining like a diamond. Her hair, telling the story of exquisite care, was still a net of dreams to ensnare the hearts of

men. Her great blue eyes, feverishly bright, lured as of old through tangled lashes. Her color she had lost, but so perfectly was it simulated by expert make-up that certainly no simple Peter Briscoe could detect the difference. The long speeches, the exchanges of compliments, all the routine of a public ceremony, passed by Peter unheard, unseen. He only saw Coralie, his one love, now lost to him forever. And finally Coralie saw him. Her restless eyes, searching the unfamiliar faces in the crowd, caught for an instant his intent gaze. She stirred, rummaged in her jeweled bag and dashed off a little note, which she despatched by an usher.

> Peter dear:—I must see you and talk to you. Hate me all the rest of your life, if you must, but forgive me just for an hour to-night and come to dinner with me at the hotel, when all this is over. Coralie.

Instinctively Peter knew that he ought not to go. But the fire of his emotions, which he kept so carefully smothered, was blazing again . . . and he went. Coralie prepared for his coming with a couple of cocktails, then joined him in another just before they sat down to dinner. Thus fortified, she scintillated through the intimate meal which she had ordered served in her private sitting room at the hotel. She fairly sparkled as she talked, plucking the choicest interests from her rich, colorful life and spreading them out as a conversational offering to her old sweetheart. Coralie was exerting her charm to the utmost. The sight of Peter Briscoe this afternoon had reminded her that there was one thing she did not possess—love. She had had love in abundance all during her girlhood and had thrown it away for higher prizes. Now she had a very much infatuated husband and a train of more or less infatuated hangers-on—but she had love from no one. And because it was no longer in her grasp, Coralie desired it.

Like all her desires, this sudden longing for love was intense, exigent. And Peter was the only one left who could give it to her. For this reason she had asked him here to-night. For this reason she was bringing out all the tricks in her bag, arching her soft red lips in their old sweet curves, underlining every exquisite curve of her bare white arms as she played with the long-stemmed wine glass in front of her, leaning suddenly close to him in confidence, so that his senses wavered under her nearness, the insidious perfume that she wore, then withdrawing on a note of mockery. But however he might be tormented, outwardly Peter Briscoe remained calm, friendly, casual. It maddened Coralie and when dinner was over and she had dismissed the attendants, she decided on the direct appeal.

She lighted a cigarette for him, gave it a couple of introductory puffs herself and held it out to him. In doing so she came very close.

"Oh, Peter," she almost whispered, "have you really forgotten?"

Peter's face whitened. His clenched hands told her that his control had to be fought for, but he answered evenly.

"No, I have not forgotten, Coralie. I have not forgotten that—at least in the sight of men—you are George Renshaw's wife."

"Just what do you mean by that?" she asked.

"In God's sight, he has another wife," he answered her gravely.

It was Coralie's turn to whiten now. She thought for one shuddering moment of the heartbroken appeal which had reached her from the old woman she had despoiled.

"You believe in God, don't you, Peter?" she mocked again.

He only answered her with his steady gaze, and Coralie half-sobbed:

"Oh, Peter, forget everything tonight," she whispered. "Forget even God —and love me a little."

She held out her arms to him and suddenly his hard-won control broke. He caught her to him savagely until she cried out faintly, kissed her lovely throat, her long lashes that lay dark and quiet on her faintly rouged cheeks, the scarlet stain of her mouth. But all the time, like a trip hammer beating at his brain was the thought of honor . . . honor. . . .

Presently the noise of its steady beat drowned even the throbbing of his heart. He tore himself away from her, turned away blindly and somehow stumbled out of the room. All night long he walked through the comforting darkness, until he conquered himself. And in the following days, though she pursued him with messages and appeals, he would not come to her again. After a week of frustrated desire, she went north, baffled for the first time in attaining her ends.

II

Another lapse of years, during which Peter could follow in the newspapers the comet-like flight of the beautiful Mrs. Renshaw who trailed her brilliance from continent to continent in a restless search for diversion. But during these years, Coralie, if she read the papers carefully, could begin to follow Peter, too. For with his earnest, single-track mind, he was forging ahead. His interests had veered from a legal to a political career and he was making real headway. He went to the national Congress, which was not so much of an achievement, but after he got to Washington, he managed to stand out as an individuality in the heterogeneous Lower House, which *was* an achievement. By his deep study of currency questions, his unceasing advocacy of a "stabilized dollar" which would not change its purchasing value, he was making a real name for himself. Older men in the political game began to recognize him as a rising star in the political firmament; leaders in his party began to cultivate him. Socially he became known and as he was still a bachelor, mothers of marriageable daughters showered him with invitations. Most of these invitations he turned down, but he went out a little—usually to dinner parties with a political cast.

At one of these he even saw Coralie, who was making a brief visit to her Washington residence. She was at the other end of the table from him but he could watch her and his heart ached for her—the heart which she had hurt so cruelly—for in her dimmed beauty he thought he read the story of unhappiness. Of the constant self-indulgence, of the drugs with which she smoothed her shining path, and of the ravages they had wrought in her glorious looks, of course he knew nothing.

It was soon after this dinner that the newspapers began to carry reports of George Renshaw's failing health. There were unconfirmed rumors of a paralytic stroke and his age gave little hope of recovery. Coralie, with all the plunder of her matrimonial piracy, would soon be free. Still a young woman—and free.

However, Peter's heart was no longer a cold, deserted shrine dedicated to Coralie. For the first time another woman had come into his life, had slipped in gently. She was Anne Crane, the young woman who served most efficiently as his secretary.

When Peter first came to Washington, she had been recommended to him by an outgoing congressman. He had understood in a vague sort of way that she was a widow. He had been quite definitely

informed as to her exceptional capability. Her quiet efficiency had in itself obscured her personality for a long time. She was so much like a smooth-running machine that he did not think of her as a woman. But in her diffident, unassuming way she had really suggested to him the plan for his campaign for a reformed currency; that "market-basket dollar" slogan which had won for him national fame had been her idea. Peter began to consider her as a person, very much of a person. And he began to look at her with the seeing eye.

Anne Crane was as unlike Coralie as the faint violet perfume she wore was unlike the heady, oriental scent which Coralie affected. She had no striking beauty, was merely pretty in a soft, unemphasized way. Her leaf-brown hair was fine and silky, but made no "show." Her brown eyes were true and steady and tender, but they could never have the thrill of Coralie's storm-tossed blue ones. Her mouth was too faintly colored, where Coralie's was heart-breakingly scarlet. True, it quirked humorously at the corners in a quaintly charming way, but it was a vastly different charm from the arched allure of Coralie's lips.

And Peter's love for her was different, too. It was a quiet, happy love that healed the wounds his love for Coralie had made in his heart. He felt instinctively that his love was returned. Anne was so emphatically not a coquette and the warm loyalty in her steady eyes was easy to read. Late one evening, when they had stayed together to finish a difficult piece of work and the office was otherwise deserted, Peter asked her to marry him. For a while she did not say anything, and he saw with astonishment a distressing change pass over her face. Her accustomed pallor blanched to a deader white, she had to press her lips tight to stop their trembling, and she dropped the lids over the pain in her brown eyes.

Finally:

"I won't lie to you," she said in her low voice. "I love you . . . love you . . . ah, you must know that." She lifted her eyes in a sudden revelation to Peter and he caught his breath sharply. "But I cannot marry you," she continued. "It is such a long story and so hard for me to tell, but I would like to show you, if you will come with me to-morrow to . . . to . . . where I shall . take you," she finished abruptly.

To-morrow was Sunday, and following her wishes, Peter planned to come for her early in the morning, in his roadster, and go "where she should take him." It was strangely confusing to find a mystery connected with Anne Crane; in her gentle sweetness she was so plainly meant for the happy commonplaces of life. But whatever the mystery, Peter knew that she was tangled in the web; she had not spun it. No one could look into her clear eyes and not trust her forever.

The air was cool with the sharpness of early spring as they sped through the country that Sunday morning. She had told him to take the highway between Washington and Baltimore. She had little to say, but silence with Anne Crane was always comfortable, never uneasy. So comfortable, so soothing was it to have her by him on this cool, clean morning that Peter could not bring himself to believe there was any insurmountable obstacle to their life together. Whatever this mystery was, he would clear it away. This second love story of his life should have a happy ending. . . . But Anne was indicating to him a new road, a short private road leading from the highway.

"We turn in here," she said.

In a few minutes they came in sight of what seemed a great estate. There

were high stone walls, heavy wrought iron gates, and beyond velvet lawns a great, rambling house, breaking the sky-line with countless old-fashioned turrets and cupolas, and sprawling over the hill in "additions" and wings of varying architectural periods.

At the big gates the car had to stop while a man, evidently a guard, peered through the bars at them.

The man's face lighted instantly, as Anne spoke to him. Peter had noticed before what a way she had with those who served in low places.

"Ah, it's Mrs. Crane," the man said and swung wide the gate.

Peter turned a questioning look upon her; he was frankly puzzled by the closed and guarded gates.

"It is—a sanitarium, a private asylum," Anne Crane told him.

Then, comprehending, he looked at their surroundings. Here and there he saw groups of people scattered over the sloping lawns, under the great oaks, but always there was a white-capped nurse at the center of the group or a uniformed attendant.

They drove up to the door, and after brief preliminaries it was arranged by the man at the desk that they should be taken upstairs to "see Mr. Crane."

"'Mr. Crane'—your husband, Anne?" Peter asked her, low-voiced, as they followed the attendant.

She nodded. "Yes, dear," she said. "You see I am not a widow, though—widowed." Her voice broke.

Even out of his own painful surprise, he could feel her greater suffering. He pressed her arm close to his heart. The attendant was unlocking a door, cautiously admitting them. Peter could not understand all the precautions, for when he entered the room, he saw only a mild, weak-faced, youngish man, sitting quietly and gazing vacantly out the window while an attendant read aloud to him monotonously.

At their entrance, the attendant arose, dropping his book to the floor.

"Ah, Mrs. Crane," he murmured.

The vacant-faced man by the window also rose with formal politeness but with an entire absence of recognition for his wife.

She went toward him swiftly, took one of his unresponsive hands in both of hers, patted it gently.

"How are you feeling, Charlie?" she asked him.

"Well. Very well," he answered. Then he saw the large bag she carried and his face lighted with the naive acquisitiveness of a child.

"Are there any presents for me?" he inquired.

"Yes, dear," she assured him and began eagerly to bring out her little offerings—half a dozen packages of cigarettes, a pound of candy, some linen handkerchiefs.

He seemed gay and pleased as he looked at the candy and handkerchiefs. Then he saw the cigarettes.

"I didn't want cigarettes. I told you that. I wanted cigars," he began and, as though the trifling disappointment had lighted a fuse, a shocking spasm of rage flicked suddenly across his face. His eyes clouded, he began to stamp on the floor like a spoiled, bad child, to tear the cigarette boxes into shreds. A flick of foam presently appeared at one corner of his weak mouth, now grown somehow cruel. The attendant moved hastily forward, murmured something to Anne, put himself between her and his patient. And she and Peter stumbled out of the room.

She was badly shaken by the experience. Peter drew her into a little sun parlor at the end of the corridor, held her

to him while long, shuddering sobs ran through her frail figure.

"You see—you see, I wanted you to understand why I can't ever marry you," she kept saying.

Presently she grew quieter and then Peter answered her.

"Frankly, I don't see," he told her. "Is there any chance of your husband regaining his mind? What do the doctors say?"

"Yes, there is a chance. One in a hundred—a thousand—but still the chance."

"But why should you be denied all your life, all your youth, just on a bare chance?" he urged. "Why, Anne, he doesn't even know you. How could it hurt him, darling, for you to have your own life?"

"No, he doesn't know me now and I'm not much good to him, except that by working and supporting myself, I leave all his income free so that he can have comforts. But if he ever comes back to himself, then he will know me and want me. And think of it, Peter, if he should come back and find that I have deserted him, then he would have nobody in all the world. When I married him we were both very young, but old enough to know what marriage meant—that it was always a gamble—'for better or worse,' you know. Now that the 'worse' has come true, if I desert, I shouldn't be playing the game."

And that was all that Peter could ever get from her. Suddenly a contrasting picture shot across his brain—Coralie Linton shutting up an old woman who had been kind to her in just such a prison as this one, and stealing all that belonged to that old woman.

As they passed out of the grounds, Anne called his attention to an old lady sitting under one of the trees, with a nurse beside her.

"I notice her ever so often," Anne said. "See how desolate her eyes are."

Peter looked, and as he looked the woman wrung her thin old hands together with a pitiful gesture. But even while he regarded her with impersonal sympathy, he had no suspicion that he was looking at Mrs. George Renshaw, the woman his own lost love, his Coralie, had betrayed.

Coming back into Washington a brief hour later, as their car was caught in a traffic tangle a newsboy jumped onto the running-board and teased Anne into the purchase of his last paper. She gazed idly at the headlines, reading a few aloud to Peter, at random.

"George Renshaw is dead," she said, "the railroad magnate, you know. It says here that Wall Street had already discounted his death, so there will be no flurry in stocks." She read on, not noticing Peter's silence.

George Renshaw dead. . . . Coralie free . . . free! His heart, his still undisciplined heart, beat suffocatingly. But his brain cleared. Coralie was *not* free. She could never be free again.

III

It was on a night late in June when Peter got his first message from the widowed Coralie. There was a night session of Congress. One of the little House pages darted up to him with a card on which was engraved the name "Mrs. George Renshaw," and beneath, the penciled words "I must talk to you." Peter arose and followed the page to one corner of the reception room where Coralie waited. His only glimpse of her in the past few years had been at that one dinner party, when she sat at the opposite end of the table. Now, as he saw her close at hand, his very soul was shocked. His keen eye could not misinterpret the telltale marks of dissipation; he could no

longer be mistaken as to the cause of her ravaged beauty. The great dark pupils of her blue eyes were contracted into pinpricks by the drugs she took so freely. Black pencilling underlined her eyes. Her make-up could no longer be mistaken for nature's work; it was heavily applied and there was a smear at one corner of her lovely mouth where the lip stick had been applied with an unsteady hand. But even though wrecked, her beauty yet lived. It had become an evil thing, but it was there. Peter felt suffocated; his one thought became the longing for darkness; he must get her away from the revealing glare of these hideous lights.

He suggested that they walk out on the terrace and have their talk there. Coralie agreed. Out in the warm, clean-scented air, Peter drew a deep breath. Coralie followed him to the stone parapet where he leaned and gazed far out over the lights of the spacious city lying at their feet. It was she who broke the silence.

"Peter," she said, "I was afraid that on account of my money, some false pride would keep you from coming to me. So I have come to you. I am free now, sweetheart, free. I know how you felt about my marriage. But I also know," here her voice thrilled in the old, unforgettable way, "that while you hate me, you also love me. And love is all that counts. I've come to see that of late years. All that counts." She moved close to him, rested her head against his shoulder. That insidious perfume she used filled his nostrils. "Ah, Peter, I can give you everything now—everything," she murmured.

For a moment his senses rocked. Here in the dark he could no longer see the record of the past years written on her face; here he could only feel her so wonderful, so warm, so intoxicating, close, close to him . . . hear the thrill of her voice . . . and catch the vision she held before his eyes. "I can give you everything." Power! The untold power of many millions. She had it to give, and she offered it to him. . . . Then his soul heard a faint, far-off echo.

"That wouldn't be playing the game."

Very gently he held Coralie away from him.

"All of that is ended for us, Coralie, long ago."

Amazed, unbelieving, furious, she drew herself erect, tense.

"Is it because I married a divorced man? Are you really as narrow and Puritanical as that, Peter?" she blazed.

"It isn't just that," he answered slowly. "But there is a barrier between us, Coralie, as strong a barrier now as there was when Mr. Renshaw was living. I don't know how to tell you . . . but the thought of what you did to get your desires, the picture of that old woman whom you sentenced to a living death, comes between us. The crime of it has been brought home to me so clearly . . . the hideous cruelty."

He hardly knew he was speaking aloud, so intently was he following the trail of his thoughts, which led back to Anne Crane and her fidelity through more than death. Then he was recalled to himself by a strangled gasp from his companion.

"Help me to find my car. I want to go home," she commanded.

Coralie of course knew nothing of Anne Crane or of her poor mad husband. She took Peter at his word that the only obstacle to their marriage was the old woman whose husband, whose fortune, whose very life she herself had stolen. Her drugged brain was mad with thwarted desire, and the fury revolved in sickening circles around that tired, imprisoned old woman.

Home again, in her own room, Coralie dismissed her maid for the night. She drew from her bosom a small key and with fumbling, frantic hands fitted it in the lock of a small, beautifully inlaid cabinet, drew out a hypodermic needle. Later she followed the injection with a stiff cocktail. Her rage mounted in her disordered brain and always it centered on that sick old woman who would never, never die, who stood between Peter and herself somehow . . . she could not remember how.

At eleven o'clock she made her way through the darkened house, back to the garage where she wakened the chauffeur. She demanded the roadster at once.

She stopped at a filling station on the outskirts and demanded a can of gasoline, to be set next to her on the seat of the car. She was wild-eyed, disheveled. "Crazy drunk," the garage man decided, but he shrugged his shoulders contentedly as she flung a yellow backed bill to him and drove off without waiting for change. Before midnight she reached the sanitarium where Peter and Anne had driven one spring day. Like them she was stopped at the gate. With her remaining shrewdness she explained that she had been called to see a patient, a relative of hers, who was very ill. She backed up her statement with another bill of large denomination from her stuffed, jeweled bag. The man let her pass. She left the car standing in front of the house, then she stealthily made her way to the rear of the west wing. It was in this wing that old Mrs. Renshaw had been confined; she could remember that from the last doctor's report she had read. The guard way down at the gate could not see her; he thought she had gone into the house. She made her way very silently and very slowly, because she held in her arms a heavy can of gasoline. Once safe out of sight, she opened the can and splashed it over the frame wall of the old house. Then she drew from her bag a box of matches. Her fingers fumbled, but she finally managed to strike a match and fling it away from her, toward the gasoline-soaked wall.

The flames had not mounted high before a wakeful attendant saw them and gave the alarm. But it was fully half an hour before the nearest city fire department could send out engines. By that time the whole west wing was blazing. Everyone was so intent on conquering the fire and rescuing the poor terrified creatures who were trapped, that no one saw the mad figure of a woman far down the drive, dancing some weird, improvised and savage dance of triumph, as the flames mounted higher and higher. But a fireman heard her sudden shriek of fear. A flying spark from the building had caught her skirt and the skirt was soaked with the gasoline her unsteady hands had spilled. In a minute she was a dancing sheet of flame. The fireman who had heard rushed to her but it was too late to save her life.

From the gold, jeweled bag that lay near her, they identified her late the next morning. No one knew why the great Mrs. Renshaw should have been there at such an hour but the newspapers wrote long sob stories about it; how sweet and thoughtful she had always been for her dead husband's divorced wife; how insistent that the elder Mrs. Renshaw should have every medical attention, every comfort. It was surmised that she had in some way heard of the fire and had rushed to the scene. The public accepted this story, swallowed every sob in it. But four men doubted it: the chauffeur who had seen her drive out drunkenly long before the fire; the man at the filling station who had sold her the can of gasoline and pock-

eted the unholy fee; the guard at the asylum gate who had admitted her and had also pocketed a fee—and Peter Briscoe.

Fate, always so kind to Coralie, had grown ironic now, it seemed. The list of casualities from the fire did not include the name of the elder Mrs. Renshaw, who had been removed to the east wing only a day before. But high up on the list of deaths from the fire appeared the name "Charles Crane."

In the fall of that year, a glorious, riotously colored fall, when Peter and Anne were returning from their short wedding trip, Peter broke one of their placid, happy silences with a reproach.

"I wish I could do more things for you, Anne," he said, "but it is so hard to find out what things give you pleasure. You never seem to want anything."

The humorous corners of her mouth quirked and she looked at him with a gay, sweet little smile.

"I don't," she admitted. "I have put my tragedies behind me and I am happy. Happy people don't have time to want things."

She put out her hand to him and the man across the aisle in the Pullman car smiled approvingly at them. "Bride and groom," he decided. "And he is the lucky man, too."

And Peter was a lucky man. And yet . . . and yet . . . even with her hand clasped close in his, summoned by her very words, had come that old picture of Coralie. Coralie looking into the fire and her wondrous voice: "I want . . . I want . . ." His heart contracted with the old hurt. With his very soul he would be true to the gentle little wife he had won, but the passionate, unreasoning love of his life had gone to Coralie—wicked, selfish, beautiful, incomparable Coralie.

Had she lived, she would herself have inevitably destroyed her image in his heart. By her death she had forever preserved it. Across the bar of eternity, her grasping, lovely hand reached out. As always, Coralie had gotten what she wanted.

Announcement of Prize Winners!

The editors of TELLING TALES take pleasure in making the following announcement of winners in the authors' contest started in the First January TELLING TALES:

Peter Chance's *novelette,* "You Can't Keep a Good Girl Down," *won the first prize of* $250.00. 1765 *readers of* TELLING TALES *voted for this story.*

Arthur T. Munyan's *last* "Patsy Allardyce" *story,* "Hispaniola," *captured the second prize of* $150.00, *with* 533 *votes.*

Marjorie Bowen's "White Hyacinths" *came in a close third, with* 445 *votes, winning the third prize of* $100.00.

For the benefit of those who have not followed this contest, let us explain that in the First January number the editors of TELLING TALES offered $500.00 in prizes to the three stories in that number receiving most votes from our readers. We congratulate the three winners, and hope that it will cheer up the losers somewhat to hear that *every* story in the issue found a large number of enthusiasts.

CALYPSO

A One-Act Play

By HARRY KEMP

At the end of the siege of Troy, so celebrated in all literature, and with the final overthrow of that ancient city, the Grecian heroes who had led their forces to help Menelaus win back his wife—that famous beauty, Helen—gladly set out for home again.

Each was the victim of many a vicissitude while on his homeward way.

But it was Ulysses, the craftiest and wisest of them all, who experienced the most difficulty in getting back to his kingdom of Ithaca.

He was thrown by the winds on the coast of Africa. He visited the land of the lotus-eaters. He almost met his death at the hands of those huge, one-eyed giants, the cyclops. And he barely escaped from the wiles of the enchantress, Circe, who changed all the wanderers who visited her domains, into brutes and swine.

He even descended into the lower regions of the dead and succeeded in getting back to the living sun alive.

But it was on the island of Ogygia that Ulysses came close to passing the remainder of his days.

There dwelt the goddess Calypso. She offered him the gift of living forever if he would only remain with her and be her husband.

But, after spending seven years with her on her island, he was visited by the messenger of the gods, Mercury, who brought him word from Jove that he must go on.

So he resumed his wanderings and at last reached Ithaca, where he rejoined his mortal wife, Penelope, who had been faithful to him during his absence.

TIME:—*The Homeric Age*

PLACE:—*Calypso's Island*

Calypso discovered sitting at the mouth of her grotto. She is working at a loom.

CALYPSO (*singing*)

Life is a passing thing
  Soon into darkness thrust,
To-day, all dreams and wondering,
  To-morrow, only dust.

Beauty's a passing thing
  That waits its certain end.
It's only gift is suffering,
  It is no woman's friend.

(*A pause. She sighs and stops the loom. She sits vacantly for a moment, then she continues to sing*)

Love is a passing thing,
  A cruel and breaking rod.
And yet his passionate moments bring
  All that we know of God.

(*She weeps softly, but quickly dries her tears, perceiving the shadow of something, cast from behind, over her loom. She turns her head and beholds, standing back of her, where he has been for some time, Mercury, the gods' messenger*)

MERCURY

What! Is Calypso sighing, weeping too?
These are two things a goddess should not do.

CALYPSO

I was but thinking how it felt to be
A mortal woman, gentle Mercury.
But tell me what high message brings you here

That on my humble island you appear?

MERCURY (*dissembling*)

I've come to earth because heaven bored me, dear!
Strolling about, I thought perhaps I'd find
Some mortal maiden who might—well—be kind,
Seeing that I'm a god. . . .

CALYPSO (*with a motion of disgust*)

You're all the same,
You gods—like men, with changing fire a-flame,
Pursuing every woman's face you see
And constant only to inconstancy.

MERCURY

So you confess you know what men are like?
You, a great goddess on an island far,
Lost in the azure of an endless sea,
Remote from men and women as a star?

CALYPSO (*with forgetful passion*)

Remote from *men!* (*Recalling herself and falling silent*)

MERCURY

Girl, do you mean to say
A mortal man at last has passed this way?

CALYPSO

No, prying Mercury, it was only play.
This island, with its morning hills a-glow,
Is sometimes quite monotonous, you know,
So I must have my moods.

MERCURY (*slyly*)

I understand!

CALYPSO (*continuing*)

Sometimes I hate the easiness of this land,
Its trees that drop their fruits into my hand,
Its fields that give abundant corn and wheat
Without the cleaving plow, the oxen's feet.

MERCURY

It seems some rank rebellion moves abroad:
You've been kissed by some creature not a god.
No leaping faun, no mauve lad from the sea
Clothed in the joys of immortality
Would teach you this.

CALYPSO (*laughing tearfully*)

Then, subtle Mercury,
Give me your message, cease your biting jest.
I love Ulysses, now I stand confessed!

MERCURY

You love Ulysses!

CALYPSO

Don't pretend surprise. . . .
What is the message Jove sends from the skies?

MERCURY (*adroitly*)

I bring no message but my love for you.
(*Seizes a hand*)

CALYPSO (*sternly*)

Stand back, and say what Jove would have me do. (*With an outburst of impatience*)
I've known enough of anguish, sorrow, tears.
True to this man for seven tortured years,
Resisting sea-gods, fauns, and shaggy satyrs—
Cleaving to him!

MERCURY (*laughing with quiet malice*)

Well, then it little matters
The word that from the mouth of Jove I bring.
But here the end of all your suffering
And take alleviation for your woe—
The gods command you: let Ulysses go!

CALYPSO (*petulantly*)

Ulysses go! As if I ever held him!

MERCURY (*ironically*)

There breathed a vague report that you'd so spelled him
And lapped him round with such enduring charms
That all his life was in your two white arms.

CALYPSO (*stung to abuse*)
Patron of thieves and lies, I thought no less.
The gods grow jealous of my happiness.
MERCURY (*teasing*)
Happiness? It was but a breath ago
You made complaint of misery and woe.
CALYPSO
I'm neither woman now, nor deity.
I curse the day that brought this man to me. (*A pause. She resumes gently*)
Mercury, gentle Mercury, I pray,
Help me to win another month's delay
Or just another blue and smiling day.
Let him still torture me but—let him stay!
MERCURY (*aside*)
I see there can be two sides to seduction.
Calypso, I must follow Jove's instruction
Or fall beneath the lightning of his power,
As tempests beat down on a broken flower. (*More sympathetically*)
Dear girl, you knew this time was sure to come;
Olympus rests on Order and the Home!
Ulysses must once more put forth to sea
And join his virtuous wife, Penelope.
From the first kiss you knew it had to be,
Such the infernal power of constancy!
CALYPSO
We, too, took the oath that we'd be true forever.
MERCURY
In love not even goddesses are clever;
Or he is so relentless and unkind
That for this hour love chooses to be blind,
Whispering with an ever-dying breath
A sweet delusion of eternal faith. . . .
Where is this man of yours?
CALYPSO
You'll find him sitting
Far on a forlorn rock with sea birds flitting
About him, near one of our island caves.
Day-long he looks out over the dancing waves
And for a shipmast scans the distant air—
Longing for home and kin. Go seek him there,
While I prepare his mid-day meal for him.
There are some curds to press, goat's milk to skim.
MERCURY (*chuckling and breaking in*)
Calypso grown a house-wife! That's a jest
Will set the gods a-laughing, and add a zest
To their ambrosia, as they drink and dine.
CALYPSO (*wearily*)
Go, while I set the board and pour the wine.
MERCURY (*mocking*)
Play the good wife; here comes Ulysses now!
CALYPSO (*anxiously*)
Go then, and let me be with him alone.
I read such black dejections on his brow
That it would wring a heart that was all stone. (*As Mercury does not stir*)
Mount back to heaven; leave the task to me.
I will inform him of the gods' decree.
MERCURY (*tapping her shoulder playfully with his wand*)
You think the gods are cruel . . . all lovers do.
They say love's end because they pity you;
They never deal a blow unless to bless,
Though the first harvest be unhappiness.
But weep to-day, you'll dry your tears to-morrow
Thanking the gods who saved you greater sorrow.
CALYPSO
Myself for my own actions can atone.
I'd thank the gods for letting us alone!
(*Mercury now vanishes. A moment after, Ulysses enters. He casts down an armful of wood he has split*)
ULYSSES
I saw what seemed a meteor cleave the air.

Tell me, Calypso, what god has been here
Mixing his fingers in your shining hair
To make Olympian judgments less severe?
For I can read in your distracted mien
You've entertained some god I have not seen.

CALYPSO (*lying—thinking for the moment to forestall the doom pronounced against them*)

For all your wisdom you're mistaken, dear!
Too busy to find leisure for deceiving
I have been toiling all day at this weaving. (*Quickly*)
But perhaps some dryad of the wood
Or some sly nymph that haunts some rolling flood
Has charmed your eye—and so you carp at me.

ULYSSES (*dully*)

I have been chopping up a fallen tree,
That's all—bored with this dull, immortal isle,
And longing for my Ithaca the while.

CALYPSO (*bridling*)

I thought that you'd been sitting on your rock
As if grown in the sky.

ULYSSES

So you've been spying
Upon me?

CALYPSO

Dear man, I'm no senseless stock!
I've followed you, unseen, there's no denying.

ULYSSES (*complacently*)

At least you know then I've been true?

CALYPSO (*sadly*)

Right glad
I'd be, if you were just a little mad
And mixed more colors with your sterner stuff,
Though you sought nymphs bright-footed as they ran.

ULYSSES (*vigorously*)

One goddess at a time is quite enough.

CALYPSO (*aside*)

I'll be well rid of this unfeeling man.

ULYSSES

Calypso, you're a failure as a wife.

CALYPSO (*stung*)

I offered you your choice—immortal life,
Eternal ease and everlasting pleasure
And unseen spirits waiting on our leisure.
A year you lived my way, and then forsook
Its splendor, changed your goddess to your cook,
A laughing girl of wonder and desire
To one who wove your clothes and built your fire.

ULYSSES

And for six years you've burnt the bread, left ravelled
The cloth you wove.

CALYPSO

Ulysses, you have travelled
Through towns and tribes, from land to lapsing land.
They call you wise, they say you understand
All wisdom, but I call you twice a fool
To think a goddess can be brought to rule.

(*She ceases, and they stand looking into each other's face in momentary silence*)

CALYPSO (*resuming*)

And now . . . I must confess that I have lied:
Mercury, Jove's messenger, just left my side
Having brought from Olympus Jove's decree
That you—(*passionately, in spite of herself*) must go back to Penelope.

ULYSSES (*looking sidewise and thoughtfully wrinkling his brows*)

Go back, indeed! Where are the means to go?
Immeasurable seas and stormy flow
Between me and my home.

CALYPSO

They'll make a way,
The gods will.

ULYSSES (*suspiciously*)

Where the ship and sailors, pray?

CALYPSO

Jove will grant time-outleaping energies
To us; I'll twist the ropes, you fell the trees.
Neptune will flatten smooth his shining seas,
Or, if the weather ceases being fair,
Some goddess will stoop down from the dark air
And buoy you up. . . .

ULYSSES (*filled with fresh suspicion*)

Calypso, I'll not go.
This is some snare laid for my life, I know.

(*A thunderbolt falls*)

CALYPSO

That was Jove's lightning. See, he orders, "Go!"

ULYSSES (*glancing slowly about*)

And must I leave this bright, immortal place
And the eternal beauty of your face?
God, what a fool I've been! I'm sick at heart!

CALYPSO

Lovers are always noble when they part.

ULYSSES (*perversely pleading*)

Still be my wooer to immortal life! (*On his knees, he takes her hand, pressing it to his lips*)

CALYPSO (*scornfully*)

You know you long to go back to your wife!

ULYSSES

O, Jove, but grant my prayer! I've changed my mind. . . .

CALYPSO

This will be my revenge . . . you'll never find
An hour unhaunted by my memory.
Even in the arms of your Penelope
And at the top of passion's highest flame
You will forget, and call her by my name.
Or if your lips won't let my loved name through
You'll close your eyes and dream 'tis I and you!

ULYSSES

Ah, we've been happy.

CALYPSO (*bitterly*)

And miserable, too.
Why were you not content with my divinity?

ULYSSES

No man wants just one woman: he wants three,
Goddess, mistress, and wife.

CALYPSO

So that's the reason that you've broken me?
I think I'll never laugh nor smile again.

(*Sighs*)

I'll always know my satyrs are not men.

ULYSSES (*surprised*)

You liked it?

CALYPSO

Yes, I liked it, I confess.
Now I'll be miserable all my life,
Hating my pale, immortal happiness
Neither a goddess now, nor yet a wife.

(*Reaching down, she picks up his axe and firmly places it in his hand*)

Take up your axe, go out and hew your ship,
While I heap up provisions for your trip
(*with tears*)
Like a true, faithful wife!

ULYSSES (*noticing food prepared*)

These curds, how white! (*starts to eat*)

CALYPSO (*ironically*)

Nothing would dull Ulysses' appetite!

ULYSSES (*with a cry, flinging down the food. He falls on his knees and clasps her about the limbs like a child, in supplication*)

I will not go! O, stay my goddess still!

CALYPSO (*with great dignity, slowly disengaging herself*)
It is too late . . . and it is not Jove's will.

ULÝSSES
But we have sworn eternal oaths that bind.

CALYPSO
In a few years, my friend, *you* will not mind,
But I can never go back to my kind!
(*Dejectedly Ulysses grips the axe and goes out, head hung in sadness*).

CURTAIN

AREN'T THEY THE LIMIT?

WAS Peg Prothero really a good girl Of course, Teddy Breck, who loved her more than any other man, admitted that there was more spice than sugar in her make-up. And what Teddy didn't know about Peg could have been supplied by Bob Brinson of the lower East Side, who knew about Peggy—well, just about all there was to know. "Sugar and Spice," a novelette by a new TELLING TALES writer, Thomas P. Sherman, will keep you on your toes. See the Second March issue.

There was the door! There it was, indeed, and how could any young man help interpret it as an invitation? When Hamlin Vance found that his hostess had placed him in a room which connected with hers by a secret passage . . . Well! Did he use that passage? And to what result? These questions can best be answered by reading "There Was the Door," by Arthur T. Munyan, in the Second March TELLING TALES.

An episode in early married life—in that crucial period when the first infatuation is over and when the "other man" appears—this is the theme of "Playing With Matches." Marcia wanted to experiment—to arouse admiration in some other man—and she built better—or worse—than she knew. A startling story by Sheila McKay, in the Second March TELING TALES.

"God-Forsaken"—a real-life story by a woman who gave up everything in her desire for money, marriage, Manhattan—and who found too late that happiness had passed her by in her own "God-Forsaken" home town. In the Second March TELLING TALES.

Can a man really live without a woman? Dr. Cranch said no, but Cale Buxton thought he could. And then he met Irma. . . . An unusual story—"Twilight"—by Gilbert Patten, in the Second March TELLING TALES.

WOMEN I HAVE LOVED

By THE COUNT DE K—

Every age has had its famous courtesans. Sappho, Thais, Cleopatra, Du Barry—their name is legion. Not always beautiful, they nevertheless possessed a mysterious magnetism which enabled them to enslave the passions of the captains of the earth.

"Women I Have Loved" is the astonishing confession of the Count de K—, a man who was endowed with that same strange power over women. How he came to realize that power, how he used it, then abused it, and was finally ruined by it, is set forth with telling vividness in this series of confessions, each of which is a complete episode in itself.

The Count de K— was well known in the best circles both in Europe and America. Born of an excellent French family, he found himself at birth in a position of great advantage. The cultivation of his natural talents, which were many, would have enabled him to assume a position of importance in world affairs. Yet such was his disposition that all ambitions disappeared in his pursuit of the blind god of love.

Broken now and regretting a wasted youth, he looks back on this period of folly. He feels that in writing this series of intimate memoirs for TELLING TALES he may show the futility of his butterfly existence to those who, like him, are too much devoted to the wines and spices of life. THE EDITORS.

Mme. Vacaresco, the Tigress of Monaco

I

OF ALL the women I have known, she was the most sensationally attractive. I saw her first in the Casino at Monte Carlo. Her back was toward me, but the proud poise of her head and the dazzling splendor of her arms and back and shoulders were enough to command any man's attention.

She was wearing a gown of shimmering Nile-green velvet that not even the Casino lights could turn to blue. Her white skin took on soft reflections from it; and, at every motion that she made, those faint, greenish shadows emphasized the exquisite modelling of her shoulders. Her hair was like burnished copper. As she turned I saw that she was wearing an emerald tiara and that her breast was ablaze with diamonds and emeralds. She carried a large fan of green feathers the exact shade of her gown.

It was impossible to tell how old she was. That tall, lithe, supple body might have belonged to a dancer of twenty-five. Except for the thin, black, arched eyebrows and the coral mouth her beautiful face was devoid of make-up. Only her long, slanting tourmaline green eyes were old—or, if they were not old, they were inconceivably wise and disillusioned.

Languidly they surveyed the room before her. As her gaze met mine a little ripple of excitement ran all through me. Penetrating eyes she had. The devil's own light burned in them.

As she turned away I glanced at her es-

cort. I judged him to be some Russian nobleman. His florid, firm-featured, still virile face was framed in a glistening white mass of well-brushed hair and beard. Suspended around his neck, against the white of his dress shirt, he wore a medal of crimson enamel and gold. His voice, gesture and bearing proclaimed him unmistakably an aristocrat. I wondered if the woman at his side were his wife or if—The second hypothesis gave me a twinge of envy.

I knew it must cost a fortune to support a woman like that. But as I strolled on into the *salles privées*—the more select gambling rooms of the Casino—I jingled the heavy gold in my pockets speculatively. There was no telling what luck, what change of destiny a few spins of the wheel might bring about!

A devout old aunt of mine had died a while before, leaving me her money. It was only a matter of some seventy thousand francs — too little for the income from it to be of any considerable use, just enough to make me wish that it were more. With the recklessness of youth I had come to Monte Carlo. I was determined either to increase my inheritance materially or to lose the whole sum in the attempt.

I dropped into a vacant chair at a table whose numbers were fairly covered with golden louis and with hundred franc gold pieces. At that time the silver inlaid chips which are now used at Monte Carlo were not in vogue. On either side of me sat white-faced, unsmiling men and women, their eyes intent upon the spinning wheel and the little bobbing ivory ball. Its speed slackened and it stopped.

"Le trois rouge, impair et manque," announced the croupier.

People caught their breath once more about the table. Pearls glowed on powdered breasts and jewelled fingers which had been clenched tight at the edge of the green baize table suddenly relaxed.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs, 'dames."

I had taken my gold from my pocket and stacked it in front of me. Now I placed a single hundred franc gold piece upon one of the even chances on the board.

Perhaps I should explain here that the roulette wheel is divided into thirty-seven compartments, alternately red and black, numbered from one to thirty-six, with a single zero. The zero represents the house's percentage. The combinations to be played are various. But the even chances are *rouge, noir, pair, impair, passe* and *manque*—red against black, even against odd, the first eighteen numbers against the last eighteen respectively.

As a matter of fact these chances are not quite even, since there is the house's percentage to be taken into account. If the ivory ball upon the wheel falls into the space marked zero, the "even" money is "imprisoned"; that is, it remains upon the table and the player merely loses his chance of winning. If zero turns up a second time, the money is lost.

After half an hour of play I was a few hundred francs to the good. I had been playing the simplest system that there is—doubling the amount of my last stake every time I lost, so that when luck finally came my way I recovered all that I had lost plus my original stake of one hundred francs. With that stake I always began again.

Then a South American gentleman at my right won some six thousand francs at a single spin of the wheel. He had been playing *en plein*—placing his money upon the numbers on the board, so that when the corresponding number on the wheel had turned up, he had won thirty-five times the amount of his stake.

There is something irresistible about such luck. It plunged me into a fever of

excitement. I wanted to get rich and get rich quick. I, too, began to play *en plein,* flinging my hundred franc gold pieces onto the board as if they had been so many sous.

In a little while I had lost almost sixty thousand francs. My nerve was shaken and I returned to my old system of betting a single hundred franc piece upon the even chances. But I had realized my mistake too late.

If you figure it out for yourself, you will see that when one is doubling at each spin of the wheel a comparatively short run of bad luck is enough to raise his stake to a formidable amount. I lost five times in succession. My next stake, therefore, called for thirty-two hundred francs. If I lost that, I should be unable to double again, not only because the maximum stake permitted on the even chances is six thousand francs, but because my money was almost exhausted.

I hesitated and turned self-consciously to see if the South American gentleman had noticed my foolhardiness.

He was no longer there.

In his chair sat the woman I had noticed on entering the Casino. She must have taken his place while I was intent upon the game. Her long, narrow, green eyes gazed straight into mine. Then, very deliberately, her coral lips moved in a mocking smile.

There was no doubt that she understood my indecision. That smile said as plainly as any words:

"Well, have you got the nerve to play again or are you through?"

I felt myself blushing angrily. Then I heard the croupier's bored invitation.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs, 'dames."

Abruptly I placed the last of my gold upon the board.

"Les jeux sont faites. Rien ne va plus."

The wheel was spinning in one direction and the ivory ball was skipping in the other. There was a buzzing in my ears. I thought the wheel was going on forever—that it would never stop. Then, suddenly, it stopped.

I had lost.

As in a dream I saw the croupier rake in the last of my money. I saw the other players place their stakes. I was dazed. It was not so much the disappointment as it was a sudden relaxation after the intense nervous strain of the last hour. How long I sat there watching the eternal spinning of the wheel and listening to the clicking of the ivory ball and the droning of the *croupier* I do not know. Suddenly I thought of the woman in green and turned to look at her.

She had gone.

A *sous chef* tapped me apologetically on the shoulder.

"If *Monsieur* no longer desires to play—"

I surrendered my seat. As I passed out through the *salle publique* I looked right and left in the hope of seeing the woman whose mocking smile had goaded me on to that last mad stake.

She was not there.

Somehow the whole evening seemed preposterous, absurdly melodramatic. Outside, the brilliant lights of the Café de Paris had given even the green lawns an artificial tinge like theatrical scenery.

An open barouche was drawn up in front of the Casino and, as I paused to light a cigarette, the coachman approached me.

"The carriage of Mme. Vacaresco is waiting for *monsieur,"* he said, touching his hat.

I told him he had made a mistake.

"Madame said that perhaps *monsieur* would not expect it. In that case she asked me to show him—" He held out one gloved hand.

In it was a single green feather that she had torn from her fan.

II

We drove rapidly along the Boulevard de l'Ouest. The sky was crowded with stars and, to my left, lay the Mediterranean. Far out I could see the lights of some passing steamer.

I wondered who this Mme. Vacaresco was and what she wanted of me. I knew, of course, that gambling is not the only industry that flourishes at Monte Carlo. For where money is quickly won it is freely spent; and, in addition to the principality of Monaco, there will always be women to take their tithe of the gambler's gold.

But if this radiant creature were a courtesan what use had she for me? All the money I had brought there would hardly have bought one of her jewels. In any case, she had seen me lose the last of it.

The carriage turned in at a well kept drive and stopped before a villa that was almost covered with flowers. In the dusk I detected the sweet, pollenlike smell of mimosa. As the door opened a long wedge of light shot out across the lawn.

A footman took my hat and stick and ushered me into a long, cool room. There were thick rugs upon the red tile floor. At the far end of the room, half reclining upon a low couch piled with cushions, I saw my hostess.

A lamp in a bracket on the wall behind her turned her hair from copper to red gold. It created the illusion of a halo about her head. That halo contrasted oddly with the voluptuousness of her pose.

She extended one long white arm as I approached and I raised her soft, cool, fragrant hand to my lips.

"Sit there, please," she said, "where I can see you. And will you help yourself to cigarettes?"

I took one from a little lacquer box which lay upon a stand beside her couch. It had a peculiar taste. She was smoking one herself which she held in a pair of silver tongs. Her lips had stained its tip coral. For a moment she studied me out of those long, bewitching, heavy-lidded eyes of hers. She offered no other word of greeting, no explanation of the manner in which she had summoned me.

"You were playing recklessly," she observed quietly, her deliberate scrutiny ended at last. "I suppose you lost everything?"

"Everything."

"But why didn't you divide your last stake?"

"You know very well," I blurted. "You looked at me in a way that dared me to risk it all upon one spin of the wheel."

She laughed—a long, low, musical laugh.

"How very young of you!" she exclaimed. "But yes—I will confess I knew it. That is why I sent for you. Do you want money so much?"

"Of course," I answered. "But I assure you I have no intention—"

"I can tell you how to win it," she interrupted smoothly.

I looked at her sceptically.

"I suppose you think you've found out some eccentricity in one of the wheels that the management has not yet discovered?"

She shook her head.

"A 'system' then?" I laughed. "I've had enough of that. I can buy books of them at the railway station and at every newsstand in Monaco. They all depend on increasing your stakes to recover past losses. They'd be fine enough if you had the capital of the Bank of France behind you and if the Casino would accept stakes up to any amount."

"I've played it myself," she announced languidly. *"And I have never lost."*

"Do you mean to say that this villa and those jewels," I began incredulously.

"Oh, no!" She laughed. "I only play it when my—what I may call my other sources of revenue are cut off. I don't pretend that it will enable you to break the bank. All I say is that, if you play it scrupulously, you can, with a moderate capital, win from one to five thousand francs a day."

It occurred to me suddenly that I had no capital with which to play any system and that she knew it.

"But why are you telling me about this system?" I demanded.

She smiled and stretched herself out upon the couch with the supple grace of a tigress.

"If you'll take another cigarette, perhaps I'll tell you."

I lighted one and, as I drew the smoke deep into my lungs, I again noticed the unusual taste.

At first I had assumed merely that the cigarettes were perfumed. Now I wondered if they could be making me ill. Although my mind was clear I felt a curious sort of intoxication. My hand had fumbled as I struck the match and my speech seemed to come with excruciating slowness. I had a sensation which I can only describe by saying that my whole body felt as if it were padded. I recalled with difficulty how I had come to that house.

Through the haze of smoke I noticed that Mme. Vacaresco was wearing jewelled slippers of red morocco and that her perfect ankles and her softly rounded, tapering calves were sheathed in green silk stockings. For some reason that fact amused me tremendously, so that I was seized with an insane desire to laugh.

She had rolled over and was lying with her chin cupped in both pink palms, looking at me quizzically. I noticed that she wore no wedding ring; and that, too, made me want to laugh. Mme. Vacaresco. . . . Red slippers and green stockings instead of a wedding ring. Ha! Ha! Ha! . . . The thought raced through my mind, but somehow it seemed too much trouble to express it.

"What were you going to say?" I managed to ask.

"I—love—you!" she enunciated slowly.

The whole expression of her face had become tense. Her words were low but vibrant, and they penetrated even my befogged brain. Then she was speaking again.

"I love you! The minute I saw you in the Casino I knew it. There is something about you—a spark—that strikes fire in me. There is—well, a *contact* between us. I felt it. I am feeling it now. And I am *never* mistaken!" The pitch of her voice had risen steadily.

Now, with a quick, sinuous movement, she rose to a sitting posture. She was leaning forward, her eyes steady, the wings of her delicate nostrils dilated, her red lips a little open over her small, perfect, blue-white teeth.

Although I had heard what she said, her words seemed to come from a great distance. I still wanted to laugh.

"Do you understand?" Her eyes flashed warningly. "I say I love you!"

I was conscious of her white arms reaching out as from some place miles away and of her hands placed firmly on my shoulders. Those hypnotic eyes gazed into mine. Then the fingers of one of her hands began to toy caressingly with my hair.

Ha! Ha! Well, that had happened before. . . . Lucy, Colette, Thérèse Monestier. . . . Another woman going mad about my hair. . . . Ha! Ha! Ha! . . . . Well, let her go then! *I'd* show her how

little I cared! . . . All I wanted was another cigarette. They were making me drunk. I'll tell her about that, old green silk stockings! I'd blow smoke in her face.

Suddenly the expression of her face changed as if she had just realized how far gone I was. She began to laugh. Her low, musical laughter seemed to come from all corners of the room. I was laughing too and trying to explain. But when I stood up her firm hands were on my arm, steadying me. They drew me down onto the couch. I sat on the edge, swaying drunkenly.

"Mais non!" I protested. *"Ecoute, ma chérie.* I have dropped . . . I have dropped my cigarette and it is burning . . . it is burning a hole . . ."

Then I forgot what I had meant to say.

The whole room seemed to be swirling about me. I closed my eyes to shut out that dizzy motion. For a second I pressed my forehead against her cool, soft shoulder. Then my head was pillowed on her lap. Her finger tips caressed my face. I could feel her warm, quick breath upon my eyelids.

When I opened them I saw that her hair had come down. It was a curtain about my face that shut out the dizzy motion of the room. It was a mist of red gold through which the light shone magically. Her arms held me tight.

All at once I felt her lips on mine. She had cast off her languor. She had become suddenly tense, swift, eager, lithe as a tigress.

Strange, dissociate phrases still kept swirling through my mind. *"Faites vos jeux, messieurs, 'dames."* "The red morocco slipper, *impair et manque."* Again her lips were pressed, quivering, against mine. *"Rien ne va plus!"*

Darkness enfolded me.

Time and space were annihilated.

III

The room was flooded with bright sunlight when I awoke the next day. I was on the couch between black silk sheets. But at first, I hadn't the slightest recollection how I had got there.

Then I noticed that the evening clothes that I had worn the night before were carefully folded and hung over a chair back. The bags that I had left at my hotel were lying on the floor. I somewhat hazily decided that the footman must have put me to bed and fetched my bags at Mme. Vacaresco's orders.

The man entered at that moment bringing me a cup of strong tea. He informed me that my bath was ready.

Refreshed by it, I got into the suit of white flannels he laid out. In the garden I found Mme. Vacaresco.

She was wearing a diaphanous, pale green *négligée.* In one hand she carried a great bunch of yellow roses which she had just picked. As I approached she stood quite still, her eyes fixed questioningly on mine. Then, impulsively, she threw her cool white arms around my neck. The dew-drenched flowers brushed my cheek and once more her lips were pressed passionately on mine.

"I love you!" she cried exultantly. "I am mad about you."

Then she laughed. With a quick change of mood, she added:

"Really, you know, I think I must be—to make love to you like this before breakfast! That isn't done, is it? Tell me, how do you feel? I really should have warned you last night that those were hasheesh cigarettes. But I've never seen anyone affected so quickly."

Presently a maid announced *déjeuner.*

The snowy table was set upon a terrace stippled with sunlight and gay with butterflies and blossoms. I could hear the soothing drone of bees. Far below me a

fleet of fishing boats, their red sails slack, floated upon the blue Mediterranean.

The soup was fortifying. The *chablis* warmed my heart. The omelette was a golden brown without, a frothy yellow within.

"For one who was so eager to make a fortune last night," remarked Mme. Vacaresco, "you seem to have very little curiosity this morning about my system."

"I'm so contented that I forgot all about it," I confessed. "Is it really any good?"

"Give me your pencil," she said, "and you shall see for yourself."

She cleared a little space upon the damask cloth.

"Now, we will assume that I am playing with hundred franc gold pieces, as you were last night, and that my object is to win a thousand francs. I am going to play the even chances consistently. You can keep the bank by matching two coins. When they are even, I win; when they are odd, I lose."

"How about the bank's percentage?" I asked.

"That is less than one chance in thirty-six. But to play safe we will assume the bank wins my very first stake and one out of every twenty stakes thereafter. Now see:

"I write down '1, 2, 3, 4.' The sum of those digits is ten, or the number of gold pieces of one hundred francs each I have to win to get my thousand francs. On each spin of the wheel I bet *the sum of the two end digits.* Each time I win I'm entitled to cross them off, and, of course, I win an amount equal to the amount I have crossed off. Each time I lose I add their sum to the list of amounts I still must win. My first stake, therefore, is five gold pieces—five hundred francs—which we will assume the bank wins. My record now reads, '1, 2, 3, 4, 5.' Now match your coins.

I drew two sous from my pocket and threw them on the table. Three times in succession they were odd. My lovely companion had therefore lost successively six, seven and eight gold pieces, so that her complete record read:

Bank Odd Odd Odd
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

On the next two spins of the wheel she won, and crossed off, first, the digits 1 and 8, then, 2 and 7. On the next eight spins of the wheel she lost, won, lost, won, lost, won, lost and won. Her completed record therefore showed, with all the digits crossed out, as the parentheses indicate:

Bank Odd Odd Odd Even Even
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) — —

Odd Even Odd Even Odd Even Odd Even
(9) — (10) — (11) — (6) —

So since she was betting on even, by the time all the digits were crossed out, she had recovered her original theoretical investment and had won an equal amount.

"You see," she cried triumphantly, "although I have lost eight spins of the wheel and won only six, I still have made my thousand francs.

"Had I staked the entire amount I wished to win the first time and then, by a run of bad luck, been forced to double my stake for thirteen more spins of the wheel, the way you were trying to do last night, I should have required a capital of"—she figured for a minute on the tablecloth—"eight million, one hundred and ninety-two thousand francs. Needless to say, if I had a fortune like that, I could invest it more profitably. Besides, the maximum stake the Casino allows is six thousand francs. In this case, my highest stake was only sixteen hundred."

"Tiens!" I said. "But look here: this system seems to work both ways. For if I had been playing odd at the same time

you were playing even, I should have won my thousand francs on the fourth spin of the wheel."

"Exactly," said Mme. Vacaresco, and she went on to explain a further development of her system.

It consisted in playing, as before, any of the even chances—red, let us say—for the first two or three spins of the wheel and then in starting to play the opposite color at the same time by exactly the same system. But if one record indicated a stake of seven on red, and the other a stake of five on black, you simply bet the difference, or two, on red. Both records eventually cancelled out, though not at the same time; and, by letting what you had gained on one color partially offset your losses on the other, you had still further reduced the amount of capital required.

I tried the system for myself while Mme. Vacaresco matched the coins. It was amazing how well it worked. As she said, every time you lost, you added only one figure, and, every time you won, you crossed out two. As soon as they were all crossed out you had won your thousand francs, or, if you were playing red and black at the same time, your two thousand.

I have no intention, of course, of encouraging the readers of this memoir to gamble. But it may interest them to experiment with Mme. Vacaresco's system for themselves. Its whole object is to keep the amount of capital required as low as possible and to avoid the common predicament in which the player finds himself required, by his system, to make a stake larger than the maximum permitted by the Casino. If he desires, he can still further safeguard himself by playing for only a hundred francs at a time instead of for a thousand.

That very evening Mme. Vacaresco persuaded me to accept a chamois purse of hundred franc gold pieces; and I returned to the Casino to try out her system. The hardest thing about it was to be satisfied with my small, steady gains and to resist the temptation to plunge on the numbers when other people at the same table, on lucky turns of the wheel, were winning thirty-five times the amount of their stakes. But I had learned that lesson the night before.

At midnight, when the *salles privées* closed, I was three thousand francs to the good. I found Mme. Vacaresco's carriage waiting for me.

On our life together after that I prefer not to dwell. Every afternoon and every evening I played at the Casino. Within two weeks I had returned to Mme. Vacaresco the capital she had advanced and was beginning to accumulate a snug little bank account at the *Crèdit Lyonnais*. Mme. Vacaresco rarely played herself. It was an old story to her and, as I have said, her system required hours of play to make only moderate winnings. Where her own money came from I could only surmise. Certainly she had it.

Money! Money! Money! It poured through her hands in a golden stream and disappeared, leaving her wondering where it had gone.

Of her past I knew nothing, though I often tried to find out. Once I questioned her about the white-bearded Russian nobleman with whom I first had seen her. She wheeled fiercely on me:

"Isn't it enough that I've refused even to see him since I met you? . . . Oh, *why* are you always trying to find out about the men that have been in my life? There's no one else but you now. What if there were others before I met you? They mean no more to me now than—than the stubs of the cigarettes I've smoked and thrown away. Can't you be satisfied that I am

beautiful and that I love only you? I've never loved anyone in all my life as I love you! Haven't I given you everything I could?"

It was true she gave. But she also took much.

So subtly that I scarcely realized it at first she was invading me, undermining my will, making me her possession, her slave, binding me to her by every sense, by every ignoble passion. I had become addicted to the hasheesh cigarettes that she smoked interminably. Her life and mine were one. She was a she-devil, the kind of woman for love of whom men must eventually go mad.

As I look back now it seems to me she was the most beautiful animal I have ever seen. Oh, God! What lithe and supple grace! What long, rippling, lustrous, red gold hair! She bound me with those tresses. What white, cool, splendid arms; what feverish caresses! Slowly, surely and insidiously she was consuming me. I no longer had the strength, the desire to break away.

Then, suddenly, spoke the voice of the past.

I came back from the Casino one evening to find the Russian with her. He was on his knees before her and he did not even see me when I entered.

But as I listened to his frantic pleading, I realized that his infatuation for her had become like a craving for some narcotic. When she had dismissed him he had been unable to give her up. Haggard, wild-eyed, pathetic he now kneeled there—cringing, beseeching her in the quavering voice of a broken old man to take him back.

When she told him coldly to get out, some last trace of pride, of rebellion flamed up in him. He fled from the room, tearing his white hair, hurling back invective in French and Russian, threatening some mad revenge. Even after he had gone those demoniac shrieks came back to us out of the flower-scented night.

At dawn next day came two secret service men. Mme. Vacaresco refused to have me in the room during their short interview. But one word I caught:

"*Spy!*"

That was the secret of her past, the explanation of the stream of gold that had flowed so continuously through her fingers.

As they were taking her off she broke away from them suddenly and threw her arms about me. For the last time her lips clung to mine in one of those vivid kisses which only she knew how to give.

Then, with the cold hauteur of an empress, she faced her captors. Disdainfully she stepped into their waiting car.

I have never seen her since. To-day the only tangible souvenir that remains to me of that mad, impassioned episode is the green feather which, on the first night I saw her, she tore from her fan.

Now even that is faded.

Next issue in "Nakhla, the Virgin of Algiers," the Count de K— describes most vivdly an exotic Oriental amorous episode.

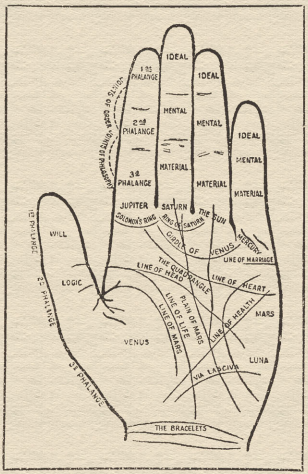
Let Kenilworth Read Your Hand at Our Expense. See page 128.

PALMISTRY

By, Kenilworth, the Famous Palmist

Personal Characteristics of Apollo Types

THE subjects of Apollo are endowed with bright cheerful natures, a love of art and beauty. They are intelligent rather than clever, their ideas are clear and their perceptions quick. A favorable influence of Apollo gives to its subject benevolence and generosity, a nature free from superstition, a tolerance of creeds and opinions that differ from his own. He is honest, proud and just. He scorns meanness, is free with money. He is effusive with his thanks, but forgets quickly. He is always courteous and pleasant. He likes other people to work for him, being of a rather indolent nature. When ill-balanced he is frivolous, quick-tempered and selfish. Fickle in love and changeable in friendship. Extravagant and reckless. He is fond of money, is ostentatious, yet bashful and self-satisfied.



Personal Appearance of Apollo Types

Usually of medium height, but well proportioned. Good looking as a rule. They have round prominent foreheads, fair or golden hair, which is soft, bright and abundant. Their features are clearly cut. The nose is straight, the mouth medium sized and well formed, chin prominent and rounded. They have wide-open blue or brown eyes, with long, dark, curling lashes. The ears are medium sized and lie close to the head.

Teeth are even but not very white. Their movements are graceful and their manners charming. The voice is musical and sweet. Hands are likely to be fine, with supple fingers.

Apollo subjects are fond of artistic surroundings, and like beautiful music, paintings, delicate fabrics and laces. The collection of antique furniture is apt to be a hobby.

Is This Your Type? See Page 128.

Kenilworth reads the hand of Peter Chance, author of "You Can't Keep a Good Girl Down," the prize-winning story in our author's contest.

IN glancing at this hand and its long, well formed fingers, I can see that attention to the minutest detail is one of the most marked traits of this young man—combined with a deliberation and a steady-going disposition. He has great capacity for hard and exacting work.

A preponderance of Saturn imparts gravity and depth of character, with a slight tendency to morbidity, which I strongly advise his rising above. Fortunately Apollo plays an important part also in his make-up, giving the balance of a natural cheerfulness.

From Apollo come intelligence and quick perception. It is the hand of one gifted in writing, so plainly evident in the finger of Jupiter which shows inspiration and creative thoughts, as well as great receptive faculties.

The long phalange of Mercury gives him command of language; expressive speech comes very readily to him. He has little oratorical power, but is, rather, at his best in tête-à-têtes. From the good, straight Head Line comes intellectual powers above the average. From the Mount of Luna—imagination.

Luna gives also a love of travel; if circumstances prevent this young man from indulging this fondness for moving about the world, he will do much traveling in imagination, keeping stored his knowledge gained thereby for his stories, so detailed and entertaining. All things point, however, to long journeys filled with adventure.

This hand might be termed the "Sympathetic," for the Mount of Venus is very nearly co-extensive with the ball of the thumb; it is by far the largest mount, giving love, affection, an appreciative ear for good music, and the desire to extract from life whatever there is of pleasure and amusement. These desires are somewhat curbed by Saturn, but he should, and will, learn to trust his own instincts toward happiness and gaiety. He is of a type easily aroused to jealousy, being an extremist in heart affairs, but I see a happy marriage. People of this type usually get what they want.

Marked ambition lines, clear and uncrossed, are seen rising from the Life Line to Jupiter. The decided cross on Jupiter's Mount shows gratified ambitions. The Line of Fortune, or the line of Apollo, shows financial success through his own efforts. Some inherited wealth comes with a long straight line from Venus to the Apollo Line.

Good health and a long life are shown in the Life Line. Mercury's Mount gives strength of constitution. But I advise some steady, consistent physical exercise.

Trustworthiness is in the forked Heart Line, and a gentleness of manner. He is generous to a fault, free with his money, and scorns meanness.

Well balanced, possessing keen powers of intuition. Inherited qualities of stamina. Good birth and rearing—all of which go to make for success I see for this young man.

KENILWORTH.

Let Kenilworth Read *Your* Hand—Free!

HOW TO DO IT—SEE HOW EASY IT IS!

SIMPLY take a piece of gum camphor* the size of a small hazel nut (it can be bought in any drug store), place it on a saucer, and light it with a match. Then hold a piece of plain white paper—note-paper will do—above the flame, moving it back and forth so that it will become blackened quite evenly by the smoke. By the time the camphor has burned out the paper should be black enough. Then just place your left hand firmly on the smoke-blackened paper, tracing the outline of the hand and fingers with a pencil, a hairpin or any other pointed article. Remove your hand, turn the paper over carefully, place it on a plate, and pour alcohol or turpentine on the white side until it is saturated. This will prevent the impression from becoming blurred. It will dry in a minute or so. Your hand can be easily cleansed with soap and water.

Then fill out the coupon below, attach it to the lower left-hand corner of the impression, and send it to Kenilworth, c/o TELLING TALES, 80 East 11th Street, New York City, enclosing a *stamped addressed envelope*. Kenilworth will send back to you a delineation of your character. Impressions sent without *stamped addressed envelopes* cannot be considered.

* If gum camphor cannot be secured, the paper may be smoked by holding it above a candle or a kerosene lamp. Some of our readers also have had good results by using india ink or an ink stamp pad. Simply cover your palm well with ink and press on white paper. Ordinary ink does not give good results. A good clear photograph of the palm of your hand will also do.

This coupon should be attached to all impressions sent in to Kenilworth for reading.

Name .....

Address .....

.....T. T. 1st, 3-24

For those of our readers who wish to be sure of receiving TELLING TALES twice-a-month, we append this subscription blank. Probably you have noticed that it's dangerous to delay in applying for your favorite magazine at the newsstands. Our circulation men tell us that a goodly number of stands are SOLD OUT a few days after TELLING TALES appears, each fortnight. Why worry? Subscribe.

I enclose $4.00 (check, cash, money order) for one year's subscription to TELLING TALES (now twice-a-month), 80 East 11th Street, New York City, my subscription to start with the { First / Second } (check which).....Number.

NAME .....

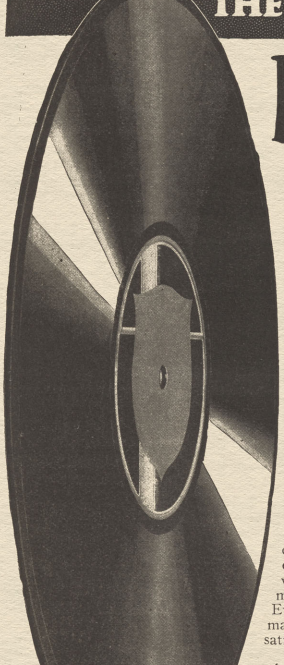
ADDRESS .....

.....

T. T. 1st, 3-24

JUST OUT!

THE NEW "NATIONAL" SET



16 VERY LATEST HITS
Eight 10 Inch Double-Face Records
$2.98 FOR ALL

THESE GREAT NEW FOX TROTS

Arcady
An Orange Grove in California
Roses of Picardy
Sittin' In a Corner
Linger Awhile
When It's Night Time in Italy, It's Wednesday Over Here
Mamma Loves Papa, Papa Loves Mamma

THESE GREAT NEW SONG SUCCESSES

Last Night On the Old Back Porch
That Old Gang of Mine
Just a Girl That Men Forget
I'm Sitting Pretty in a Pretty Little City
Every Night I Cry Myself to Sleep Over You

THESE WONDERFUL NEW WALTZES

Sleep
Dreamy Melody

HAWAIIAN INSTRUMENTAL HITS

La Paloma
Ciribiribin

A Sensational Bargain!

Here is a complete library of the newest and biggest hits in the music world—16 wonderful songs, fox trots, waltzes and Hawaiian instrumental pieces that are sweeping the country, the most popular songs of TODAY, played by wonderful orchestras, sung by accomplished artists. The most wonderful phonographic record bargain you have ever seen made possible by quantity production and direct selling. Every record 10-inch size. Every record guaranteed manufactured of highest quality material, and to be satisfactory in every way.

These are the songs that are being sung, whistled and played everywhere; fox trots and waltzes that are being danced all over the country; that are right now, today, the biggest hits on Broadway. Do not miss this wonderful opportunity; remember that these are brand new, 10-inch records.

10 Days Trial

Send No Money

JUST MAIL COUPON

Try these wonderful records in your own home for 10 days. Note the beauty of recording, the clearness of tone, the catchiness of the tunes, the wonderful volume of music. See how smooth and durable these records are. You will wonder how we can give such a tremendous bargain. Quantity production and selling direct-from-factory to you—that is the whole secret. This is the greatest selection of hits ever put out at one time, and this low price makes it the biggest record bargain ever offered. Send no money now. Just mail the coupon or letter. Give the postman $2.98 plus the few cents delivery charges. Then play all the records on your own machine. If not pleased, return the records and we will refund your money plus postage both ways. This offer may never be repeated, so mail coupon or letter at once.

NATIONAL MUSIC LOVERS, Inc.
Dept. 1893 354 Fourth Avenue New York City

National Music Lovers, Inc.
Dept. 1893
354 4th Ave., N.Y.

Please send for 10 days trial your collection of 16 very latest songs, fox trots, waltzes, and Hawaiian Instrumentals, on eight double-face, 10-in. records, guaranteed equal to any records made. I will pay the postman only $2.98 plus delivery charges on arrival. This is not to be considered a purchase, however. If the records do not come up to my expectations, I reserve the right to return them at anytime within 10 days and you will refund my money. (Outside U. S. $3.50 cash with order.)

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

☐ If you like the great songs from Grand Opera you may also care to have four of the most popular airs ever written, La Donna e Mobile from Rigoletto; Melody or Pinafore Songs; Habanera from Carmen; and Soldiers' Chorus from Faust. All beautifully sung by great artists, with full orchestra. If you care to have these great Grand Opera Songs in ADDITION to the set listed above place an X in the square at the left. The price is only 89c for all four selections. SOLD ONLY with the set advertised above—not sold separately.

Get this Wonderful Ring

IF YOU CAN TELL IT FROM A GENUINE DIAMOND SEND IT BACK

These Amazingly Beautiful CORODITE GEMS are the nearest approach to GENUINE DIAMONDS that the ingenuity of man, aided by years of scientific and chemical research can produce. They have the same gorgeous, blazing flash and dazzling play of living rainbow fire. Standing the terrific acid test of direct comparison, even lifetime experts need all their experience to see any difference. Prove this yourself.

Make this Test You risk nothing. Wear a Genuine CORODITE and a Diamond side by side on the same finger, and if you and your friends can tell the difference, send it back. You won't be out a single penny. That's fair enough! If you keep the ring, price printed here is all you pay. Remember only *CORODITE GEMS have the same facet cutting as* genuine stones. Beautiful hand made, hand carved mountings created in latest and most fashionable designs.

Ring No. 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 are finished in the true Platinum effect on a base of Solid Sterling Silver. Rings No. 1, 5 and 7 are made from finest 14K Gold Filled Stock unqualifiedly warranted 20 years.

All Carat Size Gems except No. 9. Handsome Art Leather Velvet lined case **FREE** with each ring.

No. 1	Ladies 1 Ct. Latest Model Fine 14K Gold Filled Solitaire Ring - - -	**$2.84**
No. 2	Ladies 1 Ct. Stylish Hand Carved Delicately Pierced Filigree 4 post ring, plat. effect,	**$4.19**
No. 3	Ladies 1 Ct. Hand Engraved Pierced Basket Bezel Top Ring, platinum effect - -	**$4.93**
No. 4	Ladies 1 Ct. Bezel Top Ring, with hand carved sides, engraved basket, platinum effect,	**$3.96**
No. 5	Ladies 1 Ct. Hand Chased Bridal Blossom Solitaire Ring 14K Gold Filled - - -	**$3.54**
No. 7	Men's 1 Ct. Handsome Heavy 8 prong, 14K Gold Filled Ring - - - -	**$3.68**
No. 8	Men's 1 Ct. Massive Hexagon Gypsy Ring with hand carved sides and top - - -	**$4.26**
No. 9	Ladies 1-2 Ct. Ring, Sides set with 2 Rectangular Cut Synthetic Blue Sapphires	**$4.90**

SEND NO MONEY. Just send name, address and number of ring wanted and size as shown by slip of paper fitting tightly and to end around finger. Your ring will come by return mail. When it arrives, pay postman amount shown. **OUR MONEY BACK GUARANTEE PROTECTS YOU. SEND TODAY.**

E. RICHWINE CO., 19 W. Jackson Blvd., Dept. 948, CHICAGO, ILL.

Money Back Guarantee

You do not risk a penny. *Our signed binding legal guarantee* to refund your money in full is attached to every ring we sell.

You must be satisfied.

Sole Importers Genuine Corodite Gems

AGENTS $6 A DAY

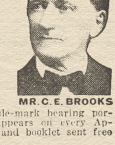
taking orders for Non-Alcoholic Food Flavors. Every variety put up in collapsible tubes. Always fresh. Three times the strength of bottled flavors. Not sold in stores. Fast repeaters. Big income every day.

Men and Women

devotine full time can make $6 to $9 a day. Big money for spare time. Largest concern of its kind in the world. Over two million dollars' worth of orders taken last year by our Representatives for Zanol Pure Food Products, Toilet Preparations, Soaps, Laundry and Cleaning Specialties and Household Supplies. Every article guaranteed. Write for Sample Outfit and Money Making Proposition.

American Products Co.
208 American Building, Cincinnati, Ohio

DON'T WEAR A TRUSS



MR. C. E. BROOKS

BE COMFORTABLE—Wear the Brooks Appliance, the modern scientific invention which gives rupture sufferers immediate relief. It has no obnoxious springs or pads. Automatic Air Cushions bind and draw together the broken parts. No salves or plasters. Durable. Cheap. Sent on trial to prove its worth. Beware of imitations. Look for trade-mark bearing portrait and signature of C. E. Brooks which appears on every Appliance. Other infringements. Full information and booklet sent free in plain, sealed envelope.

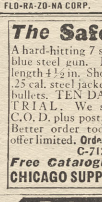
BROOKS APPLIANCE CO. 170 State St., Marshall, Mich.

$2 Chinese Peacock Ring

Just what you want to draw attention to a pretty hand. Fashion calls for Oriental rings, particularly Peacock Designs. The loveliest creation of the artists at Sterling silver, 18 emeralds and sapphires only $2. Gold plated on Silver, $2.75. C. O. D. orders 15c extra. Send ring size (tie string around finger). Return it if not delighted. Not sold in stores, but direct from

ORIENT EXCHANGE
21 Park Row, New York, Import Dept. NS-2

LOSE A POUND A DAY



Science has discovered that fat can be eliminated without diet, drugs or exercising. A NEW WAY—an easy, pleasant way that is Safe and Sure. From 8 ounces to a pound a day melt away as if by magic. *Dissolve ALO-DI-VA-NO in warm water. Get in and relax—that is the secret.* Contains no alum, epsom salts, or any harmful ingredients. Your money refunded if you are not satisfied. *Box of 14 treatments $3.00 at your druggist or direct. Add 25c for postage and packing. $5.00 in Canada. Free Booklet.*

FLO-RA-ZO-NA CORP. 100 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. City. Dept. B-8

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG

We compose music. Our Chief of Staff wrote many big song-hits. Submit your song-poem to us at once.

NEW YORK MELODY CORPORATION
423 H Romax Building, New York

The Safety Automatic

A hard-hitting 7 shot blue steel gun. Full length 4½ in. Shoots .25 cal. steel jacketed bullets. TEN DAYS TRIAL. We ship C.O.D. plus postage. Better order today; offer limited. Order No. C-7121.

Only **$6.45**

Free Catalogue.

CHICAGO SUPPLY CO., 2455 Archer Ave., Chicago

CLEAR YOUR SKIN

If you suffer from pimples, acne, blackheads, brown spots or eruptions I want to send you my simple home treatment under plain wrapper. It gave me a soft, velvety, smooth and radiant complexion, and cured thousands of men and women, after everything else failed. Simply send name for generous 10-day free trial offer of my secret home treatment.

W. H. WARREN, 448 Gray Building, Kansas City, Mo.

Relief for coughs

Use PISO'S—this prescription quickly relieves children and adults. A pleasant syrup. No opiates.

35¢ and 60¢ sizes sold everywhere

If a Jelly Fish Could Slap a Rat in the Face

he would do it. But he can't. He has no arms. Neither does he have a backbone. How much worse off is a man who was given a good backbone and a pair of arms—and won't use them.

NO EXCUSE

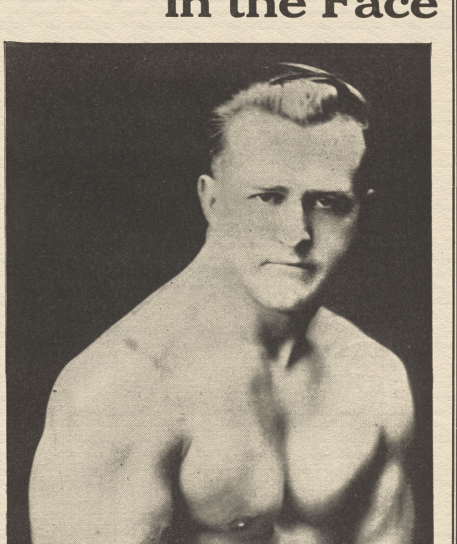
We excuse the jelly fish. He never had anything to work on. But there is no excuse for a flabby, round-shouldered and flat-chested specimen of a man. You were given a perfect framework for a body. You were meant to rule the world, but there is hardly an animal alive which does not show better sense than you do.

CUT IT OUT, FELLOWS

Brace up and be the man you were meant to be. Don't try to imitate a jelly fish. Get some pep into you and make a real *He* man out of yourself. Come on and let me help you. I'll shoot a thrill into you that will make your old spine quiver with excitement. I'll build up that chest, broaden those shoulders and give you the huge, muscular arms of an athlete. And that's not all. Your lungs will start pumping real oxygen into your blood, purifying your entire system. Those old cobwebs in your brain will disappear. Your eyes will radiate the life within you. You will have a spring to your step, and every move you make will show new life and energy.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

I don't care what your present condition is. The weaker you are, the more noticeable the results. All you need is a framework and enough ambition left to say "I'm ready. Let's go!" I'm going to put one full inch on your arms in just 30 days. Yes, and two inches on your chest. But that's only a starter. Then watch 'em grow. I'll put pep into your old backbone and build up every muscle on your body so that your own friends won't know you. This is no idle talk, fellows. I don't promise these things—I guarantee them. Come on then and make me prove it. That's what I like.



EARLE E. LIEDERMAN
America's Leading Director of Physical Education

Send for My New 64-page Book

"MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT"

IT IS FREE

It contains forty-three full page photographs of myself and some of the many prize-winning pupils I have trained. Many of these are leaders in their business professions today. I have not only given them a body to be proud of, but made them better doctors, lawyers, merchants, etc. Some of these came to me as pitiful weaklings, imploring me to help them. Look them over now and you will marvel at their present physiques.

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN
Dept. 1703, 305 Broadway, New York City

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN
Dept. 1703, 305 Broadway, New York City

Dear Sir:—I enclose herewith 10 cents, for which you are to send me without any obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book, "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... State .....

Are You Earning $100 a Week?

Big JOBS Open

Would you like to be a star salesman? Men who have mastered salesmanship—who are really proficient—name their own salaries. $5,000 to $10,000 a year and better not uncommon. Big money and opportunities in business always open to men who can SELL. Success in selling field leads to highest executive positions. Demand enormous. Old theory about "born salesman" exploded. Any man of average intelligence can now learn to sell thru scientific coaching. Training, the secret. Write today for free book, "MODERN SALESMANSHIP." It tells how you can quickly get into the selling game and win your way to the big-pay jobs. Learn in spare hours at home principles and methods of ablest sales organizations in America. Successful salesmen report sales doubled and trebled thru scientific study of salesmanship under LaSalle Problem Method. Low tuition fee—easy terms. Write now for information.

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

The Largest Business Training Institution in the World

Dept. 375-SR Chicago, Illinois

Gentlemen: Send without obligation to me information regarding course indicated below:

☐ **Modern Salesmanship**

LaSalle is the largest business training institution in the world. It offers training for every important business need. If more interested in any of these courses, check here:

☐ Business Management	☐ Modern Business Correspondence and Practice
☐ Higher Accountancy	☐ Modern Foremanship and Production Methods
☐ Traffic Management—Foreign and Domestic	☐ Personnel and Employment Management
☐ Railway Station Management	☐ Expert Bookkeeping
☐ Law, Degree of LL. B.	☐ Business English
☐ Commercial Law	☐ Commercial Spanish
☐ Industrial Management Efficiency	☐ Effective Speaking
☐ Banking and Finance	☐ C. P. A. Coaching

Name.....

Present Position.....

Address.....

Lowest Prices in U. S.

Brand New Swing-Out HAND EJECTOR Left-Hand Wheeler

22 cal. . . . $14.50

32-20 or 38 cal. $14.75

A Real "HE-MAN" Gun—Finest 1924 Model

Cal. 32, 32-20 or 38
Nickel or Blue Steel, 6 Shot
Shoots Standard American Ammunition

Most powerful 6-shot gun made. Used by police and secret service. A straight shooting, hard-hitting "regular" gun. Has wonderful balance and smooth action. Made of best blue steel, rifle barrel, automatic hammer and safety.

BEWARE OF IMITATIONS

Do not confuse this high-grade gun with other cheaper models of similar appearance with inspection plate, and automatic hammer safety, which we can also furnish you, guaranteed brand new for

$12.45 In Cal. 38

OTHER SPECIALS TOP BREAK

Automatic Ejecting—REVOLVER—Double Action

32 Cal., 5 shot, price $7.85

Genuine German Luger, 30 cal., 9 shot, value $50; our price..... **$15.45**

SEND NO MONEY—Pay postman BARGAIN price plus a few cents postage. Money immediately refunded if not satisfied.

NEW YORK CENTRAL SUPPLY CO.

79 Fourth Avenue Dept. S-114 NEW YORK, N. Y.

FIERY SUPREME DIAMONDS

Your name and address brings you a Supreme Diamond Ring. Supreme Diamonds match the genuine in fiery brilliancy. You take no risk. If not satisfied in 7 days money refunded at once.

No. 1. Ladies' Basket mounting, plat. fin., with 2 Kt. Supreme Diamond and 6 perfectly cut small Supreme Diamonds $3.98

No. 2. Ladies' Gold S. engagement mounting, with 1 1-2 Kt. Supreme Diamond $3.24

No. 3. Men's Gipsy Ring, with 3 Kt. Supreme Diamond and 6 French Blue Sapphires . . . $4.37

Order today. Send finger size. Pay postman.

Supreme Jewelry Mfg. Co., 434 Bdway, Dept. 303, N.Y.C.

YOU CAN CONTROL OTHERS

Become Popular

Learn how to plant suggestions in the human mind. Control others' thoughts and actions. **All secrets of hypnotism exposed.** You can cure bad habits and diseases. Make people do your bidding. Become popular and in demand, win admiration and friends. Full course of instructions by world famous hypnotist. You can quickly learn Sent postpaid $2.98 (C. O. D. 10c extra.)

Candid Institute, 1151 B'way., Dept. 101, New York City

BECOME A HYPNOTIST

21 Jewel Burlington

Used on nearly every vessel in the U. S. Navy. 21 Ruby and Sapphire jewels. 25 year Gold Strata case. Only $1 down! Balance in easy payments. Send for free book TODAY!

$1 Down

Burlington Watch Company, Dept. 61-03 19th Street and Marshall Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

You Should Know the Truth!

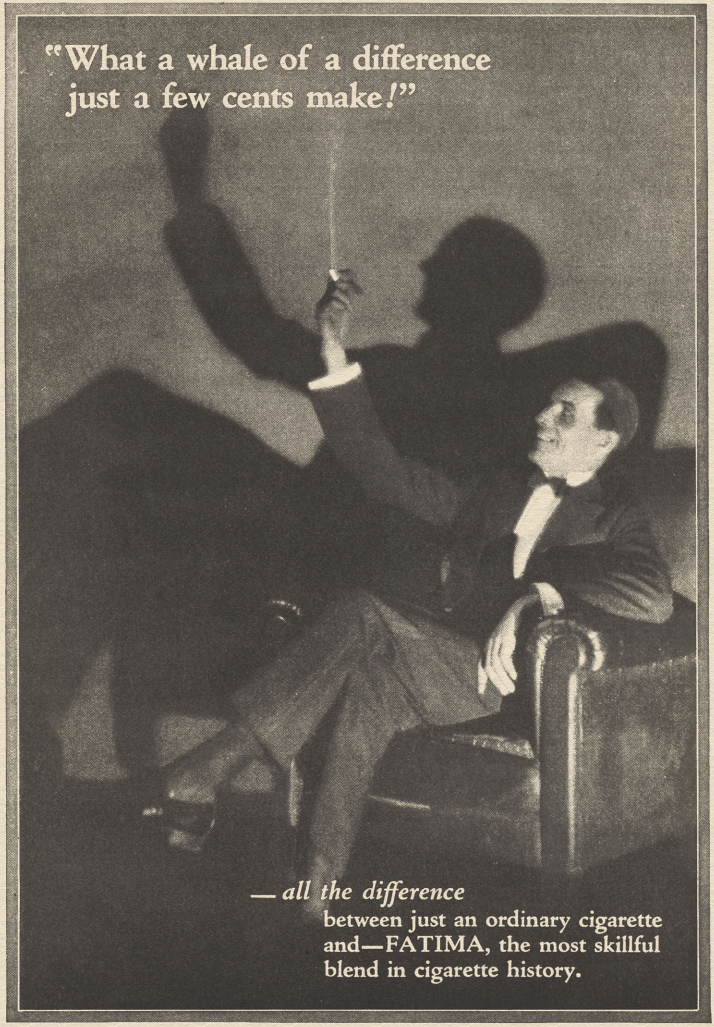
I will tell FREE

What are your chances in life, your future prospects, happiness in marriage, friends, enemies, success—under which zodiac sign were you born?

ASTROLOGY the most ancient science of history indicates all.

SOLAR will tell you FREE whether you were born under a lucky star and will give you the most accurate astrological interpretation of your zodiac sign. Send **immediately** your name and birth date in YOUR OWN HANDWRITING, and to cover the cost of this notice and postage ENCLOSE TEN CENTS, (stamps or coin) also exact name and address. There will then be sent you securely sealed and postpaid your astrological interpretation, plainly written and understood. **A great surprise awaits you!** Do not fail to send birth date and ten cents. Print name and address to avoid delay. WRITE TO-DAY—DON'T DELAY.

SOLAR STUDIO, 489 Fifth Avenue, Dept. 118 NEW YORK


"What a whale of a difference just a few cents make!"
— all the difference
between just an ordinary cigarette and—FATIMA, the most skillful blend in cigarette history.

She Found a Pleasant Way To Reduce Her Fat

She did not have to go to the trouble of diet, or exercise. She found a better way, which aids the digestive organs to turn food into muscle, bone and sinew instead of fat.

She used Marmola Prescription Tablets, which are made from the famous Marmola prescription. They cut down the waist line. They remove the double chin. They eliminate that too plump condition of arms and ankles. And they will allow you to eat many kinds of foods—without the necessity of dieting or exercising.

Thousands have found that Marmola Prescription Tablets give complete and absolutely harmless relief from obesity. And when the accumulation of fat is checked, reduction to normal, healthy weight soon follows.

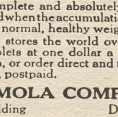
All good drug stores the world over sell Marmola Prescription Tablets at one dollar a box. Ask your druggist for them, or order direct and they will be sent in plain wrapper, postpaid.

MARMOLA COMPANY
709 Garfield Building Detroit, Michigan

$2 Brings This *Genuine* DIAMOND RING

14K

No Red Tape No Delay



SET IN PLATINUM

Think of it—seven brilliant genuine diamonds mounted in a setting of solid platinum so closely together that only close inspection will distinguish it from a $750 solitaire.

10 DAYS' FREE TRIAL

Simply send $2 if you can duplicate this diamond ring for less than $65, your deposit will be refunded. *Guarantee bond accompanies each ring. After trial, pay balance $4.65 a month for 12 months. Price only $58.50.*

FREE ROYAL CATALOG

Illustrates thousands of special offers in Diamonds, Watches and Jewelry from our $2,000,000 stock. Write Dept. 1910

ROYAL DIAMOND & WATCH CO.
35-37-39 Maiden Lane - New York

SELL US YOUR SPARE TIME

Earn $15 to $50 Weekly at home

STEADY WORK

No canvassing. Writing Display Cards for us. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY. We instruct you by correspondence. Write for particulars and terms.

SHO-RITE SIGN SYSTEM
No 5413 Sho-Rite Bldg. Detroit, Michigan

Cuticura Soap
IS IDEAL
For the Hands

Soap, Ointment, Talcum, 25c. everywhere. For samples address: Cuticura Laboratories, Dept. D, Malden, Mass.

---

21 JEWEL *Santa Fe Special*

No Money Down

The 21 Jewel Santa Fe Special, a real masterpiece in watch creation, will be sent you to examine, to inspect, to admire, to improve without one penny of advance payment. Send for information today.

Free Watch Book Send for our beautiful new watch book; shows all the new odd shape case designs in both white and green gold beautifully illustrated in colors. Write for it today. It is sent postpaid Free. A letter or postcard will bring this beautiful book.

Santa Fe Watch Co., 355 Thomas Bldg, Topeka, Kansas

Stop Using a Truss

STUART'S PLAPAO-PADS are different from the truss, being mechanico-chemico applicators made self-adhesive purposely to hold the distended muscles securely in place. **No straps, buckles or spring attached**—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone. Thousands have successfully treated themselves at home without hindrance from work—most obstinate cases conquered.

Reduced Fac-Simile Gold Medal

Reduced Fac-Simile Grand Prix

Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive. Awarded Gold Medal and Grand Prix. Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no further use for trusses. We prove it by sending Trial of Plapao absolutely **FREE**. Write name on Coupon and send TODAY.

Plapao Co., 462 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis Mo.

Name .....

Address .....

Return mail will bring Free Trial Plapao

Ladies Wanted!
EARN $20 WEEKLY AT HOME

Spare Time Addressing and Mailing Our Music and Circulars—No experience necessary—Send 10c for Music, Information, Application Blank, etc.

American Music Publishing Co.
1658 Broadway, Dept. B-19 New York City

Learn Cartooning

At Home—In Your Spare Time

from the school that has trained so many successful cartoonists of today earning from $50 to $200 and more a week. The Landon Picture Chart Method of teaching makes original drawing easy to learn. Send 6c in stamps for full information and chart to test your ability. *Also state age.*

THE LANDON SCHOOL
66 National Bldg., Cleveland, O.

---

30 Days' Free Trial

Select from **44 Styles**, colors and sizes, famous **Ranger** bicycles. **Delivered free** on approval, *express prepaid*, at **Factory Prices.** You can easily save $10 to $25 on your bicycle.

12 Months to Pay on any Ranger if desired. Parents often advance first deposit. Boys and girls can easily earn small monthly payments.

Tires best quality, at factory prices, *express prepaid*. Lamps, wheels and equipment, low prices. Send **No money,** do business *direct* with makers.

Mead Cycle Company Dept. A43 Chicago

Write today for free Ranger Catalog, factory prices and marvelous easy payment terms

On a busy day
Beeman's
quiets the
nerves and
keeps you
calm—its
daily use is

"a sensible habit"

BEEMAN'S

Pepsin Gum

AMERICAN CHICLE CO.

CARPENTRY

SELF TAUGHT!!

AUDEL'S CARPENTERS AND BUILDERS GUIDES

Up-to-date information in handy form. Easy to learn carpentry. Save money doing your own building. Make money doing carpentry work. Audel's Guides give complete instruction on how to:—Use Tools and Steel Square, Make Joints, Draw and Read Plans, Estimate, Frame Roofs and Houses, Lay out Work, Build Stairs, Do Saw Mill Work, Practical Painting with thousands of Short Cuts.

1600 Pages—3700 Illustrations—4 Numbers

Pocket size. Flexible covers. Gilt Edge. Easy to read and understand. Questions and answers teach quickly. Coupon gives free examination. No money now. Nothing to postman. Pay only if you are satisfied.

FREE EXAMINATION COUPON

THEO. AUDEL & CO., 72 5th Ave., N.Y. City.
Send me for *free examination* AUDEL'S CARPENTERS AND BUILDERS GUIDES, 4 numbers. If satisfactory I will send you $1 within 5 days and $1 monthly until $6 is paid.

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Reference..... N. S. G. Mar' .24

Eyes He Adores

Your EYES mean everything to you and to those who love you. Do you give them the care they deserve to keep them bright and beautiful?

Often dust, wind and undue strain make the EYES appear dull, lifeless and unattractive. To preserve and enhance the natural charm and sparkle of the EYES they should be cleansed just as carefully as the skin and teeth.

For daily use, or when your EYES are tired, dull and heavy, *Murine* is most refreshing and beneficial. This old and tried preparation has been used successfully for more than thirty years. It is guaranteed not to contain belladonna or any other harmful ingredient.

Our attractively illustrated book, "Beauty Lies Within the Eyes," tells how to properly care for your Eyes, Brows and Lashes, and thus enhance their beauty. Send for a copy of this helpful book. It's FREE.

The Murine Company
Dept. 69, Chicago

MURINE FOR YOUR EYES

Will you accept a Big Pay Position?

$85.00 to $200.00 Weekly

You can quickly qualify at home to accept a sales position paying from $85 to $200 weekly with big, successful Corporations. No previous selling experience required. My method is sure—quick.

I Personally Train You

I will train you quickly, in spare time, by my entirely different and proven successful method, the "Ward Actual Experience Method." **Not** a "college" or "book" course, the **real thing** direct from the "firing line." **Money-Back Guarantee.**

I Pledge You Success

You get my personal directions. I let you in on "selling knacks" that enabled me to organize and train my own powerful sales organization. I also direct and guide you by weekly letters just as I do my own active road men, you simply can't fail to make good. Get my *free* book full of "Inside Facts" and latest Selling Science, it's FREE.

James P. Ward, President and Gen. Sales Mgr.
Manufacturers Sales Corp'n of America
"The man who makes money makers."

JAMES P. WARD, President and Gen. Sales Mgr.
5023 Executive Offices
1760-1774 Montrose Ave., Chicago

Dear Sir: Send me your book *Sales-Man-Ship* and your special plan without cost or obligation.

*Name*_____

*Address*_____ *City*_____

*State*_____ *Occupation*_____

FREE

Clear Your Skin!

Your Skin can be Quickly Cleared of Pimples, Blackheads Acne Eruptions on the face or body, Barbers Itch, Eczema, Enlarged Pores, Oily or Shiny Skin.

FREE Write today for my FREE Booklet, *"A Clear-Tone Skin,"* telling how I cured myself after being afflicted for over fifteen years.

$1,000 Cold Cash says I can clear your skin of the above blemishes.
E. S. GIVENS, 112 Chemical Building, KANSAS CITY, MO.

For Exhausted or Debilitated

NERVE FORCE

Lack of Power or Energy, Weakness or excessive drains on the Nervous System, try Winchester's Specific Pill. $1.00 per box by mail, literature free. (Send now.)

Winchester & Co., P. O. Box M-147, Mount Vernon, N. Y.

WANTED! RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS

Free list of Government positions obtainable. Men and women, 17 to 45 years. $1600 to $2600 a year. Common education sufficient. Travel—see the country. NO LAY-OFFS. LIFETIME JOB. Holidays with pay. Write today for FREE BOOKLET and Sample Examination Questions.

United Business Tr. Ass'n, 227 Dinan Building, Detroit, Mich.

SEND US

Most wonderful offer ever made! Send a dollar TODAY! No bother! No delay! Beautiful cluster, 7 fiery brilliant blue-white diamonds, platinum set, sent at once for 10 DAYS' FREE TRIAL. See for yourself that it looks just like a $200 solitaire. Try to buy anywhere near our price. If satisfied, pay only $4.87 monthly — price $46.75. Otherwise return and we'll refund your dollar. Rush your dollar TODAY!

FREE CATALOG of other wonderful values. Diamonds, watches, etc. Best values—Your OWN TERMS (within reason). PAY - AS - YOU - PLEASE! Address, Dept. 0D.

O. F. Bale & Co. EST. 1888

21-23 Maiden Lane New York

MAKE MONEY AT HOME

DETROIT SHOW CARD STUDIOS
227 Dinan Building, Detroit, Mich.

Dear Sirs—Without further obligation please send me your FREE Illustrated Book giving full particulars how I can make $15 to $30 a week At Home in my SPARE TIME. WITHOUT CANVASSING. Also your GUARANTEE to teach me how, supply me with WORK and pay me CASH EACH WEEK no matter where I live.

Print Name and Address

Name .....

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

GET RID OF YOUR FAT

FREE TRIAL TREATMENT

Sent on request. Ask for my "pay-when-reduced" offer. I have successfully reduced thousands of persons, often at the rate of a pound a day, **without** diet or exercise. Let me send you proof at my expense.

DR. R. NEWMAN, Licensed Physician, State of New York, 286 Fifth Ave., N. Y., Desk M-1

America's Best

Only **$5.95** for **Home Protection**

Order No. C-7162.

A fine I. J. 5-shot, double action, blue steel revolver. 4.32 or .38 cal.) 3-inch barrel. TEN DAYS' TRIAL. We ship C. O. D., plus postage.

Free Catalog

American Novelty Co., 2455 Archer Av., Chicago

Develops Bust Like Magic!

During the past 15 years thousands have added to their captivating glory of womanhood by using

CROWDINA

for bust, neck, or arm development

Great Discovery of Parisian beauty expert. Harmless, easy, certain results accomplished quickly. Marvelous testimonials of efficiency. Confidential proof and literature (sealed) on request. Write now. **Mlle. Sophie Koppel, Suite 423H, 503 Fifth Ave., New York**

A PERFECT NOSE

shaped at home while you sleep. Rapid, Painless and safe. The **ANITA** is the ORIGINAL and perfectly comfortable **Nose Adjuster** absolutely guaranteed and highly recommended by physicians. Winner of GOLD MEDAL. Write for *free booklet*

The ANITA Co., Dept. 341 ANITA Bldg., Newark, N. J.

HOW I LOST 50 POUNDS *in 2 Months*

French Woman Reveals Secret for Which Millionaires Have Paid Thousands

See Her Free Offer Below

So as to enable every fat woman to benefit by the amazing French discovery with which Europeans are now getting rid of excess fat, I will explain, for a limited time only, FREE OF CHARGE, to every one who sends in coupon below, how I took off 50 pounds in 2 months.

No matter how much or how little you want to reduce, or how many things you have tried in the past, you can NOW do just as I did and get a slim, beautiful figure without DIETS, EXERCISES, DRUGS, ABSURD CREAMS or APPLIANCES.

I will tell you just what to do to reduce and give you the directions for which millionaires have paid thousands in Paris.

Madame Elaine, Dept. 119, 1819 Broadway, N.Y. City

Kindly explain to me confidentially and absolutely FREE OF CHARGE what you did to reduce.

Name.....

Address.....

If you care to, enclose 5 cents in stamps to help cover expense.

FORDS-34 Miles

on Gallon of Gasoline

with **Air Friction Carburetor**

truck, tractor, marine or stationary engine. Makes old cars better than new. See wonderful mileage guarantees for other cars.

We guarantee all other cars nearly double present mileage, power and flexibility, make hills on high formerly difficult on low. Models for any car,

Ford.....34 mi.	Reo.....24 mi.	Chevrolet.....32 mi.	
Buick 4.....30 mi.	Chalmers.....23 mi.	Maxwell (25).30 mi.	
Buick 6.....24 mi.	Olds. 6.....23 mi.	Nash 6.....23 mi.	
Hudson.....20 mi.	Paige 6.....20 mi.	Lincoln 8.....17 mi.	
Hupp.....25 mi.	Oakland 6.....24 mi.	Stdbkr Lt. 6...23 mi.	
Dodge.....23 mi.	Overland 4.....32 mi.	Cole 8.....17 mi.	

If your car is not mentioned here send name and model for particulars and our guarantee on it. AGENTS WANTED.

SENT ON 30 DAY'S FREE TRIAL

You can drive any car in heaviest traffic without shifting gears. Starts off on high in any weather without priming or heating—no jerking or choking. No more foul spark plugs or carbon in cylinders. No leaking of gas into crank case. Try it 30 days on our guarantee of money back if not entirely satisfied. No strings to our guarantee. YOU ARE THE JUDGE. Anyone who can handle a wrench can attach it. No boring of new holes or changing of operating mechanism. Write today.

AIR-FRICTION CARBURETOR CO.
779 Raymond Bldg. Dayton, Ohio, U. S. A.

I Offer You $48 a Week and a Buick TOURING CAR

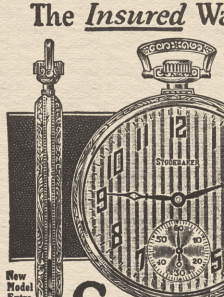
We want men and women as local representatives to demonstrate and take orders for Comer All-Weather Raincoats. New offer enables you to earn $48 a week and Buick touring car. No experience necessary. Write quick.

Comer Mfg. Co. Dept. BK-82 Dayton, Ohio

21 Jewel ~ Extra thin

STUDEBAKER

The *Insured* Watch



Direct from the Maker

New Model Extra Thin

SENT FOR $1.00 DOWN!

Only $1.00! The balance in easy monthly payments. You get the famous Studebaker 21 Jewel Watch—Insured for a lifetime; a choice of 54 new Art Beauty Cases; 8 adjustments, including heat, cold, isochronism and 5 positions—***direct from the maker*** at lowest prices ever named on equal quality.

Write today for FREE BOOK of Advance Watch Styles.

Fine Chain FREE!

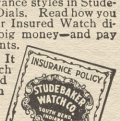
For a limited time we are giving away FREE with every Studebaker Watch a beautiful pattern Studebaker Watch Chain. Write now while offer lasts.

Mail Coupon for FREE Book of Advance Watch Styles

Send at once and get a copy of this book—FREE! See the newest, beautiful, advance styles in Studebaker Art Beauty Cases and Dials. Read how you can buy a 21 Jewel Studebaker Insured Watch direct from the maker—save big money—and pay for it on easy monthly payments.

Write! for our free book. It will post you on watch styles and watch values. Send coupon at once. Get Free chain offer today while it lasts.

Studebaker Watch Co.
Dept. 253 South Bend, Ind.



STUDEBAKER WATCH CO.
Dept. 253 South Bend, Indiana

Please send me your Free Book of Advance Watch Styles and particulars of your $1.00 down offer.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....*State*.....

LOOK HERE

FREE! Drafting Experts Instruments and complete outfit to every Coyne student! Write for information of this great offer.

I Will Make You a DRAFTING EXPERT!

I train you *at home*, prepare you quick to earn *big money* in this easy, fascinating business. Common schooling all you need. I cover every branch of Drafting by giving you actual Drafting Room jobs to do with professional instruments *which I supply free.* I guarantee to train you until you're placed in position paying.

$250 to $400 a Month!

Thousands of jobs open right now for Drafting Experts, Railroads, factories, builders, auto plants, City, State and U. S. all need drafting Expertsat top pay. Man alive! Where else can you find equal opportunity?

Big Book Free. Write Today!

Learn at Home Write today for free Drafting book. Find out how quickly you can get into this easy, pleasant work and earn EXPERTS' pay. I will tell you the rest of this story personally.

Address CHIEF DRAFTSMAN **COYNE** SCHOOL OF DRAFTING Dept. 327, 1-95 Ashland Ave., Chicago

START NOW!

Save $33.50

Regal Rebuilt Royal

A genuine, late model, visible Royal Typewriter, perfectly rebuilt and fully guaranteed, now yours at a fraction of the regular price! Try it for 10 days at our risk. If you like it, use it while you pay for it at only a few cents a day. Otherwise return it and you will owe nothing.

We rebuild only the Royal—no other. That singular durability resulting from the fineness of its original construction is restored when rebuilt the Regal way. Equipped with two-color ribbon; four rows standard keyboard; back spacer; automatic ribbon reverse, tabulator, card holder, and 20 patented time-saving features. Send postcard or letter and save $33.50, to

REGAL TYPEWRITER CO., Dept. 163, 359 Broadway, NEW YORK

Only $69 In Easy Payments

A Perfect Looking Nose Can Easily Be Yours

Trados Model No. 25 corrects now all ill-shaped noses quickly, painlessly, permanently, and comfortably at home. It is the only safe and guaranteed patent device that will actually give you a perfect looking nose. Over 87,000 satisfied users. For years recommended by physicians. 16 years of experience in manufacturing Nose Shapers is at your service. Write for free booklet, which tells you how to obtain a perfect looking nose without cost if not satisfactory.

M. TRILETY, SPECIALIST
Dept. 1963, BINGHAMTON, N.Y.

60% of Market Price

Will Buy Diamonds Here

This 3/5—1/16 Ct. perfectly cut diamond, a snappy, blazing solitaire, at $42.65 among bargains in our lists. See the many big amazing values some as low as $60 per Carat, other higher per Carat bargains. *This 75 year oldest largest Diamond Banking firm in all the world* lends money on diamonds. Thousands of unpaid loans and other bargains. Must sell NOW.

This Ring $42.65 ¾–1/16 Carat Perfectly Cut

Why Pay Full Prices

Costs Nothing To See. Any Diamond sent for absolutely free examination at our risk. No obligation. No cost to you. **Latest Listings—Unpaid Loans. Sent Free.** Describes Diamond Bargains in Detail, gives cash loan values guaranteed. Explains unlimited exchange privilege. **Write Today.** Postal card will do.

Jos. De Roy & Sons. 1718 De Roy Building Pittsburgh, Pa.
Only Opposite Post Office

Are You Well Gowned?

Any girl or woman, 15, or over, can easily learn GOWN DESIGNING AND MAKING IN TEN WEEKS. Experts earn $40 to $60 a week. *Mail Coupon Today.*

Franklin Institute Dept. 9612 Rochester, N. Y.

Send me free sample lessons in Gown Designing and Making.

Name.....

Address.....

FREE BOOK How To Learn Piano

Learn Piano!

This Interesting Free Book shows how you can become a skilled player of piano or organ at **quarter** usual cost. It shows why one lesson with an **expert** is worth a **dozen** other lessons. Dr. Quinn's famous Written Method includes all of the many important modern improvements in teaching music. Brings **right to your home** the great advantages of conservatory study. For the beginner or experienced players. Endorsed by great artists. Successful graduates everywhere. Scientific yet easy to understand. Fully illustrated. **All music free.** Diploma granted. Write today for free book.

QUINN CONSERVATORY, Studio NP 83, 598 Columbia Road, BOSTON, 25, MASS.

ONLY $14.95 ORDER NO. C-7120

.38 Special Get this new guaranteed blue steel, side swing cylinder 6 shot revolver. Extra fine construction and finish. Accurate, hard hitting .38 Special, and .32-20. **SEND NO MONEY.** Order now and on arrival, pay postman our special low price $14.95 plus postage.

Free Catalog

Chicago Supply Co., 2455 Archer Av., Chgo.

A $500 CASH PRIZE

Is Offered for the BEST SECOND VERSE to

"REMEMBER"

Those wishing to compete may receive a free copy of this song and rules of contest *by Addressing*

EQUITABLE MUSIC CORPORATION, 473 State Theatre, N. Y. C

Relief for Coughs

Use PISO'S—this prescription quickly relieves children and adults. A pleasant syrup. No opiates.

35¢ and 60¢ sizes sold everywhere

TOBACCO

Habit Cured or No Pay

Any form, cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chewing or snuff. Guaranteed. Harmless. Complete treatment sent on trial. Costs $1.00 if it cures. Nothing if it fails. SUPERBA CO., E-50, BALTIMORE, MD.

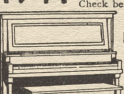
Tapestry or Velour

17c a Day Pays for this Beautiful Rocker

Over 1000 other Cozy Home Furnishings. Latest styles. Just what you need now. **Save big money** at our low Factory-to-Family prices. Pay as little as $3 down; up to a year and a half to pay balance. Get all your Furnishings at once—pay as you use. Thousands buying this new way.

Big Catalog FREE

New Spring *"Larkin Book of Better Homes."* Shows everything for parlor, porch, dining-room, bedroom, kitchen. **Bargain Prices** on famous Symphonola Phonographs. Also Symphonic Pianos, Player-Pianos in genuine Mahogany, Walnut, Fumed Oak. Free trial. Up to 4 years to pay. Satisfaction or money back. Check below article interested in.



☐ **Home Furnishings**
☐ **Pianos or Players**
☐ **Phonographs**

Cut out this adv.—write TO-DAY for FREE Book.

Larkin Co. Inc.
Dept. 334, BUFFALO, N. Y.
Peoria, Ill. Chicago, Ill

NO MONEY IN ADVANCE

Marvelous CAMERA On Free Trial

The new Mandel-ette—the camera sensation of the age—sent on approval, absolutely without a penny in advance, just to prove what a wonderful invention it is. Just send coupon below today—no money.

Makes Finished Photos INSTANTLY

Takes and makes in ONE MINUTE a perfect, finished postcard photo, size 2 1-2 x 3 1-2 in. Think of it, complete pictures one minute after you take them. Camera size is 4 1-2 x 5 x 7 in.

No Films—No Plates—No Darkrooms—None of the fuss or bother of ordinary cameras. Load in **daylight** 16 to 50 postcards at one time. Special lens makes sharp pictures at all distances. Pictures develop and print automatically. Can't over-develop. No experience necessary; simple instructions sent with outfit.

We Trust You

We'll send the complete Mandel-ette including tripod on 10 days approval. If not satisfied, return it. But if you are delighted with this quick, easy way of taking pictures, send us only 50c a week until our special price of $10 is paid. Send coupon now—no obligation—no risk on our offer.

THE CHICAGO FERROTYPE CO.

2309 W. Erie St., Desk 16, Chicago, Illinois

Send me one complete Mandel-ette Camera Outfit including tripod, supply of postcards and instructions. If satisfied, I will keep it and pay you 50c a week until I have paid $10.00. Otherwise I will return it at the end of 10 days.

Name.....

Address.....

Does $5,200 a Year Look Like a Mountain?

Here's a peculiar thing about salaries.

To the man making only $20 a week, "$40-a-Week" looms as big as a mountain.

But he reaches it, let us say.

Then "$80-a-Week" becomes the height beyond which he hardly dares aspire. His little old "$40-a-Week" looks small indeed!

Eventually—thru home-study training, if he is wise—we will say that he attains his $80 salary.

When, lo and behold, that distant peak—"$100-a-Week"—becomes no higher than a foot-hill! He wonders why he should ever have thought it utterly beyond his reach!

Start Now—by Doubling Your Salary

Never mind what you're making now. What would you LIKE to make?

Set your goal at $5,000 a year—$10,000 a year, if you like—and bear in mind the fact that mole-hills are frequently mistaken for mountains.

Then read the following statements from LaSalle-trained men, and you will understand why YOU, TOO, CAN QUICKLY INCREASE YOUR EARNINGS:

"LaSalle training has taken me from the $65-a-month class to a present earning power of over $7,000 per annum."

"Just received another raise of $600. This makes a total gain of over 400% since I started training."

"Within a period of three years LaSalle training has increased my income from $250 a month to $6,000 a year."

We do not promise anyone an immediate leap from $20-a-week—or $40-a-week—to $10,000 a year. Advancement is rarely won that way.

But we DO call attention to the fact that during three months' time as many as 1,193 LaSalle members reported definite promotions totalling $1,248,526. The average increase per man was 89 per cent.

If you have the will and the purpose to succeed—fill out the coupon, clip it, and place it in the mail TODAY.

LaSalle Extension University

The Largest Business Training Institution in the World

Dept. 375-R Chicago, Illinois

Please send me catalog and full information regarding the course and service I have marked with an X below. Also a copy of your book, "Ten Years' Promotion in One," all without obligation to me.

☐ Business Management	☐ Modern Business Correspondence and Practice
☐ Salesmanship	☐ Modern Foremanship and Production Methods
☐ Traffic Management	☐ Personnel and Employment Management
☐ Higher Accountancy	☐ Expert Bookkeeping
☐ Railway Station Management	☐ Business English
☐ Law, Degree of LL.B.	☐ Commercial Spanish
☐ Commercial Law	☐ Effective Speaking
☐ Industrial Management Efficiency	☐ C. P. A. Coaching
☐ Banking and Finance	

Name .....

Present Position .....

Address .....

$1 will equip your boudoir with a fascinating powder-and-rouge combination:

Bourjois JAVA Face Powder and*

ASHES OF ROSES ROUGE or ROUGE MANDARINE**

(Ashes of Roses Rouge is rosy and warm. Rouge Mandarine is lighter, a vivid orange)

MOST AMERICAN WOMEN USE JAVA. If you do not, there is pleasure in store for you—that of finding perfect adherence, exquisite consistency, all in a shade exactly suited to your complexion.

Java is made in White, Naturelle, Rose and Rachel, and includes the two new and already famous powders, Peaches* and Peaches-and-Cream.*

Ashes of Roses Rouge is, literally, incomparable. It blends with every undertone of the complexion. Rouge Mandarine is chosen by women who prefer the orange. Each rouge is pure—beneficial to the skin.

A dollar invested in Java and one of these rouges is invested in beauty. Almost all druggists have them. If your dealer has not, ask him to order for you. If you are not in range of a dealer's services, send us a dollar with the coupon, and the combination you choose will be mailed directly. Be sure and specify which rouge, and which shade of Java you prefer.

Bourjois Rouge Mandarine No. 88

Bourjois Ashes of Roses Rouge No. 88

(Postal orders are safest)

BOURJOIS PARISIAN

JAVA*

FACE POWDER

A. BOURJOIS & CO., Inc.

PARIS — 39½ West 34th Street — NEW YORK

Send rouge-and-powder combination checked below, for which ONE DOLLAR is enclosed

☐ Bourjois JAVA *and* Ashes of Roses Rouge ☐ Bourjois JAVA *and* Rouge Mandarine

☐ White ☐ Naturelle ☐ Rose ☐ Rachel ☐ Peaches ☐ Peaches-and-Cream

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

*Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

The NEW IDEA in Beauty

THE natural looking woman is the popular woman today! Do not deceive yourself. You cannot hide a sallow or a blemished skin, wrinkles or sagging muscles with make-up. You must get at the root of the evil. To correct the ills, not to cover them, is Mineralava's mission.

The application of Mineralava is simple and the results amazing! It draws out all impurities from the pores, cleansing the skin thoroughly of blackheads, pimples and other accumulated matter; it builds up the facial muscles and nourishes the underlying tissues by stimulating the blood-circulation; it keeps the muscles firm and healthy, thereby resisting lines, wrinkles and flabby flesh; it brings back to the skin the normal, healthy condition of childhood. Mineralava Face Finish, a fine skin tonic and perfect base for powder, should be used after the Mineralava is washed off. The treatment is then complete.

Mineralava is sold at all drug and department stores under a positive money-back guarantee. A bottle containing eighteen treatments is $2.00, the Face Finish is $1.50, and there is a special trial tube of Mineralava at 50c, containing enough for three treatments. Scott's Preparations, Inc., 251 West 19th Street, New York.

Mineralava

"KEEPS FACES YOUNG"

PARIS VIVAUDOU NEW YORK

Distributors

5,000 Years Ago—

Only about 3 out of every 100 people had decayed teeth. Today the appalling ratio is 95 out of every 100. Dental scientists say that the coarser foods of olden days gave the gums exercise. Now, with soft foods of modern diet, they recommend artificial massage with this small tooth brush which can be used freely and comfortably.

Patents allowed in United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Canada. Numerous other patents pending. All rights will be fully protected.

The Secret Revealed!

When the sphinx first smiled across the sands of Egypt—sound teeth glistened in the mouths of those ancient people. Their gums were kept sound and strong by natural massage afforded by the coarse foods they ate.

Today—though modern diet makes decay more prevalent—you, too, can have sound teeth and healthy gums. The secret is—twice-a-day brushing and gum massage with a tooth brush built small and scientifically shaped to fit your mouth.

Dr. West's tooth brush not only keeps your teeth *clean*—and *polished*—but stimulates gum tissues by proper massage.

New

A special massage brush in the Patented Dr. West's design to Invigorate the gums. The bristles are superquality, extra stiff, with ivory handle. Price 75c. *Ask your dealer*

Prices

Adult's size, 50c; Youth's size, 35c; Child's size, 25c. *Canadian prices same as U. S. A.*

Cleans INSIDE

Cleans OUTSIDE

and BETWEEN MASSAGES THE GUMS

Dr. West's TOOTH BRUSH

WECO *Product*

The Western Co., Chicago; New York—Weco Products Co., Limited, Toronto, Canada