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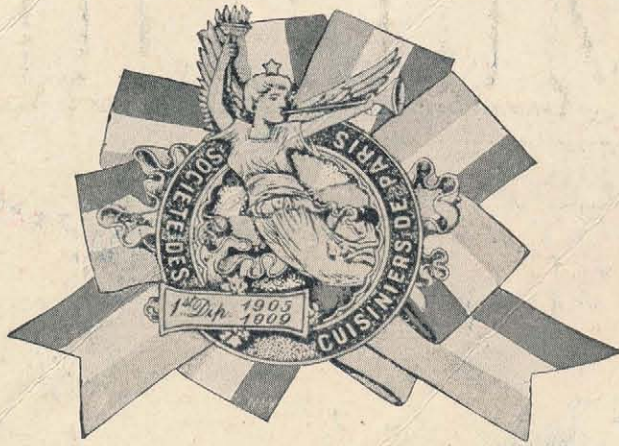
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MAGAZINE

JULY 1913  
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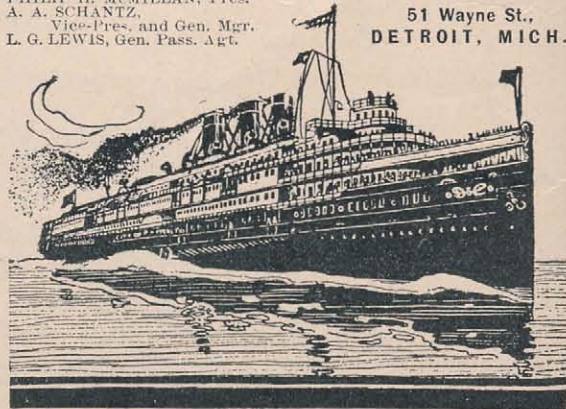
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Vol. XVII

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No. 4

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$1.50

SINGLE COPIES 15 CENTS

Monthly Publication Issued by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.  
 ORMOND G. SMITH, President, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City; GEORGE C. SMITH, Secretary and Treasurer,  
 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.  
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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 17

JULY, 1913

NUMBER 4

## The Awakening of Romola

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Marcia," "Marianna Returns," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

### CHAPTER I.

THE morning exodus from Hazelwood was past. From the seven-thirty-six to the nine-ten, the trains had been crowded with masculine commuters according to their degree; first the young clerks and office assistants, the stenographers and the bookkeepers, next the plain business men, then the more leisurely professions, and finally those aristocrats of mercantile life, the brokers and the bankers.

Hazelwood boasted a due proportion of all classes; it was no mushroom suburb, filled overnight with bare, staring, new houses, with signposts boldly naming imaginary highways across swamps and fields. Except upon its outskirts, the realty company's boards, beseeching travelers to own their own homes, had not been seen for a score of years. Hazelwood felt itself almost as firmly established in the permanent order of things as if it had been Perugia or Windsor.

Not only had all the men of the community, with the exception of the doctors, the clergymen, or the local tradesmen, made their way into the city, but the children above the age of five had also deserted their homes in pursuit of the education that Hazelwood was held to offer advantageously to the young. There were, to begin at the beginning,

the free kindergarten, Miss Main's kindergarten, and the French kindergarten; the mothers of Hazelwood could, to speak vulgarly, pay their money and take their choice. And for every age beyond the kindergarten there was the same ample field of selection.

If one were engaged in small business in the village itself, or were employed on a small salary in the city, there was the public school for one's children—a violent, red-brick structure standing in an unfavored region, known locally as "across the tracks." If one's aspiring social sense refused the offering of the board of education, there was Miss Salter's, where one's girls and small boys could obtain a pleasant sense of exclusiveness at a very moderate fee; and for the offspring of the people who occupied the houses on the Heights, which looked like comfortable palaces in miniature, there was Miss de Vere's, where one's daughters might be either "finished" as ornamentally, or "prepared" as thoroughly, as possible, according as one was a conservative or a progressive parent.

In brief, Hazelwood was a suburb like hundreds of others, and for its well-to-do women, except those who were zealous devotees of bridge or of country sports, and those whose passion was to lunch and shop and tea in town, the days went by in almost cloistral lack of contact with the world.



Romola Ventnor had lived in Hazelwood twelve years before she was suddenly struck with the strange emptiness of her days. She had gone there as a bride; sometimes even now, when her heart was particularly tender, she walked past the house that had been the first home of her married life.

It was not on the Heights, to which Richard had so soon insisted on attaining, but down in the Center, almost at the very corner of Main Street. It had not been painted, so Romola believed, in the decade since she and Richard had left it. Business had crept closer and closer to it, and had finally seized it. A sign, "J. McCarty and Son, Paper Hanging, Kalsomining, and Interior Decorating," was hung between the parlor windows. But Romola always had a smile and a sigh for the old house; she told herself it was because the Boston ivy grew more luxuriantly there, over the piazza rails and pillars, than she had been able to induce it to grow over the stone chimneys, buttresses, and arches of the new place.

It was before the French window of her room, opening out upon her own individual piazza, that she was smitten that April morning with a new, curious, disturbing impression of the dullness of her existence.

She had seen Ralph, her ten-year-old son, off for school on his bicycle; she had watched Paul and Lucy, the seven-year-old twins, start proudly on foot. She had made a note of the things that Richard wished her to superintend that day—little repairs in the house, little undertakings in the garden. She had felt his habitual, cool kiss of farewell dropped haphazardly somewhere on her face, and she had waved him her habitual good-by from the library window as he started for the nine-ten. She had seen Mr. Weston, next door, invite Richard to ride to the station in the motor car in which Weston himself always performed the eight-minute trip, and she had smiled at Richard's gesture of thanks and refusal.

Her husband was very sure that he walked to the station because he believed in the value of fresh air and ex-

ercise; with a little, faint, affectionate skepticism she wondered how long his theory would survive the ownership of an automobile. A car had been as utterly out of the question for them as a steam yacht while they had been paying for this sumptuous and stately dwelling of theirs; but now that the mortgage was finally lifted, she wondered if her husband, in spite of his Spartan doctrines, would not begin to desire what so many of their friends and neighbors had. Richard had a fashion of believing "the best none too good" for his family.

After she had seen the last of his descending figure, she had devoted a few minutes to her daughter Rose, aged four and a half. Rose was a delightful young person of the butter-ball-and-strawberry variety—plump, toppling little figure, dimples, pink cheeks, flying golden hair. Sometimes Romola impatiently wished that she dared to dismiss Nurse Dockerty, who seemed to regard Rose as her own property, and who jealously resented any interference in her rule. But Nurse Dockerty had been with Romola since the first child was born; she had established rights in the family; she was a Ventnor institution, the source of much envy in less blessed households. She was a tower of strength in all emergencies; when Richard had had typhoid, when the children had acquired one juvenile complaint after another, it had been Nurse Dockerty who had kept existence smooth and orderly, who had seemed, with her old-fashioned sense and wisdom, to be the doctor's most efficient ally. To think of dismissing her was impossible. So Romola submitted to playing a somewhat unimportant, though sufficiently picturesque, rôle in her youngest child's upbringing.

It had not taken long for her to plan the simple menus for the day, and to apportion the work between her two servants. It had not taken long to telephone the plumber about the leak in the third-story bathroom faucet, and the carpenter about the persistently creaking board in the second-story back hall.

It was only half past ten when she



stood before the window of her room, and demanded of herself what she should do with her day. It was then that she had the surprised realization that the day before her, for all her painful sense of its desuetude, was remarkably like most of her days lately.

Romola was a conscientious woman, and it was against her creed to waste time in repining. If she sometimes confused introspection with dissatisfaction, and any subjective intellectual process with useless discontent, why—she had not been trained in the fine points of psychology. She had married when she was but twenty, and the years before that age do little to develop in one's mind an appreciation of philosophical subtleties.

To-day, finding herself in a mood for question, for demanding of the universe "wherefore?" and "to what end?" she conscientiously sought for a remedy for her state of mind. Work, the universal cure, she decided was what she needed. She turned from the window toward her room.

The room expressed the woman she had grown to be. It was spacious, austere, elegantly plain. The furniture was of one of the old English designs, almost classic in its severity; it was a gray enamel, scarcely forbidding, but surely not alluring to the senses. The silvery-gray walls showed few adornments; there was an etching or two and a Japanese print.



"Noticed anything?" Romola echoed the words blankly.

On the dressing table the toilet appointments were those of a woman scornful of adventitious aids to beauty. The silver-backed brushes and the silver-stoppered bottles were of the severest pattern. The lounge of gray enamel and cane, at the foot of the bed, was piled with blue pillows that looked as if they were never pressed. There was no faintest touch of the sybarite in the apartment. Looking at it to discover some work to do, Romola unexpectedly found it cold, repellent.

"It's absolutely colorless," she told herself. "It's enough to atrophy one's emotions, a room like this."



She stared at it, a little frown between her delicate brown eyebrows. She did not see how to do it over; she did not know what colors, what designs, would make appeal to her in her new state of mind.

"It's fundamentally wrong," she pondered. "One would have to begin at the beginning to do anything with it—with the paper. And that's out of the question. We ought to have a breathing space financially, now that Dick has finished paying for the house."

Labor in her own room being thus barred, she wandered about the house searching for some work that would be a sedative to her restlessness. But the mending basket in the nursery offered her no scope for industry—it was one of Nurse Dockerty's most praiseworthy habits that she never allowed the mending to accumulate.

The thought of spring housecleaning tempted Romola for a moment, but what a farce would spring housecleaning be in a place like this, still new, equipped with every device for saving labor that the ingenuity of builders and architects had yet devised, and thoroughly cleaned each week with a vacuum cleaner? She must find work, not manufacture it!

Out-of-doors seemed a more hopeful field of operations. Rudolph, the German gardener and handy man whom the Ventnors shared with their neighbors on either side, according to the excellent, coöperative, suburban habit, was burning a small heap of litter that had covered the rosebushes during the winter. The pleasant, pungent smell of smoke was on the warm spring air; the slender, blue spiral curled lazily upward; in the Prestons' border she saw crocuses pushing through.

But once out in the mild, seductive sunlight, Romola's impulse toward garden work subsided. There was not much to do on their half acre; Richard's ideas as to the possibilities of suburban plots were extremely orthodox; he hated places dotted with flower beds and outcropping in sudden arbors. A few shrubs in clumps, a perennial flower border close to the house, and a

good sweep of lawn—for this horticultural scheme he stood firm. Romola had acquiesced as she acquiesced in almost everything that Richard favored—not from inability to think for herself, but from the almost religious conviction that it was a wife's duty to make her husband's home life as frictionless as possible.

This morning, to be sure, she played idly for a moment with the rebellious thought of a little plot of her own, its jumbled heterodoxy hidden out of sight behind a trellis—a plot where she might raise pansies and parsley, mignonette and stocks. But something told her that not even this occupation would soothe her dissatisfied restlessness.

She and Rudolph exchanged a few remarks on the rosebushes' need of fresh fertilizer, and then she wandered down the slope of the lawn to the admirably constructed stone wall that divided the Ventnor property from the road. The street—Upland Avenue was the name it wore on neat signs at the street corners—lay along the top of the ridge; Hazelwood, lying below it, was that morning delicately veiled in young spring green; a mile below, in the valley, the river glimmered silver, and beyond it wooded banks rose to another crest like that upon which the Hazelwood aristocracy dwelt. But the opposite bank of the river had not yet inspired the genius of the suburban real-estate developer; it was the shimmering green of woods that clothed the other bank, shot through with the red of unfolding maples, and cascaded here and there by a foam of white dogwood.

Romola stood, her hazel eyes fixed on the spring beauty. Unrest surged higher and higher in her; it seemed to her that some imprisoned spirit within her was striving to break through the dense covering that years of habit had laid over impulse, as the dogwood seed must once have struggled to burst the prisoning soil above them. What was it that had gone out of life that she missed so poignantly? What struggled for expression, for birth, in her heart? What recollections, what desires, were these that spring aroused in her?



Cantering down the road from one of the houses beyond, came Evangeline Dimock. The sound of her horse's hoofs drew Romola's eyes from the misty, glamorous beauty of the bank across the river, and her thoughts from the disquiet within her. She waved a greeting to her friend, who slowed up before her.

"I wish you kept a horse, Romola," remarked Evangeline, after they had exchanged preliminary remarks. "It would be twice as much fun to ride with you as to ride alone."

"You needn't lack for companions," answered Romola. "It seems to me that half the women in Hazelwood are riding this season."

"One likes a little congeniality even in a horseback companion," Evangeline grumbled. "It would do you good, anyway. You don't take enough exercise."

Romola smiled teasingly at the rider. "Can't afford it," she said. "Even if I am losing my looks. No one ever tells you you should take more exercise until you're shapeless."

"Shapeless!" Evangeline, threatened already at twenty-eight with portliness, looked with comic despair at the tall, slim figure standing below her. "You're one of those fortunate creatures who will never be that. And as for affording it—who but you stops to consider the sordid question? All Hazelwood is living beyond its means. Heaven knows I couldn't afford a riding horse if Florence and Harry didn't give me free board and lodgings. But I know your kind—you're one of the truly refined, who would consider it vulgar to be in debt."

"It isn't altogether my own view that prevails," Romola reminded her friend. "You see, there's Richard, with the most puritanical notions about money. Of course, he did build this place before he had the money to pay for it, but that was because he was able to see it was really saving money——"

"I see—'why pay rent?'—that sort of thing. Well, I wish he'd let you have a horse. Tell him it would save doctors' bills in the long run. I'm not motor mad myself, but I must say that

some means of conveyance beyond one's two feet is a comfort."

"But not a necessity, when one lives less than ten minutes from the market and the railroad station," answered Romola. "I'm not very athletic, you know, and I really think a horse would be wasted on me. As for a motor, much good it would do me, with Dick away all day long."

"You'd have to have a chauffeur, of course," nodded Evangeline. "Florence is bothering Harry to death to get her a little runabout she can operate herself. He so often goes in to town in the car that she gets no use at all of it. Romola"—she glanced downward with a worried expression on her round, high-colored, frank face—"I'm worried about them. Have you noticed anything?"

"Noticed anything?" Romola echoed the words blankly. She looked at Evangeline bewilderedly.

"Yes, about Harry."

"No. I haven't seen him very often lately, and I never notice anything about people. You know," she hurried on pleadingly, as if she begged to be spared any painful recital, "I'm afflicted with a sort of social astigmatism. I never see things, and I'd so much rather not be told anything that the people wouldn't want me to know. You understand?" Her flushed cheeks and limpid eyes seemed to entreat Evangeline's pardon for rebuffing her attempt at confidence.

"Oh, I know you think gossip is as vulgar as debt," laughed the girl on horseback bitterly. "But it seems to me that this is a little different. Naturally I wouldn't want to spread gossip about my own sister and her husband, but I am worried, and you're the only woman in Hazelwood I would dream of speaking to on the subject. However, since you don't want to be bothered with other people's affairs——" She jerked her gauntlet higher on her wrist and seemed about to start.

"Oh, Evangeline!" Romola put up a protesting hand. "I know I'm selfish. I don't mean to be, but I am. Please tell me anything you want."



An automobile dashed by, and some one waved a hand and called a greeting to the two women.

"That's Harry now. Just starting for town, and it's eleven! He was playing cards at the Keiths' until after three this morning."

"So that's it?" Romola mused.

"That's only part of it," said Evangeline succinctly. "Mrs. Keith is the whole of it—and Florence is such a goose that she doesn't see it!"

Romola's only answer was a pained: "Oh!"

"They've been married twelve years," pursued Evangeline, "and I don't suppose that for the last nine that foolish sister of mine has ever thought of Harry as a man—just a man. He's been of the species 'husband' to her. She takes him for granted—she has taken him for granted ever since the honeymoon, I suppose. She thinks she knows him—so she does, of course, after a fashion. She knows he doesn't take cream in his coffee, and that he can't be broken of throwing ashes on the floor, and that he won't eat mushrooms.

"But there's more to Harry than that. He's only thirty-five—they were married absurdly young—and he still has impulses, and emotions, and appetites, too, I dare say, that have nothing to do with the deadly matrimonial rut in which they are living. Or were. Things have changed since that Keith woman showed Harry that she knew he was something more than one of the masculine 'providers' of Hazelwood.

"Now, what shall I do? Florence is as blind to the Keith episode as she has been to all Harry's possibilities in the past. Shall I try to open her eyes, probably stir up a horrid row, make Harry hate me, and have to leave their house in consequence, or what shall I do? Some one ought to do something. Some one ought to tell Florence Graham that a man remains an individual even if he is married; some one ought to tell her that marriage doesn't convert human beings into mere domestic machines. I wish you'd do it. She'd pay some attention to you. She

thinks you nearly perfect—ideal wife and mother, and all that. Don't say no. I'm coming in this afternoon to hear what you think—Dolly won't stand another second."

She was off, and blown to her on the April breeze was Romola's gasping: "But I think I've always believed that marriage did convert an individual into a domestic machine!"

A turn in the road hid Dolly and Dolly's rider from her. She caught a last glimpse of the large, well-knit, erect figure in its dark riding habit, of the three-cornered black hat fastened firmly upon the dark-red braids, and she went into the house with a strange, disturbing doctrine ringing in her ears.

Marriage not convert human beings into domestic machines? But of course it did—it did! Wife—mother—house-mistress—was it possible that there was more yet in the word "woman"? Was there an individual striving for liberty, chafing against even desirable bonds, against even dear responsibilities?

"Why, I am only thirty-two!" cried Romola to herself, as if making a discovery. Her cheeks flamed at the implication of her own words; she felt as if she had been caught in some disloyalty. She ran up the stairs toward the nursery swiftly. She wanted Rose's prattle to silence the reverberations of that unblushing sentence. She wanted the familiar domestic machinery to claim her entirely again.

But Nurse Dockerty met her with finger upon lip.

"Sh!" she whispered. "She's just fallen asleep. She and the little Weston boy quarreled, and she got to crying. Oh, dear, no'm; he didn't hurt her—it was just temper on our little lady's part because he wouldn't let her have his new blue bladder balloon. But she exhausted herself crying, and I thought it best for her to take a nap."

"Quite right, Mrs. Dockerty," said Romola, half sighing. Then she stood idle, at a loss, for a second. "I think I'll go for a walk," she announced. "Any errands?"

"No'm, nothing that I can think of.



Why don't you go for a little walk? It'll do you good."

"The children won't be home for lunch," said Romola, pausing irresolutely. "There's to be an expedition after arbutus, and a picnic luncheon. I think I'll not come home, either. I think"—her face brightened—"that I'll try to join them, the nature-study class. They're going to Corey's Woods, of course."

Nurse Dockerty cordially approving of any plan that promised no interference with her charge, Romola set off. She walked briskly, the thought of the children and their teachers helping to silence in her mind the heretical thought that Evangeline Dimock had planted there.

At her quick, springing pace she went down from the Heights, through the village, pausing once to price the early strawberries displayed in Weilbronner's market. It gave her a sense of being again related to her own environment; and when she found herself saying, with thrifty, housewifely authority, that the berries were too dear, and that they were sure to be sour besides, so early in the season, she felt vaguely comforted.

Across the tracks, past the big, red-brick public-school building, past the dwindling row of mean houses where the unselect of Hazelwood dwelt; across the bridge beneath which ran one of the river-feeding brooks of the countryside; through the huddled cottages of the Italian settlement, without which no suburb is complete, and on out into the open country she walked.

Corey's Woods climbed up a bank from the left of the road, a half mile beyond the last of the dilapidated huts. Romola glanced at the watch strapped about her wrist. It was nearly one—she ought soon to hear the sound of childish voices and laughter. She struck up the ascent and veered from the road that skirted the woods into the rambling path that wandered through them.

But even when she was well within their green sanctuary, there was no guiding sound of young merriment to

lead her on. The liquid call of mating birds, the faint rustle of tender, new leaves—these were the pleasant noises that saluted her ears. She scoured the woods—they were not so extensive as to harbor a whole, noisy class of children unseen and unheard—but in vain. Miss de Vere had apparently changed her mind about the arbutus excursion.

Romola was rather hot from her hurried trip, and the delusive spring energy had given place to real spring lassitude. She took off the straw sailor that she wore, and pushed the damp ringlets of soft, pale-brown hair from her forehead. Swinging the hat by its elastic, stooping now and then to gather a violet, she made her way back to the road.

And then she became conscious not only that it was the enervating spring-time, but also that she had had no luncheon. There was a comfortable boulder where the hill road met the highway, and back of it was the rotting post that supported a dim sign—"To Corey's Woods,  $\frac{1}{4}$  m."

Romola established herself upon the rock for a rest. Her little spurt of energy was over, and with it had gone the comfortable sense of the commonplace. The morning's restlessness, a little more languid now for her physical weariness, again possessed her. And through it, half drowsily, Evangeline's words repeated themselves.

Her musing was interrupted by the sound of a motor car approaching from the direction of the city. She looked uninterestedly along the way, waiting to see it emerge from the curve, half hidden from her eyes by a clump of alders and birches. It came more slowly than was the custom of automobiles on empty, level highroads. Finally it made the curve, but with a dislocated, uncertain motion, and with all the rhythmic quality gone from its puffing and chugging. A few rods more it sputtered and jerked its way, and then, with a final leap, it brought itself to a standstill fifty feet from Romola's boulder.

She watched the two men in the machine leap out and begin the usual incomprehensible gyrations under and



around the car. She had no particular interest in their predicament, but continued to watch them with the unconscious intentness of an idle person watching activity. Neither was any one whom she knew—that she saw at once—and it was a dull rather than an intelligent eye that she fixed upon them. But by and by something in the movements of the more slender, more swift, figure seemed to touch a chord in her memory. The outlines half hidden, half suggested, under the big, tweed coat seemed vaguely familiar.

"It looks like some one I know," said Romola to herself.

At that moment the man seized his cap and threw it into the tonneau. The gesture was impulsive, impatient, half comic. And the sunlight shone upon a yellow head.

"His hair is as bright as Rose's," thought Romola, smiling with faint amusement and sympathy at the little burst of temper that had tossed the cap away. "I never saw a grown person such a goldilocks before. It looks like—it looks like—who is it that it looks like?"

The man had ceased his experimentations in repair, and stood staring up and down the road as if commanding succor to appear. Suddenly he spied Romola, the only human being in sight.

"Why, it looks like Wade Robinson," smiled Romola to herself.

Her roving thoughts leaped backward twenty years; again she was a schoolgirl in the Ohio village where she had been born. It had not boasted the fine social distinctions of Hazelwood, and rich and poor, gentle and simple, had secured their early education in the same brick schoolhouse.

It was in the grammar school, half girls, half boys, according to the unsentimental, coeducational practice of the community. She was twelve; she stood at the blackboard, tears beginning to trickle upon her flushed, discomfited cheeks, and to form a chalky paste as she tried surreptitiously to wipe them away with her fingers. Algebra had always been a bugbear to her.

She remembered how, quietly and unobtrusively, the boy next her had begun to write the solution of her problem in faint, small figures low on the board. She remembered, with a smile, the scared, grateful, disapproving glance she had turned upon him.

"I am not a cheet," she had written firmly if inconspicuously and unorthographically in reply. And the boy, scornful of virtue, and angry at rebuke, had promptly rubbed out the helpful figures, and substituted for them the words: "You are a dunce," and had informed her in a low voice that she'd know it when he offered to help her again, and that it was his firm opinion she would never get out of the grammar school.

He had refused to speak to her for three days thereafter, and then, overtaking her one afternoon umbrellaless in a sudden shower, he had stiffly offered her the protection of his own; she knew that his father's hostler had been sent to the school with it—Doctor Robinson and his wife were always so "fussy" about Wade's taking cold. And she had walked beneath the umbrella with a palpitating sense of being very grown up; it was almost like being a lady—not an old one like one's mother, of course, but a young one like one's aunts—to have a male being walk beside one protecting one's tam-o'-shanter from the rain.

He had sent her a valentine that year, and had hung a May basket on her doorknob. The other boys had giggled, and had made her appearances in the school yard periods of torture to her by their impish chanting of: "There goes Wade's girl, there goes Wade's girl," until Wade had thrashed enough of them to make the chant unpopular.

She had been a shy little girl, and however much her soul had thrilled with pride over the subjugation of Wade, she had treated him with a prim unfriendliness that won her encomiums from her aunts, and that soon diverted Wade's attention to more mannerly and more appreciative little girls. And the next year she had moved, and that had





*"Romola Tudor, by all that's good!" he cried.*

been the end of the yellow-haired Wade.

She was half smiling at the youthful memory when the disabled automobilist approached her.

"I beg your pardon," he began, with a motion as if to doff his hat, and a look of surprise at not finding it. "Oh, I forgot. But can you tell me how far I am from Hazelwood?"

He had a thin, tanned face and bright, blue eyes. She looked at him for

a long second without answering, and when she did speak, it was to say: "You are Wade Robinson."

The man's face brightened, his piercing eyes scanned her closely. The heavy, tired lines about his mouth disappeared in a sudden smile.

"Romola Tudor, by all that's good!" he cried.

"Not now," answered Romola, offering him her hand. "Romola Ventnor. You're about a mile from Hazelwood."



"Do you live there?"

"I have lived there for twelve years," replied Romola. It sounded like an eternity, said in that tone.

"Good! There is a destiny that shapes our ends! I've been cursing luck and fate and everything else for the past three weeks. And all the time they were leading me straight to an old friend."

"Are you coming to settle in Hazelwood?" Romola asked the question in faint surprise.

Her old playmate did not seem to fit into Hazelwood; he looked too—too—she did not know quite what word to use. He did not look suburban. He did not look like a person living in a rut, like a piece of domestic machinery—her mind leaped back to Evangeline's expression.

"Yes," he answered her question discontentedly. "I've bought your Doctor Allen's practice. He, lucky dog, is going to Germany for laboratory work. And I—I'm coming to Hazelwood! Well, that doesn't seem quite so dark a prospect as it did a while ago."

"So you are a doctor, like your father?"

"Not so good a one as he," replied the young man loyally. "And not so good a one as I had hoped to be. You see"—under his tan he turned red, as if he were telling something shameful—"you see, they found I wasn't as fit as I ought to be, about five years ago, and they sent me out to Arizona. I'm all right now, but I've got to live in the country, and do the family practitioner act, while what I'm longing for is the clinic in New York or London or Paris. Well, we don't get what we want in this world always, do we?"

"I don't know," said Romola primly, though her kind eyes rained pity upon him. "I've been so very happy myself." It was with astonishment that she heard her own words; she, who never talked of her personal existence, to be saying a thing like this to a stranger on the highroad! For, of course, he was really a stranger.

"Ah, you! That's different. No

Providence could be so unfair as to deny you your happiness."

Romola felt very sorry for him. He looked much older than his years. The marks of illness and of pain were on his thin face. For all their keenness, all their brightness, his eyes were those of a disappointed man. How cruel to give a man intellect and ambition and then to deny him the strength to work them out!

"Are you married?" she asked. She hoped that he was. She hoped that something had been granted to him in all its fullness to compensate for the gifts withheld. But he laughed shortly.

"No, thank Heaven! I haven't any unfortunate woman tied to my disabilities," he answered.

Romola immediately sensed a woman who had not stood the test, who had accepted freedom when love would have burned to serve.

"I'm sorry," she said gently. "I had hoped that you were happy in your home even if you had had disappointments in your work. But what's the matter with your car?"

"Chiefly the plain need of gasoline," he told her. "If Hazelwood's so near, the man can walk in and get some."

He called the chauffeur, and gave him quick, curt directions. Romola found herself rather liking the nervous tension of his manner. It was the manner of a man who still felt things—everything—vividly. It did not require great events, great calamities, to stir his sluggish emotions. He had not yet been converted into a domestic machine. She jerked herself up impatiently as she found the words again in her mind. She wished that Evangeline had not put them there.

When she was at home again, the restlessness, the ennui, of the morning were gone. A little flood of excitement flowed through her. A glow of pity warmed her heart. To be kind to one's neighbors suddenly seemed to make even a dull life worth while, to offer possibilities of charm to prosaic days. She was anxious for Richard to come home, that she might tell him of the wonderful encounter, that she might



plan with him pleasant, neighborly, friendly offices for the newcomer.

She listened with half an ear to the children's story of how the Corey's Woods expedition had been postponed. She yielded to Rose's imperious demands for attention, when that young person was brought to her at tea time, without her usual keen perception of the adorableness of the child, and her usual conscientious realization of all the work there was to do to develop her properly.

Richard was tired when he came up from the five-forty-three.

"Where are the children?" he asked, after he had greeted Romola with the same absent-minded sort of kiss that he had given her in the morning.

"They're all in the nursery. They're to have their supper there to-night. I wanted to have dinner without them to-night. Without Ralph even."

A little frown appeared on Richard's face.

"It's the second time this week, isn't it?"

"Of course, we can't have him at the table when we're giving a dinner," answered Romola, flushing slightly under the implied rebuke.

"All the more reason for having him down when we haven't company," answered Richard. "You know, Romola, I don't hold at all with this modern idea that servants can bring up children as well as their parents."

The hurt red rose higher in Romola's face as she opened her lips to reply. Then she thought better of it, pressed them firmly together, and walked to the window. It was yielding to that first impulse for retort that led to so much bickering, that made life so unspeakably harsh and ugly. She would repress it.

She looked out at the neat lawn, with its clumps of shrubs, at the stone wall and the trees along the road. Twelve years of discipline had taught her to control her little, feminine impulse toward "hurt" feelings. It was only a minute before she turned, came up to Richard, and told him, in her usual tone of voice, about Rudolph's activities of the morning.

Richard listened inattentively, flung one sharp question, and grunted his general dismissal of the affair.

"He's tired," said Romola resolutely to herself. "He'll feel better when he's been rested and fed."

She resolved to defer further conversation until after soup, at least, had done its pacifying work.

"Did you go to call on Mrs. Keith to-day?" demanded Richard suddenly.

"On Mrs. Keith? No. Did you think that I was going?" Romola looked at him in honest surprise.

"I certainly said that I wanted you to call on her," he answered.

"I didn't understand it so," said Romola quietly. "I thought we talked it over, and I rather hoped"—she smiled—"that you had been won to my point of view. I really don't see why I should call on a woman whom I don't know, whose conspicuous way of life makes me sure that I shan't like her. Why, you know, Richard, how often we've agreed that it was perfectly useless for our kind and her kind to mix, and how glad we've always been that Hazelwood was our kind, and not her kind, of a place."

"I know we've been pharisaical enough," replied Richard briefly.

"I don't think it is necessarily pharisaical to hold to one's standards," replied Romola.

"Well, pharisaical or not, I'm afraid we'll have to move with the rest of the world. The Keiths have settled here. He's a man of enormous interests—the biggest man this place has ever seen. We aren't going to try to imitate their style just because we're civil enough to recognize their existence. There was a tip came into the office to-day that they were going to build. It would be a very good thing if we could get the house to do. You know the last two years haven't been unduly rich ones for Livingston, Ventnor & Grant."

"I see," Romola answered. There was no scorn in her voice. She hated the exigencies of business, but she recognized them, and she forbade herself to be her husband's critic. "I'll call on her to-morrow. But I hope, Richard,



that I shan't have to cultivate any sort of intimacy with her. You know I'm a narrow-minded person, and she frankly strikes me as horrid."

"I dare say she won't be any keener than you on cultivating an intimacy," said Richard, with masculine brutality. And to Romola's laughing "I suppose not," they went out to dinner.

But the shadow of the next day's visit lay over the meal. All the spontaneous pleasure was gone from Romola's recollection of the meeting with her old playmate. When she finally related the incident, it was colorless, gray, and she could not wonder at Richard's indifferent acceptance of it.

"He ought to do well enough out here," he said, selecting a cigar from the humidor, and critically cutting it. "Enough of the women are always imagining themselves sick to keep him busy, and those that don't imagine it about themselves are always able to get up a scare about their children."

Romola discreetly veiled her eyes. The first great surprise of her married life had been the discovery that a man was capable of holding the most timorous views in regard to his own health. Richard, robust, athletic, was alarmed by every symptom that visited him. He showed a concern about overshoes that Romola had at first thought comic, and had then accepted as a matter of course. He was "fussy" about his diet—he called it being careful. And in the twelve years they had lived together, the doctor had never been in the house on her account save when the children were born.

Yet she knew that her husband was quite sincere when he uttered the familiar gibe at the hypochondriacs of her sex. The belief and the humor of generations of men were ineradicably a part of him, beyond the power of any personal experience to change. "Part of the domestic machinery," said Romola to herself.

## CHAPTER II.

"Have a cigarette, Mrs. Ventnor?" Romola's hostess put the question with a faint, skeptical smile upon her lips.

Romola shook her head and declined with what she hoped was an easy, nonchalant manner—as easy and nonchalant as if she had accepted. It was not that she was so provincial a person that she did not know that many women smoked. It was not even that she was such a provincial person that she had not seen women smoke, and thought nothing of it; it was all in Mrs. Keith's covert jeer that her discomfort lay—her sense of being gauche and awkward, and her resentment of the feeling.

"It does make one's fingers ugly," said Mrs. Keith, moving to the mantel to find a match. She showed Romola her hand as she came back. "Hideously yellow, isn't it? I'll have to bleach them out some day soon. Wise of you never to acquire the destructive habit."

"It isn't that," Romola felt impelled to say, striving to maintain an indifferent dignity. "It's——"

"It's the dear babies—that nice Harry Graham man tells me you have a brood, and that you're quite the ideal thing in mothers! And you wouldn't want to go home for bread-and-milk-in-the-nursery, and 'Now-I-lay-me,' and the whole blooming ceremonial of the 'children's hour,' reeking with smoke—that's it, isn't it? It would be incongruous. That's the reason I'm against children—they make so many amusing things incongruous. You'll have some tea, though, won't you?" She added this as a Japanese servant slid unobtrusively in with a tea tray.

"Please," said Romola, glad of the respite. "Lemon and no sugar, and rather weak. No—no arrack, thank you!"

"How depraved and altogether abandoned you will think me, Mrs. Ventnor!" cried Mrs. Keith, dashing her cup of tea liberally from the queer-shaped glass-and-silver flask on the tray. "Well, it's better that you should know the worst of me at once, and have it all over. I'm frightfully intemperate, as you see."

She half closed her dark eyes, and blew a wreath of smoke into the air, bending her sinuous bare neck to one



side. Romola watched her, fascinated, feeling like an awkward schoolgirl beside her. She was wearing a wonderful Chinese coat as a tea gown—gleaming with baleful greens, shimmering with wonderful blues, overlaid with heavy gold embroideries. Hazelwood had not seen its like before.

"I don't think," Romola was driven to say, while her hostess watched her through the blue, pungent cloud of smoke, "that you are attributing my habits to quite the right causes. I think I do as I do and fail to do as—as——"

"As other people do," supplied Deborah Keith.

"As other people do," laughed Romola, "for no better reason than that I'm a creature of habit, and am likely to go on as I have begun."

"The deadly rut!" Mrs. Keith frowned impatiently at the idea. "I should die of it. Monotony is only a modified form of death."

Romola felt that there was really something to be said in favor of order, in favor of routine, but she was strangely tongue-tied in the presence of this bright, alien, antipathetic personality. It was not alone what Mrs. Keith did, what she wore, what she said, that offended the other woman; it was the way in which she did things, wore things, said things.

Romola could picture Evangeline Dimock, handsome, stalwart, wholesome, smoking her cigarette and dashing her tea with arrack, without in any wise suggesting lawlessness; she could even picture, with a faint throb of envy, the gorgeous Oriental garment of her hostess clothing her own slim figure, and she knew that she would not suggest the Eastern siren to any human being who might see her—she would, all the more because of the piquant contrast, be the Puritan, the woman in whose elegance there was always a touch of austerity.

"We are used to monotony here in Hazelwood," answered Romola. "So used to it that you'd never get us to subscribe to your doctrine. I'm afraid you won't like our suburb if you are sincere in your detestation of monotony.

Perhaps"—she smiled at her hostess across the little veil of smoke—"perhaps you never gave it a fair trial?"

Deborah Keith laughed. "Enough to know that it would be the end of me," she declared. "But I don't intend to find Hazelwood monotonous. I'm going to wake it up. Oh, I'm going to be a real benefactor."

"You haven't passed much of your life in suburbs," said Romola, "or you wouldn't be so confident. Miss Dimock tells me you have lived abroad a good deal."

Mrs. Keith nodded. "I haven't been in America before for three consecutive months since I was fourteen," she said. "But I'm prepared to adore it. Mr. Keith's interests have been largely British—he's a Scotchman, you know—but they're likely to be almost exclusively American for a long time now. We're going to settle down and have a home."

"Beware monotony!" warned Romola, with a smile. Then she changed the subject. "What a charming old place this Ferguson house is, don't you think? I've quite envied you having it."

"The situation's rather good. Of course, the house is built on the worst site on the property. I don't care much for it. However, we're going to live in it only until our new place is built."

Romola, mindful of the diplomatic errand on which she had come, blushed guiltily as she inquired: "How soon do you expect to have your new house ready?"

"Oh, nothing's been done about it yet. No plans drawn—no architect selected. Bertram has been so busy getting his office affairs settled that he hasn't had a moment for the house. But once he gets to it, I expect it to go up like an Aladdin's palace. By the way, didn't some one tell me that Mr. Ventnor built the Malcolm house at Rumsey Hills?"

Romola blushed still more guiltily as she said that Richard had indeed built the suburban palace to which Mrs. Keith referred.

"That's my idea of a very good-looking place," declared her hostess,





*"You'll have some tea, though, won't you?"*

lighting a fresh cigarette. "Do you happen to know what it cost?"

"About a hundred and fifty thousand, I think," said Romola miserably. Then she made the invariable supplementary statement to which the building trades are accustomed: "But building is dearer now than when that went up. The Malcolms built about ten years ago."

"Bertram will want to talk to Mr. Ventnor as soon as he has a chance," declared Bertram's wife, with a mag-

nificently patronizing air. "He had thought some of Mayhew, but he admires the Malcolm place tremendously, and Mayhew's such a big man he won't be offended even if we give our shack to some one else, though he's such a friend that perhaps he might feel that he has the first call on our building."

Romola felt stiffly annoyed. After all, she hadn't come there soliciting work for her husband.

"Of course," she said, in rather a



stately fashion, "Mayhew is much our biggest architect. When one has a job really big enough to offer him, there's no one like him. Have you seen the new Van Stuyvesant Hotel?"

"Yes," Mrs. Keith nodded indifferently. "We went there when we landed. Had supper there with Mayhew himself our first night. Amusing creature, isn't he?"

"I don't know him," answered Romola.

To know Mayhew meant either one of two things—either one was a great personage, an ornament of fashionable society, or one was a person of no position at all, merely one of the unconsidered throng who minister to great men's hours of relaxation. Which, Romola wondered, were the Keiths?

"Ah, we must have him out to dinner soon," said Mrs. Keith lightly, "and you must meet him."

The loud ringing of the telephone in the hall outside put an end to the conversation upon Mr. Mayhew and his attributes, professional and personal. Mrs. Keith listened with an air of expectancy, almost of intensity. The color ebbed from her dark skin and her eyes gleamed. The red line of her lips tightened. Before the servant had time to summon her, she had jumped up and started for the booth, which was under the turn in the hall stairs.

"For me?" she demanded of the Japanese, meeting him at the door.

"Yes, madam," he murmured.

"From Mr. Keith?" she flashed at him as she hurried by.

"Yes, madam," again answered the servant imperturbably, and came in to remove the tea tray.

Mrs. Keith did not trouble to close the door of the booth, and every word that she uttered was borne back to Romola, awkwardly waiting to make her adieus.

"Not home until nine?" The woman's voice was angry and loud. "Why not? I said, why not? Nonsense, I don't believe you! I said I did not believe you. I'll come in town myself. Well, if you won't, I dare say there are other men who will. You could if

you tried. Don't think that I'll submit to being bottled up out here in this hole while you amuse yourself. Oh, what do I care for the telephone operator?"

Then there was a second's silence, while she listened intently to the remarks from the other end of the wire. Romola, blushing violently at her necessitated eavesdropping, had withdrawn to the remotest corner of the drawing-room, and was trying desperately to interest herself in the titles of some books. She welcomed the silence. Then it was broken again by Mrs. Keith's voice, changed, but still audible.

"It's only because I'm so crazy about you," she declared. "You know that, don't you, Bert?"

Then followed a few more mollified words, a good-by, and she strolled back into the room as undisturbed as if she had not been making the slightest revelation of herself. Her color was natural, her eyes bright, her full red lips smiling. It was Romola who was uncomfortably red and nervous.

"I'm afraid you think I'm a horrid shrew," she remarked carelessly, "but it does infuriate me so when Bertram calls me up to tell me he won't be home for dinner. Doesn't it you?"

"I suppose they don't do it when they can avoid it," answered Romola, evading the personal question.

"Oh, don't they?" Mrs. Keith's interrogative was purely formal. "I wouldn't trust one of them," she added, with great vivacity. "Not one—my own liege lord the least of all. And I never mean to play the part of the patient Griselda."

"I'm sure you'll never have to," murmured Romola, struggling to escape. She extended her hand and went on hastily: "I'm so glad I found you at home. I'm afraid I stayed terribly long. Good-by."

Mrs. Keith took her hand, and held it while she studied the delicately flushed countenance of her caller.

"I've shocked you horribly," she maintained. "You think I'm a vulgar beast to quarrel with my husband over the telephone. You think conjugal quarrels, and conjugal affection, and



all other intimate things, should be concealed from public view. Well, maybe you're right. But I don't really think so. If you're no longer upset by your spouse's failure to show up when you expect him, if you're no longer jealous and suspicious, why, my theory is that you've ceased to care, not merely that you're a perfect lady, and too well-bred to make a parade of your feelings. And if you never felt angry and disappointed and jealous, you've never cared, that's all.

"Now, run along home to the dear babies. 'Children's hour' approaches. I suppose you're really more interested in them than in your husband. That's what children do for a woman—and when she gets back to being interested in her husband again, lo and behold! he's not there in the spot where she left him to wait until she got quite through in the nursery! Awful heretic, aren't I?" She laughed, released Romola's hand, and pushed her playfully into the garden path.

Romola set out for home, vowing that never again should any necessity force her into the Keith house. She was offended, outraged. Heartless, noisy, vulgar, impertinent—there was no end to the objugatory adjectives that she applied to the newcomer in her mind. She walked quickly in order to leave the offensive presence as far as possible behind her. She breathed deeply of the soft spring air, as if there had been something noxious in the physical atmosphere she had just left.

She told herself that she must try to rid herself of all the unpleasant impressions that resulted from her visit before she reached home and the children. In a sudden, half-morbid attack of maternal conscientiousness, it seemed to her almost a sacrilege to go from the presence of that scoffing, common creature—so she termed her in her thoughts—into that of the eager, clear-eyed, little group at home.

And yet—and yet—Romola's hurrying pace slackened, she forgot to draw those deep, indignant, purifying breaths—and yet the woman had had something that she lacked, something that all

the women of her acquaintance lacked; and it was the lack of that something, she saw now, which had made her restless and dissatisfied only the day before. That woman, distasteful as was her personality, had a vivid, intense, actual relation with her husband; it might be vulgar, it might be hideous with cheap jealousies, commonplace with petty endearments, but it was alive.

How long, Romola wondered, had they been married? Certainly Mrs. Keith was no young girl—she was all of five or six years older than Romola herself. Was it her childlessness that had made her love for her husband so much more vehement than any that Hazelwood was accustomed to? But there were plenty of childless marriages in the suburb—the Grahams had no children, the Scotts had no children, half a dozen couples of whom she could think were childless; and yet there was with them no such keen, violent feeling apparent as she had felt this afternoon between the woman at one end of the wire and the man at the other.

When, she wondered, had the thrilling glory gone out of life for her and Richard? Had they ever really had it? She remembered their courtship—brief, tremulous, but not intense. She remembered the afternoon when he had finally proposed to her. It had been a windy autumn day, and a jagged sunset was burning in the west. She had been visiting in Boston, and his business had brought him opportunely to the same city; and it had not made such demands upon him as to prevent his being much with her.

That day their walk, after a symphony concert, had led them to the end of a street walled in from the Charles. The wind had whipped the water into whitecaps. The smoke from many chimneys was blown this way and that across the stormy red of the sky. There had been excitement, passion, in the air, and they had felt it.

When, with a little shiver, she had turned from the sunset panorama, and had said: "Let us go home," he had caught her hand and had held it close,



and had said brokenly: "Together, Romola, always together."

It had all been one, the keen autumnal air, the vivid sky, the waters played upon by the winds, her lover's handclasp, and his faltering words. What glamour, what thrill, what trembling rapture, what color life had seemed to possess at that moment! The air about her had been palpitant with glory, the blood in her ears had sung hosannas, her veins had beat with delicious excitement! That was what life and love meant, what they were to be to her, she had believed. And now—the thought of the well-ordered house, of the well-trained, well-cared-for children, the busy, excellent, perfunctory husband, came upon her like a heavy hand upon her eyes, shutting out beauty, upon her lips, shutting out air.

Whose was the fault, whose the deceit, that the promise of that glowing, vibrating, November afternoon had not been fulfilled? Had it been hers or Richard's? She could recall no time in their life together where she had failed him in wifely duty and affection, where he had failed her in any substantial good. Ah, that was it! Wifely duty and affection were such poor substitutes for ardor, for yearning, for all the delicious mystery and the soft excitement of love; substantial good was so dead a thing after emotion!

She was walking swiftly now, flushed with her exercise, intent, frowning a little in the absorption of her problem. She had forgotten for the moment the distasteful woman who had started her thoughts upon this path. And suddenly a figure blocked her steps. She looked up, startled, inquiring. The blue eyes of her old playfellow laughed down into hers.

"Oh!" gasped Romola.

"Oh!" mimicked Wade Robinson. "I haven't seen any one so lost to the outer world since I used to see you walking home alone from school, immersed in some mighty algebraic conundrum."

He turned and walked by her side. She laughed confusedly. She had a guilty sense that the cause of her pre-occupation must be apparent to him.

"What was it?" he asked, lazily smiling down on her. "The big boy's school report, or the little girl's pinafores, or your own entertainment for the bridge club?"

"None of those," she answered. "But how do you happen to know so much about the themes of ladies' pre-occupation?"

"Oh, quite often they let me know what they're thinking about. They like me. They let me play the tame cat by their firesides. You see," he added bitterly, his light pretense of self-complacency passing, "I've been a semi-invalid, and I don't count as a dangerous man."

She looked at him pitifully.

"But you're better now?"

"Yes—only confirmed in the habit of not being a dangerous man, I'm afraid."

"Why on earth should you want to be a 'dangerous man'?" demanded Romola.

"Perhaps if you could see yourself at this moment you would not need to be told," he answered again lightly. "It's normal for a man to desire to be loved, and feared, and desired, and dreaded—not merely to be pitied and given a warm corner by the fire because he's out of the running."

"If you want to spread havoc," she laughed, "perhaps you will find Hazelwood just ripe for you. There are lots of eligible girls and a painful dearth of eligible men; and a new doctor, a bachelor, will put zest into the dull situation."

"I have a foreboding that I shall not add to the gayety of the eligible maidens," he returned.

She flushed uncomfortably under the look he bent upon her.

"How soon are you to be really established here?" she asked formally.

"I go back to town to-morrow, and return for good next Monday."

"You must dine with us at once, and meet all the people—or as many of them as the dining room will hold. Richard"—she prevaricated—"was so interested to hear that you were settling among us."

They had reached the Heights, and



her home lay before her, substantial, a little pretentious, highly conventional, eminently respectable, eminently prosperous. She caught a glimpse of Rose's bright head on an upper porch; the child saw her, and screamed, and waved a greeting. Romola fluttered a handkerchief in reply.

"What a sunbeam!" commented Doctor Robinson. "After I'm settled here, I may come over some afternoon and make her acquaintance?"

"Surely. And I'll arrange the dinner for the first night when both you and Richard are free. Good-by."

She gave him her hand and hurried into the house. The encounter with him had diverted her thoughts for a few minutes, but as she entered the hall, charming, tasteful, in the same fashion of charm and tastefulness as the halls of half Hazelwood, the feeling of irritation, of restlessness, of question, fell upon her again. What had stifled emotion in her life? What had smothered romance to death? And what was there left for a woman—a good woman, a conscientious woman, a high-minded woman—when romance had perished from her days?

"I am only thirty-two!" protested Romola to fate, as she went upstairs to the nursery. And she decided to try to coerce romance a little.

"I am going to have Ralph eat his supper with the other children to-night," she told Nurse Dockerty. "Do you know where he is?"

Nurse Dockerty did not know, but she thought that he was in his room. Romola looked for him there, and found him curled up with a book on his window seat. She rubbed a caressing hand over his forehead, and pushed back his thick, pale-brown hair.

"Why did you come in so early, honey?" she asked him.

"I wanted to read," replied Ralph. He held up the volume to her. It was "Ivanhoe."

"It's a splendid story, dear," she said; "but you ought to be out playing until sundown. You're in school so many hours now that your father and I want you to spend as much time as possible

between school and dinner out of doors."

"I'd rather read," said the boy.

She did not press the question further then—she never nagged her children or her husband—but told him that he was to have supper in the nursery that evening. He acquiesced indifferently. The honor of dining with the grown-ups, to which he had been promoted at nine, did not particularly affect him.

"Are you going to have company?" he asked.

"No, not to-night."

"Is father going to be very late?"

"Not that I know of," replied Romola.

"Then why——" began the boy questioningly, but broke off to say: "Not that I care, you know, mother. I'd just as lief eat sometimes with the kids. Only I just wondered."

"It's just a—a little anniversary of father's and mother's," explained Romola.

That was not exactly accurate, but it was more comprehensible to the ten-year-old than if she should tell him she was going to try to bring back a little of the olden glamour into her life by making Richard Ventnor forget that he was an architect, a householder, and a father, and by making him remember that he had once been a lover. It was too precious a thing, that romance of youth, to be allowed to die, crushed to death by mere domesticity.

She ordered certain changes in the dressing of the dinner table—the everyday greenery of the fern dish was replaced by sweet peas, pink and lavender and white; the candle shades were changed from their customary yellow to a bridal sort of white and silver. Then Romola dressed herself with more than her usual care, selecting a gown that Richard had always liked—ashes-of-rose silk and cobwebby lace—instead of the year-before-last's black net that had been doing duty as a home dinner dress.

She met him at the front door, after the habit of their early married days. He bent to give her his customary



salutation. When he drew back he glanced at her a second time, and a slight frown appeared upon his forehead.

"I didn't know we had a dinner on for to-night," he observed.

"We haven't," explained Romola. "I'm gorgeous all for you."

"That's nice of you."

His tone was relieved and indifferent, glad of a festivity avoided, unstirred by her beauty or the flattery of her frock. She felt annoyed rather than hurt, but not even the annoyance was strong enough to ruffle her much. How differently would Mrs. Keith's emotions behave in such a situation, she reflected!

When the waitress announced dinner, Richard, who had been in the library arranging papers on his desk, came into the dining room and stared at the pretty table. But his only remark was:

"Where is Ralph to-night? Out for supper?"

"No. I let him have his supper with the other children in the nursery. I—I—I wanted you to myself this evening."

She blushed as she spoke, but the blush was one of shame; she was shocked to find how the gracious words were a hypocrisy! She did not particularly want Richard to herself that evening. She only wanted in some way to *make* herself want him, to make him want her, alone, in the sweetness of a solitude *à deux*.

"That was very sweet of you," commented Richard, after a slightly bewildered look at her. "But you have me so much to yourself after the boy has gone to bed——" He broke off, conscious that he was not being tactful, resentful of the necessity of being tactful with a wife of twelve years' standing.

"Do I?" Romola's voice was a trifle cold. "It's usually the evening paper and the work you bring out from the office, isn't it, that you give your evening to?"

Then she caught herself up shortly. This was a bad beginning. She always avoided criticisms, recriminations. Why on earth should she begin them to-night of all nights—when she meant to win

back a little of the luster of youth to gild the drab of approaching middle age?

"I've never thought of myself as a very neglectful husband," replied Richard, a little aggrieved. "If I have worked at night, it was because I had to, because this house had to be cleared, not because I wanted to neglect you. No, I don't think you can fairly call me a neglectful husband."

He had no slightest taste in the world for a roisterer's life, but he still counted it a virtue in himself that he did not subject Romola to the uncertainties of a roisterer's wife.

"Of course you aren't a neglectful husband," agreed Romola, firmly repressing a desire to tell him of his shortcomings.

"Well, then?" said Richard.

There was a few minutes' silence. Romola was fighting her desire to say something bitter. Richard, having no such battle on his hands, spoke first:

"Did Ralph stay out this afternoon?"

"No; he was at home reading 'Ivanhoe' when I came in."

"We've simply got to keep him out of doors more. He's growing so, and he hasn't enough color. He doesn't seem to care for sports at all." The father looked worried.

"He's like me at that age." Romola gave up the struggle for romance. One could not upset the domination of the merely domestic just by keeping children away from the dinner table.

"I'm thinking seriously of sending him to a boy's camp for the summer—one of those places where they are made to row and swim and play ball," pursued Richard. "A place where they have to do it as they have to learn book lessons in school."

"I should be worried all the time," cried Romola.

"Nonsense!" Her husband answered vigorously. "Not half so much danger as at home here, where he has no one to direct his activities."

"I'm sure——" began Romola, flushing, but Richard interrupted: "I'm not saying that you neglect him in the least, Romola," he assured her. "I am only



saying that the home is not giving him what he needs at this particular period of his life. I'll look into the camp question to-morrow." He continued to meditate with a slightly anxious look.

Romola fell silent. Silence had always been her refuge against unlovely speech, and she knew that any words that might pass her lips now would be unlovely ones—tart or whimpering. She applied herself to her salad, as if it were the one really important thing in the world to her. The lump in her throat almost prevented her swallowing it, but she realized that what she felt was chagrin rather than sorrow; she was not possessed by grief that her husband no longer loved her, but by annoyance that her plans had miscarried. In other words, she told herself, with a mixture of resignation and of horror, she also no longer loved. Ah, well, she supposed that this was what life was!

Richard, obtuse to all the currents in the air, broke the silence by and by with dull, petty gossip of his office. Romola conscientiously enlarged her monosyllables to sentences, and what passed for conversation in half the houses in Hazelwood went on. After coffee, Richard withdrew again to his study. He had a small private commission. One of his neighbors wanted a new wing built—a matter too trifling for the firm to handle, but not for Richard in his spare time.

"You're going to work this evening?" Romola asked, in the resigned tone of one expecting an affirmative answer, as he turned toward his study.

"Yes; there isn't anything on to-night, is there?"

She shook her head, and there was a tinge of bitterness in her gray eyes, and on her faintly smiling lips. This, then, was the end of romance—that married lovers should see each other only when there was "something on"!

Richard, though not quick in catching subtleties, was uncomfortably aware of the meaning of his wife's glance. He justified himself.

"Reading's addition may mean a motor car for you," he told her.

"I haven't been clamoring for a motor car, have I?" asked Romola gently.

"No, you're not like some women, thank Heaven!"

But the compliment left her quite unmoved. She wandered into the living room, and seated herself in the mellow lamplight with a book in her hands. But she did not read it—only gazed across the room and out into the darkness unseeing. When the telephone in the hall rang, she sprang to answer it. It was the Grahams asking Romola and Richard to come up and make a second table of bridge.

"Richard's busy, but I'll see if he can come," said Romola dutifully.

She went to his study door and spoke to him.

"Yes, I'll come," he answered. "That is, if they're not going to play for high stakes. I won't go higher than half a cent a point."

"All right. I'll tell them," said Romola, moving back toward the telephone.

To her own mind even that half-cent concession to the Grahams' insistence upon stakes was a truce with evil. But she and Richard had been over that ground before. She repeated his message to the Grahams, and came back.

"They say to come anyway," she announced.

She drew a cape from the coat closet in the turn under the stairs. She was glad to get away from her charming house, glad to leave that for which she and Richard had labored long and had sacrificed so much of irresponsible happiness. It seemed to her to-night as if it were the handsome monument they had erected over the grave of young ardor. And as they walked along the path toward the Grahams, something within her kept repeating that she was only thirty-two.

### CHAPTER III.

Every one uttered a little exclamation of admiration as the dinner guests filed into the Keiths' dining room one evening late in June. The table was very large—the newcomers were entertain-





ing almost all of that section of Hazelwood which was given to social amenities—and in its center there was a miniature Japanese garden—lake, bridges, rockeries, and all.

Mrs. Keith, who had a mind above the petty accuracy of schools and periods, had had this centerpiece arranged upon a wonderful tablecloth inset lavishly with Renaissance lace; it caused the eyes of her feminine guests to expand with adoring envy. They had never before seen such a piece except in museum collections.

Everything was on the same scale of magnificence, hitherto unapproached in the suburban festivities. The array of glasses at each place was beautiful—color, here glimmering, here vivid, shape, delicate quality—all unapproached in the Hazelwood experience. The room was lighted with hundreds of wax candles, or so it seemed, stuck in

*Her dark eyes were shining, her white teeth flashing, her loud laughter ringing, from the arrival of the first guest.*

wonderful sconces against the side wall, or in beautiful candlesticks placed here and there. And every place, except the dining table, bore as many velvety red roses as it could carry. The room was full of their warm, sweet scent, as intoxicating as wine.

Deborah Keith's frock, which had caused a first, though immediately repressed, gasp from her women guests,



was of the same color as the velvety rose petals, almost of the same texture, one would have said. It was almost molded to her supple figure; it revealed every curve of her body, even where it affected to clothe her; and Hazelwood had never seen, in its own set, a gown that frankly left bare so much of the wearer's person. Across her shoulders slender bands of crystal held up the low-cut bodice. Her arms were bare their whole white, dimpled length. Her throat and bosom were more exposed than even the most experienced in décolletage had ever seen a respectable woman's before.

It was curious to see the effect of the gown; Evangeline Dimock drew a scarf across her handsome shoulders; Maude Scott fumbled at her laces to lower them. But Deborah Keith seemed unaware of the sensation her appearance created. Her dark eyes were shining, her white teeth flashing, her loud laughter ringing, from the arrival of the first guest.

In spite of Romola's resolution not to know Mrs. Keith, circumstances and her husband's will had been too strong for her. All Hazelwood knew the Keiths. All Hazelwood was already responding to their influence—was becoming livelier, showier. It was impossible to avoid them—they were everywhere. They pervaded the country club with noisy parties from town. They drove the swiftest cars over the highways. They were always inviting half the suburb off on motor trips, on theater trips—on any sort of trip that broke the monotony of day-by-day existence as Hazelwood had always known it. And—this to Romola was most important—they had given Richard's firm the commission for the new house, which was, regardless of the increased cost of building, to surpass the one at Rumsey Hills.

Richard was much elated. It had been a sort of revelation to Romola—his eagerness to secure the job, his pride in his success. She saw that for a man, at any rate for such a man as her husband, there was no need of a quick, living love to supply color to his days.

His ambitions, his interests in his business, were exciting, were thrilling enough. Having these, doubtless he preferred that his personal life should be dull, a sedative to the intensity of the other.

She had resented silently, perhaps almost unconsciously, his eagerness about that new house. It had not increased her satisfaction, made her more tolerant, even when the debated automobile was the result of the commission. One automobile had come to seem a small, rather a mean thing, in Hazelwood—did not the Keiths keep three?

To-night she was rather surprised to find that she was to have the seat of honor at her host's right. She knew well enough, with the unfailing intuition of women, that Deborah Keith did not like her. She knew that the antipathy that she felt for Deborah could be no one-sided affair. Therefore her surprise to find herself going out to the dining room with Bertram Keith—a man who had baffled her, since her first moment of meeting him, by her complete inability to classify him.

Physically, he was as colorless as his wife was brilliant—a tall, lean, large-boned man, with drabish-brown hair and a tough, smooth skin that seemed of one color with it where it melted into it at the forehead. His eyebrows and eyelashes, though heavy enough, were of the same drab line. So was the rough mustache at which he kept constantly pulling.

His eyes, Romola had decided in her furtive scrutiny of them, were the violet color of which one reads more often than one sees it. Sometimes they seemed gray and piercing, sometimes clouded and melancholy. There was a rather kindly light in them for her, she had noticed early in their intercourse—almost the sort of idle, friendly look that a kindly disposed father gives to children not his own.

His voice and manner were generally as quiet as his wife's were noisy, but once or twice there had flashed from him the intimation that he could be roused into a rather ugly temper.

Far down one side of the big table



sat the great Mayhew. Mrs. Mayhew was not among the guests. The omission seemed to Romola's critical mind to establish the Keiths' social standing on the lower of the two planes to which she had assigned Mayhew's acquaintances in her thoughts. She had met him on his more casual appearances at the Keiths', where his wife's absence meant nothing. But even as she congratulated herself upon her shrewdness, a chance word across the table showed that Mrs. Mayhew was abroad. There was no deducing anything derogatory to to-night's hostess, then, from her absence from the table.

Well, Romola reflected, it must be a pleasure to Mrs. Mayhew to be abroad when Mayhew was in America! She had never seen a man to whom she had taken a more instantaneous dislike. She disliked everything about him—his great size—he was over six feet tall, broad-framed, and almost grossly fat—his thick, wiry, black hair upstanding from his forehead, his bold, roving, fairly insulting, black eyes which challenged every woman's, the roll of his full red lips unconcealed even by his heavy black beard. A huge animal, he seemed to her, lusty and powerful, and repulsive with a quality that no animals possess—suggestiveness, lewdness.

By what freak had ability, genius even, been given to such a satyr? For not even Romola's disgust toward him could blind her to the fact that his work was good—more than good—exquisite, uplifting. His were the only buildings in America that she had ever thought deserving of the old definition of architecture—"frozen music."

He had been a horrible disappointment to her when she had first met him some weeks before. It had been part of her new and growing grievance against Richard that he had declined to see Mayhew with her eyes, and had intimated that she was foolish, overstrained, womanish, in short, to read so much grossness into the man's personality.

She had been studying him across the table while her host was busy with the woman on his left. Suddenly Mayhew

turned his full eyes directly upon her. His unpleasant smile lit up his face. He inclined his head toward her, raising the long-stemmed glass that the butler had just filled.

"A glass of wine with you, madam," he said, and the ancient phrase of courtesy and compliment fell from his lips with an effect of mockery.

Yet his full glance was one of admiration. Half a dozen pairs of eyes followed the direction of his, and Romola felt herself unpleasantly conspicuous. To have refused his challenge, which was what she longed to do, would only have made her more so; accordingly, she touched her lips to her glass, and inclined her head with a faint, chilly, little smile.

Unconsciously, as she set the glass down, her eyes sought Richard's. He was looking at her with a half frown. A little farther along the table sat Wade Robinson, and from his blue eyes there flashed a message of understanding and of sympathy. Gratefully she thought how keen his intuitions were, forgetting for a moment that in the freedom of intercourse that had grown up between her and her old schoolmate since his coming to Hazelwood, she had expressed herself fully enough on most topics to render the use of his intuition superfluous.

Doctor Robinson had taken Evangeline Dimock out to dinner, and as Romola's gaze included them both, she was struck with something new in her friend's expression. Evangeline had always been handsome in a stalwart, healthy style, but her face, for all its vigor of coloring and clearness of modeling, had lacked animation—softness—elusiveness—charm. To-night something had happened to give her at least some of these qualities. Romola seemed to see her freshly as one sometimes sees a familiar landscape, heightened and softened by some nebulous play of sunshine and shadow.

"Why, how lovely Evangeline is to-night!" her first thought was, and close upon it followed another, more startled: "Why, she's falling in love with Wade!"



Fascinated by her discovery, she continued to watch them for a few seconds. Evangeline's eyes, always bright, were dewy; there was something appealing, wistful, about her quick smile. Almost pathetic was her look of young expectancy. Romola eagerly transferred her regard to Wade; he was laughing and talking with his usual animation, his usual air of attentive interest, but—and her heart gave a throb of relief at her reading of his manner—there was no answering glow to that upon Evangeline's face.

A dinner table, bright with lights, buzzing with conversation, noisy, hilarious, was no place for searching of soul, for rigorous self-examination. Yet Romola was astounded, frightened, by that throb of her heart. She could scarcely bring her attention back from her own amazed perception of her own emotional confusion to listen to what her host was saying. She did not know how long he had been addressing her. She turned toward him with an apologetic flush.

"I beg your pardon," she cried. "I'm afraid I didn't hear what you were saying. My wits always go woolgathering in a crowd—it's so absorbing to watch people, and to speculate about them, don't you think?"

"Greatest fun in the world," he answered her reassuringly. "We used to have a game when I was a young chap, first married—a game of guessing what people were as they came aboard a train or steamer, game of guessing what their errands were." He stopped abruptly, and a curious flush traveled up the pale, drabish brownness of his skin. Then he added abruptly: "But what was your game? About whom were you speculating? Of course, we play with marked cards here—we've got a line on all these people."

"Do you think we ever really have a line on people, as you put it?" asked Romola, to divert his thoughts; of course, she was not going to be guilty of the disloyalty of gossip about her friend, however disguised under the mask of psychological speculation. "I sometimes think we never know any

one—husbands their wives, mothers their children. And what do we really know, then, of the people we call our friends?"

Again she seemed to have uncovered a conversational pitfall, for the dull color traveled once more up Bertram Keith's face. In the glance he bent upon her, steely blue, sharp, hostile, there was intimation of the force and the ability which, the men said, were making him, although a newcomer in the country, a success, a force, in it.

"Very true," he answered in a curious, measured voice. "After all, what do we know of one another? You say Doctor Robinson is a childhood acquaintance of yours, an old schoolmate, perhaps your first lover. But what do you know about him in all the years since pinafores and lollipops? And as for Deborah and me—how do you know we aren't a pair of escaped murderers living on the proceeds of our assassinations?"

For all the extravagant lightness of his words, his eyes were gimlets boring into her thoughts. But she laughed. The grotesque unreality of his jest somehow cleared the air.

"You ought to be a writer of the kind of fiction I'm always confiscating from my young son. It's a pity for such an imagination to be wasted, such a gift for the horrific. I hope it was not with such ghastly speculations that you and Mrs. Keith used to entertain yourselves aboard those steamers and trains?"

She looked up at him, bright-eyed and smiling. The flush had ebbed from his face and left him rather paler than his wont.

"No, in those days we were young idealists, Mrs. Keith and I," he answered quietly. "But tell me about your boy. I think I've seen him riding his bicycle down into the village. He looks like you, does he not?"

"I like to think so," replied Romola, with a tender smile. "He's a dear boy, though not as robustious in his tastes as Richard wishes him to be. So I'm dreadfully afraid that he's to be taken from me for two months this summer, and sent to a boys' camp, where his



father thinks he will learn all manner of hardy things."

"What's his name?" asked her host. "Ralph."

"Ralph? That's the name——" He paused abruptly. "That's the name of a favorite nephew of mine," he ended the sentence with a sort of definiteness, not with the lingering, upward intonation of the man who wants to talk about his favorite nephew.

And then the man on the other side of her demanded Romola's opinion of the newest book, which she hadn't read. Discovering her deplorable ignorance, this young gentleman—he was an importation from town—seemed stranded for further conversation with her, and returned to discourse with his right-hand neighbor, who was more adequately supplied with small talk than was Romola. And Romola's gaze again stole down the table toward Evangeline and Wade Robinson.

Something of the glow had departed from her friend's face. She sat staring about her, twisting the stem of a wineglass, while Wade, across the woman on his other side, talked with old Doctor Cartwright. Catching Romola's eyes, Evangeline made a little grimace, and gave a little shrug expressive of boredom, and Romola shook a reproving head in her direction.

When the women had withdrawn from the dining room, and were scattered through the long, old-fashioned parlors and the piazza opening from them, Evangeline sought Romola.

"Come into the garden, Maud," she quoted jocosely. "You don't want any more coffee—do you?—and you never do take liqueurs. And I want to talk to you. Can't we find a corner on the piazza?"

"I suppose so," Romola answered, following her friend out through the long French window.

But when they reached their secluded corner, and Romola was ensconced in a big, cushioned chair, while Evangeline, seated on the rail above her, leaned against a pillar, the girl did not seem so eager for talk. She sat, her clear-cut features outlined in profile against a big

lilac bush growing close to the porch, her eyes fixed on the stars.

"Well," said Romola suggestively by and by, "have you forgotten what you were going to say, or have you changed your mind about saying it, or what?"

Evangeline threw away the cigarette from which she was blowing faint rings into the starlit darkness.

"Oh, I didn't have anything in particular to say. I only wanted to get away from that gabbling crowd. Have you ever heard any one make as much noise as our hostess? And did you ever, ever in your life, see such clothes?"

"You aren't going to sit on the lady's porch and discuss her, I hope?"

"You're so refined!" scoffed Evangeline. "But not at all modern! She wouldn't care. She expects you to do it—just as she would."

There was a moment's silence, as Romola lazily declined to enter upon an argument. Then Evangeline spoke again, still looking starward: "That new man seems rather a good sort—your Doctor Robinson."

Romola could not explain to herself just what sort of somersault her emotions performed. The chief feeling of which she was conscious was one of chill toward Evangeline. She felt herself shutting the doors upon her friend, as it were. There was something that seemed to her own ears almost hard in her smooth voice as she replied:

"He seems very pleasant. I think you've seen rather more of him than I since he came to Hazelwood. He was a nice enough boy when we were children."

"Not very happy, I should say?" hazarded Evangeline, in a carefully remote, indifferent voice.

"I suppose his illness was a blow to his ambition," replied Romola.

"Do you think he's entirely cured?" Evangeline's voice rang anxious, in spite of herself.

"I suppose there's always the liability of a return with that disease," answered Romola, very impersonally. "But, of course, as a physician himself,





*She seemed some brilliant spirit of lawlessness, daring every one who saw her to "let go" as she had done, to snatch at the vivid, pulsating joy of the moment.*

he must have calculated all the chances."

"But he might be the sort of man with a streak of recklessness in him," speculated Evangeline, "who would rather risk a good deal to do what he wanted to do than be safe doing the thing that he hated. And I gather he did hate it out there in Arizona."

Romola fought down a feeling of unmistakable annoyance at Evangeline's intimate interest, intimate knowledge,

of Wade Robinson's temperamental possibilities, but before she could disassociate her thoughts from criticism, and make a commonplace rejoinder, there was an influx of masculine voices and laughter into the room behind them, and in a moment the subject of their conversation had joined them.

Romola was debating the desirability of leaving, of giving Evangeline the chance that the older woman thought she too obviously desired, when Harry



Graham came to the window and called his sister-in-law.

"They're going to play bridge in the library," he announced, "and Doctor Cartwright is clamoring for you, Eve."

Evangeline went more or less reluctantly, and Wade dropped into a chair beside Romola. Her long white gloves lay in her lap. He leaned over and idly, apparently unconsciously, took one up and smoothed it out.

"Nice girl, your horsy friend," he said, indicating the departing Evangeline. "I like her. She isn't over happy, is she?"

"I don't see why not," said Romola, curbing a desire to be acid. "She's young, handsome, healthy; she doesn't have to worry about money, and——"

She tried to think of other blessings in Evangeline's lot. But Wade interrupted:

"You don't mean to tell me that you think those things mean happiness? Most of them are equally true of any heifer in a dairy herd."

"Well," laughed Romola, "I've never thought of the dairy heifer as suffering from a vague melancholy."

She liked to banter with him. She felt a sudden sense of lightness, of gaiety, of spring, of returning youth.

"Well," admitted Doctor Robinson, "you may be right about the heifer; she may not serve as the type of female longing and unhappiness. But I firmly decline to accept her as the type of the satisfied, full life."

"What would you take as the type, then?"

Romola leaned back and watched him with lazy pleasure as she asked the question. The light from the room behind was not bright enough to bring out the lines of illness and disappointment in his face, but it revealed attractively enough the better points of his physiognomy—the fine modeling, the alert poise of the head, the quick smile.

Wade drew his fingers along the length of white kid which he still held before he answered. He looked at her dubitatively.

"Why not yourself?"

"I?"

Romola was suddenly, unreasonably angry at his reply. What—had she been discovering all the losses and lacks in her life, had she been learning for the past month the emptiness, the dullness, of her existence, to hear now that it presented a picture of ideal womanly satisfaction? And this from the lips of the one man of her acquaintance who, she had believed, understood and sympathized with the colorlessness of her days! She was no adept in satire, but she essayed it now.

"Oh, of course," she exclaimed; "I'm happy! I'm completely satisfied. Haven't I just received an automobile? What more does any proper Hazelwood wife desire—unless, perhaps, another one?"

"Ah!" Doctor Robinson's exclamation was long and low. He leaned toward her with a look of eagerness. "Do you remember," he asked, "what Carlyle has said on the subject of the full, satisfied life? It is to the effect that not all the pastry cooks in Europe can satisfy the soul of a single bootblack. I have often thought about it—that there is not enough in all the dearly desired material things in the world to complete the happiness of the meanest of us.

"I've thought of it to comfort myself when all the material goods were denied me—health and money, success, fame—and what they might have purchased—love! When I was down and out, knocked out of the running! And now, in other words, you are telling me the same thing—that there is something in a woman's heart that homes and husbands, automobiles and lovely frocks, even children, do not utterly satisfy. Not youth and strength, not love, not power to arouse love, are enough. Or is it only in women like you that not all these good gifts can smother the divine spark of discontent?"

Romola heard him a little dazed. It was on her lips to tell him that her life was not the rich, completed one he had been pleased to picture, and that its lack was love, was romance, was the gilding on the gingerbread. But greatly as he had broken down the barriers of



her reserve, she was still a reticent woman. She could not talk of her emotions. So that there was an effect of rebuke, of rebuff, in her answer:

"I don't know. I'm not very introspective."

"You mean," said Doctor Robinson, swift to perceive, a little piqued at his perception, "that you don't choose to let me share the result of your introspection. Quite right, my dear Mrs. Ventnor. Quite right. Let us keep the poor beggar in his place, even though we did know him when we were children, and even though we know he is the most harmless poor devil that crawls, for all his presumption in daring to think about what goes on in our mind."

"You know it isn't that!" cried Romola, wretched at the imputation of severity. With another man, the charge would not have concerned her at all, but to seem harsh to her old playmate, a sick man at that, why, it was like being harsh with Ralph when he came to her with childish fancies and speculations.

"Why are you afraid to let me see inside your mind, Romola?" Wade leaned toward her and asked the question with a measured deliberation.

She had a moment of panic, of breathlessness. There stole upon her a sort of languorous half fright that was not wholly unpleasant, and that seemed to be curiously related to the touch of his thin hand upon her glove. Her voice sounded far away, almost dreamy, to her own ears, as she replied: "But I'm not afraid."

There was a loud blare of music behind them. Some one seated at the piano in the long room had struck a peremptory chord, commanding attention. Romola started to her feet, and moved quickly toward the window, though Wade's outstretched hand caught at her floating draperies, and though his voice, tremulous as her own had been, whispered:

"Don't go, don't go, Romola."

The few steps between the corner in which she had been seated and the window were like a thousand miles to her, so completely did the yielding, in-

explicable mood that had frightened her pass. That moment of intimacy, of revelation, of danger, had scarcely more reality to her, standing by the window, than the vague dream that precedes waking has when the eyes are fully opened, and actuality—life—have called us out of slumber.

"Oh, come!" she cried, looking back toward him after a glance into the room had shown her what was happening. "Come, Mrs. Keith is going to dance."

Wade rose listlessly, and sauntered to the window.

"What do I care for Mrs. Keith's dancing?" he asked half sulkily. But when he looked into the room he exclaimed, in involuntary tribute: "By Jove!"

Deborah Keith had changed her dinner costume for that of a Spanish danseuse. It was wonderful how it became her with her dark eyes and hair. She had stained her red lips to even a more vivid carmine, and had exaggerated and emphasized all her natural coloring. Her guests, men and women alike, were applauding the picture she made as she stood poised, waiting to begin. Even the besotted bridge players in the library left their game to stand at the parlor door, and laugh and clap their hands at the unaccustomed sight.

Romola caught a glimpse of Bertram Keith's face across the room; it was flushed and smiling, and his eyes, darkened by excitement and admiration, were bent devouringly upon his wife. Behind him, his cards still in his hand, stood Harry Graham, his broad face also alight. Even Richard was applauding.

The dance strains sounded, and Deborah Keith began her performance. It was unbelievably good, as far as its technique went. The room buzzed with murmurs, in which the names of all the famous dancers of the world were compared with her, and not to her reproach. Grace, fire, abandon—all these she had.

Romola, watching, felt her breath coming short. The exhibition was affecting her as no dance she had ever before witnessed had done. Her own blood seemed to keep time to the meas-



ures to which Deborah Keith's feet responded so lightly, so wildly. Up and down the long room, cleared in the center, she whirled and swayed. She seemed some brilliant spirit of lawlessness, daring every one who saw her to "let go" as she had done, to give rein to impulse, to snatch at the vivid, pulsating joy of the moment. Finally, when with a last exquisite gesture of abandonment she threw herself upon a low couch piled with many-colored cushions, the whole audience gave a little gasp.

Harry Graham, quite white with excitement despite his outdoor red and tan, hurried to her with a scarf to wrap her shoulders; Mayhew, with his suggestive smile upon his thick lips, brought her a glass of wine. Her husband came and leaned over the back of the couch on which she had flung herself, and his hand rested against her shoulder.

Florence Graham, placid and plump—daily plumper since the advent of the second Graham automobile—spied Romola in the long French window. She advanced to speak to her.

"Wouldn't the Fergusons have had a fit?" she gurgled.

The Fergusons, whose country estate had once comprised half the present suburb, had built the rambling house fifty years before; they were famous, according to the Hazelwood standards—he for a treatise on the Greek iota subscript, and she for having organized the first antinicotine society in New Jersey. Romola thought it extremely likely that they would "have had a fit," could they have witnessed the desecration of their home.

Florence went on cheerfully: "She really dances as well as a professional, doesn't she? See all the men flocking about her—even Richard and Harry—old, married fogies like them! Oh"—she caught sight of Wade Robinson standing at Romola's shoulder in the semidarkness of the piazza—"oh, there's one who isn't! I didn't see you before, Doctor Robinson. Don't you want to go in and join the court?"

There was nothing unamiable in

Florence's babbling manner, however her words might read.

"Not while you and Mrs. Ventnor are here," Doctor Robinson answered, with trite gallantry.

"I have sometimes thought of taking up fancy dancing myself," Florence prattled on. "Might be a good reducer. I tell you, Doctor Robinson, if you really want to be a boon to Hazelwood, and to make mints of money——"

"If!" Doctor Robinson interrupted, laughing.

"Well, then, all you have to do is to discover a way in which women over thirty can keep their waistline without too much dieting," said Florence, quite seriously.

"I can do that," answered the doctor, "but it won't make me a boon to Hazelwood, for no one will follow my prescription; and it won't fill my empty pocketbook, for it will make me very unpopular."

"You're joking," answered Florence. "What is the prescription?"

"Sell your automobiles, dismiss your chambermaids, walk to—what is the name of the market man?—to Weibroner's every day instead of telephoning, play golf instead of bridge, and cut out a course from every meal. How do you like the prescription, Mrs. Graham?" he finished, laughing as he caught full sight of Florence's crest-fallen face.

"I don't like it at all," she replied decidedly. "Don't you think, Romola, that it's a reflection on the physicians' ability when they try to make you do all the work of curing yourself?"

"It does seem a little unfair," agreed Romola, smiling, as she entered the room.

"It's the only cure that amounts to anything," Wade assured them, following her. "And I won't charge a cent for that prescription."

The group about Mrs. Keith was breaking up, the inveterate card players to return to their game, some of the other men to make way for women, who crowded round to demand of Deborah where she had learned the art of dancing, whether she had always prac-



ticed it, whether she believed it might be acquired after maturity, what she thought of it as an exercise, and a dozen other questions all tending toward the same end.

No one was surprised when, two days later, Mrs. Ledyard, the prime mover in most of Hazelwood's feminine enterprises, made a round of visitations, and organized a fancy-dancing class. She pointed out, quite truthfully, that Hazelwood was behind some other enterprising suburbs in this respect, and that it was really a matter of communal pride that it should take its place in the list of fancy-dancing communities.

And half the feminine hearts among the socially elect thrilled to a secret hope that some night they might astonish and delight their friends as Deborah Keith had done at her dinner party.

Romola did not join the class. Something had happened before the close of the memorable evening that made her wish to put it forever out of her thoughts. With a sort of dull, unjust anger she had held her hostess responsible for the experience that had concluded the night's festivity for her.

After the dancing she had tried to induce Richard to go home. He was not playing cards, for the stakes were higher than he ever permitted himself to play for. Richard was capable of a certain dogged persistency that he himself was a little inclined to call virtue. But although he was not playing cards, he insisted upon waiting until the card players were through. He and Keith were to have a half hour's conference in regard to the new house. It was their only opportunity, he explained to Romola, for he was going West for a week or so, and he must have certain instructions to leave with his draftsmen.

Romola had accepted the situation rather ungraciously. She wanted to get away—away, though she did not say it even to herself, from Wade Robinson, away from the sensuously stimulating atmosphere of the room, from the all-pervasive, dominating, unruly influence of Deborah Keith, who, still in her

dancing costume, moved everywhere among her guests.

Florence Graham and Evangeline had gone, Florence frankly yawning in her liege lord's face, and saying: "We'll send the car back for you, but there's no sense in our staying if you've settled for an all-night at bridge."

Romola had watched Wade Robinson take the two women to their automobile—she herself had come as far as the piazza to bid her friends good night and to make some neighborly engagement for the next day. She saw him tuck the wraps about them; there was something tender, deferential, in everything that he did for women, she told herself. His attentions were not the perfunctory sort with which marriage had made her acquainted. She stood waiting until he came back to the porch.

"Sit down again for a while out here," he suggested. "It's better than the house. The moon will be up in about five minutes—see that paleness over in the horizon? That's where she's climbing."

Romola looked obediently to the eastern sky which, along the distant hills that bounded Hazelwood's view, showed a silvery promise of light to come. She breathed the sweet night odors of the old Ferguson garden, and marked the delicate, ghostlike beauty of some pendulous, late locust blossoms on the trees along the road.

"I'll get you a scarf or shawl or something," said Wade, as she dropped into a chair.

She smiled her thanks, but said nothing, and he went through the door into the murmurous, lighted room beyond.

The night, calm and beautiful, the slowly rising moon which, silver-tipped, pushed itself above the brow of the hill, a sleepy twitter from a nest in the garden—all soothed her into a forgetfulness of her annoyance against Richard, into a forgetfulness of the overstimulated life in the house behind her.

She did not even wonder why Doctor Robinson took so long a time to find her a wrap. Afterward she told herself that she must have closed her eyes, that



she might even have "lost herself" for a second. Certainly she heard no one come up behind her. But she was suddenly galvanized into consciousness of her surroundings, into startled action. For she felt, upon her bare arm, the pressure of bearded lips.

She sprang to her feet, to be confronted by Mayhew, smiling, offensive, at ease. She opened her lips, but succeeded only in stuttering: "Mr.—Mr. Mayhew! You—you——"

"Sit down again, my dear Mrs. Ventnor," said Mayhew, suave and insolent. "You made too charming a picture. I shall not forgive myself if my yielding to a quite irresistible impulse should cause you to destroy it. Shall I apologize? I always yield to temptation."

There was about his manner such utter effrontery, such calm assumption that any resentment of his outrage would be merely a pretense, that Romola, though furious, was quite speechless before him. Her Hazelwood training had given her no schooling in this sort of thing. Occasionally a man who had drunk more than was good for him had confided to her his admiration of her character, or had attempted to tell her why he was not entirely happy at home, but Mayhew, whatever else he was, was not intoxicated. He had not even that excuse for his insolence.

She fumbled for the handle of the screen door, and the great architect put out his hand as if to seize hers upon the knob, and to prevent her leaving. But at that instant Doctor Robinson, scarf in hand, appeared upon the other side of the screen.

"Oh, Wade! Let me in. Find Richard for me. I want to go home. I must go home."

Doctor Robinson, holding the door open for her to pass, looked out at the other man standing in the semiobscurity. His eyes flashed an accusation, his face set in stern lines. He was about to close the door after Romola, and to remain outside, when she turned.

"Will you come with me? I'm not well. I had a—queer turn, a sort of—I don't know what."

Wade did not believe her, and the

look he turned upon Mr. Mayhew told that astute gentleman the fact. But there was nothing to do save to follow where the lady commanded.

It seemed to her that she could not endure another instant in the house. She was angry with herself for having come. Her original instinct had been right. Mrs. Keith was more than disquieting, more than upsetting. Her influence was disintegrating—depraving! A hostess might be measured, Romola told herself, by the way in which her guests behaved. In what other house would even a satyr like that man have dared to kiss her?

She felt scorched by the flame of her indignation. Yet she was a mature woman; she could not make a scene; she must find Richard, leave this house, and explain to him her reason for refusing to enter it again. Let the Keiths get another architect, if they were offended! Let them get Mayhew! Let them do anything, except expect her to have further intercourse with them!

Richard and Doctor Cartwright, engrossed neither in cards in the library nor in ladies' society in the parlor, were standing together in the big, old-fashioned hall that bisected the house. Romola and Doctor Robinson approached them. Romola's white face, the burning of her bright eyes, the swiftness of her light step, all told of some experience momentous or unpleasant. Richard frowned a little as she came near. He feared that she was again about to urge him to leave. He stepped forward to meet her in response to the summons in her glance.

"I must go now, Richard," she said, her voice low and vibrant. "I—something has happened—I am feeling unwell. You must take me away from here."

"But I've already told you, dear," began Richard complainingly, "that I've got to have a few words with Keith. He's playing the rubber now. It's not so late—only a little after one."

"Can't I run Mrs. Ventnor home if she is too tired to stay?" Wade broke in. He looked kindly at her white, tense face. "She looks played out."





*His eyes flashed an accusation, his face set in stern lines.*

Richard brightened. "I should be grateful to you—and so would she. It's no taste for late hours that keeps me here; but I'm off for Cleveland in the morning, and I must arrange a few things with Keith before I leave. Run along, Romola—I'll follow as soon as I can. We need a chauffeur—that's evident."

"Very well," answered Romola, after a moment's rebellious silence. "Thank you, Wade. It's good of you."

She had recovered command of herself, and while Wade set the machinery of the car in motion, she made her brief

adieux to Deborah Keith, at whose side Mayhew, undisturbed, smiling, was standing.

"You must forgive me, Mrs. Ventnor," he said boldly. Then he turned to his hostess. "Make my peace with Mrs. Ventnor, Mrs. Keith," he begged. "I'm in disgrace. I've showed my admiration too—crudely."

Deborah flashed an inquisitive, rather pleased, glance from his half-amused face to Romola's cold one. Then she laughed and shrugged her shoulders.

"You should have known better, Mayhew," she said—Romola hated the way she addressed her intimates without title. "Mrs. Ventnor is our saint—our madonna! You should have recognized the type. But you, dear Mrs. Ventnor, will have to forgive him, whatever he has done. Nobody minds Mayhew! His gallantries mean nothing personal—he simply can't resist any woman."

"All ready," called Wade, and Romola escaped, while the two whom she left smiled at each other.

The risen moon—the sweet, cool,



dewy countryside—their benediction fell upon her as she sank back in the car. She closed her hot eyes; the night calm was like dew upon them. The machine glided softly, swiftly along. Wade asked her no questions, harassed her with no comments. But the sense of his understanding wrapped her about. By and by he brought the car to a standstill. She opened her eyes; they were at her own doorstep.

"Thank you," she said, as he helped her out. He held her hand, and looked down upon her with tender, ardent eyes. She trembled, and withdrew her hand, moving away from him.

"I must go in," she breathed hurriedly, nervously. "It was good of you to bring me home." The pressure of his fingers removed, her courage returned to her. The feeling of haste for the shelter of her home departed. She stood a moment, watching the tranquil night. "It is beautiful, is it not?" she said. "Night—and moonlight—and summer. Do you remember all that you thought they meant, when you were young?"

"They mean all that they ever meant," he answered. "They mean more. They mean love."

Harry Graham's car, en route for its owner, shot glaringly by. Under cover of its noise, Romola uttered a hasty good night, and ran into the house. Her heart was beating unevenly. She hurried to Ralph's room. The sight of his delicate, sleeping face stilled her agitation. She smoothed his soft, pale-brown hair, and kissed him; she was calmed, strengthened. The evening at the Keith's, over-colored, over-noisy, ending in destined ugliness; the mystic, disturbing, poignantly sweet night and the disquieting looks and words of her old playfellow—all fell to their due unimportance in the world.

It was only when Richard came home, a trifle "fussy" about his preparations for his trip, a trifle important about his new commission, that the rasping of her nerves reasserted itself. Briefly she told him of the incident with Mayhew. He was annoyed, but she quickly saw that his annoyance was

really with her, not with the man. Was she sure? Oh, Mayhew had been drinking too much—a beastly thing to do, of course; but still it wasn't inexplicable! And if she was entranced—half dozing, he supposed she meant—on the piazza, why——

To her indignation he seemed to indicate that the fault was her own; there was in his manner the suggestion that true womanly dignity knew how to avoid such painful experiences—that even womanly sophistication knew how to avoid them! Although he called Mayhew a "cad," he rather inclined to Deborah Keith's easy verdict—Romola would have to overlook the episode. And whereas Deborah Keith had lightly given the impression that nobody "minded" Mayhew because he was negligible, Romola's husband seemed to intimate that nobody ought to mind Mayhew because he was great. Her disappointment made her hotly unjust.

She would not quarrel, would not stoop to the wearisome bickering into which she knew domestic explanation so often degenerated. But in her heart she bitterly marveled at his dullness. Did he not perceive that it was the standing of their hostess, her standards, the atmosphere that she created for herself, that were declared, stamped, by the incident occurring beneath her roof?

There was disdain in Romola's silence, but he did not feel it, and for that reason it grew. It grew as she listened to his opening and closing of bureau and wardrobe drawers and doors. It grew as she answered his questions concerning the weight of the suits, the colors of the ties, that he should carry with him. It grew when there was finally stillness in his dressing room, and the last trivial query had been answered. It grew as she lay awake in the moonlit room, until finally the climbing globe of silver was level with her windows and looked in upon her.

Then her tired thoughts drifted back to the moment of farewell at the door, to the everlasting meaning and promise of June nights. Again the trembling



languor thrilled her. She closed her eyes and buried her face in her pillows to shut out the ancient, ever-young sorceress who played thus upon her emotions. But the sorcery was in her own veins, and blinding herself to the moon and the pale, glorious night sky did not still the uneven beating of her heart.

#### CHAPTER IV.

While Richard was in Cleveland, Romola elected to play the part of the recluse—the maternal recluse. She was much with her children, and very little with the rest of the world. Particularly she had decided to avoid Wade Robinson, even in her thoughts. She would not let her mind dwell upon the emotion he aroused in her. She shut a door tightly upon a chamber in her memory, and declared stalwartly to herself that she had forgotten the moments of agitation he had caused her, that the agitation did not exist. She denied herself to him when he called the next day, and, that her servants might not comment upon the particularity of the order, she denied herself equally to all of Hazelwood.

And, after the fashion of women who have emotions to quell or sorrows to forget, she threw herself into unaccustomed labor, that her tired body might help in the work of dulling her mind. Such a period of unnecessary housework as her admirably ordered house knew during the next week was unprecedented in the recollection of her servants.

Richard's room had been done over—that had been the task to which remorse had set her. She had been bitter and unjust in her thoughts of him that last night when he was at home—she would expiate the wrong now by service! Poor Richard! How unkind she had been in her reading of him—tired, hard-working, conscientious, sensible, uninspired man that he was!

She whipped her dormant gratitude into life—see how much he did for her and his children! No home in Hazelwood was better, no woman in her set had more servants or more efficient

ones! The children went to the best school, would go to the best colleges, would have the best training that they were capable of receiving. He liked her to dress well—he had given her the automobile! Good, hard-working fellow!

For all these things had meant work—even the comfortable, suburban-home prizes of life did not come to dullards or to laggards, she told herself. Oh, if only he had had the gift to keep romance alive, instead of all the comfortable, serviceable gifts he had! But why could she not bear with his little lacks, his little idiosyncrasies? Doubtless she had trying traits of her own! In fact, she knew she had—and she knew it all the more, she recalled, because Richard never had any hesitation in reminding her of them.

Oh, well, that was Richard's way—a man's way—probably a much better way than hers, on which she prided herself—her way of keeping ugly language, recriminations, spoken criticisms, out of their daily intercourse.

And so remorsefully, penitently, she worked, recalling everything she had ever heard him say concerning his needs and desires in his own domain, and carefully rearranging everything according to them.

On the day when he was to have returned, a telegram came instead—he had been detained for another week! A collapsing feeling like despair seized her. She could not fill another week with manufactured, artificial, unheeded work! She could not fill every hour with the children.

Ralph and the twins were more interested in their own worlds already than in the world they inhabited with their mother; their games, their playmates, were all-engrossing to them. Rose, the bright-haired baby, was learning, too, to have a life of her own apart from that with Nurse Dockerty; the baby next door was Rose's absorbing universe at present.

Her demand of high Heaven for an occupation, a distraction, that should keep down excitement, the craving for excitement, and the memory of excite-



ment, was not answered. Instead, Evangeline Dimock was on the telephone ten minutes after Richard's telegram.

"May I come down? I've lots to talk to you about," she announced gayly.

There was a tone in her voice that sent a chill to Romola's heart, like the one she had felt the night of the Keiths' dinner, when she had read the meaning of Evangeline's radiant face.

"Do come!" she answered. "I'm perishing of loneliness. The infants are all out, and Richard won't be home for another week."

"Richard away?" said Evangeline vaguely, thereby incensing her unreasonable friend. "I didn't remember—you know we've all been away, motor-ing through the Berkshires with the Keiths."

"I didn't know," responded Romola, still more incensed.

"I'll be down and tell you all about it," said the girl, and the matron thought she detected a note of apology in her voice.

Evangeline's shining, handsome face notified Romola that Wade Robinson had been of the party, even before she learned the list of the Keiths' guests. She transferred that unreasonable feeling of anger to him then. A fine way, she said, to build up a practice! She said it aloud to Evangeline, cloaking her resentment under a jest.

"Well, he wasn't with us all the time—neither he nor Mr. Keith. They came up to Lenox on Friday, and motored back with us. It was heavenly—there's no time like June, is there? And the Berkshires are perfect then."

Romola agreed that the Berkshires were lovely in June.

"Who was of the party?" she asked.

"Oh, Harry, Flo, Mr. Mayhew, the Pondexters, and that Annable girl who is visiting them, and that bookish young man—Starr—who sat next to you at the dinner. We took Mr. Mayhew up with us, and left him in Stockbridge, where he had an engagement. And then Mr. Keith and Doctor Robinson came up, as I told you, and motored back with us.

"We had three cars. Deborah Keith and Harry and Mayhew planned the thing that night after the dinner. Flo didn't want to go—you know she's a lazy creature, that sister of mine! But I took the bull by the horns, and gave her a hint about keeping up with Harry. Anyway, she came at last!"

"How can you bear to go anywhere with that Keith woman?" demanded Romola impatiently. "She's—impossible."

"She isn't much like the rest of us," agreed Evangeline cordially. "But perhaps we're rather narrow. She interests me. She never makes Florence's mistake of taking her husband for granted! She's really mad about him, although she does flirt with other men."

"She seems to me vulgar, and worse."

"Why, Romola, you impractical creature!" Evangeline scoffed. "Why should you expect refinement and virtue of your neighbors? Isn't it enough if they give you amusement and excitement, an occasional thrill, and make no drafts upon your admiration and respect? At any rate, you don't deny that they're waking Hazelwood up—the Keiths. Are you going to join the fancy-dancing class?"

"No," answered Romola shortly.

"You don't need to, of course," sighed Evangeline, looking with frank envy at her friend's slim figure, its girl-ish lines set off by her crisp, white linen morning dress. "Still, I imagine it will be fun. Guess who is to teach it—once a week?"

Romola shook her head in token of her inability to guess, and Evangeline went on, explosively and triumphantly: "Mrs. Keith herself. That is, after September. It isn't to begin really until then."

"What on earth," began Romola, "what on earth does she want to do that for?"

"I think it's very good-natured of her. She dances beautifully," declared Evangeline.

"She does, indeed. But why teach? Why does she do it?"

"Don't you think that she's really



good-natured, for all her—her—well, I suppose you'd call it her commonness?" asked Evangeline.

"I really don't, if you want me to answer you truly," declared Romola. "She's easy-going, but that is a vastly different thing from being good-natured or kind-hearted. But let us not talk any more about her. She makes me ill-tempered in spite of myself. How do you like Wade Robinson on further acquaintance?"

There, she had brought the words out without any telltale break in her voice! She had an embroidery hoop in her hands, and some instinctive kindness or instinctive dread of pain kept her eyes upon it, matching a thread to a blossom, while Evangeline answered.

"I—I like him very much," said the girl. "I wonder if he will really stay here? I don't think it's a good place for him, do you?"

"Oh, I don't know!" Romola's manner was indifferent.

She raised her eyes now, and threaded her needle, glancing naturally at the girl as she did. A soft flush was dying slowly from Evangeline's round cheeks. There was a misty light in her eyes, a trembling softness about her mouth.

"Have you ever been West—I mean to Arizona or Colorado, or any of those places?"

"Evangeline, you infant!" cried Romola, with sudden sympathy, rising and crossing to kiss her friend. "Do you mean to tell me you're falling in love with the man, and are thinking of carrying him back where he ought to be?"

"Romola!"

"Romola!" mimicked that lady, forcing herself to sisterly merriment, in spite of something tugging at her heart-strings. "Tell me all about it, you dear goose!"

"There is not a thing to tell—honestly!"

Romola's constricted heart went suddenly free again, at the sincerity of Evangeline's gaze and tone.

"You mean that he hasn't knelt upon his knees and begged you to be his?" She was conscious that her jocosity was out of character, but to be jocose was

the only way she knew of not being sentimental, plaintive even.

"He hasn't said a word! Truly! Only—he has such kind eyes—they look at you so?"

She ended on a questioning inflection. Romola's mind made affirmative answer—he did have such kind eyes! They did look at one so. But aloud she said:

"You see, I shouldn't be so likely to notice his eyes and the quality of his glances."

"He seems to understand one; one doesn't have to talk." Romola jealously remembered the silent, infolding tenderness of that brief drive home. She was seated at her work again, and carefully found the point of the petal for which she looked, making no answer.

Evangeline went on: "And yet he seems impulsive—daring—oh, I don't know what you call it! Adventurous, I suppose. Yes—that's it. He's an adventurer at heart. And—well, the men at Hazelwood never seem to me particularly adventurous in their souls, do they to you?"

"No, they don't."

"He isn't in our rut—I dare say that is the secret of the—the attraction he has for me," Evangeline pursued, blushing and bringing the words out honestly. "I don't believe he cares a cent about owning a larger house or a newer model of car than his neighbor. I don't think he's—what would you call it?—smothered in—oh, in things that don't count—money, clothes, servants, country clubs, and city clubs, stakes at bridge, dinners. Not," she added ponderingly, "that he's averse to the good, material things of this world."

"I think you've described him," said Romola gently. "He's not an ascetic—not that that is the secret of his unlikeliness to our men; I dare say Richard is a good deal more of an ascetic than Wade; but he's adventurous-souled. That's it. And he calls one's own soul—that is, yours—the heart that has not had its adventure—to adventure, too."

Evangeline, she saw, had not noticed the revelation that her words had made. She breathed a sigh of relief. Not for worlds, not for worlds, would she have



the girl guess that she, too, had heard the bugle call of adventure sounding down the dull, prim paths of her existence. And that the girl might not guess the secret of her wavering, wandering half-fancy—so she named it to herself—she must change the subject, must talk of other things, other people. She led the conversation back to Florence and Harry.

"If only Flo would indulge in the hideous crime of jealousy!" sighed Flo's sister, temporarily diverted from the theme of her own affections. "But she doesn't. She might be jealous of you if you had a better-looking suit next winter, or if you got a French car, or went abroad when she couldn't, or were invited to visit at Newport. She's capable of that trivial, worthless form of jealousy or envy or whatever you call it. But she never dreams of being jealous of Harry—she never will, until suddenly it's too late.

"Then she'll be jealous good and plenty, as Harry himself might say! And she'll cry and sob, and look forlorn—and Flo and I are such sights when we are weepy and forlorn! Fat women always are. And she'll call the neighborhood to witness that she's been a good wife, and that she never looked at a man after she turned her eyes away from the clergyman who married her to Harry! And she'll ask the universe why Harry ever looked at another woman—how it was possible for him to! Poor Flo!"

"But he isn't looking at another woman—in the sense you mean?"

"The other woman isn't looking at him, if that's what you mean. Mrs. Keith is crazy about her husband, as we all can see. But she treats Harry like a man—not like a serviceable piece of household furniture. She doesn't treat any man like that. And that's why they're all half intoxicated with her, though she is as vulgar as you say she is, and though she's no better looking than the rest of us, and no more alluring. Only—what lure she has she uses. Flo, and you, and half the other women have put yours away with your dresses of the late nineties."

"So that's how it seems to you?"

"That's the way it seems to me." Evangeline pushed her thick, wavy red hair back with her large, shapely, white hand. "I tell you, my dear Romola, there is a period of particular danger to domestic peace. I don't believe it's the first two years or whatever the time of first adjustment may be; love and passion carry most married people triumphantly through that. But it's years later, when the glamour has worn off, when the man has struck his gait in business, when the first financial pressure is lifted, when he isn't devoting all his waking hours to the question of whether or not he can support his family. It's when he feels secure in his business, secure in his family—and adventure calls to him, just as—I said a few minutes ago that it was the possibility of adventure that called to me in Doctor Robinson.

"And so many wives never see that period or its dangers! They are 'settled,' as they call it, immersed in their children—only foolish Florence hasn't even that excuse for being blind, blind! No; if Harry, poor, eager, fat-headed thing—you know my dear brother-in-law is a bit of a fathead, Romola—if he escapes shipwreck, it won't be due to his stalwart principles—poor Harry, who has indulged himself in everything that he could afford all these years, and has not indulged in viciousness only because he hasn't happened to want to. If he escapes, it will be neither his own virtue nor Flo's merits that will save him. It will be just because Deborah Keith has no earthly use for him, and throws him back to Flo, bruised, and sore, and hurt, for repairs! And—and maybe there'll be other women not so likely to do that."

Romola looked at the girl with a slow, measuring, thoughtful glance.

"I see," she said at last, nodding her head. "I see. And do you suppose that no marriages ever come to shipwreck because the situation is reversed—because the husband has come to regard the wife as a piece of domestic furniture, because she finds her hard labor done, her days idle, her mind and



heart vacant? Don't you think that ever happens?"

She spoke with an intensity that she was half afraid Evangeline would perceive. But the girl laughed.

"Not in Hazelwood! You're all nice, comfortable tabbies, Rom, dear. Well, I must be off. Will you ride with me to-morrow? Starritt has a mare in his stable that is really worth trying."

Romola shook her head. "Can't to-morrow," she said.

"Well, come up for a game with us to-night. Poor Flo, she's unhappy without one. Gambling is her one pet passion. Well, I dare say even you dear, good tabbies have to have one."

"Be off with you!" cried Romola, laughing.

Evangeline laughed, too, and ran down the steps, and across the well-kept lawn to the road.

"I wonder if he cares for her," was the instant thought in the mind of the woman whom she left behind. It was almost spoken aloud, so promptly did it follow upon the girl's departure. And then fiercely: "What if he does!" cried Romola to herself.

She went into the hall. She looked in the box of the dark, carved oak settle for something, but when she saw the mass of caps, and toys, and gloves, she forgot what she sought. She stood staring, frowning at the jumble for a moment. Then a shadow darkened the screen door leading to the piazza. She looked toward it. Suddenly, like a wave inundating her, the sensation of warmth, peace, and joy flowed over her. Wade Robinson stood looking in at her.

She went awkwardly to the door, opened it, put out her hand mechanically, and said, in a prim little voice: "Oh, how do you do?"

He did not answer, only stood looking at her out of deep-set, feverishly bright blue eyes. Then he drew a long breath.

"Gad, it's good to be back!" he cried.

He sank into the chair that Evangeline had so lately quitted. Romola resumed her own place.

"Ah, yes," she said vaguely. "You

have been away, haven't you? Miss Dimock was telling me. Did you have a pleasant trip?"

"The weather was excellent," he answered, with a mock formality. "The scenery, I believe, was beautiful. I know it is quite famed. The company was what you call 'jolly.' And I—I had as pleasant a trip as a man naturally would have under such conditions—provided that he was perishing of thirst." The pretense at formality was gone now. His voice was earnest, vibrant with feeling.

"Thirst?" Romola repeated the words dully.

"Of thirst," he asseverated passionately. "Oh, don't pretend to misunderstand me! You know what thirst consumed me—the desire to see you, to hear your voice, to be near you!"

Her work fell from her lap, and she arose, trembling, pale.

"You must not—you must not speak to me like that," she faltered.

But her gray eyes, in spite of their look of fright, were shining like stars. She knew, and had not yet had time to upbraid herself for knowing, that she was glad, glad of what he said; that she was glad of the proof that he did not care for Evangeline, glad of the haggard, adoring look he turned on her.

"Of course I mustn't speak to you like this!" he answered roughly, bitterly. "I mustn't speak to you like this because it's the truth! It's been the truth almost ever since the morning I found you sitting by the roadside, with your hat in your lap—do you remember?" The harsh voice softened. "It's been the truth right along. You'll never know what a mad temptation I had to run off with you that night in the automobile when you leaned back, looking so white and tired in the moonlight. Why, Romola, I think I have loved you ever since we were children together."

"But you forgot me for a good many years; confess, didn't you?"

Romola was recovering her self-possession. Some of the dizzy, glad excitement was dying out in her. She even forced a little smile as she put the question to him.





*And all the evening as they sat on the porch and listened to the waves on the beach and the band in the dining room, she asked herself what she should do with the empty summer.*

"Oh, I've been a man, and a fool like any other! But that doesn't prevent me from knowing the truth when I feel it—the truth that I must not say. I can talk to you about all manner of things in which neither of us is the slightest interested—about books and sunsets, about the neighbors, and the weather, and politics. But I can't tell you that I have been thirsting for you as a famished man thirsts for a bubbling spring that he remembers. And yet, what harm can it do you to hear

me? I am not asking you to leave your good husband and your children and your home, and to scandalize the neighborhood. I'm only relieving my heart of a cry that it had to utter. That can do you no harm, can it?"

"It is not right," said Romola. "It is not right. You are saying things that you could not say, that I could not hear, if there were any one else present. And such things," she ended firmly, "no married woman should ever listen to."

She was not altogether satisfied with



the moral tone of her little lecture, but her agitation, the singing joy that would not be quiet in her heart, made it impossible for her to speak more wisely.

"An interesting rule for tête-à-tête conversations! Thank Heaven I am not a married woman, if she is never to be permitted to hear anything more interesting than may be said in front of the gossips at the town pump. Confess you're ashamed of that trite, little-minded rule!"

"I am not," declared Romola, but delighting in his badinage. "All the good rules in the world are trite, all the safe paths are the well-worn ones. And," she added, more seriously, more solemnly, "I am quite in earnest in what I said. You must not say anything to me when we are alone that you would not say"—she blushed, but brought the words out valiantly—"before my husband or my children. Of course, I know they're all nonsense—your words; you almost confessed to me, the first time I saw you in Hazelwood, that you have been in the habit of making harmless love. But you must not to me. I'm a perfectly conventional person. I like my safe rules for conversation and behavior. I'll forget what you have said to-day"—her thrilling, caressing voice gave the lie to her steadfast words, her shining eyes denied them—"but you must never speak to me like that again."

He stood up and came toward her. She looked at him bravely, though her heart was beating unevenly. How good looking he was—so ran some independent thought in her mind, outside the current of emotion—how tall, how pitifully thin! How the blue of his deep-set, overshadowed eyes shone out in the tan of his skin!

Pity for him, wasted by his long fight with illness, surged in her, mingling with that other, delicious sensation that she could not admit to herself—that sensation of weakness about to be overmastered. She took hold of the back of the chair in front of her, and her fingers gripped hard upon the wood.

"Romola," he said very seriously, "tell me one thing, and I promise you

not to speak again on the subject. Is all this—this overpowering thing that has happened—is it all on my side only? Has the wave swept over me alone, and left you standing dry shod?"

She knew what she ought to do, she struggled for the reply that she ought to make—the calm denial of any feeling to match his own. But her bosom rose and fell, her parted lips uttered no word, and her eyes, starry pools of light, wavered and dropped before his own.

"Ah!" His exclamation of triumph was whispered. He stood before her for a second before she raised her gaze to meet his again.

"I have said nothing," she protested. The sound of her own voice gave her strength to go on, restored her to the everyday world in which one spoke clearly, knew one's mind, had principles, standards, convictions of right and wrong. "I will not be questioned. I have given you no right to dare speak so to me."

"Your eyes are not conventional hypocrites, whatever your words may be," he told her. "But don't be afraid. I shall not presume on—on anything. But, oh, Romola, to think that a woman like you—to think that you yourself—might have loved me! It is enough for me to live on!"

He was gone at once. He gave no backward look toward the figure standing still behind the chair, with fingers still clutching it. She stood there a long time. Gradually the singing in her heart, the tumult in her brain, quieted. She saw things as they were according to the Hazelwood tradition, according to the best traditions of her own life.

Here was she, a married woman, with the most devoted of husbands, the most adorable of children, the most delicate of tastes—here was she letting a man make love to her! She, who had always prided herself on her austere standards! She, whom all her little world believed to be so cold and proud, she in whom the heart of her husband trusted utterly!

She had a vision of a dark, mocking face, that derided her; of a flutelike,



jeering voice that demanded of her where were now her fine feelings. She imagined Deborah Keith's unholy mirth, had she been privileged to overhear the conversation just finished.

She walked back into the house and upstairs to the telephone on the second floor. She busied herself for a few minutes with the directory. Then, for half an hour, railroad stations and summer resorts near by answered her queries.

When Nurse Dockerty came in, Rose clinging to her hand, Ralph and Lucy dancing behind her, Romola announced: "I'm glad you've come in, nurse. I've just been telephoning to Mereside. Mr. Ventnor will not be home for a week, and I think we'll all go down there to spend it. The children need a change."

The two older children burst into a protest. Sally's birthday party was next Thursday—didn't she remember? Oh, mother, couldn't they stay for that? There was going to be a clown! They didn't like old Mereside, anyway! Oh, mother, mother! Even Rose, who, on account of her tender years, was not invited to Sally's party, raised her voice in sympathy with her brethren.

But mother was obdurate. In spite of Nurse Dockerty's declaration that the children did not have half enough clean clothes to go anywhere away from home; in spite of her recollection of Ralph's appointment with the dentist on Wednesday, and her conviction that it would be cold and damp at the seaside since—Nurse Dockerty was rather emphatic in calling Romola's attention to this—since it was remarkably cool for the time of year even in Hazelwood; in spite of everything that could be urged against it, Romola persisted in her plan.

The afternoon train to Mereside saw them all in it, some of them with the marks of rebellious tears still on their cheeks. A telegram to Richard apprised him of their changed address.

When they were safely out of Hazelwood, and the train was speeding toward the sandy Jersey shore, Romola leaned back in her chair and breathed a great sigh of relief. She had not had time for consideration from the mo-

ment she had left the porch. She had been hurrying as if pursuers were on her track. Now, in the lull of activity, she found that the thing she fled was with her on the train, was with her in herself. It was not Wade Robinson whom she had feared; he could threaten her with no danger; he could force her to listen to no words she did not wish to hear. No, the enemy, the peril, was in her own heart.

Nevertheless, she told herself, as the train rushed through the forests of scrub oak and pine and the flat stretches of sand, she had done well to run away. At any rate, those traitors in her heart should have no opportunity to surrender the citadel to the foe outside.

At the end of the week Richard came down. He had been to Hazelwood first, and his errand at Mereside was the usual paternal one—he would spend Sunday and bring the family up with him on Monday morning. Romola and the four children met him at the train, all of them browner and rosier for the week on the hot sands.

Sally's party had been forgotten—Lucy and Ralph, her contemporaries, swarmed upon their father with bubbling tales of the thousand distractions that had driven Sally from their minds. Rose shrilled and screamed her delight according to her noisy wont. Ralph, more gentle, more restrained, waited with his wide, little, old-fashioned smile for the more youthful greetings to be over. Romola, large-eyed, smiling, stood behind them all. With all her heart she had been hoping for a miracle, hoping that she might see once more in Richard the lover of her girlhood, the dear, joyous companion of her early married days.

"There, there, kids!" he kissed his brood and pushed them from him tenderly enough. He looked inquiringly at Romola.

"You're all looking very fit, it seems to me," he said, in a half-injured voice. "Why on earth did you run away from home like that, Romola?"

She blushed and answered vaguely: "Oh, I don't know! I thought the change would do the children good."



And it was dull at home—lonely. I couldn't stay there alone any longer."

Richard looked at her in some alarm. Was it possible that his well-balanced wife was becoming erratic, notional?

"I don't see why you should have been lonely with a whole townful of friends and neighbors about you," he objected.

"I suppose I missed you," replied Romola.

"As though I hadn't been away twice as long a dozen times! However, I don't want to find fault, although we are sailing pretty close to the wind, and a tribe like ours can't put up at Mereside for nothing. Never mind, though, you're here, and we'll try to enjoy it."

So it had begun again, the old familiar process of closing her lips firmly upon criticisms that she would like to make in her turn. Romola, walking ahead, with eyes fixed on the blue of the sea, was conscious that the unruliness of spirit, the rebelliousness of heart, that she had been fighting the whole week, had returned to her with her husband's appearance.

She asked him something about his Cleveland trip, and he began talking of it. It all sounded dull and sordid, the complaints of train service, of hotel service—he hadn't had a decent cup of coffee since he left home, it seemed, and this was a grievance overshadowing even the business that took him to Cleveland; the committee he had gone to confer with were all distasteful to him—ignoramuses, who insisted upon making themselves heard in spite of their limitations. He doubted whether he had gained anything for himself by the trip.

"Did you see any one at home last night?" asked Romola.

"Yes; I went over to Keith's. I wanted to see him. He wasn't at home, but there was a crowd there, playing cards, smoking, and drinking. That woman must have the constitution of an iron horse—she never seems to go to bed, she's always smoking, and at least half the time she's drinking. And yet she's always vigorous and alive. It's a great thing to have an organiza-

tion like that. Graham was there, of course. So was Florence, looking rather seedy, I thought."

They turned in toward the hotel. People on the piazza, watching them approach, smiled at the family picture, the pretty, well-dressed children running ahead, the slim, lovely, young-looking wife and mother, the good, substantial—even a little bit stolid—husband and father, provider for the group, proprietor of it. As they swung through the door into the hall, Richard added to his budget of home gossip.

"Oh, by the way, Graham tells me there's going to be a match between Evangeline and that doctor friend of yours—Robinson."

"What!"

The exclamation came without Romola's volition. She stood transfixed between the door and the desk to which Richard was making. He looked back at her, half surprised, half amused, at the effect of his announcement.

"Evangeline and Robinson," he repeated. "Are you surprised? I'm not—Eve's been ripe for matrimony any time these five years." Romola stiffened at what seemed to her his coarseness. "I should think, though," he went on easily, "she might have done better for herself than to take up with Robinson."

"Why?" Romola asked mechanically. She had followed Richard to the desk, and stood beside him while he automatically signed the register.

"Oh, nothing very serious, I suppose," replied Richard, turning away from the desk. "Only she's such a fine, strapping, healthy woman, it's a pity she ties up to a semi-invalid. And I don't believe he'll stick it out there in Hazelwood. I doubt if he'll be able to; don't believe the climate will let him. Besides, he strikes me as something of a philanderer. Don't know why, for I haven't known him long enough to tell, but that's the way he impresses me. Doesn't he you?"

So that was the way Wade impressed her husband, impressed the ordinary, casual, commonplace, shrewd observer! And Wade was engaged to Evangeline



Dimock! Why, it was not a week since his eyes had burned into hers with their ardent message, since his words and his voice had played upon her very heart-strings! A philanderer! And she—what was she but an unsophisticated fool, as ignorant, for all her years and the children playing ahead of her and the man walking by her side, as any schoolgirl? But was Richard sure?

"Is it really an engagement, announced and all? Or something that Harry merely surmises?" She was surprised at the tranquillity of her own voice.

"I don't know that it's announced," replied Richard, yawning. "Harry merely gave me the impression it was settled. It's a wonder Evangeline never gave you any hint of it, she's such a follower of yours."

"I dare say it reached a climax suddenly, if it is true," Romola answered, with the same serenity. "I did think she rather liked him, but one can never tell. I am quite sure it wasn't settled the last time I saw her, the morning I left home. She spoke of him, and there was no mistaking her manner—very much interested, but quite uncertain of him."

She shut a door inside her heart upon a room where, side by side with the recollection of her last talk with Evangeline, lived the memory of the last talk with Wade. False—weak—a common trifle—what was it that he was? Had they all been part of a familiar pose—the eager eyes, the happy voice, the words, the atmosphere in which he enveloped her?

In a curious stillness of the mind she put the questions, without anger, without shame, without any of the emotions that she supposed a woman—scorned, played with—ought to feel.

"I'm numb!" she realized, with a little start. "It's because the blow deadened me that I feel it so little."

And then she thought of Evangeline and Wade. And then of the going on of her own life. It was not Wade

whom she regretted, she saw suddenly; it was something more dear than any man—the possibility of romance, the possibility of rapture; it was not Wade's departure, not even the manner of it, that would, by and by, after the strange numbness had passed, cause her hot anger and tingling shame, that would fill her life with loneliness; it was the final passing of the glory of youth, before youth itself had gone!

"Romola," said Richard anxiously, breaking in upon her musing, "do you know, I think we shall have to have Ralph's adenoids attended to in the fall? The boy positively snuffles!"

She came back to the world where she belonged with a jerk. Moonlight and the amethystine glamour were over for her; her husband's dinners, her children's colds in the head—it was with these that she must concern herself.

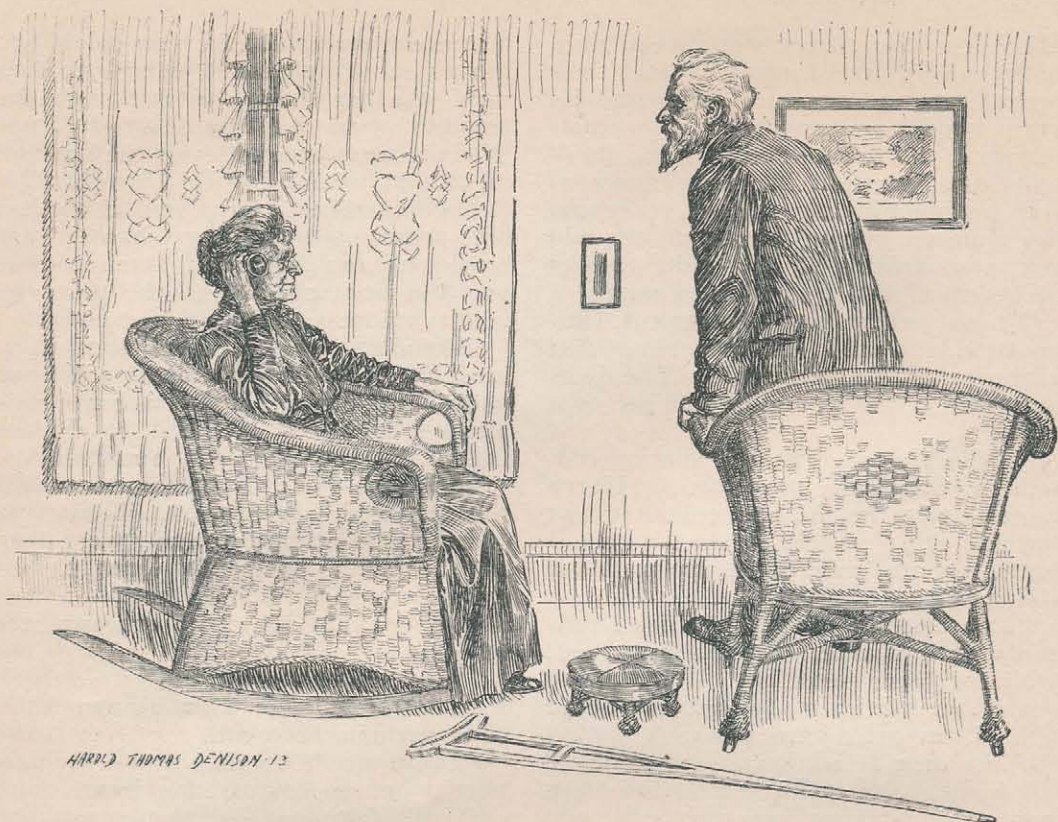
"Why wait until the fall? Wouldn't it be better to have it done now, while he is out of school?"

"There won't be time now—perhaps later, when he comes back from camp. Oh, I didn't tell you—I've arranged for that camp on Lake Cayuga. I ran down there on my way from Cleveland. A fine fellow, the man at the head of it—clean, straight. I liked him a lot. He'll knock the mollycoddle out of Ralph in no time."

"He's never been away from me since he was born," she said softly. But there was no pleading in her voice. She knew Richard by this time, and the persistency that was so large a factor in his success.

And all the evening as they sat on the porch and listened to the waves on the beach and the band in the dining room—transformed on Saturday nights into a ballroom—she asked herself what she should do with the empty summer. Not until then did she realize that in spite of her high intentions and fine words she had unconsciously counted upon a continuance of the excitement of Wade's love-making!





## The Golden Bowl

By Helen Baker Parker

Author of "The Willow Plume," "His Masterpiece," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD THOMAS DENISON

I'VE been thinking maybe we better go live a while at Lettie's."

They had just come up from dinner. Gropingly grandmother had found her chair close by the window, and grandfather had dropped his crutch to the floor and substituted for it the ear trumpet through which came to grandmother all that she heard of the fading world.

"We better go to Lettie's, mother," he said again.

"Why, we're comfortable here, David. Stella's good to us. We don't lack for anything. And you know

we're getting old, David—you forget that."

"Seems as though we're in the way here, Elizabeth. I think our room was the spare room. Stella doesn't have company the way she did when we first came. Don't you remember the stylish rich folks——"

"Well, David, you never cared for company, and we're not much for style."

There was a bitter note in the old man's voice as he answered: "No—that's it. We're not stylish."

He looked swiftly at the face beside



him. Elizabeth had been beautiful a half century before—beautiful for many, many years afterward. It had been soon after they had come to their daughter Stella's house that "mother" had awakened one morning to find herself unable to speak to David or lift her hand to lay it over his. Alone one day, after a month's illness, she had got up and tottered to the mirror, had seen her face, with one side drawn and withered, had seen her helpless arm. She had got back her speech, but without her trumpet all she could hear was little Miss Ames practicing her choir music in the next house. For grandmother, too, were slowly dropping the curtains over the darkened windows of old age.

Grandfather Bishop, always sensitive, felt Elizabeth's loss as one feels a never-healing wound, growing accustomed to it, but aware at times of unspeakable pain. During their slow, uneven walk in the afternoon he was always tortured, yet for her sake, by the curious glances of passers-by. Sometimes at sight of the old people with their failing senses, their crutch, and their ear trumpet, the young smiled as they hurried by in the pride and flush of strength.

Grandfather's was the occasional overkeen hearing of the old. A whisper at dinner between Stella and her husband, a syllable half formed like a cryptic sign, he heard everything, and everything hurt.

"We might go to Lettie's in the fall," he said into the trumpet, "and maybe to George's in another spring." He sighed, but grandmother could not hear sighs through her trumpet. "I wish I hadn't given that money to build a library! I wish I had saved it till now, and had it to give the children, and then we wouldn't feel—like a burden."

"There, there, David; it's done. We can't help it now. We didn't know we'd lose the rest later." She felt blindly for his hand.

The family were coming into the library from the porch—Stella, her husband, and little Donald. Grandfather put away the trumpet. Tenderly he

laid about grandmother's shoulders the purple shawl Lettie had sent for Christmas, and then they sat in silence as the summer evening deepened—the silence of those for whom the world is growing dark.

Feeling themselves useless, a burden, old-fashioned, behind the times, their opinions worthless, their thoughts lingered for a little time over the advisability of leaving Stella's house and being taken care of by Lettie; then, with the merciful toxin of age, they were back in other years, and youth—all youth—was theirs. The white clematis that grew to their window ledge was the bloom of a summer night long ago. The evening song, piercing sweet, of a bird swaying on a perfumed bough was the bird that heard his first "I love you." Voices of little children playing in the twilight street were the voices of their own boys and girls, unspeakably loved.

Stella was coming upstairs with Donald. Leading the child, she went softly by the door. She did not stop or look in. Bone was she of their bone, flesh of their flesh, out of their youth had been distilled her beauty and her pride. If for a fleeting instant they craved the touch of her—a word—why, they must not complain. She was a woman now, mother of another generation. They had had their day. Now they were old, crippled, useless.

Stella read to Donald every night from a book about Big Americans for Little Americans. And after he had undressed himself—as was evidenced to grandfather's keen ears by the falling of his shoes, the rattling of elastics, and the scrape of buttons on a chair back, by Stella's "Oh, Donald, hang it up! You know you are going to be an orderly man," and the boy's "Where's my night drawers?"—the story reading began.

Her clear, firm voice read on about the man Lincoln. It was slow work, for Donald was full of whys—his father said that his "why factory" never shut down. Stella read that every one honors the memory of Lincoln.

"What's that 'honor,' anyway?" de-





HAROLD THOMAS DENISON '13

"What's that 'honor', anyway?" demanded Donald.

manded Donald; and it was evident from a certain creaking that he was sitting up in bed to get the information. "'N first grade we say, 'One!'—like that, like an explosion. 'One! I—love—my—country! Two! I honor flag!'"

"I honor *her* flag," corrected Stella.

"All right—two, hers. But what does the thing mean?"

"Honor?" All was silent a moment, for, when you come to think of it, honor isn't so easy a thing to put into a sentence. Grandfather waited to hear. He was always glad for something to pass on afterward to grandmother through the trumpet—some quaint wit of Donald's, another proof of Stella's competence, a clever saying of Edward's. So small a thing interests the very old. It takes so very little



to make them happy. Listening, he stroked grandmother's withered hand that felt almost nothing any more save his touch.

"Honor?" said Stella. "Why, honor is something more than love. It's a way you feel—well, it's the way we feel about grandfather. We love him, and at the same time we look up to him for what he knows—and the great man he is. What he thinks about a thing just about settles it for your father, you know. Well, that's the way people feel about Lincoln. Let's read now. 'Lincoln was a man whose generosity——'"

"What's gen'rosity?"

"It's being willing to give, Donald. Lincoln gave his time, his love, days, nights, everything to make the black people free. There are so many ways to give. When I was a little girl I was always sick, and my mother took care of me. That meant a good deal in those days. There weren't so many doctors and nurses as there are now. Mothers took care of their children. That meant that mother gave to me—*herself*. That kind of giving, like Lincoln's, you can't see.

"And, you know, I've told you how your grandfather gave money to found a library—yes, like the one on Second Street; yes, a little bigger. You see, that will be

there when we're gone. Always grandfather will live on in all the things he has done; and aren't we glad he gave the money for something that will last! That is the best way to give. Your grandfather was a great man—and he is yet. You see, that's the wonderful thing about being good; it doesn't stop; the body gets old, of course, but all the good things grandfather and grandmother have done will keep going on and on, and they will never be forgotten."

"Like Lincoln?"



Grandmother could not hear, but Stella's head was on her breast, Stella's tears on her withered hand.



"Like Lincoln. Now, let's read. 'The beauty of Lincoln——'"

"I don't think Lincoln's beautiful. I think he's *homely!* We've got a picture 'n first grade——"

"Oh, but beauty, Donald, is something more than a picture can show. You can't see all there is of beauty with your eyes. You know, dear, who I think is the most beautiful person in all the world?"

"Who?"

"My mother."

"Grandmother?"

"Your grandmother—yes, dear. When I think of her—and grandfather, and their lives—I—— Let's begin here to-morrow night; my throat—I couldn't read any more, darling——"

A long silence through the house. No sound in all the night save the clematis blowing in the wind, and one bird crying. "You won't call out, dear? We—must be quiet on account of them."

"Is that why Jaky and us can't play engine in the dining room any more?"

"Yes; we must have the house quiet—the rest of the time."

"But you like company. We always used to have it."

"Yes, but it isn't good for them. And we're so happy to have things just right for them. There now, draw the cover up. You're going to be a great, fine man like grandfather."

A prayer was said, a light was put out, shades were lowered, steps came cautiously along the hall. Stella stopped at the door, her strong, fine head erect.

"I thought you were asleep," she said, in her reserved, even voice. At a touch on the arm, grandmother turned, too, to see Stella in the door. So small a thing helps fill the lagging hours of the old. "I thought you were asleep—you were so quiet. Is there anything I can do for you?" It was

an accustomed question, but this time Stella lingered, drawing her hand across her eyes. "Isn't there anything I can do for you?"

Out of the fragrant twilight came the voice of the chorist singing the Song of Old Age:

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed  
Or the golden bowl be broken——"

With a half-smothered cry, Stella crossed the room, and sank down at their feet. "Oh!" she sobbed. "Oh!"

"There now," soothed grandmother; "there now. You go off somewhere with Edward. We'll take care of Donald. Father'll hear everything. You've got too much to do—you're all tired out. We're a lot of care, Stella."

"No! No! Not that! Oh, mother, I can't bear it! I——"

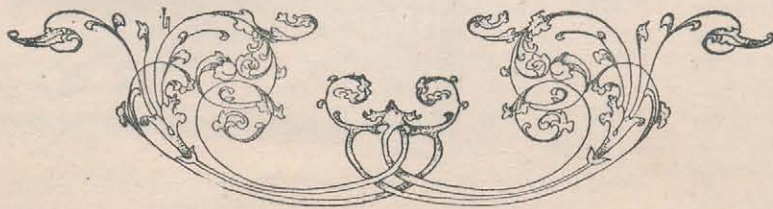
"When you were a little girl," grandfather said, "we used to think how beautiful you were; and once when you were sick we watched all night—it was a summer night like this—and we were afraid we'd lose you——"

"And now, and now, father—mother—oh, when I think of it—all the years and years you took care of me, and how there's nothing at all I can do to pay you back——" She lifted her wet face to theirs. "You're happy here? You're contented? You won't—oh, you won't leave me?"

"We'll stay here, Stella, what time is left. You are a dear daughter, Stella."

Grandmother could not hear, but Stella's head was on her breast, as it had been forty years before. Stella's tears were on her withered hand. They three clung to each other in speechless yearning as the young voice sang in the growing night:

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed  
Or the golden bowl be broken——"







# A WAGER WON

By *Marion Short*

Author of "An April Change," "The Famous Cochran Children," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

WE'VE wooed you about long enough to win you, Price. When do you propose to honor our chapter by uniting with us in the holy bonds, and so forth?"

Harper Price, in his junior year at Oldport College, was absorbingly occupied with a new manual of gridiron tactics, and, ignoring the fact that this was

perhaps the twentieth time he had been approached by a proselyting member of the Delta Gamma Phis, he scarcely deigned to look up.

"Higher mathematics and football are all I'm keen about," he drawled, as he turned a page of the manual. "Unless I'm punished into being a frat man, I'll never get around to it."

"Punished? How? Just what do you mean by that?" inquired the other softly, but alertly.

"Oh," answered the junior, with reckless abstraction, "if you fellows lock me up on bread and water for forty-eight hours, with nothing else to think about, I may be persuaded—that's all."

Later—to his entire and disgruntled surprise—they took him at his word. Since five p. m. he had fumed up and down the narrow space between the piles of junk in the top-floor storeroom of the end dormitory, and it was now nearing midnight. Just as the big tower clock boomed the hour, an investigating delegate, by means of a step-ladder, sought to interrogate him through the narrow transom over the door, skillfully dodging a missile flung by the irate captive as he did so.

"Art ready, Prometheus, to be unbound and join the mystic brotherhood?"

"I—am—not!" answered Price defiantly, "and I'll bet the bunch of you a hundred dollars that I'll break away from here unaided, and that you won't get your hands on me again before this time to-morrow."





His wager, communicated straightway to a committee of Delta Gamma Phis outside, was accepted with undisguised hilarity.

When, toward morning, deceived by a long period of silence, Price made a determined onslaught on the door, his efforts were greeted by derisive jeers from the watchers in the hall, and the cheerful information was vouchsafed him that a barricade of furniture awaited his assault when he should have succeeded in removing the intervening obstacle thereto. Whereat he abandoned his initial scheme of escape as impractical.

All about him were piles of discarded books, stacks of dingy manuscripts, worn flags and banners, odd garments, maps, dusty globes, and other useless paraphernalia. What he needed desperately, in furtherance of the scheme now germinating in his brain, was something in the line of suitable attire. In sky-blue pajamas—the only clothing his captors had permitted him—and with bare feet, a man is not exactly equipped for public scrutiny, even in a sprinting match. The only outfit available in the storeroom was one that at first he absolutely refused to consider. Afterward, when the situation grew wearily worse, he recognized that, bad as the alternative was, it at least went the pajamas one better, and dragged the bundle down from the high shelf on which it reposed.

Presently the cracked mirror, in the dim light of a single plugged gas jet, revealed his figure clothed in grotesque prison stripes. The garments had once been used in college dramatics, and he thanked his stars that they hung loosely on his muscular frame.

When the morning was well advanced, he cautiously opened the dusty and stubborn window of the storeroom, in preparation for a circuslike leap through space into the boughs of an elm tree below. He knew that an attempt so foolhardy had not even entered the minds of his captors, and that there should be nothing to interfere with his flight when once he set foot on the college campus.

For a wavering moment, as he measured the intervening space, he considered the possible aftermath of broken bones resulting from such an attempt, and was moved to abandon his plan. The next instant he was more determined than ever to carry it out. Had he not passed through numberless games of football unscathed, and had not the danger of injury only added zest to the sport? There was nothing more to be done in the way of preliminaries except to wait for the disappearance of an obstacle that had suddenly and exasperatingly presented itself immediately beneath the boughs of the chosen elm. Waiting was the last thing Price found himself willing to do.

"Confound you—get away from there! Why, of all times, should you settle on this particular morning to investigate the ravages of those elm-tree beetles, you bespectacled bug?"

The bespectacled bug, thus inaudibly addressed, was a sophomore of scientific proclivities, and one much interested in the study of forestry. He said afterward that, not being a fraternity man himself, he would never have thought to betray the fleeing student to those interested, if that malefactor had not landed ruthlessly upon his unsuspecting shoulders along with part of a bough that he had broken in his descent. Even that indignity he might have overlooked had Price not added to it by demanding the loan of his russet shoes, following up the demand by a speedy and enforced removal of same.

Five minutes after the vandal act had been committed, the Delta Gamma Phis were informed of Harper Price's exit from storage by elm tree, and the direction in which he had fled was pointed out to them.

Oldport Avenue was Oldport's finest residential street. It had never looked more attractive than on this particular day in early October. The well-spaced maples on either side formed great successive torches of blazing yellow, seeming to call for nothing less than a ceremonial procession to pass in pomp along the bordered road.



But the incongruous is always intruding to devastate the poetry of things, and instead of a stately cavalcade with gorgeous trappings, there appeared a single prosaic taxicab which slid unimpressively along until about midway of the block, when it sidled close to the pavement and stopped.

A fashionably clad young girl pushed open the door, and, breaking into expectant dimples, sprang lightly to the ground. Between her and the house toward which she looked lay a well-kept lawn, divided into two exact squares of green. The residence itself, though handsome, bore an almost oppressive air of conscious and rigorous respectability. Seeing that the shades were drawn, an expression of dismay banished the smile from the girl's fresh young countenance.

"Dear me, the place looks as deserted as a desert!" she cried. Turning to the driver, she handed him some silver. "I'm afraid there's no one at home."

The man saluted.

"There's some one now!" he said, for at that instant around a corner of the house jolted the stout form of a gayly clad woman, evidently a domestic. She was entirely engrossed in pulling an emaciated white glove onto a pudgy right hand, and did not see the newcomer until she fairly ran into her.

"Goodness me!" she gasped. "It isn't you, Miss Rose?"

"Who else? You don't sound enthusiastic. Don't you think I'm good to look at, Katie?"

The stout woman removed the glove, and exercised her stiffened fingers.

"You're better to look at than ever, Miss Rose, but you took my breath away for a minute. It's a piece of luck I remembered I must feed the cat the first time I started out, or there'd have been no one here to let you in."

"Why, where's Aunt Julia?"

Already Kate had turned back, and while she fumbled for a key, led the way to the front door.

"In New York with your Uncle James."

"How long has she been away?"

"For a week past, and not a soul on the place but me."

"You don't really mean that the folks aren't here for me to surprise?"

"I do that, Miss Rose."

"How horrid of them—when I thought it would be such fun!"

"I'll make you as comfortable as I can till they get back." Involuntarily she sighed. "You must have a cup of tea right now."

"Cup of tea, eh? And you in white gloves and Sunday-go-to-meeting hat! You're on your way to nothing less than a wedding or a christening. You don't need to think that I'm going to interfere."

"But what can you do here all alone?"

"Make some tea, and entertain myself reading this noon extra I bought down at the station."

But Kate still demurred, though tugging hopefully at her glove.

"You know how particular your Aunt Julia is. She wouldn't like your being left here all alone."

"How's Aunt Julia to know anything about it if no one tells her?"

The young girl thrust her hands into the pockets of her long, natty coat, and put up a defiant little chin. She was above the average height, and her military turban, with its upstanding cockade, made her appear taller yet. Her slim feet were, as usual, incased in shoes with perilously high heels, and the rotund Kate took in the general effect of her with awed admiration. She made up her mind to copy that turban as soon as the visitor's stay was ended.

"I won't be back later than five o'clock," she said, ushering her into the wide hall, "and it's awful kind of you to be willing to get along without me."

"Why shouldn't I, when there's the cat and the canary for company, also my better self, which I am told one should associate with frequently? You mustn't think of me as being left alone at all. Go right along now, Katie."

"To tell the truth, I should hate to miss witnessing Hattie McManus getting married, seeing that she's had two men back out at the last minute that





*The fugitive, panting, the perspiration dripping from his countenance, stood facing her, his back against the door!*

was promised to her. This is the third, and I hope he'll stick."

What a well-ordered home it was! As Miss Raymond laid off her hat and coat, she saw that everything was kept up to the same degree of spick-and-span neatness as always since her earliest visits as a child. There was not a dried leaf on the spreading plants in the bulging hall windows with their plate glass polished to rainbow luminosity. There was not a tarnished wire in the bright cage of the fat and flawless canary bird that occupied it.

Perhaps it was because her beloved Aunt Julia and dear Uncle James were as unchangeably irreproachable as their surroundings that she invariably found the visits she paid them a trifle monotonous. Unconventional happenings, however interesting, simply could not occur in such a model and methodical home. How she longed for something out of the ordinary to stir the untroubled calm of the stream of her daily life! Yet even the pleasure of taking

her relatives by surprise had been denied her.

She raised the sitting-room windows. Kate had already left the front door ajar at her request, and as the glorious October air swept in to banish the mustiness of the inner atmosphere, her spirits resumed their usual altitude. She indulged in a gay little snatch of song as she tripped toward the big closet at the end of the hall. In the identical spot where a shawl of some description had always reposed since memory served her, she found a billowy pink one to throw about her shoulders.

Returning to the sitting room, she set the samovar going, and sank down with the noon extra of the *Oldport Herald* in her lap, her blond head gracefully outlined against the back of a huge and formal chair.

Oldport was an old-fashioned residence town, but it boasted mildly of three things in the way of seeable attractions. First there was the Oldport



College, then there was a Carnegie Library, and, last on the list, Oldport Penitentiary. Miss Raymond had often viewed the prison, which stood in gray and picturesque ugliness on the banks of Oldport River, and had once suggested visiting the institution, but this her Aunt Julia had forbidden.

The familiar outlines of the building were staring at her now from the front page of the noon extra, and beneath it was an account of the sensational escape of a young convict from its environs the night before—one Jackson Elderwein, lately sentenced to a term of years for manslaughter. He was powerfully built, the article went on to say, with dark hair and eyes, thick-lipped, beetle-browed, a typical criminal, desperate and dangerous. At the foot of the column appeared an announcement in extra black lettering:

Elderwein is supposed to be at large now in Oldport or immediate vicinity. A liberal reward is offered for his detection and capture.

Miss Raymond shivered slightly, and got up to close the windows. Just to think of it—a convict rambling around unfettered right here in respectable, conservative Oldport! A man guilty of the next thing to murder! After all, it wasn't so very pleasant to find one's self entirely alone in a big house like this—a house containing all sorts of odd corners where a thick-lipped, beetle-browed criminal might conceal himself quite easily if he took it into his head to do so.

"Oh!" she gasped, and flung the paper aside in nervous fear. Then she laughed. The plump canary had joggled the fishbone to the floor of his cage, that was all. But it had sounded like a mysterious and forbidding knock at the door. Why was it, she wondered, that one always heard mysterious and forbidding noises when no one was around that were never by any possibility heard at any other time?

Feeling the need of company, she stooped and stroked Brewster, the cat, but he was curled into a living hassock in front of the fireplace, and sleepily

ignored her advances. She chirped to the canary, hoping to inveigle him into a responsive twitter, but for the present he was interested in fishbone only. Then the bright shelter of the open attracted her, and she stepped out onto the veranda.

Faint shouts reached her from a distance. College boys, perhaps, practicing some game on the campus, she thought idly. Crossing a yawn with two dainty fingers, she wondered if she should accept her student cousin's invitation to a college dance the following Saturday evening.

Suddenly the cries grew louder, as if their clamor had been swelled by fresh voices and additional excitement; also they seemed strangely near! All at once, as if seeking to escape those cries, a man, clothed in prison stripes, half bent over, his elbows drawn in close to his sides, made a tumultuous entrance into the quiet street, running at topmost speed! Elderwein in Oldport Avenue! Her premonition had become a fact!

As she turned and fled blindly into the hall, she collided squarely with a large rubber plant, upsetting it and falling with it in dire confusion on the polished floor. Even while striving to extricate one of her high heels from the tangle of a torn skirt braid, the tears starting to her eyes from the pain of a badly bumped nose, it still seemed to her that she could hear the clatter of those flying feet.

Then the great door behind her slammed shut, apparently of its own accord. With a startled exclamation she sprang up. The fugitive, panting, the perspiration dripping from his countenance, stood facing her, his back against the door!

She heard herself giving a series of short, staccato shrieks that seemed to stop of their own accord as the interloper put up a protesting hand.

"Don't—do that—again—please," he panted. "You're—in no—danger—and you might—arouse—the neighborhood."

Miss Raymond did not do it again. She found to her amazement that she had no inclination to repeat the per-



formance. She was not nearly so terrified from the actual encounter as she had been at sight of the creature at a distance. She could hardly realize, save for the irrefutable proof of his attire, that she was in the presence of a desperate character at all. He looked quite as respectable as many young men of her acquaintance, and even more so than some. Also, he was unreasonably good looking, and instead of glaring at her with murderous ferocity, as by all laws of precedent in such cases he should have done, he displayed some splendid teeth in a singularly winning smile.

Deep in her inmost soul, Miss Raymond was intensely and imaginatively romantic, and she now experienced the delicious conviction that—face to face with a criminal, alone and in his power—she was undoubtedly experiencing the most thrilling moment of her life! She found herself rising to the superb heights of courage that the situation seemed to require.

"I suppose you think you frightened me dreadfully," she said, with preternatural quietude, forgetting her outcry of a moment before, "but you didn't. I know who you are, and I am as calm as possible!"

"Calm!" panted he of the striped attire, regarding her with an approving right eye while he applied an alert left ear to the crack of the door. "I wish—I could say—as much—for my—state of mind—but I can't!"

His breath was coming painfully, and Miss Raymond wondered how far he had run since his pursuers began the chase. Evidently persuaded that he was safe for the moment, the fugitive straightened to his full height, and addressed her, pantingly still:

"Of course—it's inexcusable—dashing in here like this—you know! I—hid—in a bakeshop kitchen—an hour—but—it got so hot—behind the oven—and—these clothes, too—please excuse. They robbed me of everything—but my blue paj—I mean—if I could have found a—better—disguise—but I couldn't. When a fellow—knows—his escape is discovered—and has made a

big wager—the others can't nab him very——"

"He must naturally find refuge where and how he can." Miss Raymond obligingly completed the suspended sentence, and nodded her comprehension, though coldly. "Of course, that is the way any one in your unfortunate position would be obliged to look at it."

With deliberate dignity she stooped to right the rubber plant, which still lay in unseemly disorder upon the immaculate floor.

"Allow me!" Her strange guest bounded forward and tipped the tub into equilibrium again, flinging back into it a spilled clod or two. Then, dusting his hands on his hideous trousers, he went on with his narrative, evidently taking her continued interest for granted.

"I had a scrimmage with one fellow—on the campus—and knew he'd turn informer—before I was out of sight."

"You dared cross the campus? Wasn't that hazardous for a—person—in your situation?"

"If I'd been able to reach the street any other way, I'd have avoided it," he admitted, "but, not owning an aëroplane, I was obliged to do the best I could. They lost the trail while I was in the bakeshop——"

"Sh!" she interrupted. "What's that?"

Once more he bent to listen.

"It's only a fishmonger," she informed him after an expectant moment of silence. "I thought it was some one after you."

"I think I've dodged them, all right," said he; "though once the whole pack were at my heels, yelling themselves black in the face."

He laughed as he spoke, almost as if he found eluding his pursuers a merry sport. Miss Raymond could but admire his insouciant intrepidity, though instantly ashamed of herself for doing so.

"Awfully kind of you to overlook my butting in here as I did," he said gratefully. "I'll reconnoiter a moment, and be on my way if the coast seems



clear. They may be doing the stealthy act just to fool me, of course, but I rather think I'm safe."

He placed his hand on the doorknob. "Don't go—just yet!" Miss Raymond cried out involuntarily, unwilling for her unique and exciting experience to end so soon when she might never in all her lifetime have another. "You—you are still—quite—hoarse, you know! You'd better—get rested—before you try the streets again."

"Why, thank you!" he exclaimed, as politely as any casual male caller might have done. "I will drop down here on the stairs a minute, for I'm about all in."

Again he smiled, and with such an air of boyish ingenuousness that Miss Raymond was almost tempted into smiling in return. She checked herself. The sinister side of the man was bound to pop up in a moment or two, she reflected, for undoubtedly an individual of his type must be mostly sinister, no matter how engaging his surface manner.

The lazy Brewster, emerging from the sitting room, undulatingly paddled toward the staircase, and, slowly mounting a step or two, rested both paws on the stranger's knee.

"Want to make friends with me?" queried the intruder, as the Angora purringly nosed his chin. "I'm willing, if your mistress doesn't object. She knows who I am, she says, and therefore must be the judge."

He appeared so entirely at his ease that Miss Raymond experienced a sudden feeling of resentment. He must be made to understand that it was condescending pity she was extending to him, not courtesy; that was plain.

"I think it my duty to tell you," she said, stiffening into primness, "that while I'm sorry for you, I do not sympathize with you in the least. Those people are merely doing their duty in trying to capture you."

"It's money in their pockets if they do," he answered cheerfully, a mischievous twinkle in his big black eyes; "money in mine if they don't. But I couldn't permit them to keep me locked

up on bread and water—the blood-thirsty Indians! I simply had to break away, just to show them I could."

Miss Raymond marked the magnificent muscles of his arm beneath the disgraceful stripes as he stroked the willing Brewster's back. What would Uncle James and Aunt Julia say if they ever heard of that unhallowed contact with his hitherto uncontaminated fur? What would they think of a niece who would deliberately harbor a hardened criminal under their sanctified roof-tree?

She resolved then and there to preserve Brewster's good name and her own by keeping the whole affair a profound and guilty secret. After all, if a girl descends into an abyss of social experiment, it really becomes her duty to look about a bit before leaving it, from a purely educational standpoint, if no other.

"Perhaps, though, you think a diet of bread and water might be good for me," he resumed, becoming a bit restless under her meditative eye.

"I know it's what you deserve," she answered uncompromisingly, "for I read about you in the *Oldport extra* not half an hour ago."

"Why, they didn't put the rumpus in the paper, did they?"

"All of it."

"I didn't suppose I was important enough for a write-up."

"It's printed in full. I know just when you escaped, and how, and all about you."

"Well," he remarked vengefully, "I owe those fellows one, I see that! They must have filled that reporter up with a nice lot of blackmail about me. They've made you believe I'm entirely unfit for publication, but I'm not!"

He looked so young, so manly, so entirely uncriminal, with his direct gaze answering her own, that all at once she became possessed of a new and fascinating theory regarding him. Perhaps he was a martyr, hounded by the law, but in reality guiltless and misunderstood, needing a friend. She gave way to a warm and romantic impulse of commiseration.



"Will you answer me truly if—if I ask you a very personal question?"

His expression was one of owl-like gravity.

"Unless the truth within me lies!"

"Are you innocent?"

Her glance, meant to read him through and through, only succeeded in thrilling him through and through. She was an exquisite picture of exquisite young girlhood as she sat there in the big, carved hall chair, a slant ray of sunlight crossing her crinkly hair.

"Are you innocent?" she repeated, suspecting his silence.

"W-well," he stammered, "I—I'm not exactly a babe in arms on the one hand, or the most hardened of criminals on the other."

"You aren't answering me!" she said severely.

He looked down at his ill-fitting shoes.

"Because I don't know exactly what you mean by 'innocent.' I'm—well, just an average fellow, you know."

"What provocation did you have for what you did? I mean—of course—your principal offense—attacking your victim."

"Oh, him?" He looked at her incredulously. "Was that in the paper, too?"

"Certainly. It told the whole story from the beginning. What had the poor man done to make you his enemy?"

"Oh," he laughed, "he wasn't my enemy. I wanted his shoes—that was all. I couldn't very well do without 'em."

She recoiled visibly.

"For a mere pair of shoes you were guilty of crime?"

"Crime?" A sudden blaze of anger shot from his eyes. "By Jove, they must have piled it on pretty thick in that newspaper yarn!" Then he smiled reminiscently. "But of course I can't blame them. I ought to be willing for them to enjoy themselves at my expense, since I'm enjoying myself at theirs. What I did to the owner of the shoes was good for him—he was in my way. I hope the reporter didn't

enlarge on the size of the shoes—they're three sizes too large already."

"There was no mention of shoes at all. Oh, how can you speak of such a terrible thing so lightly?"

His exasperation returned.

"Will you let me see that confounded paper for a minute?"

She considered his request gravely, then shook her head.

"I don't think it would be right for me to do so. It might give you a clew of some kind to aid you to escape. After you leave the house, I do not wish to consider myself in any way responsible for you."

"It's been very kind of you to be responsible for me at all," he said, getting to his feet, to the discomfiture of Brewster. "I realize more than ever what a raw thing it was to invade your privacy the way I did. But—your pink shawl—it seemed a beacon light to lure me—and I turned in without a thought of how nery I was." He looked toward the sitting-room door. "If any of your people are about, I'd like to apologize—to explain—"

"I am alone," she announced bravely, "and entirely defenseless."

Somehow she expected that he would evince his appreciation of her undimmed candor in making such an admission to a man in stripes, but he seemed entirely unimpressed.

"My thanks are all due to you, then," he said, starting for the outer exit.

Somewhat to her own surprise, she found herself detaining him again.

"May I make a few suggestions to you, for your own good, before you go?"

"You think I need them?" He smiled quizzically, but the crease between her narrow bronze eyebrows warned him that she was entirely serious. "Go ahead—certainly," he assented; "as far as you like."

This time she sat on the stairs while, in obedience to a queenly wave of her hand, he sprawled stripedly in the chair she had vacated. The impressiveness of her manner increased. One must assume an air of authority when one sets out to do a good work in the world.



"The reason I wish to talk with you—to help you—is," she informed him, "because it seems to me that I see good in you beneath all surface appearances."

"I say," he interrupted ruefully, "surface appearances can be explained—if you mean these beastly togs I'm wearing."

"I feel certain," she continued, visualizing herself as holding a torch aloft for the benefit of a benighted soul, "that if others had understood, and been more considerate of you in the past, you would be a different man to-day."

He shrugged his shoulders and recrossed his legs. "Oh, no, I wouldn't! I'm a self-made sinner entirely. My mother is responsible for my virtues, if I have any, but I'm the only stockholder in my assortment of faults."

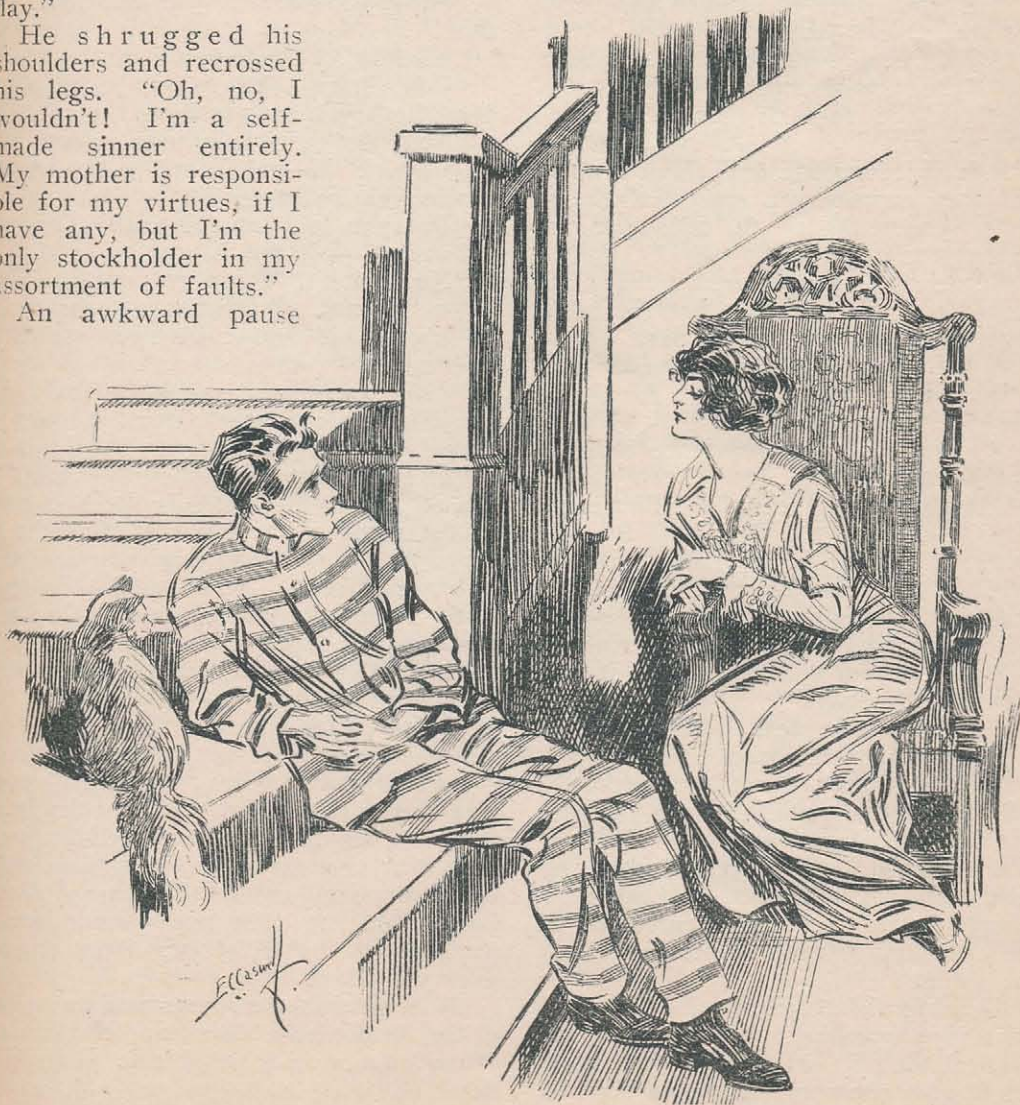
An awkward pause

ensued. Holding a torch aloft is rather wabby business when one undertakes it without previous preparation. Miss Raymond could not think, for the life of her, of a single uplifting sentence. But just as she was about to lower an extinguished beacon a promising subject occurred to her.

"Did you make it a point to attend chapel in the—where you came from?"

"Every one does," he answered. "It's compulsory."

"Compulsory? Oh, yes—there—it



"Are you innocent?" she repeated, suspecting his silence.



would be, of course," she said, a bit staggered. "Did you enjoy it?" she added, after waiting for a more illuminating array of words.

"I manage to survive."

Up went the torch in full splendor.

"But that is not the way to look at it—as an infliction. You should appreciate chapel for the spiritual good it does you. There's nothing you need like spiritual good."

"I'd have exchanged it for a ladder this morning," he informed her feelingly.

"It's your duty to hunger and thirst for the ethical—the true!"

"Well, as a hungerer and thirster —" he began flippantly, then subsided in the face of her determined earnestness.

"Oh, if it happens, as I think it must, that they capture you and shut you up again, you will try to follow loftier ideals, won't you?"

He ached to say the exact thing she wished to have him say, but feared to experiment, so became evasive.

"But they can't catch me," he gloated.

"You never expect to see the inside of those walls again?"

"I return of my own free will tomorrow morning."

"Of your own free will! You mean that?"

"Surest thing you know!"

"Oh," and she clasped enthusiastic hands, "that's splendid of you—noble! When you might be able to remain outside that dreadful spot forever if you tried hard enough!"

Her exaltation left him untouched and somewhat perplexed.

"Oh, as to that—I rather like the old jail, to tell the truth. I have no wish to leave until I graduate."

"I suppose," she said distantly, repelled by his matter-of-fact attitude, "that one can become accustomed to 'most anything, even a prison cell, if one must."

"Talking about prison cells," he cried excitedly, pointing through a glass panel at the side of the big front door, "there goes the very chap who blabbed, spectacles and all. They've separated

into detachments, I suppose—patrolling the streets for me." He strode the length of the hall. "But no matter—I've got to take my chances some time, and it might as well be now. Hear those yowls? Some more of the menagerie not far away, you see!"

"Oh, please wait, just a moment longer!" she cried dramatically.

"What for?"

"Because if they catch you—they may string you up to the nearest lamp-post, and it would be on my conscience forever!"

"Why, you act as if you really meant that!"

"Mean it? Of course I do."

"Come, now; they're not barbarians, even if they have got it in for me."

"Men do terrible things when the mob spirit is on them. I've heard Uncle Jimmie say so!"

"But you look at this lark of mine all wrong—"

"No, I don't. I realize your danger, if you do not. I positively forbid you to leave this house in those telltale clothes."

"They can spot me for a mile in them," he assented, "but what else is there for me to do?"

"Put on some of Uncle Jimmie's," she replied. "His room is the first one to the right at the head of the stairs. Open up the windows, and you can see into the closet. There's a suit on the third hook—the church hook—that he wears to pass the plate in on Sundays."

"But what would Uncle Jimmie say?" he protested.

"I don't care what he says! You've got to take them for my peace of mind—even if you return them afterward. I've been expecting you to demand them all along. People placed as you are nearly always do. It wouldn't have surprised me in the least if you had killed me first and then turned around and helped yourself to whatever you liked."

But by this time the striped one was at the head of the stairs, and she heard the abrupt closing of Uncle Jimmie's door.

As she, trembling and relaxed, stum-



bled into the sitting room, her glance once more wandered to the outer world, and as it did so something came hurtling through the air from above, and landed sprawlingly on the half-dried blossoms of Aunt Julia's pet hydrangea bush. It was the striped jersey of the criminal!

At sight of it her mood changed. Oh, what would Uncle James and Aunt Julia, with their puritanical ideas and rigid rules of etiquette, think of her if they knew she was assisting—yes, actually assisting—a convict to escape the just action of the laws he had transgressed? Probably what he had said about intending to give himself up on the morrow was pure invention, to please her because she had shown a flattering interest in his welfare! After all, carried away by her sympathies, was she not making a terrible mistake in aiding him?

She could never quite tell afterward, in thinking it over, whether it was the fear of her relatives, or a freshly roused conscience, or just a nervous impulse to be up and doing that made her go to the telephone; but once there she promptly called up the police department. Put on the wire with Captain Blake, an old friend of her uncle's, she breathlessly informed him that Jackson Elderwein was concealed on the premises attempting a disguise, and that she wished they'd hurry up and come for him before he got into it and came downstairs. Reassured by promises of early aid, she hung up the receiver, and turned to face the consequences of her act, whatever they might be.

The fugitive had ceased tramping about the floor of the room above, and was strangely, ominously silent. She had shut herself tightly in the little compartment where the telephone was, but—had he overheard? For the first time since her initial encounter with the convict she became really frightened. If he had been guilty of manslaughter, she reflected, on light provocation, why shouldn't he be guilty of womanslaughter for the very sufficient cause she had given him in betraying him to the police?

Then another explanation of his strange silence occurred to her. He might be robbing the tin box in the upper left-hand corner of the chiffonier, where Uncle Jimmie invariably kept the Sunday-school collection before transferring it to the bank. Naturally a man like that, bent on eluding his pursuers, would take any money he could lay hands on, no matter how sacred.

She crept to the foot of the stairs, listening. A peculiar sound at last broke upon her waiting ear. Could it be that the wretch was so lost to a sense of his own peril that he had calmly fallen asleep, and was actually daring to snore? Indignantly she passed up the stairs to the closed door of Uncle Jimmie's room. The snoring continued with unromantic, but healthful, regularity. She turned the knob cautiously and peeped in.

There lay the escaped prisoner on Uncle Jimmie's luxurious leather sofa, his athletic form looking strangely tortured in Uncle Jimmie's narrow-shouldered, long-tailed coat and abbreviated trousers. But, in spite of his ill-fitting attire, he looked as handsome as a sleeping Hermes! One arm was flung in boyish abandon across the top of his finely modeled head. Those long, curling lashes! That high, noble brow! Oh, he could not be wholly bad; he could not, even if he did snore so horribly as to make one think him capable of almost anything! How confidently he had come to her for shelter, invited by the beacon of a tender-hued pink shawl! What a base, ignoble act was hers to betray the soul that trusted her!

As suddenly as she had determined to give him up to the authorities, she now resolved to undo her rash act.

Uncle Jimmie's cane stood aslant in its comfortable corner by the door. Grasping it in both hands, she gave the somnolent young man a poke in the ribs calculated to make him sit up and take notice.

"Cut it, you geezers!" he yelled, with a kick that narrowly missed the elbow of his hostess; then, assuming a sitting posture, he blinked himself into complete wakefulness.



"Wh-why, I wasn't asleep, was I?" he asked, plainly embarrassed.

"You sounded that way," replied Miss Raymond, with an underlying accent of reproach.

"You don't mean that I was sn——" He paused, his face growing red.

"Horribly—like the honk of Uncle Jimmie's car!"

"Great Cæsar's ghost! I just dropped down to rest a second before starting out—worn to a frazzle from last night—never meant to fall asleep! I ought to be turned over to the police if I added snoring to my offense!"

"That is just what happened!" she answered hysterically. "You did snore—I mean—you have been turned over to the police—they're on their way up here now!"

"Police? Why, who—what——"

"Some one phoned them that you were here. I can't tell you the person's name, but she—he, I mean—regrets doing so now with all her heart!"

"Dear child," he said soothingly, "don't agitate yourself. The police have no interest in a perfectly harmless, respectable chap like me."

"Why should you try to deceive me at the eleventh hour, like this?" she flung at him tumultuously. "You're not harmless and respectable. Don't I know your criminal record, and all about you?"

"Criminal record?" As suddenly as if he had been dealt a solar-plexus blow, the caricature of Uncle Jimmie doubled up in an armchair. "Why, who do you think I am?"

"You are Jackson Elderwein," she panted. "You escaped from Oldport Penitentiary last night—it said so in the *Herald*! Oh, I wanted to spare you—I didn't wish to denounce you to your face as a thick-lipped, beetle-browed convict! I tried to ignore it as far as I could when making my appeal to your better nature—but I know you are a manslayer, and you owned yourself that you did it for a miserable pair of shoes! There!"

While she was speaking, he stared at her, agape. As she concluded he covered his face with his hands, half turn-

ing his back. His neck and ears grew a reddish purple—his shoulders shook.

At sight of his agitation her flare of indignation died down, and tremulous pity took its place.

"Even so," she said gently at last, "I wish you to have your chance at freedom, for I'm convinced you have—redeeming qualities. But you must go at once, before that phone call to the station is answered. Why—why—you aren't laughing?"

"If the boys ever find this out," he choked, "they've one on me for life! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Find what out?"

"That I've been mistaken for a jailbird."

"Mistaken?"

"I don't happen to be this Elderwein party, you see—I haven't that superlative honor."

"Then who are you?"

"Harper Price—student at Oldport College. You said, almost at sight of me, that you knew who I was, and I supposed you'd seen my work as half-back on our football team, perhaps. I never dreamed you were sizing me up as a——"

"But you are! You must be! You spoke of jail yourself—you said you were fond of it."

"Jail is a student nickname for Oldport College, as distinguished from Oldport Pen on the other side of the river."

"But those clothes!" she cried accusingly, determined not to believe him unless she must.

"Some theatrical stuff I corralled in the storeroom where those frat fellows locked me up. I bet them a hundred dollars I'd get out of there and stay out until after midnight. It won't be my fault if I don't win the wager."

"But I can't have made such a mistake—I can't!" She stamped a perturbed foot. There was a hint of rising tears in her pretty eyes. "Why, I'd never respect myself again if it were true! You simply must be what I thought you—I'll never get over it if you are somebody else!"



"I'm sorry I'm not Elderwein, if you'd really prefer it."

"I don't mean that either," she cried hysterically, "but no girl likes to make a complete goose of herself — just when she's sure she is doing something daring, and humanitarian, and — and unconventional, and all that! It's no fun to feel — ridiculous!" She put both hands to her burning cheeks. "Oh, what must you think of me?" She rushed to the window, and the lace curtains, closing behind her, formed a fragile screen between them.

He drew a deep breath, standing where she had left him.

"May I say what I really think of you?"

"Please!" quiveringly. "I deserve it!"

"Sirup of sugar," he chanted very softly, "and moonlight meringue, and the perfume of all King Solomon's roses!"

The curtains quivered.

"I didn't mean that sort of thing, and you know it!"



*Their prey thrust his hands under his long coat tails, and waved them a mocking farewell.*

"Well, then, in everyday parlance, you owned me from the moment I saw you on the porch."

Curtains and girl grew very still.

"My cousin, Cendric Herbert, is on your football team," stated Miss Raymond presently, still partly hidden from his sight, and with her face turned away. "I've heard him speak of Harper Price oceans of times."

"Hah!" he exclaimed, as one suddenly enlightened. "Then you're a



Miss Raymond—that blond cousin of his!"

"Um-hm!"

"That explains the resemblance."

"Which?"

"The one I noticed as soon as we came face to face. I tried to crib your picture once."

"So Cendric told me."

"You can see from that what a hard case I am, after all!"

Very slightly she drew one of the curtains aside.

"Still, I'm willing to be friends—considering——"

He joined her in the deep recess of the window, but instantly a wild whistle from the yard below destroyed the eloquence of their mutual handclasp. The bespectacled bug had reappeared. He was standing by the hydrangea bush, the discarded jersey in his hand. As his eyes met those of the ex-wearer in the window above, he waved the garment wildly, bounded for the street, and, with a vindictive whoop, tore madly away.

"Confound that jersey!" exclaimed the irritated Price. "I pitched it across the room when I took it off, and it sailed through the open window like a bird! He'll have those howlers up here inside of five minutes."

"But five minutes is a pretty good start, isn't it?"

"Aren't you expecting Captain Blake?"

"Y-es, though I had forgotten him for the moment. But I can explain my mistake——"

"Not all by yourself, when I was the cause of it."

"But what if those college boys reach the house before you get away?"

"That only means losing a wager, and I'd lose a dozen sooner than have missed meeting you." He grinned and gritted his teeth, adding: "Besides, they haven't got me yet!"

"I knew it was a mistake of some kind," Captain Blake said smilingly, after the situation had been apologetically and profusely explained to him by

both the young woman and the student. "That's why I brought two plain-clothes men with me, Miss Raymond, and came in my automobile—I didn't wish to attract unnecessary attention to the house. I drop in often to see your Uncle James, and knew no one would think anything of my presence—unless there was a patrol wagon in evidence."

"But how did you know it was a mistake?" queried Miss Raymond. "Jackson Elderwein must be somewhere."

"He is," the captain informed her with a laugh. "He rolled into the station fully an hour before you phoned me. He was roaring drunk, and offered to treat the crowd, so we got him without any trouble. Of course, there was the possibility that your call might mean another unreported escape, but"—and he laid a hand on young Price's shoulder—"I'm glad your captive proved to be no one worse than a crazy college boy."

"Send in a bill to me for the trouble I've caused, and I'll consider it a favor," said Price seriously.

"A bill? Nonsense! I'm a crank on football, you know. You're Oldport's crack player, and I'd be delighted any time to help you out of a real scrape if I could. This has been a mere incident."

"Then," demanded Miss Raymond, "why not help him now?"

The captain looked puzzled.

"Now?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"By keeping him out of the hands of the crowd there in the street." Unobserved by all but the girl, a group of students had collected quietly under the maple tree in front of the house, casting toward it furtive, but triumphant, glances. "Ever since we've been standing here they've been arriving one by one."

"Waiting for Price, eh?"

"Yes. He bet them a hundred dollars they couldn't catch him before midnight. It's my fault that he's been held here so long—and I do want him to come out ahead, Captain Blake! I



shan't feel right about it unless he does."

The captain clawed ruminatively at his gray mustache.

"There's only one scheme I can think of to protect him——" he began, but Price interrupted:

"I don't ask for protection. Why, Miss Raymond, don't worry about me and that wager! I'm aching for a good tussle with those yahoos yonder. Just throw a glance me-ward as I strike the street, and you'll see——"

"Wait!" she commanded, plucking him by the sleeve. "It's only respectful to Captain Blake to find out what his scheme is. What is it, captain?"

"Well," said the captain, "the crowd out there is perfectly quiet, so I can't arrest them for disturbing the peace or for——"

"Of course not—certainly!" agreed Price. "I'm asking no favors, captain, and——"

"But," added the officer, "I can arrest Price for disturbing your peace if you say so, Miss Raymond, and keep him at my home until midnight."

"Well, I do say so—emphatically!"

"So I'm a prisoner, am I?" asked the grinning student. "Well, I must say, Captain Blake, you're treating me very badly—so badly that if I ever collect that hundred I'm going to divvy with you."

The captain assumed an air of righteous indignation.

"No bribery and corruption about it, young man—or I declare it all off!" He turned to the waiting policemen. "Go drive those chaps half a block up the

street. Show your badges, and tell 'em they're obstructing traffic."

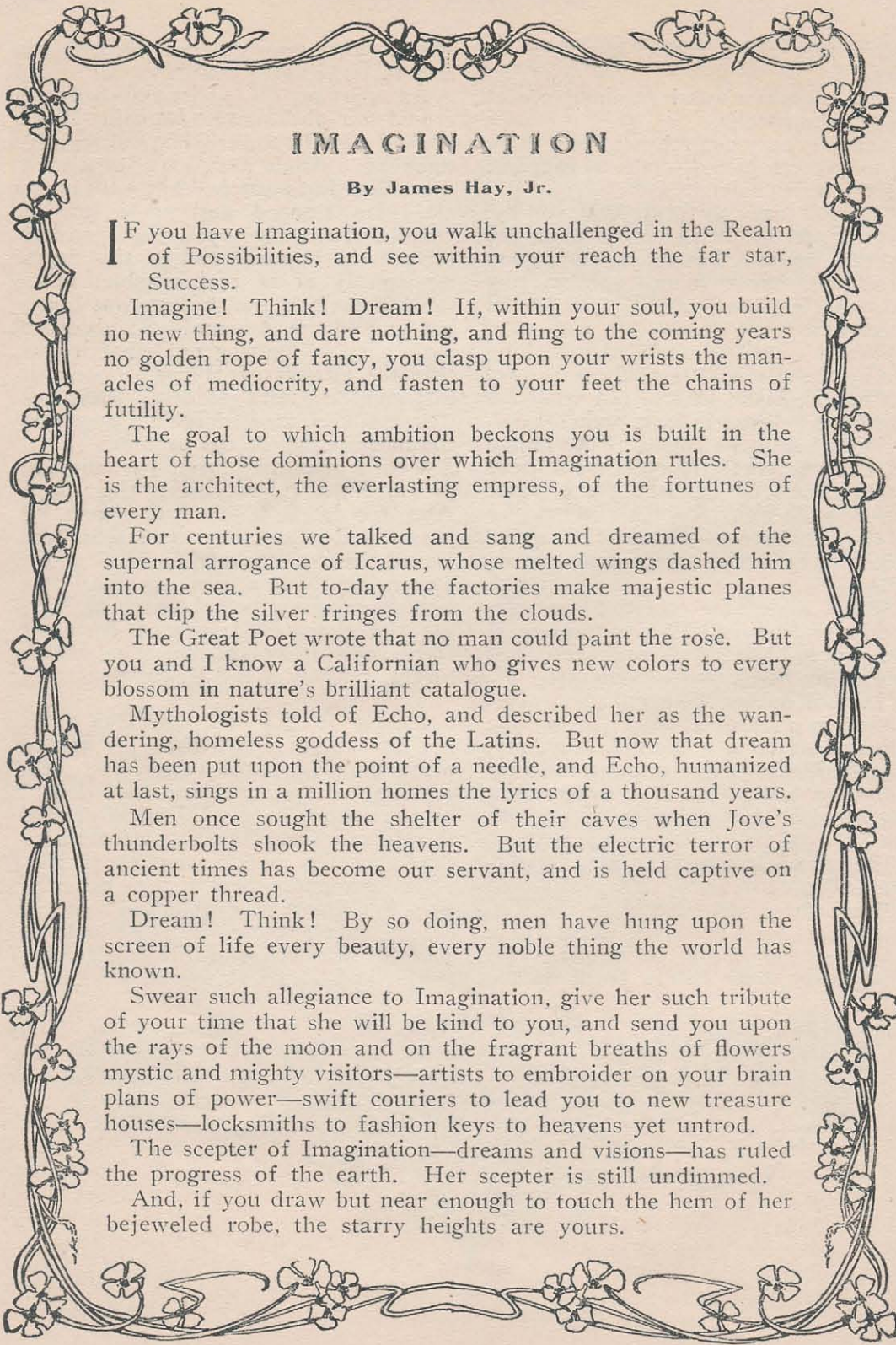
As soon as the policemen had the crowd on the move, Captain Blake walked swiftly toward his waiting automobile. From a few yards distant the college boys watched him with interest. He stooped and spoke to his chauffeur, making mysterious gestures toward the opposite end of the street. Apparently some real trouble, unrelated to their fellow student, was brewing in Oldport Avenue! So absorbed were they in figuring out what it was that the pursuit of Harper Price was lost sight of until suddenly they saw that oddly clothed individual step into the machine beside the captain.

With a roar they broke past the two policemen, intent on seizing their prey. Alas, too late! Their prey thrust his hands under his long coat tails, and waved them a mocking farewell as the automobile made a swift turn and shot like an arrow up the golden street, leaving the defeated frat men to make frantic and useless guesses as to what it meant and how it had all come about.

Harper Price joined the Delta Gamma Phi voluntarily after his triumphant winning of the wager, and some say that he spent the hundred dollars on the supper he gave them afterward to celebrate his initiation. Others contend that the money went to charity. Miss Raymond, whose visit to her relatives in Oldport was prolonged as never before, says nothing. But she looks at a beautiful solitaire on her engagement finger, and—Miss Raymond *knows*.





A decorative border of stylized flowers and vines surrounds the text. The flowers are simple, five-petaled shapes, and the vines are thin, curving lines that connect the flowers. The border is symmetrical and frames the entire page.

## IMAGINATION

By James Hay, Jr.

**I**F you have Imagination, you walk unchallenged in the Realm of Possibilities, and see within your reach the far star, Success.

Imagine! Think! Dream! If, within your soul, you build no new thing, and dare nothing, and fling to the coming years no golden rope of fancy, you clasp upon your wrists the manacles of mediocrity, and fasten to your feet the chains of futility.

The goal to which ambition beckons you is built in the heart of those dominions over which Imagination rules. She is the architect, the everlasting empress, of the fortunes of every man.

For centuries we talked and sang and dreamed of the supernal arrogance of Icarus, whose melted wings dashed him into the sea. But to-day the factories make majestic planes that clip the silver fringes from the clouds.

The Great Poet wrote that no man could paint the rose. But you and I know a Californian who gives new colors to every blossom in nature's brilliant catalogue.

Mythologists told of Echo, and described her as the wandering, homeless goddess of the Latins. But now that dream has been put upon the point of a needle, and Echo, humanized at last, sings in a million homes the lyrics of a thousand years.

Men once sought the shelter of their caves when Jove's thunderbolts shook the heavens. But the electric terror of ancient times has become our servant, and is held captive on a copper thread.

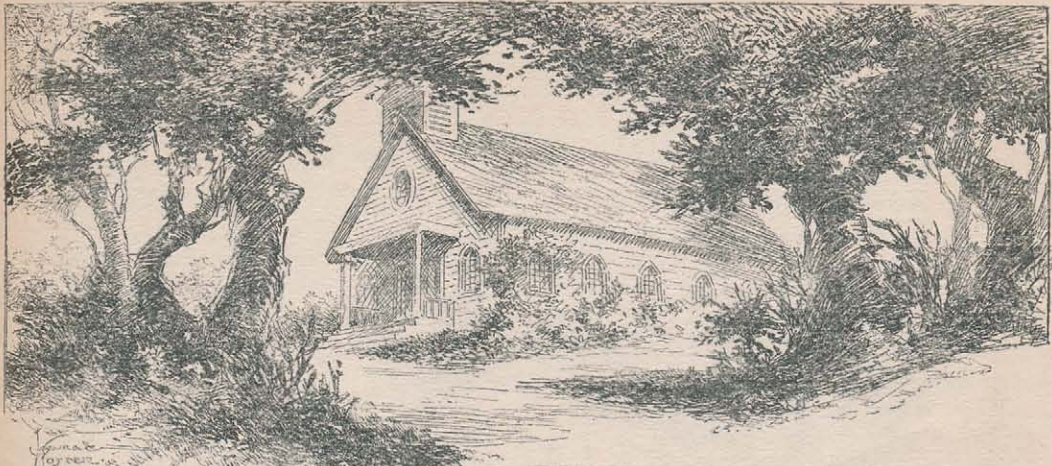
Dream! Think! By so doing, men have hung upon the screen of life every beauty, every noble thing the world has known.

Swear such allegiance to Imagination, give her such tribute of your time that she will be kind to you, and send you upon the rays of the moon and on the fragrant breaths of flowers mystic and mighty visitors—artists to embroider on your brain plans of power—swift couriers to lead you to new treasure houses—locksmiths to fashion keys to heavens yet untrod.

The scepter of Imagination—dreams and visions—has ruled the progress of the earth. Her scepter is still undimmed.

And, if you draw but near enough to touch the hem of her bejeweled robe, the starry heights are yours.





# And Mary Ellen Sang BY Louise Driscoll -

Author of "Votes for Women," "The Late Mrs. William Rankin," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

THE Presbyterian Church at Jones Corners was a pleasant place, happily free from the unfortunate attempts at decoration that mar so many houses of worship in small communities. It was a low, wooden structure, painted white, and a row of great oak trees stood in front of it like so many guardians. Some old lover of the sacred spot had planted green shrubs all about the edifice, lilac and forsythia and syringa; so in spring the air was heavy with their perfume, and, until the frosts came, there was a green garland lying around it like a ring that holds a jewel.

The new minister's wife had been a struggling art student when she married a struggling minister. Jones Corners had been their new charge, and they had come to it with a pleasant feeling of expectancy in the new relation.

A very good, kind people had made them welcome. The community was prosperous and maintained a comfortable manse. The sunny, open rooms had been prepared by willing hands for the coming of the new minister and his

wife. The Ladies' Sewing Society had given a new rug for the living room; Mrs. Weatherby had put flowering plants in the windows; every one had tried to do something to express a welcome. The house was ready for them and the larder stocked.

It was known that the Wyndams came from a discouraging struggle that they had met bravely, with bare necessities, and Jones Corners was ready to make amends to them. It all seemed too good to be true, Mrs. Wyndam said.

She wept a little against her husband's shoulder after Lemuel Wilson, who had met them at the station, had driven away, taking with him the committee of ladies who were at the manse door to bid them welcome home.

It was late spring and toward evening; a bright fire burned on the hearth in the living room, and in the dining room supper lay spread for them, a generous, dainty feast prepared by the best cooks in Jones Corners.

Paul Wyndam dried his wife's tears and repeated her words. "It all seems too good to be true," he said.





*She saw Mrs. Quimby's face as she watched her daughter with rapt, unquestioning adoration.*

The next morning they went to look at the church.

"It's absolutely perfect!" declared Mrs. Wyndam. "Oh, Paul, it's lovely! Isn't it wonderful to see how they—they've kept it so simple and lovely? See—they've left the plain glass in the windows!"

She wandered about the little church, viewing it from the pulpit, from the choir loft, and from the pews, and the organist came in while she was there.

Miss Pierce was no longer young. She had remnants of a delicate beauty and a girlish manner, quite untouched

by any consciousness of the years that had touched her. She loved her music and had found in it consolation for more than one sorrow; she played with the abandon of emotion. Mrs. Wyndam lingered to listen as she played.

"She really loves it," Mrs. Wyndam whispered to her husband. Mrs. Wyndam's beauty-loving soul had been without food and she was emotional.

"That's perfectly lovely!" she cried, and came back into the loft again. "And have we a good choir, Miss Pierce?"

Miss Pierce flushed a little. "Well—no," she said, as if regretting to ad-



mit the fact. "Really, we haven't, Mrs. Wyndam."

She coughed a little.

"I wonder if I shouldn't have asked," thought Mrs. Wyndam; and then Miss Pierce began to explain a little, half shyly.

"You see," she said, "George French has gone to the city, and Mabel Walters is married, and—and—— Well—we gave it up after a while, and now we just have a precentor and congregational singing."

Miss Pierce smiled dubiously and began to speak of something else.

"It seems a funny thing to be embarrassed about," said Mrs. Wyndam to her husband as they went home. Neither of them thought much more of the matter until Sunday morning.

The odor of the blossoming shrubs came through the windows like an incense to carry their prayers aloft. There was a pleasant air of expectancy as the congregation gathered, clad in their best to do honor to the day and to the new minister. After the opening prayer, Paul Wyndam announced the hymn, and the organ responded joyously:

"How beautiful it is to come  
Into thy courts with singing."

Mary Ellen Quimby sat well toward the front of the church. She was a young girl, rather conspicuously dressed. "Folks look at Mary Ellen so," Mrs. Quimby was wont to explain, "it's only right and proper she should look good when she's so kind of prominent—so to speak."

So the cotton roses trembled above Mary Ellen's hat, and Mary Ellen's mother, who did not rise with the rest of the congregation, leaned back in her pew and folded her worn hands, enjoying to the utmost her single hour of perfect satisfaction in the week.

"There ain't nobody in Jones Corners can sing with my Mary Ellen," Mrs. Quimby was wont to say.

"Nor against her, either," Miss Perkins was known to have murmured an irreverent aside.

Mrs. Wyndam's sensitive ear was

sorely shocked. She saw Mrs. Lemuel Wilson close her hymn book and put it back in the rack with a gesture of resignation; she saw Mrs. Temple look at her husband and sigh; and she saw her own husband, who had begun to sing the hymn with his customary devotion, glance over the edge of his book and the pulpit railing, and eye Mary Ellen speculatively. And she saw Mrs. Quimby's face as she watched her daughter with rapt, unquestioning adoration.

"How beautiful it is to come  
Into thy courts with singing."

Mary Ellen really sang the last stanza as a solo. Mrs. Wyndam breathed a little sigh of relief when it was over. She was conscious of a slight tension through the whole assembly, and she was inattentive through the lesson and the prayer.

When her husband announced the second hymn, she bit her lip to keep from smiling, for Paul Wyndam said gravely, "We will omit the second, third, and fourth verses."

That left Mary Ellen only two, but she sang them lustily.

Mrs. Wyndam forgot her distress briefly during the sermon. She was so anxious to have Paul do his best, to have these dear, good people pleased with their new minister, and she loved him and was proud of him. So she did not think of Mary Ellen again until it was time for the last hymn.

Miss Pierce ventured to introduce the subject at dinner. Mrs. Lemuel Wilson had invited Mr. and Mrs. Wyndam and Miss Pierce to go home with her and her husband.

"We really feel very badly about Mary Ellen," said Miss Pierce; "but no one wants to say anything, you know. We wouldn't hurt Mrs. Quimby's feelings for the world. We keep hoping something will happen."

"And she sings regularly," said Mrs. Wilson. "That girl never has anything the matter with her. A little cold, now, would be the greatest kind of relief to the rest of us, but she never gets it."

Mrs. Wyndam giggled a little, appreciatively.



"It broke up the choir," remarked Lemuel Wilson. "They all got perfectly discouraged."

"You see," explained Mrs. Wilson, "Mrs. Quimby is such a good woman. She is a widow and does day's work—washing and ironing and cleaning—and Mary Ellen is her joy in life. She simply adores Mary Ellen. We've all known her for years and years, and we can't bear to hurt her; so"—Mrs. Wilson shrugged her shoulders—"Mary Ellen sings."

At the evening service, Mary Ellen sang "How Firm a Foundation," lustily and alone. She had a big voice, not placed, but sliding along the scale, now off the key, now out of time, raucous and penetrating. It quite filled the beautiful little church and drove the worshippers to frenzy.

"We had a prayer meeting about it once," Miss Pierce told Mrs. Wyndam, "and we asked the Lord to do something without hurting Mrs. Quimby's feelings."

One day Mrs. Wyndam came to the Home Missionary Society with a plan for Mary Ellen. She was growing acquainted with the women at the Corners, and was learning to depend upon their generous hearts and ready services.

"I've been wondering," said the new minister's wife, "if we couldn't arrange to give Mary Ellen a few singing lessons. Miss Pierce tells me that a really good teacher is coming to Milton once a week. If we could arrange to get Mary Ellen over and back—and do it nicely, you know, as a present from the church because we appreciate how she tries to help—she does *try*, you know."

"Mercy, yes!" said Mrs. Lemuel Wilson; "and many's the time I've wished she'd give it up."

Mrs. Wyndam's cheeks were pink with excitement. "If we could pay for a few lessons," she continued, "and get her over and back once a week—and just *suggest*, you know, to the teacher—a Mr. Phillips, I believe he is——"

All the ladies were interested now. They liked Mrs. Wyndam, and this was her first suggestion to them.

"We might tell him, you know," said Mrs. Wyndam, "that he could tell her not to strain her voice."

The moment's silence that followed this speech was broken by soft laughter.

"Well, I'm willing to pay for a few lessons myself," said Mrs. Lemuel Wilson. "Suppose we ask him to tell her she ought not to sing at all?"

"No—no," protested Mrs. Wyndam; "she might suspect."

So they plotted laughingly.

"And to think," said Mrs. Quimby, "how they do appreciate Mary Ellen! The Ladies' Aid Society giving her singing lessons—and Mrs. Wyndam so kind! Cultivating of her voice!"

The good soul worked with a happy heart, and Mary Ellen began to put on mysterious airs. After a week or two, Mrs. Lemuel Wilson was able to keep her book open through the entire hymn and voices began to rise from different parts of the church. By and by there was talk of organizing a choir, and, to every one's surprise, Mary Ellen refused to join.

"Mr. Phillips says I mustn't strain my voice," she said. "I only do exercises now."

"It seems too good to be true," said Mrs. Wyndam.

And then, one day Mrs. Wilson surprised the sewing society.

"Do you know," said Mrs. Wilson, "that when I went to pay Mr. Phillips for Mary Ellen's lessons he told me that she was doing very nicely, and that he had been able to get her one of the free scholarships at a school over near Boston. I certainly was surprised."

"Isn't that funny?" exclaimed Mrs. Temple.

"He said," said Mrs. Wilson, "that he had found work for her mother there, and Mary Ellen could have a lesson every day, and be taught other things she ought to know."

"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Winterbourne.

"I was so surprised," continued Mrs. Wilson, "that I didn't ask him any of the things I wish I had now, but I did





*In the back of the church a velvet voice arose, taking up the strain softly, yet with a tone so sweet that it wrapped itself about one like a soft, comforting garment.*

say, 'Do you really think she has a voice?'

"Has a voice?" interrupted Miss Perkins. "Couldn't she be heard from here to Milton every Sunday morning?"

"Well," said Mrs. Wilson, "he said, 'Why, yes. It wasn't placed, and her ear needed training.' You can't think how amazed I was to hear him speaking seriously about Mary Ellen's voice."

"Yes, I can," said Mrs. Temple.

Once or twice when some one spoke of Mrs. Quimby, it was said vaguely

that she had "a place" in Boston. Mary Ellen sent picture post cards to Mrs. Wyndam and Mrs. Wilson, with scant information written on the edge. It was more than two years before they came back to the Corners.

Then, one Sunday morning, as Paul Wyndam rose to face his congregation, he saw in the back of the church a young woman who held his attention for a minute. He did not place her in his recollection until he glanced at the decently clad woman who sat by her and saw the woman's eyes fixed, with the old, rapt, worshiping gaze,



upon her daughter's face. By chance the opening hymn was the same as on the first day of his ministry at the Corners:

"How beautiful it is to come  
Into thy courts with singing."

In the back of the church a velvet voice arose, taking up the strain softly, yet with a tone so sweet that it wrapped itself about one like a soft, comforting garment. It pierced the soul and filled the eyes with tears.

Mrs. Lemuel Wilson closed her hymn book and stood with her head turned, listening. Mrs. Temple felt for her handkerchief. Voice after voice fal-

tered and died away until at last the stranger sang alone, and the notes lingered, and when the room was still a sound like a little sob went through the congregation.

Paul Wyndam stood a minute looking down at the two faces. When he spoke, he said, "We will praise God with another hymn," and Mary Ellen smiled up at him quickly.

Mrs. Quimby leaned back in the pew with folded hands, quivering with gratified emotion while her daughter sang again.

"The folks at Jones Corners always did think a lot of Mary Ellen," she reflected.



### The Quintessence of Respect

MRS. ELEANOR WASHINGTON HOWARD, of Alexandria, Virginia, enjoys the distinction of having been the last Washington born at Mount Vernon, the home of the father of his country. It goes without saying that she is proud of her ancestor, and has at her command a great many anecdotes concerning him. This is one of them:

Soon after Washington had been chosen President of the United States, an aristocratic-looking cavalier was riding in a stagecoach when he heard a young fop remark:

"I am going to dine with Washington to-night."

At this the cavalier bristled up visibly and remonstrated:

"Young man, a youngster like yourself, when speaking of one who is as old and as famous as Washington, should refer to him as Mr. Washington or General Washington."

"Not at all," said the fop glibly. "I never would speak of Mr. Cæsar or General Alexander."



### Enough Jobs for Everybody

MRS. MARTIN LITTLETON, who wants the government to buy Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, took a party of women not long ago to Charlottesville, Virginia, to see the mansion.

While they were in the town, they ran across an old negro who had been in the habit of making his living by telling tourists stories of his personal experiences with Jefferson.

"And did you really know Jefferson?" Mrs. Littleton heard a Yankee school-teacher ask the old man.

"Yas, ma'am," replied the negro. "I done toted him about in my arms. I kin show you jes' two blocks from here de hole I toted him out of when he was runnin' away from de British in de Wah of Eighteen Hund'ed and Twelve. Dey was aftah him wif big swords."

"Here, Uncle Jim!" called out Mrs. Littleton. "That is quite enough of that talk."

"Gawd save us!" gasped Uncle Jim. "You done sp'ilt my story. You go ahead and save de home, and I'll save de heroricks of Marse Tom Jefferson."





# The Childless Woman

A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN GRIEF

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Influencing Our Children," "True Love," etc.

**M**Y DEAR THEODORA: Yesterday afternoon I received your letter, written on that sad day in your calendar, the anniversary of your little daughter's death. What you said remained with me all during the evening, all during the night, and I wake to find that it is still with me this morning.

For once, Theodora, I am going to claim the last privilege of friendship. I am going to presume to take you to task for your attitude toward life and duty. We have known each other nearly twenty years; we have loved each other, served each other, rejoiced and grieved with each other. There ought to be nothing in which we fear to speak the truth as we see it to each other; and yet I confess it is with a sinking of the heart that I speak the truth to you.

First of all, you know how deeply and sincerely I sympathize with you in the loss of your little girl. Have I not known the awful loneliness of empty rooms, their heartbreaking silences? Have I, too, not seen glimmering before me in the crowded streets figures that mocked me with their likeness to figures that walked the streets no longer? Have I not known the ache of yearning arms? Have I not hidden my eyes from the brightness of the blue sky, because of eyes that could no longer behold it? Oh, Theodora, I need not tell you that I sympathize ut-

terly with you in your grief, that I know how the first unclouded brightness of the world is darkened forever, and how the flavor of life is forever changed!

But—I will quote from your letter: "She was my all, my reason for being. What is a childless woman? She is not only a lonely woman, she is a useless woman. All the occupations with which she pretends to justify her existence are but makeshifts—such futile makeshifts! When my dear little Blossom left me, not only was life stripped barren of its joy, of its hope, of the light that danced and the birds that sang, but it was stripped of its dignity, of its worth.

"I know now that I shall never have another child, and I feel myself a failure, a discredited woman. I look with envy upon the mothers in the Italian tenements where I do my miserable 'district visiting'; children they have in abundance, though they lack food, clothes, the decencies of life. They have not failed in their mission! I find it almost possible to envy the poor creature who slinks along the street with a fatherless child held close against her dirty shawl. More and more it seems to me that not only is there no joy for women without children, but no worth, no splendor, no dignity——"

Theodora, you speak, with the poignant note of suffering, the thing that has been taught to women for ages; the



thing that the church, desiring vast dominion in things spiritual and things temporal, desiring subjects to rule and to do its bidding, has taught them; the thing that the striving nations, with their bloody need of warriors for all the battlefields of history, have taught them; the thing nature, and God, if you will, have taught them through the seed implanted in their hearts. But speaking this thing as you do, Theodora—vehemently, extremely—you have kindled a flame of rebellion in me against the teaching of the ages, and almost against instinct itself. You are morbid with grief, but you carry to its logical conclusion the doctrine that we women have all been so constantly taught—the doctrine of a dignity of motherhood so transcendent that no other dignities exist by its side. You have pushed me to deny it.

If a woman is an immortal soul—nay, if she is a human entity, a personality, an individual—she is, of herself, important in the great plan of creation, apart from her use as a mother of the race. Else—I speak with the gravest conviction, Theodora—the race is not worth continuing. If the race constantly reproduces individuals whose only use is to reproduce more individuals, then the race is not worth continuing.

It is because you have been taught, in a thousand subtle and a thousand patent ways, the reverse of this doctrine of the worth, the use of women, apart from their child-bearing function, that you are now dragging out that most abject of all existences, the existence of a woman who does not believe in her own right to be because she denies the value of the contribution she makes to the world.

Consider for a few minutes—as I have been considering ever since I read your letter—the childless women of your acquaintance, and of your knowledge outside the limits of your acquaintance. Consider, first, the unmarried women. Can you place your hand on your heart and swear to me that there is a smaller proportion of the nobility that gives dignity and worth to life among the old maids of your ac-

quaintance than among the wives and mothers? You cannot do it, Theodora. Women do not often remain single for the mere, humiliating reason that nobody asks them to marry; they remain unmarried, half of them, because they are unselfish, self-sacrificing.

I think my Cousin Sarah is a type of at least half the unmarried women of our acquaintance. She has devoted her youth and her early maturity to her parents. The time has never come when she, with her lofty ideals of the love and duty she owed them, has felt that they could spare her. Would she have been a finer woman, a higher-minded woman, if she had followed the first alluring call of sex attraction, or even the call of love itself, to the altar? You know very well she would not have been. You and I may think that she has made a mistake, but at any rate it was not an ignoble mistake. And is fineness, high-mindedness, self-abnegation, of no use, of no dignity, in the world?

Half the unmarried women of my acquaintance are like Sarah, in varying degrees. Their own families need them. Their overworked, underpaid fathers need the help of their weekly pay envelopes, their monthly checks; their invalided mothers, worn out with the rapid bearing of more children than their strength could rear properly, need them at home; the younger children need them. They are unmarried, childless, because they choose to respond to these needs rather than to seek their own immediate happiness, and that worth and dignity as mothers, about which you, Theodora, talk with such morbid eloquence. If such women have not a worth and dignity of their own, as fine, though not so joyous, as that of any mother in the world, then we have been wrongly taught, and the path of self-denial is not the path of great honor.

But, of course, I know that you and all the good people who talk and write about the grandeur of motherhood, and imply the worthlessness of all other womanly careers, do not mean to include in your strictures the unmarried



women. Even the most fanatically insistent of you will allow that in a non-polygamous civilization, in which the women outnumber the men, there must be childless women. But for the childless wives there is no extenuation in your condemnations.

I will confess at once that though I have not met the deliberately childless wife of popular reprobation, who refuses for trivial reasons the dangers of childbearing and the restrictions of child rearing, I suppose she exists. She must. Preachers could not go on preaching at her, writers writing at her, editors fulminating at her, unless they had first ascertained that she was a real person. She doesn't happen to exist in my limited circle of acquaintance, though there are childless wives there. Upon them rests not only the cloud of sorrow that childlessness casts upon even gallant-spirited women—the cloud of unsatisfied present yearnings and hopes, of unsatisfied pride in race, of an unaccompanied old age—but there is generally also the cloud of doubt as to their own use in the world—the result of æon-old teaching about the comparative worthlessness of the childless woman.

To some of these women, children are denied by what we used to call, in a more primitively pious age, the will of God. To-day the scientists have a dozen explanations of the fact more appealing to our sense of divine benigancy, to our true piety, than that, and perhaps containing more hope for another generation with its dreams of motherhood, its aspirations toward that dearest and most intimate form of human service—the service to one's children. But the scientists have not altered the situation for the grieving wives of this generation; they leave them grieving, like you, Theodora, and without help.

For such women it does not greatly matter whether science says that they owe their childlessness to some fault in their own ancestry or that of their husbands, or to their own ill-directed physical education, or to their husbands, or to the ignorance of doctors, or the care-

less experimentation of surgeons. The *why* for them has ceased to be important, however important it may be to coming generations. They have no children; and they have been taught to believe, deep in their hearts, that, having no children, they have no real excuse for being.

Then there are the few women who have chosen to be childless for legitimate reasons, not connected with their vanity or their desire for an irresponsible freedom. They may have become aware of taint, physical or mental, in their own blood or that of their husbands, which they decline to pass on to descendants. Or they feel themselves, for some industrial reason, totally unequal to the task of bringing children up properly.

Personally, you or I may think it a misfortune that these women are unable to perform a mighty act of faith, and to believe that the gift of life is greater than the gift of anything that life affords—education or health, prosperity or honor. But if you and I take this stand, we shall be side by side with the medieval churchmen demanding that women furnish subjects to swell the power of the church and with the lords of feudal tribes demanding that women furnish them with men at arms to help them in their battles; to both of these, numerical strength was the important thing. But we shall not find ourselves standing beside the modern eugenists, some of whom hope to accomplish for the masses by law what the women whom I have just described have elected to accomplish for themselves individually.

It may possibly be that the wonderful mysticism of the church, declaring in every human birth that an immortal soul was created to be saved for eternal joy and service, was truer than the hard teaching of the modern eugenist, proclaiming that society must protect itself against the breeding of the unfit. However that may be, we cannot deny to the women who choose to be childless, for what seems to them the good and the happiness of the race, a logical and an honorable ground upon which to stand.



And to all these women—the unmarried, the involuntarily, even heartbrokenly, childless, the childless from a prudence that is not selfish, yes, even to women like yourself, who are childless because their children have died—you deny an equal worth in the world with other, happier women. Not only you, Theodora, but every writer and every speaker who overemphasizes the dignity of motherhood by slurring the dignity of the childless, does this.

It is the fashion for perfervid orators and writers upon this subject to assume that all mothers are the mothers of Lincoln. They demand to know if any advocate of "careers" for women, or any woman who has succeeded in having a career, has ever made a contribution to the world like that of Nancy Hanks. Probably not. But Aaron Burr, Benedict Arnold—every traitor whose name is execrated, and all the little traitors whose names are forgotten—these had mothers as truly as Washington and Lincoln, and all the forgotten men whose labors made possible the fulfillment of the ideals of these remembered heroes.

If Marcus Aurelius, that upright emperor and philosopher who would have been canonized had the Stoics been given to the making of saints, had a mother, so also had Nero. And do you not think that Queen Elizabeth, with all the shortcomings that can be alleged against that spinster queen, gave a more valuable contribution to the world than the mother—of Lucretia Borgia, let us say? And whose name do you think shines brighter in history—that of Joan of Arc or that of the mother of Catherine de Medici?

But let us come down to times with which we are more familiar. Frankly, Theodora, do you not think that Florence Nightingale was of more use in the world than the women whose contribution to society was the bunch of political "grafters" convicted of wholesale theft a few years ago in one State, or the group of gamblers and gunmen lately exposed in another? Do you not think that Clara Barton did almost as

much for the world as the women whose sons fell wounded upon the battlefield where her brigades were busy in stanching wounds and saving lives?

When you write about the worthlessness of your life since your child has died, and imply in every line your sense of the beauty and grandeur of motherhood *per se*, do not forget that Jesse Pomeroy had a mother; do not forget that the loathsome tribe of cadets who prey upon the helpless, ignorant girls of the poor sections of the city all had mothers. The prisons are full of men who had mothers as truly as did Abraham Lincoln. So are the club windows, with their glimpses of idle, vacant, overfed faces; so are the directors' meetings at which tricky dishonesties are planned.

It is not enough to be a mother to gain honor; one must be the mother of useful and honorable men and women. And every woman who helps, no matter how indirectly, in the work of making the sons and daughters of other women all that they should be, is worthy also to stand beside the mothers in honor.

It has sometimes seemed to me, Theodora, that this deep-rooted doctrine of the high dignity of motherhood *per se*—of course, I subscribe with all my heart to the doctrine of the dignity of motherhood, unless there is stated as its corollary the worthlessness of everything else womanly—had its rise not only in the needs of church and warlike states, but in some old effort to keep women satisfied. They have always been trying to keep us satisfied, you know, the men, our rulers. And when, of old, the women felt stirring within them little desires for adventure, little ambitions for a more varied service than that of the fireside; when they said: "But I should like to take time to write a tragedy to be tried out at the great games at Athens," or, "I think I should enjoy riding behind our Lord Charlemagne against the enemy; I should love to see the banners waving and to hear the bugles blowing and to catch the flash of all the glittering armor," then, I think, the ancient poet and the medieval warrior used to say:



"Tush, tush, my dear! The work that you are doing is so much finer, so much more magnificent, than anything that we can possibly do. You must be contented to stay at home, and to let us attend to these more trifling matters of literature and war. The most honorable work in all the world is the bearing and rearing of children, and the crown with which you are crowned is far more resplendent than the dusty wreath of laurel I may win from my verses, or the bays that may bind my victorious head. There is no work so high and worthy as yours, my dear; nothing is so to be revered. So stay you at home and keep the fire upon the hearth and tend the children, and forget the foolish idea that you would like to sway an audience with your words, or to be thrilled by the sight of all the glittering panoply of battle."

And because there was a germ of truth in this, Theodora, and because women from time immemorial have been singularly susceptible to flattery—else I solemnly believe the world would not have gone on!—the ladies sat at home and took the alleged reverence of their men, bestowed upon them as mothers, in lieu of all else that the world offers. And that is why it is so hard to-day to make a woman realize that the dignity of her position as a mother rests not upon the number of her children—not upon her mere fecundity, in short—but upon the use they are to the world. And it is that which makes it difficult for them to realize that whoever is of use to the world—man or woman, spinster, childless wife, or happy mother—is equally honorable.

Suppose, my dear Theodora, that your little girl had lived. What doctrine of worth and dignity would you have taught her? Would you have said to her: "My dear one, you have a single purpose in the world. You are to bear children. You are to bear daughters and to teach them to bear daughters willingly, proudly, until the end of time." Is that what you would have taught her, Theodora?

Or would you have taught her that there is great work to be done in the

world; that there is ignorance to be enlightened, sickness to be healed, sorrow to be comforted, liberty to be gained, joy and beauty to be diffused by means of every art; and that as she and her children, if she happened to have any, bore their part in all this great work, they would be clothed with the beautiful garments of dignity?

If you can imagine yourself teaching her the doctrine that you have adopted for your own, the doctrine of the utter worthlessness of anything else a woman may do in the world compared with bringing children into it, I think you would have been guilty of a dreadful cruelty, of a dreadful atheism.

I have said atheism. I can almost see your shocked, incredulous stare. But I mean exactly that. I know no more conclusive way of denying any divine purpose in this world, of denying any divine plan in which human beings may hope to share, than that of declaring that each generation exists but to produce another generation. If this is so, then, indeed, are we but "as the beasts that perish." But if each generation, besides having laid upon it the injunction to leave descendants to go on with the world's work, has some part of the world's work—the divine plan—to carry out itself, then, each existence is fully justified. Each existence, that is, that does its share of the work.

I am not for an instant attempting to deny, Theodora, that those women who are mothers have the easiest and most joyful lot in the world. Their work is, so to speak, cut out for them. They can excuse themselves for many failures, for many shortcomings, on the ground that, after all, these things do not greatly matter; their children will make right their mistakes, will atone for their indolence. But I do not need to point out to you that this is a very dangerous attitude of mind if they are really desirous of forwarding the work of the world.

You may tell me—I almost think I hear you telling me—that this is all very well; that the exceptional woman, though childless, may be allowed to be of some service, and therefore worthy



of some honor in the world. You will allow me my Joan of Arc, my Queen Elizabeth, my Florence Nightingale, my Jane Addams. But for the rank and file of childless women you will concede no such claims to dignity and importance.

Very well, then. I, in my turn, will allow you your Mary Washington and your Nancy Hanks, and your few score of mothers who have given great workers to the world. But I will not concede you the honor and dignity of your rank and file of mothers—your bridge-playing neighbor in the house across the street, your gadabout next door. I claim for my army of teachers, of trained nurses, of district visitors, of settlement workers—yes, even of girls and women at work in shops and stores and factories for their own livelihood and the helping of their families—for all these mere privates in the great army of unselfish workmen I claim worth and the honor due to worth; even as you claim it for all the unknown mothers of men and women who will never be known to the great world, but who will keep the great world going. There is no worth or honor in anything, Theodora, except in service, whether we are looking at men or women, mothers or childless women. And where there is service, no matter how lonely, there is always dignity.

Of course, women will tell you, and truly, that to go childless through life is not to have the full experience of life. But experience of life is a complex and mystic thing. There is an experience of renunciation as well as an experience of fulfillment. There is an experience of poverty as well as of riches. I doubt if Lazarus, picking the crumbs from Dives' table, was aware of his limited experience of life in comparison with the full-fed Dives. There is no experience of life worthy of the name which is gained by snatching for it, and there is no deprivation which,

gallantly accepted, may not be mysteriously transmuted into part of life's mystical treasure.

As I reread this letter I am almost appalled that I should have dared to write it to you, crushed as you are by grief. But it is because you are crushed, too, by a feeling that has none of the holiness of grief—the feeling of the worthlessness of your existence—that I have dared to write it. I shall not mind it though it makes you very angry, provided that, after the anger is passed, you discern the germ of truth in my contention. Service, usefulness, with their concomitant of dignity and even of joy, are possible to every one, to you as well as the rest. Do you remember that poem of Stevenson's that we used to read when we were girls? I think you must have forgotten it. It is the one that begins, you know—

If I have faltered more or less  
In my great task of happiness—

and he goes on with a list of the common, everyday things that should have stirred him to happiness—books, and his food, and summer rain. And then he prays that if these have failed to keep him at his great task, he may be made to suffer:

Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take  
And stab my spirit broad awake.  
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,  
Choose Thou, before my spirit die,  
A killing pain, a stabbing sin,  
And to my dead heart run them in.

It is the prayer for all of us—that prayer to be saved from the dead heart that no longer feels the great task of happiness—of service—within it. It is the prayer for all of us, declaring as it does that every common experience and every deprivation must tend to the same end—of happiness, which we who live under the modern dispensation believe to be joyous, conscious service. Think it over, Theodora, and try in time to forgive me the lecture I have read you.

Your old friend,

M.

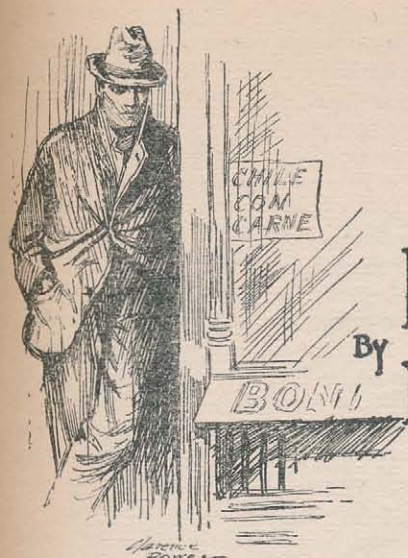




# BOADICEA *and the* GREEN ELEPHANTS

By  
Margaret Belle  
Houston

Author of "The Poet and Peggy," "Suzette," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

DAPPER MELONE, gazing from his solitary window, looked grim.

This was a remarkable feat for Dapper, considering how slight and pleasant was his face. He had often looked dignified, and on especial occasions "correct"—after the manner of his trousers, his behavior, his letters home. But this correctness, like the trousers and the behavior, had been no part of the actual Dapper. It had been an external application, worn with approving consciousness, and laid aside when he went home to bed.

The grimness, on the contrary, arose from within. He felt it gnawing at his soul, but he knew not that it sat upon his face. Dapper was contemplating suicide.

It was raining. The gray university buildings loomed through a dark and icy veil. More distinctly, the line of shops opposite rose from the swimming sidewalk, their loose-hung signs and irregular little roofs seeming to shiver in the rain.

Dapper was gazing at a man, the only human figure in this effluvial scene. He wore no overcoat, his hat was drawn forward as if to protect his face, and he leaned listlessly beneath the drooling eaves of Boni's chili stand.

"Poor devil!" the fellows usually remarked at sight of this mournful derelict. And once in a way a passing friendly hand clapped him upon the shoulder, a friendly face smiled into his. At which the "poor devil" would start, laugh a bit, and edge away.

But Dapper never "poored" anybody. "Down and out, eh?" said Dapper. "Simple enough. Poison's cheap."

By which you will see that he was a very strong-minded person. And now that he stood arraigning the Fates on his own score, now that he had begun to reap his own unconscious sowing, singularly enough appeared this ghost of Ernest Abbott, this echo of past admonition, "Poison."

True, their dilemmas, as Dapper reminded himself, were not the same. Far be it from him to go about *looking* like Ernest Abbott! But when it came to a point of having reached one's wit's ends, then elbow to elbow they stood, looking over the edge—Abbott, with an aimless tranquillity, letting the rain run down his hat brim, Dapper grimly, as I have said. For Dapper was considering his own advice. Very well. Poison.

But he would see Florine Shaw to the german first. It should be a success,



that german, as glorious as he could make it, and he knew a thing or two about germans. Then he would take cyanide of potassium.

It was swift, he understood, and not disfiguring. He would lead the dance with Florine, see her safely home, and an hour later be laid, like Paolo, beautiful as a sleeper, at her feet.

It was inevitable that unless he died speedily he must flunk in his biology. This would undoubtedly mean a slow death at the hands of the folks at home. They expected incredible things of him. And he would not—he positively would not—take Boadicea to another german.

Boadicea was the sole daughter of Professor Hodge. Professor Hodge occupied the chair of biology—venerably. Boadicea occupied her father's heart—entirely, exclusively, supremely.

For the bugs and fishes amid which he dwelt Professor Hodge had a deep and abiding esteem, but Boadicea he unremittently worshiped. The fishes he had known always. She had come to him late, quite past the years, it appeared, of his better judgment. Her real name was Winnie, but Winnie was inappropriate.

Dapper recalled last year's german. The president of the Green Elephants had commanded him to escort Boadicea. It was Dapper's initial year at the university, but he had been sufficiently enlightened to decline. The president had offered him a scarfpin and a pink bath robe. Dapper had yielded. He had taken Boadicea.

He remembered her sitting back against the wall. She wore a lavender dress with a dutch neck. Boadicea in anything so ingénue as a dutch neck! She was gazing with perfect calm about the room, slowly fanning herself. The room was aflutter with fresh frills and flowers, rustling with eagerly sought programs, musical with deep voices and light laughter. But Boadicea was alone.

Dapper had plowed here and there, forward and back, his brow drawn, his bosom panting. He had been rushing Boadicea's program. Before the evening was over he had managed to fill it,

all but two dances. The triumph had cost him the greater part of his transferable wardrobe, including the scarfpin and the pink bath robe.

But at the next meeting of the Green Elephants he had been openly commended. They had made him president.

Dapper remembered shaking everybody's hand and contriving a neat little speech in which he thanked everybody, and took the oath of office with modest dignity. He had felt very sure of himself. Anybody in his home town could tell you— But, then, leading a german, as it transpired, was not the sole duty of the chief of the Green Elephants.

One of his obligations was to find an escort for Winnie Hodge—or take her himself. This particular feature of the office had caused one or two presidents to shrink from the distinction of a second term. The unwritten law, however, had never been abolished, for Boadicea's triumphs and failures palpably affected the temperature of her father's laboratory.

Dapper was not a shining light in Professor Hodge's class, and any flagrant neglect of Winnie bade fair to extinguish him altogether. Now there was the bi-exam almost upon him. And there was the german to-morrow night. And there was Florine Shaw.

Dapper had tried. Let no man suppose that Dapper had not used every method of coercion known to the traditions of the Green Elephants. Promises, prayer, profanity, he had employed each in turn without avail. If there was any man willing to qualify for martyrdom at any price, he belonged to the outer darkness of some other fraternity, and such was not expected to attend the german.

Only a Green Elephant could bring Boadicea, and the Green Elephants had stampeded en masse. In his room—this room—they had stampeded, one hour before and in full view of every cherished object he possessed. Dapper looked sadly upon the upheaval of wardrobe and bureau drawers rejected upon the bed. Even the silver hat





"I'll speak out straight. We want the distinction of having you for a member."

brush and the blue lamp shade his aunt had embroidered with cat tails to cheer his midnight toil; even the old dress suit—perfectly good—the Turkish bath slippers they had all admired—everything was there. And it had failed.

If he had not already asked Florine — No. Let him not deceive himself. Even if he had not asked Florine, he would not take Boadicea.

He would rather take the potassium. There came a knock at the door. "Come in," growled Dapper.

And in walked Cedric Vaughan, the president of last year.

"Heard the news?" asked Vaughan.

News! Could Boadicea have died suddenly? Dapper opened his mouth. He could not speak.

"Ernest Abbott has turned in a perfectly corking thing on Bismarck."

Dapper leaned against the window. "Abbott. Bismarck," he repeated.

"What's the matter, you ninny?" asked Vaughan.

"Did you say Winnie?" Dapper breathed.

Vaughan looked at the array on the bed. Then he remembered. "Sit down!" he commanded.



Dapper sat down meekly on the blue lamp shade.

"I'm talking about those eulogies we had to write for Rutledge. I did Napoleon—'nough to make him shake down his monument, turning over. You did Lincoln."

"Oh, yes!" murmured Dapper.

"Well, Ernest Abbott has turned in a thing on Bismarck that's—great. Rutledge is tearing his hair over it. Read it out to the class, by George! Then he got up and poked Lincoln in the stove."

"I like his nerve!" said Dapper.

"Put Napoleon out of the window. Can't blame him. They didn't belong in the room with that Bismarck. Why, man, it was alive!"

"That bum?"

"Who? Oh, Abbott. He's a bum now, all right. Wish you'd seen him four years ago."

"Saw him just now—front of Boni's. Seedy as the dickens. Three times a day he goes to Boni's. Rooms at a lean-to down the street. Dogged if I wouldn't go away—or take poison."

"I asked him once why he didn't go away," said Vaughan thoughtfully. "I remember he never had to dig. Sort of found things lying around on the surface, and brought 'em in to class all worked up and done over. It was great. Spent money like a prairie fire, had friends from here to yonder—everything. By George, it was worth the price just to watch him! Then one day the rich uncle got wind of his ways, and cut him off without a cent."

"So he dropped," said Dapper, glancing again toward the figure beneath the shop eaves. The man had turned now, and was passing into Boni's.

"Well," said Vaughan, "it didn't look as if he meant to drop. It looked as if — By George, it looked as if it had sort of sobered him up and set him to work. But there was a girl somewhere that—"

Dapper looked up.

"There was a girl back where he lived. He had her picture in his watch, and I remember he had sent her a ring—a corker. Well, right on the heels of

the uncle's little stunt—right on top of it—the ring came back."

Dapper shook his head. "Can't blame the girl," he said.

"I do blame her," answered Vaughan. "Letting go like a turtle soon's it thundered. Might have held on to see if there was anything in him. But no. And so when I asked him once why he didn't go back, he sort of laughed and said: 'Go back—to what?' And so he drifts, poor devil, but the tide doesn't seem strong enough to carry him away from here. Wish you'd heard that Bismarck."

Now it happened that the bed on which Dapper sat was placed alongside the window at which he had been standing. From this window there was a view of the sidewalk opposite. And down that sidewalk passed at this very instant—Boadicea.

If the reader has gathered that Miss Hodge was old or hideous, or in any way repellent to the eye, he has leaped at unwarrantable conclusions. She was tall, which was rather unwise of her, and she was about twenty-four. She had a broad forehead, and she brushed her hair back from it without curl or compromise.

Her eyes were gray and very clear. She looked straight at you, with no dropping of the lashes, appearing to weigh what you were saying, and to be thoughtful of her own answers, an attitude rather disconcerting in light conversation. And society conversation, as every one knows, is seldom anything but light, so Boadicea being a weight upon its ambient waves, sank. She sank down, down, fathoms down. She was unpopular. When a girl contracts this affliction there is nothing for it but a change of climate.

However, Miss Hodge did not care to change. She liked this climate very well, a little rainy at times, but one could always wear overshoes. And she bowed from beneath her umbrella to the sad young man who stood watching her from his window.

"Found anybody for her yet?" asked Vaughan.



Dapper turned on him savagely. "Suppose you——"

"Thanks. I told you this morning I'd like to oblige you, considering the bath slippers, but I've had a date since last year. She's been down to Kerri-gan's to match the fringe for her dress. It's pink this year."

"She's all ready, of course," groaned Dapper. "And nobody's asked her yet."

Vaughan laughed. "Nobody ever asks her until the last minute. Hear the sleet! There comes Abbott out of Boni's. Wonder if he's heard about Bismarck?"

Dapper said nothing. Suddenly he started up. "Call him!" he cried quickly. "I want to see him."

Vaughan opened the window and called. The man closing the door of the chili shop looked about him. Presently he saw the two at the window and crossed the street, his shoulders stooped beneath the pelting rain.

Vaughan closed the sash. Then he turned apprehensively.

"What are you up to?" he asked. "He's not a Green Elephant."

"He shall *be* one," said Dapper, "and you're going to stay by me in it, too." Then he opened the door. "Hello, Abbott," he said cordially. "Come in!" And he pushed forward one of his two chairs, which the newcomer drew nearer the fire.

"Smoke?" asked Dapper. The other declined.

"It's plain you haven't heard the news," and Dapper took the remaining chair as he crammed his pipe.

"The news?" asked Abbott.

"About Bismarck, I mean."

Abbott smiled whimsically. "Oh, yes, I heard."

"Good thing, that," said Dapper. "University's proud of you."

"Well," said Abbott in his slow way, "I wrote that before I came to the university. Happened to find it, and thought I'd hand it in."

"I see. Whenever you did it, it's good. And that's what I wanted to see you about." Dapper examined his pipe bowl, then he added, quite simply:

"You've been elected to membership in the Green Elephants."

Vaughan rose suddenly from his seat on the table and walked back to the window.

Dapper went on: "I think you realize that we do no——" He hesitated. "The Green Elephants do no——"

"Proselyting?" suggested Abbott, with his slow smile.

"Well, yes. However, in your case it's different. We want members who do things. I'll speak out straight." Dapper laid his pipe on the table, and looked the visitor in the eye. "We want the distinction of having you for a member."

"Are you quite certain it's a distinction?" asked Abbott presently. "Have you by any chance read the effusion you mention?"

"I know what the faculty have said," answered Dapper. "That's enough."

"I appreciate the honor," said Abbott gravely. "And the fact that I am entirely unable to accept it does not lessen the obligation it confers."

Dapper made a mental note of this little speech. It would come in handy some time, he felt sure. "If you mean——" he began gently, aloud.

"I mean I'm broke," said Abbott harshly. "Flat broke. I thought you knew. I thought everybody knew. I don't deserve membership in anything on the ground you mention. The paper was nothing—an accident. But you fellows—it's decent of you. I'm—I'm much obliged."

He rose, pushing his chair in place with a fumbling hand.

"As for the financial obligations," said Dapper, "whenever the society solicits a member—which is rare—it accepts no dues of any sort."

Abbott favored him with a look—a long look from dark, slow-moving eyes.

"Ain't that right, Vaughan?" Dapper added, in rather a warning tone.

"Right-o!" said Vaughan at the window.

"Now, what we want you to do," hastened Dapper, "is to wake up, to get out of yourself." Then casually: "You





"They are waiting," murmured Florine. "Shall we start the grand march?"

are to come to the german to-morrow night as a starter."

Abbott broke in with his low, stumbling laugh. "Now I know you're joking," he said.

"Joking?" from Dapper. "Why, if you don't show up at the german, I don't know what the society'll think."

"If I do show up they'll change their minds about my being a distinction, I can tell you that." He laughed, a sudden laugh that grated on Dapper's nerves. "No, we'll cut out the germans. But I'm much obliged."

"Look here," said Dapper; "I've got a dress suit you can have, if that's

what's stopping you. There it is—on the bed. It'll fit you, all right. If it don't—take it to the tailor. Whatever else you need, go to Kerrigan's and get it. Charge it to me. Why, man, the society authorizes me to get you in at any price."

"My stock has risen overnight," said Abbott, after a moment.

"And here's ten dollars for roses or whatever you select. For my part, I like roses. You know we've got a girl for you."

It was the pinnacle to which Dapper had so laboriously ascended. Who could guess from his casual—almost careless,



tone, that his head was whirling with the height, with the sickening fear that the rain-battered man before him would open the door and go, leaving him lying amid the rocks from which he had climbed?

Abbott's eyes clouded, shifted, fell. "I'm not going," he said in a low voice. "I tell you we'll cut out the—the social side of it. I'm much obliged."

"Why, man!" cried Dapper desperately. "I never thought of your refusing. I told her—and she's expecting you."

"What's her name?" in the same low, beaten tone.

"Hodge," answered Dapper faintly. "Miss Winnie Hodge."

"I know her father," said Abbott. "He's failed me twice."

"Well, the girl likes you, all right." Dapper laughed almost boisterously. "Don't she, Vaughan?"

"Shame on you!" said Vaughan, without turning.

"I'm not sure," said Abbott, looking from one to the other of them, "whether you're trying to make a fool of me or to find out if I'm one already."

"Forget it, man, forget it," soothed Dapper. And he lifted the bill from the table, and laid it in Abbott's hand.

Abbott spoke after a moment. There was something like apology in his voice. "It's hard to believe anything's genuine, after a time," he said. "Even—even a treat." Then he folded the bill carefully. "I suppose," he added, "I'd better call there to-night—on Miss Hodge. I've never met her, you know."

"No," said Dapper, in a panic. "It's not necessary. Fact is, she has some sort of engagement for to-night. She'll understand."

He folded the dress suit, and pressed it into Abbott's arms. "The tailor—my account—Kerrigan's—anything you want," he mumbled rapidly, closing with a fervent "God bless you!" a form of adieu that Dapper had never employed before.

When the door had closed on the visitor, Dapper sank into a chair. "Anything I can do?" asked Vaughan.

"Go by the express office!" shouted

the president, "and see if those favors have come. Hanged if I know what that committee's thinking about."

Alone, he went to the mirror, and, seizing his brushes, began rhythmically to smooth back his hair. He was cultivating a pompadour. "All for you, Florine!" he breathed to the lady in the silver frame before him. "All for you!"

Whether he meant the pompadour or the things he had been telling Abbott, Florine did not inquire. She merely smiled back inscrutably after the manner of Mona Lisa and all lesser sisters who are having their pictures made.

It was the next night. To be exact, it was that tense moment when Dapper was midway in the ritual of his white tie.

The door opened without preliminary knock, and Abbott entered. He wore the regalia of full dress, even to a flower in the buttonhole. His face was darkly flushed, his eyes burning. For a full breath he did not speak, but stood, his back against the door, his flaming eyes on Dapper.

"You drunk?" demanded the object of this scrutiny. Then, more amiably: "What's the matter?"

"Matter?" repeated Abbott, through clenched teeth. "What sort of game's this you've been playing?"

"Game?"

"Yes, game! Electing me to your old society when you've never been able to see me on the street, calling it a distinction and all that rot—*proselyting*—so you could use me for work you wouldn't do yourself."

Dapper, facing him, fumbled with his tie. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"I know what *you* mean. I thought it was out of pity you took me in. I thought in the beginning it was some fool joke. It never occurred to me that you were hiring me—yes, hiring me, and without my knowledge—to take a girl nobody else would take—that somebody had to take. Why couldn't you tell me what you wanted? Why couldn't you play straight?"



"Who's been telling you this rot?" asked Dapper.

"Telling me? I heard 'em talking on the street. I was on my way to her house—like the fool I was. *They* don't want me in it, they were howling—but they appreciate *your* predicament. 'Get's harder every year. Girl's deucedly expensive. Could have built us a clubhouse on what she's cost us, all told.' Then they laughed. Why shouldn't they laugh? The joke's fine."

"Good Lord!" mumbled Dapper piously, and began to brush his pompadour.

"Yes," said Abbott, "the joke's fine, but it's not finished. That's what I'm here for, to finish it."

He peeled off the dress coat, and stood facing Dapper as if prepared for an even more intimate encounter. When he began, however, rapidly to unbutton the white vest, Dapper's alarm grew desperate.

"Here, man!" he cried, clutching this second garment and holding it together in sudden frenzy. "Can't you see it's too late now? I phoned the girl yesterday—she's waiting for you. Think of the girl, man! Think of the girl!" And he stood gripping the lapels of the vest and gazing imploringly into Abbott's eyes.

Abbott shook him off as if he had been an overattentive poodle. "You can phone her again," he remarked. "You can tell her I'm suddenly ill. The gentle art of fabrication is apparently not unknown to you. As to your clothes, it occurs to me that I must take your advice. I should probably be arrested if I went away without a few of them." He rebutted the vest. "The money you lent me I would return now, but as it happens I have spent it."

"I'll take the roses and call it square," growled Dapper.

"Unfortunately, I didn't invest in roses. You failed to specify roses definitely, if you will remember. So I paid the money to Boni. I owed it. However, you shall not go unpaid." He opened the door, adjusting the lapels of the dress coat with a certain rigorous nicety. "Perhaps some one else will be

thoughtful enough to hire me—who knows?"

Dapper made a final lurch for his dignity.

"I am sorry——" he began. But the door banged suddenly upon his words. He flung the hairbrush upon the floor. Its fall drowned the remark he made, which was just as well. The landlady in the next room was accustomed to things dropping around the house, but as she had wearily explained, "there was some *words* as no lady could bear."

"Now I suppose I've got to phone," said Dapper, and he kicked the hairbrush under the washstand. Then he went downstairs, his tie dangling.

Boadicea answered the call herself.

"Sick? Why, I thought I saw him only a little while ago in Kerrigan's."

"He's been taken suddenly. He has attacks."

"Has what?"

"Attacks."

"Oh! I'm sorry. I read his paper on Bismarck. Father says he's a genius."

"H-m-m-m-m! Maybe so. *Something's* the matter with him. Anyway, he asked me to let you know. I'm sorry, too. I"—Dapper swallowed bravely—"I wanted a dance."

Then he fled as if he feared she would hook him with the telephone receiver.

Had any Green Elephant striven for Boadicea as he had striven? Had any met with so ignominious a defeat? He had conceived a scheme Machiavellian, had blazed a trail for all other panic-stricken presidents, only to see its fruition crumble at a touch.

And *they* had betrayed him. In the first place, they had refused to help him; then, when he had fought his own way out, they had laughed and betrayed him—him, their president. And what in thunder were they laughing at? He hadn't contrived the thing for their amusement. And why Abbott should get so thundering mad—— The man was a fool!

He hadn't told him what he wanted because he preferred to spare his feel-





*"She came into that room with her soft dress trailing about her, and her long cloak falling from her shoulders, her face so beautiful, so kind——"*

ings. All right. The game was up. Boadicea could stay at home. The bixam could go hang! As for Dapper, he was going to lead that german with Florine. He had forgotten all about the cyanide of potassium.

The tie was not a success, but the hour was late, and, clapping on his top hat with unDapperlike brevity, he dragged on his coat, snatched up a florist's box, and, leaping downstairs, slid into the waiting carriage.

"Colonel Shaw's," he said; "quick!"

Now, Florine was blue-eyed and radiant-haired. She had all the softness, all the playful, purring prettiness of a

white kitten. In her presence, what man could brood on the annoyances of a Boadicea? Riding with her, Dapper was in a heaven of supreme oblivion to all outside the carriage doors.

Leaping from his seat, lest a lackey serve her first, he lifted his lady to the step, gazing a rapturously possessive moment upon her satined and spangled beauty, folded in swan's-down; then they passed into the lighted doors of the ballroom.

On the threshold Dapper gasped, drew back. Florine turned her starry eyes to his. "It is nothing," he said; "nothing at all," and they went on. But



Dapper had seen more than a vision, and he glanced back twice to make sure.

In the corner, not far from the door, 'neath the shade of the sheltering palms, sat Ernest Abbott and Boadicea. He was looking at her program, making what might have been crossmarks upon it. She was watching him as she drew on her gloves. Boadicea always drew on her gloves in the ballroom, rather laboriously. She appeared to dislike gloves.

"What powerful arms she has!" thought Dapper. And great Heaven! He had told her he wanted a dance! How reckless of him! How unnecessary! But then everything was going wrong to-night.

"They are waiting," murmured Florine. "Shall we start the grand march?" So the german began.

After supper, Dapper moved haltingly from balcony to palm, and along the chairs in the ballroom where the wall-flowers usually bloomed. He meant to give Boadicea that dance. He had said he would, and he meant to stay by it. There was nothing mean about Dapper.

But Boadicea was not to be found. Perhaps she had left early. He had not seen Abbott rushing her program. Well, that, at least, was not his fault. And he drew a long breath and went back to Florine.

But Boadicea had not gone home. On the way downstairs she appeared suddenly by his side, and said good night.

"It was a beautiful german," she added.

Dapper thanked her tranquilly. He thought himself that it had been a beautiful german. And already Boadicea was the burden of the next president.

Yet he was to feel her weight again. Not her weight, indeed, but that after-ache that sometimes follows when a burden has been laid aside.

It was a month later. Vaughan was in Dapper's room, his feet on the table, a book in his hand. Dapper was bending a profound scowl on a page of Livy. He had skinned through on bi, but here was Lat. Verily, man is of few days, and full of trouble. It was a

glorious day outside, a day of white sunlight with an icy tang in the air, a day for a gallop across the hills.

A knock at the door. A firm, rapid knock.

"Come in!" muttered Dapper.

And in walked Ernest Abbott.

He looked like the day outside. There was a buoyancy about him, a glow—something glad and fresh and new. Was it the clothes he wore? They were irreproachable. Dapper conceded that, and rose reverently. Vaughan shifted his feet and shut his book.

Abbott laid a bundle on the table.

"I'm sorry I forgot to return these," he said. "It's the suit you lent me. The bill at Kerrigan's in your name I have paid. The carriage that night I didn't use. For the loan of the ten dollars"—he laid a bill on the table—"I am very much obliged."

"I don't understand," said Dapper. "You know these were not loans. Even if you regard them as a br—as payment, you did your part. You earned them."

"That's it exactly," said Abbott quietly. "I did not earn them. I refused them on the conditions they had been offered upon, and went home. That closed the deal."

"But——" began Dapper vaguely. He was fingering the bill, rather glad to get it back, but averse to giving it an open welcome.

"I went, I am aware," finished Abbott. "But I didn't take the young lady. She took me. She came in her carriage and got me."

Dapper glanced at him and smiled. Vaughan shook with laughter.

"The incident is no doubt amusing," said Abbott reflectively. He turned to Dapper. "You had told her that I was ill. That I had—attacks. She had seen me sometimes at Boni's. She had gathered that I was—down and out. It wasn't hard to see, was it? She thought that night: 'It's the blues, that's what it is.' And she came. You see, you were not far wrong. I do have—attacks. And she was right, too, in her surmise of what they were." He stopped.



Then suddenly: "If you had been singled out as a thing so mean—so wretched——"

"Oh, it wasn't that bad!" said Dapper.

"You might have had an attack, too. I left you, you remember, wearing your clothes, and came home. I didn't go up to my room. There are times—there were times—when I didn't dare be alone. Anyhow, I was downstairs in the hall. Cold as it was, I had thrown off the coat again—I couldn't bear the feel of it—and I sat on the sofa looking into the dying coals and listening to the carriages as they rolled past to the ball."

"Cinderella the second," murmured Vaughan.

"Yes—only worse. Then suddenly one of the carriages stopped. I heard it scrape the curb, and a moment later the door opened softly and she came in. I had seen her before, not knowing who she was. I had thought only that she was very tall. But now she came into that room with her soft dress trailing about her, and her long cloak falling from her shoulders, her face so beautiful, so kind——"

He stopped a minute. Vaughan looked at Dapper. He was not laughing now. Dapper was fingering the money still, folding and unfolding it without looking up.

"I can't tell you how it happened, but another minute and she was sitting beside me in the cold. She is not tall, you know, when you see her close. It is the way she carries herself. She sat down there on the little, worn sofa beside the fire.

"I am Winnie Hodge," she said, "and I want you to come with me, no matter how you feel. It will do you good."

"And all I could think of was: 'I don't care for parties.'"

"I don't, either," she answered, "but my father is unhappy when I am left out. And the boys have worked so hard to get me there. They like to keep him in a good humor."

Vaughan and Dapper exchanged a quick glance that was like a shout.

"I go for his sake," she said. "You must come for mine." And then, as I didn't move, she added, very softly: "Aren't we a little alike, we two? And yet, in our loneliness, we can manage a little—that our shadow does not fall on some one else." That was all. She was thinking of her father.

"Well, sir, I got up as if I worked by a spring. She lifted the coat from where I had flung it, and helped me into it. She has strong arms, but how gentle! What could a man not face for a woman like that? With others he might drift—over the precipice, perhaps. With her, if he let fall the oars, she would take them up and row him in.

"To think of her being hawked about year after year! To think of men being bribed—you started to use the word yourself a minute ago—bribed to let her go with them—to dance with her! And she knew—she knew it all the time, and went—and smiled—lest her shadow fall on some one else."

He looked from one to the other. Dapper put the bill in his vest pocket. There was silence.

"I came home that night and wrote. I wrote till it was light outside. She had asked me to. I gave the thing to her—it was nothing. She sent it away. She asked for my other things. I scraped them together. She typed them, and they went off, too. That's how it happens I can pay you. They sold. I've accepted an offer from the editor of *Holt's*. It's all her work. I wanted you to know. We leave tonight for New York."

"We?" It was Vaughan who put the question.

"Winifred and I. We were married an hour ago."

Dapper had been standing, and he sat down.

"I congratulate you," said Vaughan, rising. Abbott gripped his hand. Dapper looked up—extended his own tentatively. The husband of Boadicea might not care to see it. But Abbott seized it without reserve.

"It was you," he said; "it was you who gave her to me." He paused, hesitated, laughed shortly. "There is one



other thing I hadn't meant to tell you—but I'd like you to know the whole of what you've done for me, and if ever I can be of any service—you understand.

"That day in front of Boni's—the day you fellows called me up here—it was all up with me. Out there in the rain I had just made up my mind. The thing doesn't take courage as people seem to think. It's when our courage is all gone that the decision comes.

"Well, I went in out of the rain and gave Boni a ring—a little ring I had managed to hold on to through everything. I didn't owe him that much—but he'd been my friend, and somehow I couldn't do the thing comfortably without settling up with him. By the way, your ten dollars got it back—the ring, I mean—and it met—a happier fate. I had just come out of Boni's, and was making for the drug store——" He stopped, laughed again. "Sounds funny telling it," he remarked.

But Dapper breathed hoarsely: "Cyanide of potassium!"

Abbott started, laughed again. "How'd you know? Well, it's the simplest route if you're going to take any. Besides, I'd pawned the gun. Anyhow, I didn't get it. You called me and I came up. And then—you gave her to me. That's all I mean to remember. Good-by."

"Good-by," they echoed, and he was gone. There followed the sounds of wheels departing. They went to the window. It was Boadicea's carriage on its way to the train.

"Do you know," said Vaughan thoughtfully, "I have always had a lurking suspicion that we didn't appreciate Boadicea?"

Dapper turned on him savagely. "Appreciate her or not, I've worried my ears off over her." Then, after a pause, slowly: "But—what do you know about Abbott?"

"Well," said Vaughan, taking up his book and returning his feet to their former eminence, "I think we may safely assume he's resigned from the Green Elephants."



### The Wanderer

**L**OST: a foolish heart, that needs must go a-straying  
 Down the fern-fringed byway through the pine-dusk dim unrolled,  
 To the stretch of open meadow, and the gypsy children playing,  
 And far beyond the alder tops, the sunset's gleam of gold.

Lost: a foolish heart that lingered close and listened  
 To the chance-flung gypsy jargon by the twilight-kindled fire,  
 While the bangles of the women in the red light caught and glistened,  
 And the night wind in the pine tops pleaded sweet of old desire;

Heard the rattle of the headstalls, and the gypsy ponies stamping;  
 Glimpsed against the darkness, the firelight-flickered tents;  
 Sensed the thousand sights and sounds that loiter round the camping;  
 Breathed the fir-sweet wood smoke, and the brooding hemlock scents.

Lost: a foolish heart that strayed across the heather,  
 Loitered down the hemlock glade, and threaded through the fern;  
 Needs must go a-faring in the May-white wander weather,  
 And found a gypsy caravan, chance-set beside the turn.

MARTHA HASKELL CLARK.





# Goring Ends the Reign of Terror

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "On Second Wives," "The Communal Commissariat," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

EXCEPT in the eyes of Aline Emerson, Goring did not look like a person capable of ending any sort of a reign of terror, even the small one that thrilled Dempster Falls during the winter of 1909.

He was a tall young man, but scarcely as broad as his length warranted; and, less heroic still, his garments shared this peculiarity of his breadth, and always seemed too short and scant. He had a shock of stiff, unruly, blond hair that was always standing bolt upright from his forehead, as if in surprised protest at the things his eager, spectacled, blue eyes beheld in the world. How shocking these things were, one had only to read the columns of his brother's struggling little paper, the *Dempster Mercury*, to know.

Elmer Goring had come to Dempster Falls at his brother's call for help. George, the elder, had settled in that prosperous manufacturing city some ten years earlier, had married a blooming country girl from the hills outside the town, had accumulated half a dozen children, and a moribund weekly, which he promptly changed into a daily, still threatened, to be sure, with dissolution on account of its failure to meet expenses, but no longer afflicted by auto-paralysis.

Day after day, week after week, the *Mercury* thundered in juvenalian tones and terms against the political corruption which, it declared, was eating the

heart out of Dempster Falls. Then, suddenly, at the end of the ten years, physicians, whom George Goring at first firmly believed to be in league with the municipal powers of evil, told him that he must drop his work and go to Arizona unless he desired to die within three months.

Ernestina, his wife, had allowed him no choice in the matter, or he might have chosen to stay in Dempster Falls to test the truth of the decree, and to die in harness; the Gorings were cast in fanatic mold. But when George objected to his wife that his life work must inevitably be lost if he was obliged to leave the *Mercury* in the hands of his few subordinates—for he was not only proprietor, but managing editor, editorial writer, business manager, and city hall and police reporter—she bade him send for Elmer.

George's summons found Elmer eking out a somewhat hungry journalistic existence in Chicago, to which spot he had drifted from the newspaper office in Michigan where he had served his varied apprenticeship. He responded with an alacrity prompted equally by strong family feeling and intense love of an idealistic battle; for George had told him that Dempster Falls was in the midst of a "Reign of Terror," and that the "Carnival of Vice" could be ended only by the unceasing vigilance and the undaunted attacks of the *Dempster Mercury*.



It was a prospect not to be rivaled in charm for Elmer, and he arrived full of enthusiasm, to be carefully coached by George in all the details of that "Carnival" and that "Reign" in the midst of which George was as a voice crying in the wilderness.

To a less heroic soul, the fact that he almost immediately met Aline Emerson and fell entirely, hopelessly, and overwhelmingly in love with her might have been saddening. For, according to George, the very bulwark of civic corruption in Dempster Falls was Aline's father, its perpetually reëlected mayor.

Old Joe Emerson, George had solemnly instructed his substitute, was the dragon at which the St. George of the *Mercury* office must forever tilt, disdainful humbler, though more obvious, enemies. Not the police commissioner, not the chief of police, not the detective bureau, not the board of aldermen—though all these were in truth vicious and dishonest, as seen by Editor Goring—were to be assailed, but the mayor, whose creatures they were, whose bidings they performed, and whose rewards they received.

To Elmer Goring, however, the fact of falling in love with Aline Emerson only gave strength to that doughty sword arm of his. He is thrice strong who knows his weakness; Elmer, perceiving love for his enemy's daughter as a weakness, probably designed by the Evil One to render him false to his brother's charge, and to his own convictions, redoubled his attacks upon the mayor. Unconsciously Elmer had always wanted to be a martyr, and here was a glorious martyrdom offered to him—to crucify the longings of his heart for the sake of Right, and Truth, and Brotherhood, all in the largest-sized capitals.

Aline, who was handsome and healthy, earnest and intelligent, prided herself upon being also "modern." It seemed to her that nothing could be more modern than for her to fall in love with her father's opponent—quite forgetting that the thing had been done since the days of the Capulets and Montagues, and probably long before. At

any rate, fall in love with him she did. How she contrived, without sacrifice of traditional feminine decorum, to let him know the fact, has nothing to do with the story. How she contrived to win her mother's consent to the engagement is easily told; it was a mere matter of a tall, fresh-colored, wholesome, self-assured, and dominant young lady's bullying a fidgety, little, self-distrustful old one. But there was nothing new in that, for Aline had always bullied her mother, in the perfectly good, affectionate, American fashion, from her cradle.

The question of winning her father's consent was naturally somewhat more complicated. But the mayor of Dempster Falls was not in charge of his bailiwick when all these things occurred. He had broken a record for indomitable hardiness by falling ill just a little before George Goring went to Arizona; and when he fell ill, he did it thoroughly, making up for much lost time.

There had been consultations of physicians and surgeons at his bedside; there had been a series of extensive and expensive operations, and, finally, there had been a decree of banishment for six months. When the Reign of Terror and Elmer Goring simultaneously struck Dempster Falls, the mayor had been a month absent from city hall; and when Aline coerced her mother into receiving the awkward, badly dressed young enthusiast as her fiancé, four months of the mayor's exile had passed.

It will be, perhaps, noted that Dempster's Reign of Terror is described as coincident with Mayor Emerson's absence from his office. At first glance, this might seem to prove the falsity of charges against the mayor, of misapprehension in regard to his commerce with the underworld of the city over which he ruled. But such a conclusion could never be reached by the well-instructed readers of the *Mercury*.

The mayor, it was admitted—even pointed out by that sheet—was too intelligent a man to permit the perfect riot of robbery, and of unveiled disorder, which his lieutenants, no longer guided by his intelligence, permitted. They, so





*The roar of a train approaching the bridge drowned the sound of the steps behind him.*

said the *Mercury*, "took the lid off; but it was the mayor who had permitted the seething mass of offense to brew under cover while he was at home."

The particular fresh manifestation of the criminal spirit to which the *Mercury* had reference, was the sudden increase of burglary and highway robbery within the confines of Dempster Falls. A police long paralyzed by deliberate indifference and laxity in regard to slightly more subtle forms of crime,

found themselves totally unable to cope with the new situation—such was the *Mercury's* explanation of the fact that house after house had been robbed, and no successful clew to the robbers discovered; that whoever rode upon the street cars or walked upon the streets after nightfall was likely to return to his home minus his watch or his wallet.

It was not all the mere sensation mongering of a disgruntled newspaper. Even the prosperous sheets of the town,



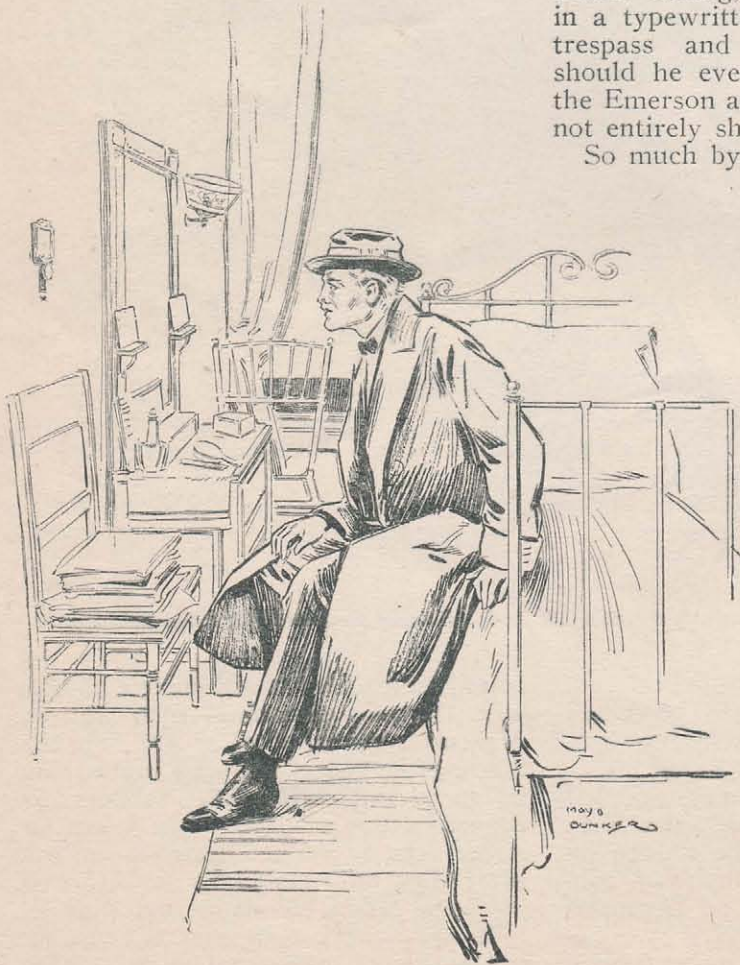
even those that belonged to the political ring that had so long ruled the destinies of Dempster Falls, were obliged to report the succession of outrages, were obliged to comment upon the unsafe condition of the streets. So many women were robbed that only the direst necessity induced one of them to go out unaccompanied at night. Citizens began demanding to be sworn in as deputy sheriffs in order that they might legally carry firearms with which to protect themselves.

Things were in a very sad condition, indeed, for every one except the editor pro tem. of the *Mercury*, when, finally, the six months of the mayor's banishment were over, and he returned to his

own realm to strike fear into the hearts of his lieutenants by his criticism of their mismanagement of affairs during his absence; to chill his wife's blood with dread of what he would say to her concerning Aline's engagement; and even to give that sprightly girl herself a few minutes of trepidation, in thinking what was before her.

She, however, comforted herself with a reflection that her mother was unable to make—namely, that we live in a modern world, that we are moderns, and that the tyranny of parents is merely a quaint survival of the antique. Even when Mayor Emerson showed his total lack of appreciation of the requirements of modernity by refusing to see Elmer Goring, and by threatening him, in a typewritten note, with a suit for trespass and various other things, should he ever dare to set foot upon the Emerson acres again, her belief was not entirely shaken.

So much by way of prologue. Now for the story.



*Elmer sat down suddenly in front of it and stared.*

Elmer was the last person to leave the *Mercury* office that night. He had seen the copies of the early-morning edition on the wagon that carried them to the railway station. He had received from the hands of a faithful newsboy the first editions of the papers that he called his rivals, thereby, in their opinion, greatly flattering himself. He had congratulated himself upon a new feature that he had introduced into the *Mercury*. In a half column of the front page, where certain of his contemporaries printed a résumé of the day's news, he printed a résumé of



the day's crimes in Dempster Falls; and not a child was robbed by a larger child of his penny for candy or of his nickel for bread without due notice being given in the *Mercury*.

That the *Mercury's* circulation was growing under this policy, was, he assured himself, much less important to him than that the city was waking up to its condition. There had been a citizens' meeting of protest that very night, which he had attended in the twofold capacity of speaker and reporter.

Altogether, as he slammed his desk cover down upon a heterogeneous mass of copy paper, proofs, and police reports, snapped out the electric light, and made his way down through the dusty and disorderly silence of the office to the street, he was rather well pleased with himself.

The *Mercury* office was in that region of Dempster Falls locally known as "across the tracks." The *Mercury* had never been rich enough to follow its contemporaries out of this old, unkempt, badly paved, badly lighted section of the city to the brilliant new center. The district was known as Alderman Flynn's. Except for the *Mercury* offices, a few lumber yards, and a few warehouses, the industries of the locality seemed to be concentrated in the grogshops. Alderman Flynn was a wholesale dealer in spirits, which may have had something to do with the favorite occupation of his ward.

Elmer walked along rather slowly when he first left the office. After the heat and the vitiated air of the printing establishment, the cool night winds were restful to him. No one else seemed to be abroad in the dark, dingy streets, and he went along peacefully, thinking a lover's night thoughts.

Suddenly he heard behind him a heavy, but rapid, tread. He was approaching a great arch of stone and brick over which was built a railroad bridge. He was not deeply interested in the fact that some one else was abroad at half past two on the dark winter morning. He was thinking of Aline and the splendid bravery of her

dark eyes and the inspiring courage of her words when they had met that day for a moment in the library; and also—he was human, though the Champion of a Cause—of the way in which her hair curled about her ears and her neck.

The roar of a train approaching the bridge drowned the sound of the steps behind him. He had just turned into the dark arch, and was crouching a little toward one side to escape the sudden gust of wind that met him as he turned, when his follower caught up with him, brushed against him, and strode ahead through the darkness of the tunnel.

For half a second he thought nothing of the jostle—the wind was sudden and strong from the direction that he faced, and any one might crowd another in bending before it. But as the figure emerged into the light of a street lamp beyond the tunnel, Elmer seemed suddenly to recognize it. Stout, tall, alert, well dressed—it was the very figure that one of the victims of a holdup had described in that evening's meeting as belonging to the gentleman who had recently taken from him his well-filled wallet at the point of a pistol.

Elmer's wallet was not well filled; it was most unlikely to be at any time an object of attack. But he put his hand quickly toward the pocket in which he carried his watch. It was gone.

Elmer quickened his pace, broke into a run. He did not stop to reflect upon the physical disparity between him and the man whom he was pursuing. He was merely angry, merely meant to have his watch back. Not only was it a good watch, but it had been his father's, presented by the men of his father's regiment upon their disbanding at the close of the Civil War. He had not the slightest intention of losing that watch.

It seemed to him that, as he ran, the figure ahead quickened its pace. It did not, however, either take ignominiously to its heels, or disappear in any of the dark little houses of the street or escape in the open, littered lots that divided them. Panting, for he was no sprinter, he caught up with it at last, just as it turned to face him.



"Give me that watch, you—you!" breathlessly demanded Elmer, enforcing the command by the display of the revolver that he was carrying. "And come along with me," he added as his wind returned.

The overtaken thief complied with the request to the extent of handing over the watch, but he twisted Elmer's hand from his shoulder in such a way as almost to sprain the wrist. The pistol fell clattering to the ground, and the big man was off on a run with an agility surprising in a person of his build.

Elmer was in no condition to follow. He had to be content with the recovery of his watch. He walked home more slowly, pondering upon the amusing fact that the thief had seemed better dressed than he, the upright citizen. He would lay the case before the police in the morning. It wasn't worth while to try to start them out to-night, especially since he had his watch.

He climbed the stairs to his room in his lodging house. A dim light burned in the hall outside his door; he was a favorite with his landlady, and this was a mark of her regard. He went into his room, lit the gas beside the bureau, and the first object upon which his eyes lighted was his father's watch, ticking peacefully upon the hook of an absurd little frame that his Sister Bessie had given him the Christmas before. The melodiously ticking chronometer registered two-fifty o'clock. Elmer sat down suddenly in front of it and stared.

By and by he drew the other watch from his pocket. He let it lie in the hollow of his hand, and stared at it. It was undoubtedly an excellent and expensive watch of which he had that night robbed a harmless pedestrian under the railway bridge in Alderman Flynn's seventh ward.

He sat still for a few minutes, mentally cursing the absent-mindedness that continually drove him to leave his house not entirely clad—minus handkerchief, gloves, even necktie—or without his watch or his important papers or his money. And then he spent another imprecation upon his tricky fancy, which had convinced him that he had

looked at that very watch of his father's five minutes before leaving the office. It must, of course, have been the office clock.

A sudden hope leaped up in him. Perhaps this watch also bore inscriptions by which its owner could be immediately traced without the intervention of jewelers and their records. But there was no inscription, not even a monogram anywhere about the full-jeweled, eighteen-carat bauble, which now burned the hand that held it. Well, there was nothing for it but to make a round of the jewelers' establishments in the morning, and to try to discover to whom they had sold the excellent timepiece on the noncommittal black fob so like his own.

And then he thought how the robbed and plundered citizen might have already lodged a complaint against him, with a description, and how, even now, vengeance might be upon his trail. He had been in Dempster Falls only six months; he had incurred powerful enmities, made few friends; memories of the various Raffles of fiction of whom he had read occurred to him, and a cold sweat bedewed his brow. Dempster Falls had many eminent citizens who would rejoice to see in him another "gentleman highwayman."

Mayor Emerson, although he had been out late the night before, appeared early at his breakfast table. In answer to his wife's inquiries, he said that he had finally seen Flynn the night before, and he volunteered the information that Flynn was a shortsighted fool. He also instructed the waitress to reach the police commissioner for him by telephone, whether that gentleman was at home or in his office, "where he should be," said the mayor viciously, attacking his grapefruit.

When the police commissioner was found and was reported to be at the other end of the wire, the mayor proceeded to address him, and, there being no one present but the wife of his bosom, he spoke his mind freely.

"You've let things get away from you in fine shape," he informed his aid.



"Here I come back to find a full-blast campaign against the administration, with everything to back it up, for once. And as if that weren't enough, I can't go downtown of an evening to consult with one of the crowd but what I get held up and robbed on my way home. I'm not only going to lose my office on account of these blamed highway robberies you've let get away from you, but I've got to lose my watch as well!

"Pretty situation, ain't it? What do you think of yourself? Have it for me again within twenty-four hours, will you? Just let the people hear that, and this administration will have a blacker eye than ever! The police know enough of the thieves to find the mayor's watch, but not other people's? Hardly! Never mind about the watch. But this thing's got to stop. Do you get me? It's got to stop!" And the mayor returned to the bacon and eggs which had by that time reached the table.

So it happened that by the time Elmer Goring had discovered the owner of the watch that he had seized from a defenseless man at the point of the pistol, the edict had gone forth. Members of the light-fingered gentry had been instructed to take the first trains out of Dempster Falls; a few of those who presumed to regard the order as a pleasantry and to test it by a little further work in their chosen line, soon found themselves proving its authenticity by



*Feverishly protesting that he would never cease to give battle to the forces of evil.*

serving terms in jail. The harvest was over.

It took Elmer Goring two days to trace the ownership of the watch. They had been two days of misery, in which he had awaited the clap of the hand of the law upon his shoulder, in which he had not seen Aline, and in which he was quite unable to put his usual force into his daily invectives against the municipal officers. Nor was his situation bettered when, on the afternoon of the second day, he discovered, by a double



coincidence, that the man he had robbed was Mayor Emerson.

The fact was proved not only by the records upon a jeweler's books, but also by Elmer's attendance at a hearing of the board of estimate and apportionment, at which the mayor presided. Valiant a spirit as he was, he could not run the awful risk of remaining in the council chamber to report the proceedings; he hurried back to the office and sent one of his few subordinates to cover the meeting.

When the mayor was summoned from his comfortable dinner to receive the suitor for his daughter's hand that evening, he obeyed the summons explosively, noisily, tyrannically. Nothing less modern than his attitude could be imagined, as Aline, with regretful superiority, observed.

But when the storm of abusive inquiry with which the old-fashioned master of the house saw fit to greet Goring had subsided, the mayor was rendered entirely speechless by having his caller dangle before his eyes his watch upon its black silk fob. Astonishment having deprived him of the power of speech for a few minutes, Elmer had a chance to make his explanation.

The mayor was an intelligent man, as his less intelligent lieutenants knew. He was not without a sense of humor also. A grim smile curved his smooth-

shaven lips at the close of Elmer's recital.

"I dare say there are a lot of people in this town who would swear that you were not so far wrong when you took me for a thief," he observed without bitterness. "But you were wrong, you see; and they are wrong. It was an amusing blunder; I hope you will also find it an instructive one."

The mayor rose, to signify that the interview was ended, but he reckoned without the modern Aline, who entered the drawing-room and informed him that this was as good a time as any to let him understand that his antiquated notions of the connection between private and political life were passé, superseded by a new code.

"Besides," she said, "I'm not at all sure that it wouldn't be good politics for you to let me marry the editor of the *Mercury* with your consent. Of course"—negligently—"I'm going to marry him. But I really think that your consent would be good politics."

The mayor looked at her with some admiration. "That's not such a bad idea," he said.

And across Elmer Goring, elatedly seizing Aline by the hands, and feverishly protesting that he would never cease to give battle to the forces of evil, but that it would be the system, not the man, that he would attack, the mayor and Aline smiled a compact.

### The Shell That Frightened Dewey

ADMIRAL DEWEY and his wife were stopping, on one occasion, in a New York hotel when Mrs. Dewey brought in a small boy who wanted to have the honor of speaking to the great sea fighter.

The admiral, finding that the little fellow had a pretty fair knowledge of the battle of Manila, described it to him in great detail. In fact, the manner in which he glowingly pictured how the day was won in that fight would have brought him big money on the Chautauqua lecture platform. Finally, he paused to see whether the boy had been duly impressed.

The child shifted from one foot to the other, smiled in a bashful manner, ran his hand into his trousers pocket, and pulled out a lot of peanuts.

"Have a peanut?" he said to the Nelson of the navy.

The admiral was nonplused for a moment. Then he smiled, and, patting the boy on the head, explained:

"No, thanks, my son. They are the only kind of shells that don't agree with me."





# Trailing Henry

By Frank X. Finnegan

Author of "Mrs. Worpington's Windfall," "Dan Cupid, Aviator," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HAYGARTH LEONARD

WHEN Mrs. Armbruster hurried to the door in answer to the sharp rattle of the electric bell, hastily untying her apron and tossing it over a faded sofa in the back parlor, she was fervently hoping that she would face an applicant for the second floor back.

It had been empty for three weeks, since Madame Merrill, the snake charmer, had suddenly vacated it with her rent five weeks in arrears, and nothing for Mrs. Armbruster to hold but seven full-sized snakes. It had taken less than an instant for the landlady to decide that holding them was out of her line, and she had allowed the Serpent Queen to go her way, with a little, hopeless sigh for the fifteen dollars she would never see.

Every summons of the bell thereafter was a feeble harbinger of hope, which fled to the four winds invariably when she opened the door to confront the gas collector, or the young man from the butcher's, or some other representative of the increased cost of living; and this time was not an exception. On the doorstep stood an alert youth, whose long, rangy neck was not even partially

concealed by the gleaming celluloid collar at its base, and whose blue serge suit gave back the spring sunshine like a mirror.

When Mrs. Armbruster opened the door, he stepped confidently forward, and thrust a large and able foot against it, plunging into conversation at the same moment, with what was intended for a genial smile.

"Good morning, madam," he said. "If I may have just a moment of your valuable time, I would like to show you what we are doing in the line of artistic enlargements from cabinet photographs. Don't confuse what we have to offer with the ordinary work of that kind," he continued hastily, as Mrs. Armbruster began an impatient shaking of her head. "It will take but a moment's glance by a person of culture like you to recognize the great advance that has been made in this line."

"Don't bother yourself," she interrupted, as he began tugging at the fastenings of a portfolio under his arm. "I don't want any pictures enlarged. I don't care to see 'em. I haven't got the time."

She essayed to close the door, but the



impassive foot still rested firmly against it. She scarcely felt equal to walking in and leaving the door open with the confident young man in the aperture, and she hesitated in annoyed indecision.

"Just let me show you a sample of our work," he went on, fumbling among the life-size crayon pictures in the carrier, "and I'm quite sure you will agree with me that it's far ahead of anything——"

"It's no use showing me anything," she acidly interposed. "You're only wasting time. I haven't any photographs to enlarge, and I haven't any money to waste on foolishness. So you might as well not bother——"

She stopped short, staring at the crayon portrait that the persistent young man in the celluloid collar had finally extricated from the package and held before her enticingly. It was a picture of a dashing gallant, with bushy hair roached up at a fascinating angle, and mustaches tightly curled at the ends. A horseshoe stickpin in the scarf bespoke the sportsman, and an Elk's button in the coat lapel proclaimed the original of the picture to be "one of the boys."

After the first look of incredulous surprise, Mrs. Armbruster's thin lips settled into a straight line, and she folded her work-worn arms with decision.

"Where did you get that picture?" she demanded, with a nod toward the crayon Adonis.

The eager salesman, who had read in her first expression amazement over the marvelous art offered by the Peerless Copying Company, put his knee against the half-open door, and tried to step inside. He was determined that no one who had made that first incautious step on the road toward becoming a customer should escape.

"Oh, this is just a sample of the regular work we turn out," he said. "I carry several pictures of both ladies and gents, so you can select the style you want. Now, this class of picture always——"

"I don't care anything about your styles and your classes," Mrs. Armbrus-

ter persisted. "I want to know where you got that picture."

He began to have a dim suspicion that the art treasure was stolen from her private collection.

"Why, the manager gave it to me when he was making up this portfolio," he explained.

Mrs. Armbruster eyed him narrowly, as if she had her doubts of that statement.

"Oh, he did, did he?" she snapped. "And who is the manager?"

By this time the young man in the shiny serge suit was struggling in strange waters and out of his depth. He had become accustomed to rebuffs of every conceivable degree, and insult rolled off him like the pattering of hailstones. But this inquiry was along such unaccustomed lines that no portion of the speech he had painstakingly learned in the offices of the Peerless Copying Company seemed to fit it, and he had recourse to the simple truth.

"I don't know what you're getting at, lady," he floundered; "and all I can tell you is this here picture is one that was made in our studios, and probably left on the company's hands for some reason or another. Maybe it wasn't paid for. That's where most of these samples come from, to tell you the truth. We don't have 'em made up just to show to customers—they're regular enlargements. The manager is Mr. Mc-Glue, and he put this enlargement into this portfolio as much as two months ago, when I was starting out. If there's anything wrong I can give you my word that I ain't——"

"I didn't say there was anything wrong," the landlady reminded him, "only I happen to be sort o' interested in that picture. If you'll be good enough to tell me where I can find this Mr. Mc-Glue I'll go downtown and see him."

The agent hesitated, with the firm's card half drawn from his pocket, and looked at her grim face doubtfully.

"If you had in mind ordering an enlargement in this style," he said, holding out the picture with the fascinating curled mustaches again, "I could take your order now——"



"I haven't anything of the sort in mind," Mrs. Armbruster assured him, still studying the pictured features with attention. "There's nothing I need less than crayon enlargements. But if you don't mind leaving that picture with me, I'd like to take it down to Mr. McGlue's office when I go."

"I don't think I could do that," he said doubtfully; "especially as you ain't a customer. If you ordered an enlargement——"

"I'll be responsible for it," she said stiffly. "This is my rooming house, and if the picture gets lost or damaged, I can pay for it, all right. You just leave it with me, and I'll explain to the manager when I see him. You can get it again from him to-morrow. You see," she added, "it's that picture I want to talk about, and I ought to have it to show him, so he'll understand."

She held out her hand for it confidently, and the young man regretfully released his hold on it, and handed her the card bearing the address of the Peerless Copying Company.

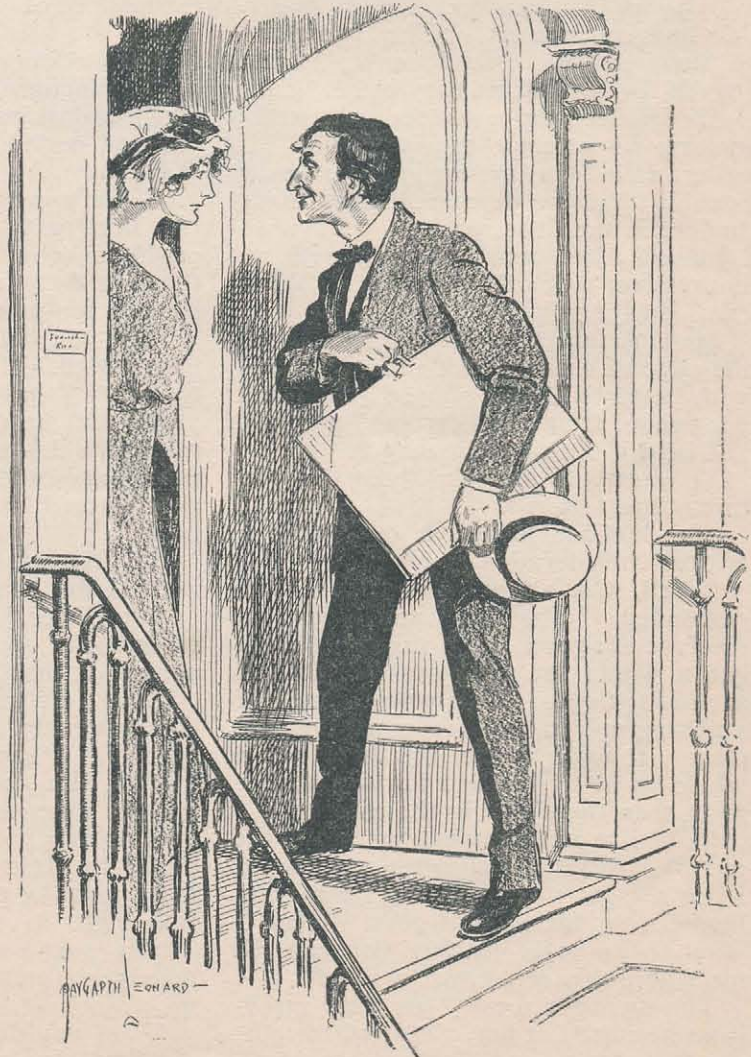
"Well, if it's any favor to you, lady," he said, "you can take it for a couple of days. I'll be around this way again in a week or so, and I hope you'll keep me in mind if you hear of any of your friends wanting any enlargements. You can see the grade of work we do——"

He had incautiously removed his foot from the door, and

Mrs. Armbruster saw her opportunity to retire in triumph.

"Thank you," she said. "I'll keep you in mind. I'll leave the picture with your manager. Good morning." And she deftly closed the door on his flow of eloquence.

Mr. Hugh McGlue, portly, puffy, red-faced, and argumentative, sat behind his desk in the office of the Peerless Copying Company that afternoon, ready for trouble. He was not particular whether it came by way of a



"Don't bother yourself," she interrupted. "I don't care to see 'em. I haven't got the time."



slothful and negligent solicitor who preferred to starve rather than hustle for business, or through an irate customer who had the nerve to find flaws in the art standards of the Peerless Company. In either instance, Mr. McGlue was there to meet it, combat it, and emerge triumphant.

To him entered a meek and brow-beaten young man from the outer office, announcing that Mrs. Armbruster was in waiting for an audience, and that she carried a package that looked suspiciously like one of their peerless crayon enlargements.

"Humph! Another kicker!" Mr. McGlue commented. "They're comin' in bunches. Well, send her in. I can handle 'em as fast as they come."

He glanced up and nodded curtly, making no attempt to rise, when his caller sidled in through the narrow opening that the depressed clerk made for her in the doorway.

"Good afternoon," he said, with an impressive lack of geniality. "What can I do for you?"

Mrs. Armbruster seated herself on the edge of a chair beside his desk, and with nervous fingers slipped string and wrappings from the borrowed portrait, and held it out to the manager.

"I wanted to ask you about this picture," she faltered.

Mr. McGlue looked it over with a critical consideration.

"Well, what's the matter with it?" he demanded. "The lights and shades on the face are good, and I think the artist got a whole lot of expression into it around the eyes. That wasn't much of a photograph to work from, in the first place. It looks to me like there was a whole lot better likeness in this enlargement than there was in the cabinet."

"Oh, I'm not complaining about the picture," Mrs. Armbruster interposed when she got a chance. "It's a perfect likeness, so far as that goes. What I want to know is whether you can tell me where this gentleman is now."

The manager rotated his cigar rapidly as he stared at her, and tried to fathom the reasons underlying this remarkable statement.

"Say, you haven't got this place mixed up with police headquarters, have you?" he said then. "What's the idea of comin' in here askin' about this party? This isn't any detective agency—we're in the picture-enlargin' business."

"I understand that," his caller said, with some asperity—it did not require much to induce Mrs. Armbruster to strike back; "but, seeing that you people made the picture, I thought maybe you could give me his address. It's my husband," she added, bringing the corners of her thin mouth down into the expression of relentless severity with which she was wont to meet explanations concerning overdue room rent.

The manager continued to regard her and the dashing gent of the horseshoe pin and curled mustaches with a puzzled frown.

"I don't get you yet, lady," he said. "If this party is your husband, you ought to know more about where he is than we do. Just because we copied a picture for you—"

"But you didn't copy it for me," she interrupted. "That's why I'm coming to you. I haven't seen him for four years, and he didn't have any enlargement like this made at that time, so he must have ordered it since; and I supposed you'd have the address on your book."

Mr. McGlue laid down his cigar, and nodded his head wisely.

"Oh, I see," he said. "He just got up and quit one day, and never showed again. Is that it?"

"And left me with two dollars and eighteen cents," Mrs. Armbruster added bitterly. "You see, I hadn't only known him about three months when we got married, but I never dreamed he'd do any trick like that. He was an awful handsome man," she concluded, looking at the portrait in her lap with a little sigh.

"He wasn't a bad-lookin' feller," the manager admitted; "but you never can go on looks."

"You wouldn't believe what that man did, Mr. McGlue," she continued, fixing her accusing glance on the Armbruster





*"I sure will. How did you come out with friend husband?"*

features that smiled up at her so confidently. "He took four hundred dollars of my money that I'd saved—and it's no easy thing for a woman to save any money keeping roomers, counting them that don't pay up and the cost of help and all—and he was going to buy out a cigar store with it. And what did he do but run away and leave me to face the world with that two dollars and eighteen cents I happened to have left after settling the grocery bill.

"That was four years ago, Mr. McGlue, and not a sign of him have I seen or heard of since until your agent come around to my place this morning, soliciting for pictures to be copied, and showed me this one for a sample. It looks like there was a Providence in it. So I asked your young man to lend me the picture to show you, and see if you could tell me off your book where I can find him."

She concluded with the ribbons and flowers on her hat all of a-tremble, and Mr. McGlue looked at her curiously.

"What are you goin' to do if you find him?" he asked.

"Do?" Mrs. Armbruster repeated,

drawing her lips a shade tighter even than they had been. "I'm going to drag him to jail, that's what I'm going to do! I haven't toiled and starved and searched and hunted all these years for nothing. If I find Henry Armbruster, even if he's on his dying bed, I'm going to have the law on him and see him behind prison bars if it's the last breath I draw!"

"Whew!" whistled the manager. "You're goin' the limit, ain't you? Well, it's none of my funeral, and I guess he deserves all that's comin' to him at that. I don't want to mix up in your troubles, Mrs. Armbruster—"

"Armbruster!" she corrected stiffly.

"That's what I meant," he went on. "I'm willin' to give you the last address we have for this party, providin' the company isn't dragged into it any ways. He must owe us for this picture, or it would have been delivered. I don't mind sort of gettin' square for that."

From the books in the outer office, the browbeaten clerk produced the address of Henry Armbruster, and the additional information that Mr. Armbruster had been sued by the Peerless



Copying Company for twelve dollars, the price of the portrait with an ornate gilt frame, that judgment had been returned against him, and that no property upon which a levy could be made had been found by the sheriff. With which enlightening data Mrs. Armbruster departed, leaving the crayon on the manager's desk.

"Lemme know how you come out, will you?" he asked, as he held the door open for her. "I'm sort of curious about that cuss, and, besides, you know, we've got a judgment against him."

"I'll telephone you," she assured him, "and I can't thank you enough for getting the address. I've been thinking about it day and night for four years."

Two days later Mr. McGlue's telephone jingled, and a piping feminine voice inquired for him.

"Yes, this is McGlue," he snorted. "Who is this?"

"This is Mrs. Armbruster," she said. "I just happened to remember I told you I'd call up and let you know."

"Well, how goes it?" the manager inquired, almost genially. It was a trifle hard for Mr. McGlue to drop his professional manner on short notice.

"That was the right address," Mrs. Armbruster said. "I've found the house, all right, but I haven't got hold of him yet. They tell me he's out on the road, and won't be back until Saturday morning. I didn't believe 'em at first, and I've been staying around to see if he went in or out, but I guess now he's out of town."

"I suppose you'll be right on the job Saturday morning," Mr. McGlue suggested.

"I certainly will!" she snapped. "And he'll get the surprise of *his* life! Imagine the nerve of that man, Mr. McGlue, living in a boarding house right here in town, where I might run into him almost any minute. I never let on to the woman that keeps the place who I was—I told her I was from his old town, and that I promised his folks to look him up. Wasn't that the best thing to say?"

"That was all right!" the manager

commended warmly. "You couldn't do better if you was canvassin' for enlargements. How did she take it?"

"I don't think she suspected a thing," the deserted wife said earnestly; "and I was scared all the time I was talking to her for fear she might know something, and write him a letter warning him to keep away, or something like that. But I'll get him Saturday! I'll come down on him like a thousand of brick as soon as he gets to town."

"I've got a man rooming at my house that's taking one of these mail-order courses in the law, and I was asking him last night what my rights were—I had to tell *somebody*, and he seemed the most likely that wouldn't charge me—and he told me I'd better take out a warrant for him charging desertion, and have him locked up right away and then sent to the penitentiary for ten or fifteen years. But he says I can't do anything about the money, because a husband is allowed to steal from his own wife under the law. Doesn't that seem queer to you, Mr. McGlue?"

"It is pretty tough," he admitted. "But I guess that's the law, all right. Well, I hope you land him Saturday. Stick to it, Mrs. Armbruster. You've got all the best of it now, after waitin' four years. Good-by," and he hung up in the midst of her farewells.

The manager was rather expecting a message from Mrs. Armbruster Saturday afternoon—he felt sure she would hasten to share her triumph with him, and he was not surprised when her voice came over the wire:

"This is Mrs. Armbruster. Mr. McGlue, I wish you'd have that picture I left there fixed up in a nice gilt frame, and send it up to me," she said cheerily. "The same kind of a frame you put on it the—the other time, you know."

"I sure will," the manager said. "Want it for a kind of a souvenir, eh? How did you come out with friend husband?"

"Oh, I was going to tell you about that," she cooed. "Henry came home with me to-day. Twelve dollars was the price, wasn't it?"



# Her Dwelling Place



## by Grace Margaret Gallaher

Author of "The Sisters," "Sinners All," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

SILVY, you packin' up? Silvy—  
Sil-z-y, you there?"

The ancient voice, thin and dry as a husk, searched the house like the shrilling of an insect. Silvia dropped her broom to let lie where it fell across the doorsill, and ran, in her own phrase, "like she was goin' to the fire."

In the little dark room under the eaves where the white-covered bed made a spot of light, a wisp of a creature lay against the pillows, brown-faced as a nut, with eyes in which all the strange, wise experiences of over ninety years burned hot and ardent still.

"It's long after sunup an' I ain't heard a dite o' packin'. You puttin' my clo' into the baskets?"

Silvia's voice was keen with the stress of young living, but her words were gentle:

"Granny, dear, we ain't but just through breakfast. We——"

"More shame to you!" the indomitable old voice. "I'd 'a' had a week's washin' out by now."

"You wait till 'long in the middle o' the day 'fore we move you," soothed the girl. "There's a sight o' work to be done here yet."

The dark eyes flashed irefully. "You think I be a-goin' to waste a smitch o' my good month here? You pack up

my clo', I say, an' finish reddin' up by an' by."

Inspiration flashed in her harassed granddaughter. "You won't need your gownds, granny; just your night-clothes."

"Shall, too, need 'em! I ain't a-goin' to lie clamped onto no bed onct I get up to my own dwellin'!" The ancient voice quivered and snapped with purpose.

Silvia gave up this—as every other—contest against a creature so frail, so strong.

"I'll be a good girl, granny." She tried a small laugh. "An' you be a good girl, too, an' take doctor's stuff."

She began to lay garments out of the press, the fiery eyes watching her to detect any show of insincerity. Presently the quieting potion wrought its way; the sick woman slept, her face, unlighted now by her quick soul, ancient as time itself. Her granddaughter smoothed the coverlet with work-hardened, caressing hands, and stole from the room.

Out under the grape arbor, where the sunshine dripped greenly gold upon the stone flagging, an old man smoked and mended a harness, working stalwartly for a space, then sliding away into dreams of all the years that had been. He was a mighty figure of



strength still, beside whom his parched and withered wife seemed as his mother; but the smiling old face he lifted to his granddaughter was as sweet and void of all speculation as a baby's. Silvia, knowing perfectly his helplessness to aid, yet cast herself upon him of old habit.

"Grandsire, she wants to be moved right now."

"Sartain she does. Wealthy has always got to have things happen right now," he chuckled. "She ain't a-goin' to miss out any o' her own proper time. Le's see, 'twas when you was a baby, warn't it, she h'isted me off on a stretcher?" His serene face clouded as he groped in memories.

"'Twas mother, sir," she supplied gently.

"Yes, yes, 'course 'twas Polly. Where was I? Wealthy, she whipped me right out o' bed—me all tied up from the kick o' a colt, so as I couldn't stir han' nor foot—an' jounced me off to her own abode." He laughed richly now in a great, rumbling bass.

"But, grandsire, she's terrible sick; her heart——" She stopped in the futility of it.

"Oh, she'll make it through, Wealthy will." Still in his mirth. "Once she puts her hand to the plow, ain't no turnin' back for her." He set to work again valiantly, as if spurred by this rehearsal of his wife's prowess.

Silvia flung out her hands impatiently, and, warned of the folly of speech, ran down into the garden, pleasant with the first tender young sprouts of early vegetables. Beyond the garden stretched away the wide, brown spaces of newly plowed land, and in the clean furrows the scriptural figure of the sower going forth to sow outlined itself against the pale spring sky, swinging in a steady rhythm. She leaned against the stone wall, and signaled him urgently.

The farmer finished his row before he strode over to her, saying, in a mild, slow voice:

"You want somethin', Silvy?"

"She *will* move to-day," she flung at him acutely.

A smile all humorous sweetness played over the man's tanned face, boyishly thin still in the hollows of cheek and temple; Silvia's excitements always moved his easy, unstressful nature whimsically.

"So she's set on movin', eh?" he repeated after her.

The girl gave her characteristic flare of the hands. "Don't you *sense* anythin', Ross?" she scolded, in a shrewishness given to him only. "She's dyin'. Doctor says she can't hold out more'n a day or two now, an' this awful movin' will kill her right now."

He leaned on the fence beside her. "Is it any great matter whether she goes to-day or to-morrow?" he pondered, more to himself than to her.

"You ain't got proper feelin's." Yet she knew that he had always cherished his grandmother in a tender affection.

"It's just that I deem 'twould be kinder to let her go to-day, contented, in her own home than to keep her down here a few hours longer, frettin' an' pinin' for it."

"Her home!" Silvia sniffed, in a high scorn. "You tell me what you call this house, where she's lived over thirty year, if it ain't her *home*?"

Ross smiled in a wise understanding. "'Tain't ever been just exactly home to her, Sil, an' you know it. The other house was built for her specially by her father in a grand style; that's the home o' her heart."

"Fiddle-dee-dee!" intensely. "You're just a chip o' that block yourself."

His slow, brooding gaze traveled across the acres of good red earth furrowed by his own plow to the ring of wood beyond, trimmed by his own ax, then to the plot of ground in the wind-sheltered hollow, where, touched by the sunlight, the gravestones of his forefathers shone white. As far as eye could see, the land was his, won for him from the wild beast and the savage by those battling, enduring forefathers.

His keen young face softened to a still dreaminess; his eyes darkened with a sense of the mystery of life; his lips quivered at a taste of its sadness. The



love of the soil, watered by the blood of his race, enriched by their bones, deep as the Saxon's, poetic as the Celt's, smote his heartstrings till they vibrated achingly. He forgot the girl at his side and her mockery, forgot place and time.

"For my part," the girl cut across his mood crisply, "I give thanks I was born to the city, in a house that was tore down the next year, an' have jaunted round through every corner o' the Union since."

He stared at her, still in his daze.

"An' the sights o' houses I've camped in! Mother used to say the hymn that suited her condition was:

"An' nightly pitch my rovin' tent  
A day's march nearer home.

"I'm all trained to wed a Methodist preacher." She laughed out in sly malice at some thrust of her own.

"You ain't goin' to be given the opportunity," he retorted upon her, his mystic mood cast off like a garment. "The Reverend John Wesley Appleton is sparkin' Cindy Barrett zealouser'n a revival meetin'."

"She don't count; old 'nough to be his mother," undaunted; then, her cares folding round her again: "But, Ross, what I goin' to do 'bout granny?"

"Just you wrap her up good an' warm, an' have her bed to the other house ready, an' I'll carry her there in my arms like she was a baby. She won't take any kind o' harm."

"You wouldn't try to coax her to stay here a spell?" her eyes anxiously on him.

"You couldn't. An', poor ol' soul, let her have one more day in her own home."

"My country!" in pale exasperation; then, in her unconscious manner of leaning on his fidelity: "You'll be long in 'bout a couple o' hours, won't you? She'll be waked up then, an' all in a tew to be off."

Rosswaine LaMay watched the girl's quick pace through the garden till her slim figure was lost in the shadows of the arbor. "Pretty little creature!" he told himself fondly, as he went back to his furrows. Silvia Tate's thoughts

were not on Rosswaine at all; he was there, kind and sure, always. Her mind was fretted with the problem of her patient, and with the deeper one of human nature's perversity.

"Why didn't grandsire act up good an' solid seventy year ago, an' make granny live to one house, whether or no?" she thought, with the conviction of youth that if only some one will *do* something, presto! the perverse heart will be at once changed. She studied, as if for the first time, the old, old house, bowed, scarred, and blackened with the years; and her resentment flowed away. "Who'd blame granny, though, cribbed up here?"

Old Abijah LaMay still sat in the dappled light, the uncompleted harness swinging in his fingers. Silvia laid a hand on his shoulder upon impulse.

"Grandsire, did you an' granny contend consid'ble 'bout which house you'd live in 'fore you settled down to this seesaw performance?"

The happenings of last week were blurred in the old brain, the memories of half a century still bit sharp; he answered with a rich relish in this twice-told tale.

"Pretty nigh busted up our partnership, Polly." He thought her her mother, dead years ago. "Wealthy, she's sot—all the Holtons be; an' Abijah, well, he's a LaMay, an' they've got a kind o' name round these parts for holdin' onto their point." He laughed proudly in the strength of his breed. "She had a good, new house, wife did, just heired from her father; 'bout the handsomest dwellin' in the county 'twas deemed then. Had a newfangled butt'ry, water pumped right into the kitchen, a fine new cook stove, shiny as fury, an' I don't know what all. This little old place didn't show up any too peart 'longside."

Again Silvia considered her grandfather's house dispassionately. In its best days it had been no more than a poorly built cottage lean-to, the windows ill-matched, crookedly set, the doors sagging away from their walls, and now in its old age it was forlorn and sodden. Of the interior only a





*Out under the grape arbor an old man smoked and mended a harness.*

woman could speak adequately, its exasperatingly slow Dutch oven, its dark, low cuddy-hole of a pantry.

Old Abijah smiled tenderly at her and at the house.

"My great-grandsire built it with his own hands—him that was a soldier in the old French war, an' helped take Quebec. I guess he made a better fist at the fightin' than at the carpenter's trade." His smile grew proud. "You've seen his picture, ain't you—in the Bible stan' she keeps it—all hung with medals he won? He set this house right on the place where the ol' orig'nal dwellin' stood, the one the first LaMay that come over from England built."

"He was Rosswaine LaMay, wasn't

he?" she pressed him, partly to pleasure him in his tale, partly because to-day her interest in the past of the family was stirred.

"Every eldest son since his day has bore the name, an' lived right here in this meadow," he told her, his mind nimble upon the trail of old, far-off things. "I was second son, but poor Brother Ross he died, so house an' farm come to me. We could have erected a better domicile—any one of us—if we'd been so minded, for the farm's prospered; but was we a-goin' to desert the ol' home just for show? Not us LaMays!"

He straightened his big shoulders, his silver-crowned head reared itself

imperiously. Not alone in broad acres and an ancient title lives there high pride; this plain farmer clung to his bleak New England hillside and name unheralded of fame as stanchly as any peer honored at Hastings.

"That's how Ross feels to it," said Silvia, in slow wonder.

The old man was away on another turn, unheeding. "Wealthy, she'd sunk her roots up the road yonder in the gran' new house, an' she warn't goin' to be hauled up, not for nobody. She an' me was tokened, an' the banns called first time, 'fore we come to grips over it. Then, good fathers!" He shook all over at the recollection of the duel that had lost its sting half a century ago.



"Whose idea was it, grandsire, this ring-round-a-rosy play o' yours an' granny's?"

"Your mother's, child; she always had the headpiece for the two o' us. Where is mother? Why, I ain't seen her this whole mornin'." His face trembled piteously, like a child's; his blue eyes filled with anxiety.

"She's kind o' nappin'," she soothed him, her hand on his. "You'll see her pretty quick. You say granny was set an' determined to live in her gran', new house, an' you was set an' determined to live here in your ol' one?" She turned him skillfully back into his story.

"Wealthy, she blazed an' banged—that's the way temper takes the Holtons—an' I went round dumb's a ox, for that's my fashion o' anger; an' both on us—we let on after 'twas all over—was scared nigh dead for fear we couldn't be wedded. Wealthy even went so far as to make her talk 'bout goin' to York State to dwell with an aunt. When I heard that I 'bout caved in, but not quite."

"I think you were just two—sillies!" vehemently.

"Was so; but, you see, darter, I hadn't ever slep' a night under no other roof but this, an' I couldn't bring myself to give it up; an' Wealthy, she was prouder'n any peacock to be mistress o' such a noble mansion. Well, one day she come to me—'twas Sabbath afternoon, right in the early fall o' the year, an' weather that'd make an ol' horse cavort same as a colt. Down by that gate she stood, for my folks was all dead, same as hers, an' she could talk without fear o' bein' spied on. She had on her meetin' frock still—I mind me of it like it was yesterday, for all it's nigh to seventy year ago—a little pink frock 'twas, an' she wore a big white rose in her bosom." His bright blue child's eyes rested on the old fence as if he saw again the small and fiery sweetheart of those days.

"Granny must have been pretty in the face for all she's so dark," mused the fair-haired granddaughter.

"A beauty she was!" instantly. "An'

her eyes were like stars. She says to me, snap-bang, like a soldier: 'Abijah LaMay, since I *can't* give in, an' you *won't*, I've come to offer a kind o' middle course. The Lord Himself only knows why any girl should prize such a stubborn fellow as you!' I tell you, Silvy, when she flung that word right into my face, my heart bumped down into my boots. I couldn't 'a' spoke a word if my life had hung on it.

"'But I do prize you,' says she, fierce as if she'd said 'hate.' 'We'll live man an' wife one month here in this ol', ramshackle house, then we'll go next month up to my good dwelling'; then next month back we'll swing, an' so on long as the Lord spares us.'"

"Did you say yes, grandsire?"

"Didn't say nothin'! I leaned over close, an' I saw her eyes was all misted up with tears, an' I made one leap over that fence, an' I had her so tight in my arms that rose was flatter'n paper. An' there ain't been a happier couple in Pettipaug township," he ended triumphantly.

Silvia laughed softly. "It's a reg'lar LaMay story, grandsire, but I like it." She stroked his white hair, fine as silk. The fire of his tale had died out; he looked tired and dull, and his eyes closed sleepily. His granddaughter left him dozing.

As she stepped about the dark, crooked little kitchen on a hundred capable errands, she mused upon the ancient romance and the husband and wife who, in summer's heat and winter's frost, month in, month out, for nearly seventy years, had moved back and forth from the tall house on the hill to the sunken one in the hollow. She could see how determination of will and conscious action of mind had hardened into unconscious habit, and it again into the very stuff of life itself, so that by and by they could no more think of themselves without the monthly pilgrimage than without their own hands and feet.

In the girl a sudden wave of bitterness surged hotly. What heritage of loyalty to old allegiances had she, cooped up this morning to work in this



little, hot kitchen, with tools old and clumsy; or, if freed, only that she might fly to get the other house in order? She was no LaMay nor Holton, "a kinless, landless man," in the words of the Saxon chronicle; she had no art nor part in the deep things of their blood. For although Abijah and Wealthy LaMay had reared her with care and love, which she now paid back in double, she was not their grandchild.

Their youngest daughter, Polly, had fallen in love with Ambrose Tate, a handsome, gentle ne'er-do-well, who had wandered into Pettipaug from no one knew where, and, after a year's unsuccessful farming, had wandered away again into vague regions classified as "out West." Not alone this time did he go; he took pretty Polly with him—secretly, for her parents had forbidden the marriage.

He had not had the plea of young passion to cover his theft, for he had been ten years older than his little bride, and she had been his second wife, his first having left him a baby daughter. For the next ten years Ambrose, Polly, and the little girl had called the map of North America their home.

The child had delighted in such an entertaining existence, and had thrived in their vagrant ways. She had idolized her stepmother; and forlorn, homesick Polly, childless herself, disappointed in her husband, had found all the comfort of her sad heart in loving the child back. When Silvia had been twelve, her father had faded out of life as futilely and uncomplainingly as he had wandered through it. Her mother, stricken herself with a fatal illness, had struggled home to the old people to confide the child to their kindness.

She had accepted without question this new station on the march, and had set herself cheerily to discover its special good points. The greatest of these had been a lively boy, a couple of years older than herself, ready to be playfellow to a girl, and full to the brim of fascinating lore of stream and wood and four-footed creatures. They had become fast friends, and now, at

the end of a dozen years, were so truly "kin" as to be like brother and sister.

Silvia could not tell why to-day, of all the many lived among these kindly, cherishing people, she should feel alone, outside their lives. They had seemed entirely her own family always. Now she realized suddenly that their heritages were not hers, and that she lacked any born in her own blood. Her father's people she knew vaguely as poor and unconsidered; her mother's she knew not at all. She had no past. She stood out bleak and unprotected against an unshaded *now*.

She turned impatiently, and a dish clashed at her elbow. The old woman in the next room stirred in her sleep, and, noting that as a sign that the effect of the medicine was wearing off, she hurried away to the other house to let the sweet spring warm it.

Wealthy LaMay's own house was, indeed, a brave structure; in spite of seventy years' existence, it still wore an air of bright modernity. Silvia, matching its high ceilings, wide windows, and clear spaces with the crowded, dark tuck-holes of her grandfather's house, swung over in a swift approval to her other grandparent.

"Granny ought to have just stood out!" she cried vehemently to Ross, who was building her a fire in the "fine new cook stove," wonderful yet, after the hearth and crane in the hollow. "'Twasn't any kind o' conduct in grandsire to ask a woman to cook up a meal o' food in such a poor, unhandy fashion o' place as his, let 'lone raise a family o' children."

Ross laughed in the amusement her intensity always produced.

"You ever tried a session o' standin' out again' him?" he giped mildly.

The girl, reminded of disastrous ventures of childhood, reddened, but answered stoutly:

"She was his sweetheart; she could 'a' compelled terms."

"Didn't she?"

"Terms!" in contempt. "All the men that ever captured Quebec, or built it, for the matter o' that, wouldn't make me spend one single night in that ol'



hole in the ground if I had me an elegant abidin' place like this."

Ross, still smiling, shifted the theme adroitly, leaving, according to his custom, the last word with her.

"Open the doors now, Sil, while I h'ist the windows. We'll have the good, fresh air in, an' the damp dried out quicker'n figgerin'."

"I'll run get granny ready. I hope to mercy she won't be struck with one o' her spells right in the middle o' the road."

It was characteristic of both the man and the girl that neither made any handle of the personal trouble of this strange housekeeping of their grandparents; yet Rosswaine must shift stock and fodder up into the other barn, while for Silvia an endless patter of her light feet to and fro was necessary to complete a comfortable change. It was near midnight when the old people were safely asleep in bed, the last of the gear disposed in its place, and the bread set for morning.

Silvia stood a moment in the open kitchen door, leaning against the lintel, her eyes afar across the night scene. The valley of the Connecticut lay flooded in moonlight, and beyond the swimming reaches of the river the hills stretched away into mysterious darkness. The hour was one of perfect quiet, the myriad voices of the summer night not yet strong to break its stillness, the fine, wet pipings of the young frogs in the brook only serving to heighten it.

Silvia, essentially a creature of daylight and the clear values of high noon, was yet swayed by the magic and the mystery of the spring night, alive in its hushed spirit with the splendid secrets of the unborn summer.

"Ain't it sightly?" she murmured to the dim figure on the step.

Ross could not answer; his poet's soul was aching with the sense of "the dim beauty at the heart of things."

"Wonderful sightly," she said again; then, because her wholesome, warm nature never strayed far from kindly human needs: "Ross, you'll get the ague settin' out in such a green

night o' spring. It's gettin' on for all hours; you go to bed."

The watcher of the moon sighed in a shivering ecstasy. "I've shut up everythin' snug." He forced himself to a commonplaceness to meet hers. "Go 'long to bed yourself; you're all beat out."

"You be up real kind o' early in the mornin'?"

He had risen, and stood close beside her. "I've made all my calculations to stay here."

"Oh, Ross, you can make yourself?" in an extremity of amaze.

Ross' father, the only son of Abijah and Wealthy, had never left the paternal house after his marriage, not even on the singular monthly trekking of his father and mother; at his death in his son's boyhood, his widow had elected to stay steadily at the place in the hollow. When she, too, died a few years later, Ross had clung to the only home he knew, taking his meals up at the "new house," as it was still called, but sleeping in the bedroom in which he had been born.

His grandparents, in spite of their great age, had been so hale that his aid had not been necessary at night. Now Wealthy, desperately ill, and Abijah, lost of wits, were a great care for the girl, who had trembled at the thought of the long night alone with them, but had not ventured to suggest to Ross such a vast emprise as sleeping for the first time in his whole life under any roof-tree other than the moss-grown one built by the famed conqueror of the French.

"You ain't talkin' serious, are you?" she ventured again, as he stood by her, still as the night, and, as she thought, a little pale in the moon mist.

"Yes, I am, too," with a vehemence oddly different from his usual sweet placidity. "It comes kind o' hard—I ain't sayin' that it don't—but I'd be a poor sort o' a tool if I left a little, small creature such as you be to rastle the night out alone."

Suddenly he caught her shoulders, gripping her hard with his strong farmer's hands, his eyes darkly hot, his tall,



limber figure swaying, a flame leaping from him to her. Silvia, pleasantly matter of fact, ever centered on the calm noonday, was swept by a wind from the wood beyond the world, was blinded by a flash of white magic. She stood still and dumb.

In a moment it had passed. Ross had loosed her, and was fastening the shutters with a clatter. She shook herself clear of her trance, with a short "Good night," hurrying away to her bed by her grandmother's side.

In the face of Silvia's worries, old Wealthy took no harm from her change of bed, and, in spite of the doctor's "impossible," appeared to be growing well. It was the hale old grandfather who one afternoon, when all the sky was crocus-colored, unmoored his bark of mortality, and voyaged forth upon that river that flows around the world forever.

Silvia had settled him comfortably in a rocker—warm against the keen edge of spring in his old army coat, a broken basket and withes to mend it on his lap—on the veranda that looked out over the narrow valley of green laced in and out with the silver ribbon of the river, and the handful of white houses that gleamed in the distant village. He had gone to work, contented as a child, his innocent old eyes bright upon the task. Silvia, with a show of love not part of her Pettipaug training, but one of the graces heired from her luckless father, leaned her shining hair against the pale beauty of his head, and kissed him.

"Dear grandsire!" she murmured, in a tender wonder as to what it must seem to be old and feeble and done with the world.

The old man smiled in placid affection. "You're a proper, nice child, Silvy, an' good to your ol' father." Then, in a flash of memory: "You couldn't be better to me if I was your own blood kin—no, an' I couldn't prize you more."

An hour later she found him asleep, his head resting against the back of his chair, his hands folded above the mended basket.

The wife of his youth—that long, long-ago youth—heard of his death in the strange calm of the very aged.

"So 'Bijah's gone first?" she murmured, her vivid eyes upon Silvia, who, in the sorrow of the young for all death, was weeping. "I guess I shan't have to put up with many weeks now 'fore I see him again." It was her surrender in the fight she had waged against even the name of death.

Later they heard her whispering to herself: "Abijah LaMay was the ablest young man in Pettipaug township, an' the most upright, an' the handsomest in the face. Seventy year come November! An' it's clearer to me than what happened yesterday."

She lay silent a long time, then roused to say sharply to Ross, who sat beside her in Silvia's absence:

"Who's in the kitchen with Silvy?"

"It's Artemesia Torrance. She's come to help out a spell."

"Um, um!" ambiguously. "Ain't it strange, Rossie, out o' 'em all—children an' gran'children—there's only you lef' to do for me?"

"You forget Silvy, granny."

The old face puckered into a hundred fine wrinkles, like the cobweb cracks of flawed glass. "Silvy's a good girl, tender o' me as an own darter, too, but she ain't no blood kin—don't ye ever forget that, son." She laid her withered hand on his, where it rested on the bed beside her.

Ross waited till his resentment for Silvia was quieted. "She's just the same as kin to me," with force.

"You deem that Torrance girl's a likely, cap'ble creature?" in a sudden *non sequitur*.

Ross remembered her skill in relieving Silvia from many burdens. "She's a reg'lar driver, an' real kind, too." Then the girl as a distinct personality came before him. "She's handsome as any picture, too."

"Any abler woman than our Silvy, or sweeter to look on?" Some secret anxiety edged her voice.

"Why, no, I can't say as she is," ponderingly. "But Silvy's a little, thin fashion o' person, an' Artemesia's a



great, splendid woman—looks like she was made to carry big weights o' things o' the world, an' the spirit, too."

"I guess I've viewed her consid'ble few times," with extreme dryness. "You fetch Judge Ackerley up here right away."

"Can't you wait till mornin'? Grandsire's only just gone," he remonstrated to this caprice.

"You do as I bid ye. Doctor said I warn't to be crossed." She pushed his hand from her, her eyes blazed, her voice shrilled imperiously.

Obedient, Ross started from the room, a murmur following from the bed:

"Artemesia! A terrible soft-soundin' name; but if there's any soft spot in one o' the Torrance tribe, they are changed since——" The rest was lost.

After Abijah LaMay's death, life at the farm went on as before. Ross plowed and planted, Silvia tended the house and nursed her grandmother, drifting slowly toward the end of all living. One change there was of deep import—Artemesia Torrance stayed on, "to help Silvia," Ross said; "to please Ross," Silvia thought, in a strange stir of bitterness.

Artemesia, of the flowery name, did indeed resemble a blossom, a high-colored hollyhock, or a bouncing peony. She was a tall, coltish girl, with a beautiful mane of bronze hair, and cheeks as round and as red as apples. She and her mother, who often came to see her, were noted "trainers" in the town-



"Don't you sense anythin', Ross?" she scolded.

ship; mirth and laughter bubbled over from them constantly. Silvia, whose early wanderings had bred in her a staid responsibility for herself and others, and who took life with a pleasant seriousness, watched the two in baffled puzzlement; but Ross openly valued any one so joyous.

So a month passed, and all the tender, misty green of early spring had flowered into the pink and white of the beginning of summer. One perfumed morning when the whole valley was shrouded in a silver fog, old Wealthy woke as if summoned.

"Silvy!"

"Yes, dear." Her faithful handmaiden was by her side.

"What day o' the week's this?"

"Saturday."



The old lips smiled grimly.

"Saturday's flittin'  
Makes a short sittin'.

"Darter, your grandsire's month's come round again."

Silvia, her pretty, curly hair loose over her shoulders, her scant little cotton nightgown hanging straight to her feet like a child's tier, argued piteously:

"Granny, dear, you're so snug here, an' the room's so sightly."

The sick woman's eyes traveled about the room, high and spacious, then sought the far-off hills, rising gold-rimmed of the sun above the fog.

"I've always taken a sight o' comfort lyin' in this bed an' watchin' the light creep up, clearer an' clearer, over Lyme Hills, till the river was all ashine with it, an' I knew 'twas time to rise. There ain't another such a prospect in all Pettipaug." She sighed deeply. "There ain't nothin' to see from my chamber in the other house 'cept the end o' the cornerib—but it's time to go."

Silvia stroked the tiny face under the frilled cap. "Grandsire ain't there, dear; you've no call to move any more."

Old Wealthy darted a ferret glance at her. "My call, as you put it, is the word that went forth from me seventy year ago. I vowed then I'd move ev'ry month so long as I lived, an' I'm a-goin' to keep that covenant in spite o' ev'ry one." She stretched her hand toward her granddaughter as if putting a curse upon her if she thwarted her righteous purpose.

Under such compulsion, Silvia hurried into her clothes to start the journey. The day, begun in mists, darkened to twilight in a sad little rain. The leaky chimney of the cottage dripped monotonously into a bucket; gusts of dampness blew in through the loose-hung windows the sweet, rank scent of wet, plowed fields.

In the small, heavily rafted bedroom Silvia sat bathing the sick woman's face, or moistening her lips with a cordial. A thin flame burned in the lamp, its flickerings like the wavering of life in the frail body. Ross stood

at the foot of the bed, leaning against its heavy rail, his eyes sorrowful at the passing of the last of his race.

"I said 'twas wrong to move her," murmured Silvia, for the tenth time, tears running thick over her cheeks.

The flaccid lids opened wide over eyes that still held a spark of vital fire.

"Hadn't nothin' to do with it; my time has come. Where's Ross?"

"Here, granny." He crowded in beside Silvia, so close in the narrow space that his shoulder pressed hers.

"Silvia, you've been a dear, good child." The words were forming themselves slowly. "There ain't no tellin' what you've been to me this dozen years." The thread of sound dwindled into silence.

Silvia dropped to her knees, her face buried in the covers.

The voice came again, startlingly strong:

"But she ain't no manner o' kin; you mind that, Rossie. Not a drop o' your blood runs in her veins."

The girl flung up her head in an agony of remonstrance.

"The deaths ye died  
I have watched beside,  
And the lives ye lived were mine,"

might have been her cry; must she, then, be shut out—an alien?

Ross put his arm around her shoulders comfortingly.

In the fluttering light a bluish shade stole up over the pinched features, and the small, puckered face shrank deeper into the pillows; yet the dark eyes glowed still from the unconquerable soul.

"Take her hand, Ross."

With cold fingers closing over the girl's, as chill as his, the young man obeyed.

"Tell her she ain't no kin at all." The voice was thickening now, yet each word reached them. "Ask her will she wed you to be your wife."

Like one under a spell, Ross muttered the words after her, his hand gripping Silvia's in a bruising hold.

"Silvy, you tell him yes, you'll wed him."



The girl hung upon her answer, amazed, frightened.

Ancient fires flared in the dying woman, imperious to the end. "You ain't got all week to answer," she threatened. "I'm a-goin' mighty fast. He's set by you like a lover for years, only he hadn't waked up to it; an' you prize him, too, more'n your own eyes. Tell him, 'I will.'"

Tranced now in her turn, the girl answered, in a clear, high voice:

"Ross, I will."

A faint smile, sweet as if born of heavenly joy, touched the dying face. "That's good!" she whispered. "Kiss me. I'll hold out till next tide now, but I'm so tired I can't talk no more."

Crying together like children, they kissed her, and, holding each other's hands tight for comfort, took again their watch by the bed. Old Wealthy lay all night, breathing quietly, but she never spoke again; and when the pale light of the storm-washed dawn flowed into the room she, too, drifted out with the tide past the village, past the headland, into deep Eternity.

The small, low-studded "keepin' room" of the cottage overflowed with relatives and friends of Abijah and Wealthy LaMay, met after the latter's funeral to hear the reading of both their wills. Mild surmises concerning how much Abijah "was worth" were whispered among the waiting folk, mostly old men and women, for, although he, like his fathers, dwelt in a poor and meanly furnished abode, he was known to be one of the most prosperous farmers of the valley. But the pith of the interest was in how that wealth was to be apportioned between the two heirs, his own grandson and his adopted granddaughter. "Silvia Tate's been a true daughter to them old bodies," shrilled old Ann Blisset, a cousin, in a far-reaching whisper.

"Blood's thicker'n water—thicker'n water," mumbled back young Silas LaMay, a grandnephew.

The sentiment of the gathering was plainly with Silas as the whisper crept around. It was all very well to give

bed and board—aye, love and faith—to an outsider while you lived, but when it came to leaving this world, why, money followed the family.

Ross and Silvia, in their position of only near relatives, sat apart from the others; she very pale and pretty in her narrow black dress, hastily fashioned from one of her grandmother's; he flushed and agitated. He had thought of little else save Silvia since that unearthly betrothal, and his heart beat constantly in a hurried race with his brain. Silvia, on the contrary, had thought of nothing at all; through the day she worked in a numb speed at the many tasks that followed death in a long-ago farmhouse; at night she slept, drugged by fatigue.

Now at last in the still room, tense with the many expectancies working there, her mind opened to the consideration of her own standing. Penniless she had come to this house; penniless should she go? And where? Then her wits, startled from their torpor, leaped to their strange compact. How did Ross really feel toward it? How did she feel herself? Her feet and hands were lumps of ice; her whole body chill to the bone. A long sigh of thankfulness stirred the black fichu on her bosom when Judge Ackerley rose with solemn slowness to begin the reading.

At first she could not fasten her thoughts on his voice, and the "whereases" and the "aforesaid" of the legal phrasing glided by her unnoted; then suddenly, as at a great distance, she heard him reading out various small legacies to relatives and to the church; and after that, in a voice that boomed like a great bell, "and all the residue of my property, both real and personal, in the township of Pettipaug, to my grandson, Rosswaine LaMay."

A whisper rustled around the room. Some of the men turned to smile in congratulation upon Ross, always a favorite, then shifted around again in embarrassed remembrance that they were met just after his grandmother's funeral.

The judge cleared his throat for a





*"Ross, you'll get the ague settin' out in such a green night o' spring."*

second reading—Wealthy's will. She also had remembered her kin, in smaller gifts this time, for Captain Holton, her father, had left her no wealth, being house poor. The house and ground, still called the "Cap'n Holton place," she bequeathed to her grandson, Rosswaine LaMay.

This time the whisper was stronger; had nothing at all been left Silvia Tate?

The judge's voice beat down theirs: "A codicil, made out by me, and witnessed according to law, was added on the day of the death of Abijah LaMay, husband of the testatrix: 'I will and bequeath my house and farm, and all

the contents of said house, and all the belongings of said farm, not to my grandson, Rosswaine LaMay, but to my beloved granddaughter by adoption, Silvia Tate, to her and her heirs forever.'"

They were all gone at last, after a bountiful supper, and the little old house was silent and dark, a shadow in the hollow. Silvia, on the hill above it, looked away to the uplands, still vivid in the sunset. It was weeks since she had been so far from home; she might not come again soon, for Artemesia Torrance and her mother were



to stay on with her for "a spell," and they were close companions, not to be avoided. To-night they had driven home for some necessities.

Silvia held her eyes away from her new domain with resolution. She did not want to see it to-night; she seemed to have heard nothing for hours but how good her grandmother had been to leave it to her. She could not keep her thoughts off it, however. Like a spent wayfarer who will not acknowledge weariness till he finds himself safe home by the fire, she had not dared to ponder her condition; now she dwelt upon her former poverty in the glow of her present wealth.

A grand house, richly furnished, all hers! She needed nothing from any one. In a word—independence. Her mind swept around to Ross; he wouldn't be forced by pity to ask her again. She could live a rich old maid all her days if she were so minded. A great sigh of relief lifted her like a wind.

"The old house looks powerful lonesome." The voice was low and mild, but her frayed nerves leaped. Ross had come up behind her unnoticed, had heard and misinterpreted her sigh.

"They're at rest, Rossie." The childhood name fell unregardingly. "We don't ask to bring 'em back to suffer, do we?" with the gentle resignation of her serious, docile nature.

"That don't help the missin' o' 'em, Silvy." His moodier heart rebelled at the law of life. "Granny an' grandsire were the last o' my kin."

She laid her hand on his where it rested on the bars of the rail fence, in a touch of healing sympathy.

"You're kinless, too," he went on, but forbore to add: "You've always been." And for such delicacy the lonely girl blessed him.

"It's hard." The bare words were deep with the heart behind them.

Ross flung his arm around her in a desolation that made this one comrade of youth precious beyond words.

"I got you still, Silvy," he cried tempestuously.

"Yes, you got me." Fidelity moved

her voice; she felt all other emotion shut out of it.

He leaned his head down against hers, holding her close. Neither spoke while night sifted down from the skies and the old house in the hollow was blotted out of shadows.

"Ain't it strange how granny knew?" began the young man slowly, broodingly. Silvia held her breath till he should speak again.

"I'd 'a' swore you were just a dear little sister to me. I don't know as I'd ever 'a' found out different; yet it ain't so. There's another bond than blood between us, Silvy. Don't you feel it, too?"

"We hadn't ought to talk—about—it to-night, ought we, Ross?"

"Yes, we had, too. It's the time we need each other most, when all the rest's swept from us." Suddenly he thrust her from him, keeping her at arm's length. "Silvia, that pledge before granny don't hold." He spoke stressfully. "I give you back your freedom."

His tall figure was only a blot of black in the twilight; even his voice sounded far away. The girl clasped the fence rail with clenched fingers, and waited, cold with fear.

"You got a house an' land o' your own; you can live independent o' me. Now here, as if we were just a man an' girl from the village down below that hadn't ever spoke a word o' the thing before, I ask you now out plain an' honest."

The girl's words fluttered long on her lips, were strange when they came: "Ross, you grudge me the house an' land the least mite?"

"House?" he stammered, swept beyond that point on the tide of his feeling. "Lord, child, I wish 'twere three houses, so you'd be grand as a queen! Such things don't count. Give me an honest answer out o' a free heart."

"To what?" Her lips trembled with a smile at this new impetuosity of her easy-going playmate.

Ross caught her hands, and pulled her back to him resistlessly.

"It ain't like you to torment me, Sil-



via," in a grieved voice. "I told you like a man how 'twas with me. I look for you to give me a man's answer."

She leaned her tired head against his shoulder, and cried tears more of weariness than of grief.

"There, dearie, there; you know you're all I got in the whole world," he soothed her now; "an' you know I prize you dearly, an' I'll be good to you always. Just you say one little, kind word to me." He bent down to catch the breath of sound.

"I didn't have to have granny tell me I loved you, Ross."

Too tired to prolong even these sweet confidences, before night had fully come, hand in hand, they started down the hill, talking in low voices.

"Sil," Ross broke in suddenly, "let's be wedded to-morrow!"

"We can't. The day after the funeral!"

"Next week, then. Why can't we? I don't want Mother Torrance hangin' round longer'n has to be."

"That's too soon," she countered him.

"I'd like to ask why. You can get you up some kind o' fal-lals for your settin' out if all three o' you put into the sewin'." Again he was insistent, as only the slow, mild ones of the world can be, once set in desire.

"In two months—well, maybe six weeks." For Ross had caught her and shaken her strongly in his grasp.

"A month's my say-so," he assured her, as they opened the garden gate.

The next morning, while the grass was still filmed with dew-bright cobwebs, and the sun's rays fell aslant from Lyme Hills, Silvia, fleet and silent, let herself into the other house. She wanted to be all to herself when she came into her own; no thumping Artemesia or prying mother must mar her still delight.

She stepped into the kitchen, familiar from childhood, yet wearing the strange face of an old possession seen in a new mood. With the thoroughness of an auctioneer preparing for a "vendue," she searched its drawers and cup-

boards; then she passed on into the "clock room," and so on through all the house. She opened presses, examined shelves, delved into boxes; nothing escaped her.

And what piles of hand-spun, smooth linen, heavy blue-and-white bedspreads, rich, glossy silk dresses of her grandmother's youth, ancient beadwork, delicate muslin embroideries! All the plenty of old Wealthy's inheritance was stored here, for not a box would she move into the hollow.

Then there were the larger relics—the cedar chests, the eight-day clock, the settees, highboys, bandy-legged tables, and their fellows. Silvia seemed never to have seen them before, although winding the hall clock had been her weekly task since childhood, and her arms had ached from polishing the mahogany tables.

At noon she seated herself in a pool of sunshine on the kitchen floor, and counted over her horde. There wasn't another bride in Pettipaug—not even Judge Ackerley's daughter, who was tokened to the Boston minister—who had such a "settin' out."

Her fancy winged its way to wonderful tea parties in which all the young women of Pettipaug, strangely stiff in their meetin' gowns, should sit around the wall in her noble foreroom, while she herself, resplendent in a certain ashes-of-roses silk, edged with thread lace once worn by her great-grandmother, should exchange polite conversation—quite different from the chat of ordinary days—with each guest in turn.

Then when the sun began to cast long shadows over the lawn—few, indeed, were the Pettipaug houses that could boast a lawn—she would wave all her guests out into the dining room, where upon the carved mahogany table should sit the silver coffee urn and the eggshell china painted with the sprigs of pink roses.

Silvia clasped her hard little hands in an ecstasy of vision; life unwound before her a primrose path of dalliance with such dainty joys at every curve of the way, and butter churning, soap



making, and other commonplace tasks of the household were forgotten.

There came stealing over her in a warm tide the thick, rich love of things—her own things. This gypsy of the long roads, whose possessions hitherto could be knotted up in a bundle over her shoulder, felt herself one who had owned always great possessions coming to her from remote treasure houses of the ages. Little wrinkles of worry seamed her forehead as she considered how moth and rust do corrupt and thieves break in and steal.

"I'll use my things—every last one o' 'em." She nodded a pretty head, golden in the sunshine. "The best china an' the hemstitched linen an' all. This room'll do for just me an' Ross to eat in." She swept in her glance the big, clean kitchen, with its bay window. "But if we have just one company, we'll set out the table in the clock room."

She flitted over to the window to straighten a curtain hung awry. "I wonder if I could learn to play the piano?" her nimble fancy flew along. "Ross is real tuneful on his fiddle, an' if I could, 'twould be complete." She stood still as silence in the middle of the room, one finger on her lip, the other pointing toward the foreroom that held the mysterious piano.

"Land o' love, Sil, you seen a spirit?"

At the jolly laughter behind the words, Silvia sprang around out of her daydream to face Artemesia Torrance, standing in the open door.

"Dinner's been a-waitin' this half hour," Artemesia went on, unembarrassed by the other's short frown—it took much to dash a Torrance—"an' Ross 's gettin' more like a bear every minute. I notice there ain't a man body, anyhow, let him be as soft as milk, that ain't riled up if his fodder's kep' from him." She laughed her deep, magnetic laugh, and laid a cordial hand on the other's shoulder.

"Been viewin' the kingdoms o' the earth, have ye? Wish you'd 'a' took me through 'em with you. I've always heard tell Mis' Wealthy LaMay had

sights an' sights o' handsome things stored away up here."

Not a tinge of envy chilled her warm voice, and just Silvia, who disliked Artemesia, her manners, and customs, could not hold back a meed of praise for this, even while she answered stiffly: "I been lookin' over a few drawers."

"Well, come along to dinner now, or Ross'll raise ol' Hewdie."

Laughing in spite of herself at this outrageous slander upon her amiable lover, Silvia followed the other out. The heavy-beamed, low, old kitchen in the hollow seemed meaner and darker than ever. Silvia longed to take her cup and plate out under the arbor. Mother Torrance, a heavier, flowzier Artemesia, greeted her jovially as she ladled out chicken dumplings.

"You been searchin' your grand house from end to end, Silvy?"

"I been lookin' it over a little," primly.

"It's a noble edifice, an' got a 'mazin' plenishin', I make no doubt; an' I'm dretful pleased you've heired it—a lone girl like you, with nobody to fend for you, so to say. But, for my own part, I've been raised so common all my days I like to snug me down in a little, warm, old burry like this."

"I'm with you." Ross looked across the table at her with the slow, earnest smile that gave his face a childlike sweetness.

A chill little wind rippled over Silvia; suddenly she was tired, and out of harmony with her new joy. She ate her dinner in silence, while Artemesia and her mother chattered away.

With her habitual decision, Silvia began at once her "settin' out," sewing long white seams under the arbor, where the light played in and out on her hair, and the song of the birds was like a tune to which her needle kept time. Every day she twisted some errand into a secret journey to her own house, there to smile at her treasures, pat their sleek heads, and stroke their glossy backs.

Each time she found some fresh



charm in her house; the windows on the landing that dripped the soft evening light upon the stairs; the porch out of the "kitchen chamber," where peppers, apples, and other pleasant stores could be dried. She changed chairs and tables about to new locations to prove to herself that they were her own; then set them back because she was convinced no other plan could be as beautiful as the one that had first greeted her heiress eyes.

One delicately scented day of June, when bees were booming in the vines, and the last of the roses were spraying pink-and-white showers over the paths, she took her fine sewing up to her own house, and under the tall lilac bushes that hid her from the road sat rocking and stitching in a soft content.

Every now and then she laid down her work to look away across the river, blue as turquoise, tranquil as a little lake; or to rest her eyes nearer home in a fond scrutiny of flower-bordered paths and aromatic bushes; last of all, to dwell upon the tall white house itself. So deep was her sense of possession that the very river seemed to call her mistress, and to flow steadfastly by her permission.

All sorts of pretty dreams floated in and out of her head, and visions too purely sweet to fashion into words. Suddenly voices reached her, and, to her amazement, Ross and a strange man appeared around the corner. The former showed no surprise at sight of her, merely saying:

"House open, Silvy? You willin' I should show this gentleman round?"

"Certain, Ross," civilly, though in her heart she thought it cool that he should not have asked her to do the honors of her own house. Who was this stranger, anyhow, and where had the fame of "the Cap'n Holton place" found him?

A longish time passed before Ross reappeared, alone now, and sank upon the grass beside her. Silvia's heart fluttered tunefully as she noted his clean length of limb and lithe grace. His face, usually abstracted and gently vague, was pricked now with alert pur-

poses. She reached down a shy hand to touch his hair with the tips of her fingers. Ross seized the little hand, and held it against his lips.

"'Most ready?" he asked, laughter dancing in his soft eyes.

She did not feign to misunderstand him, blushing prettily, and rolling her work into a modest bundle.

"You want to hear 'bout that man, dear?"

"'Course."

"He's Daniel Blackett, from beyond the Mill. He heard how you'd heired this house, an' he wanted to see what fashion o' place it was inside, for he's got a cousin up to Boston who's all o' a hew to come down here to live."

"What for?" That ancient Pettipaug had not yet been invaded by aliens on strange holidays.

"I don't know as I can rightly tell. Blackett talked 'bout his farmin', an' raisin' fancy stock. Kind o' a wild project for a city-bred chap, I view it, but ain't anythin' to us if he's got the cash an' wants the house."

"*What* house?"

"Why, this house. Blackett thinks that cousin o' his will give a swingein' good price to buy it."

"Well, he can't buy it!" with an amused laugh at the foolishness of folks from Boston.

Ross stared at her. "Look here, child—what you deem you'll do with it? You ain't likely to get another such offer in the course o' your whole life."

"But I don't ever want to sell." The girl laughed again, this time because she was frightened in a queer way.

"What in the name o' ol' Farrago you goin' to do with it, then?" he repeated, dazed now in his turn.

"Live in it."

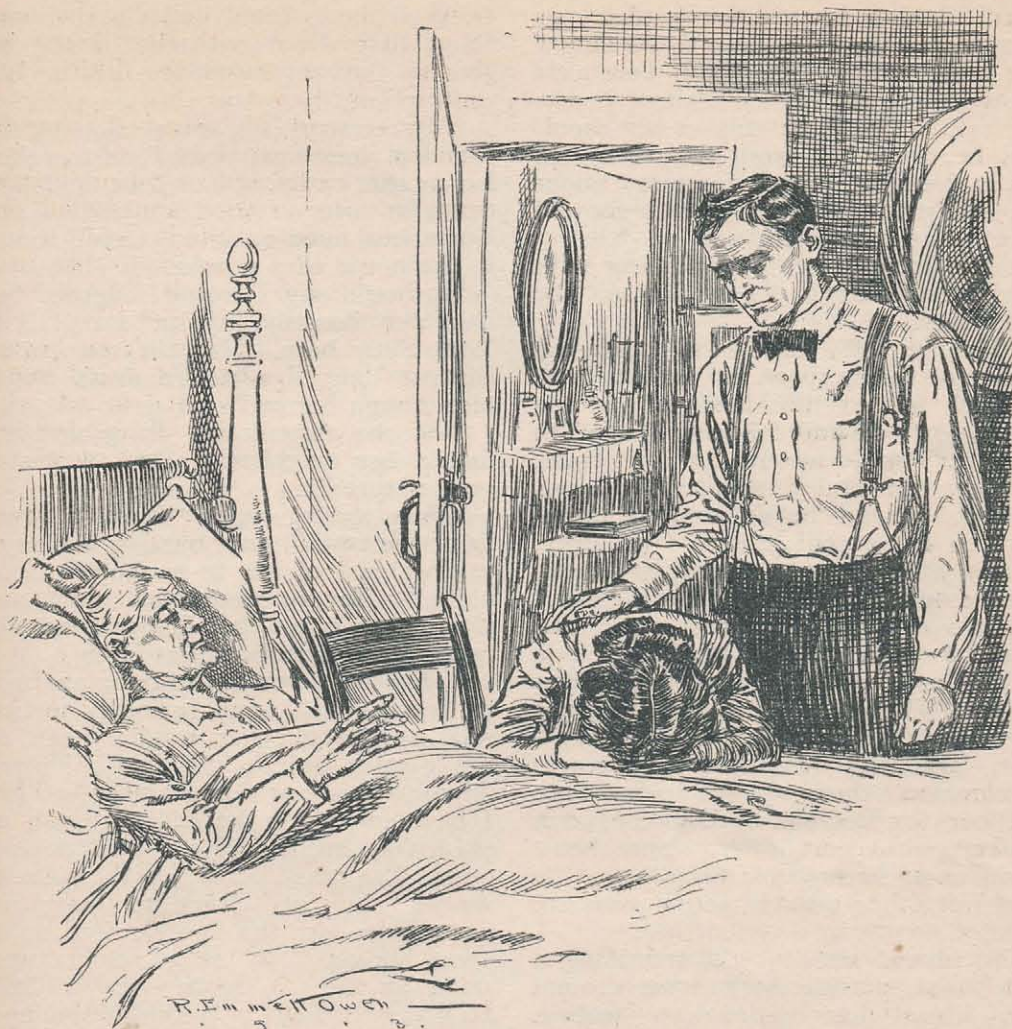
Ross rose to his feet impetuously, and strode away across the grass; but in a moment he was back, and neither anger nor chagrin marked his face—only exceeding gentleness.

"You an' me are goin' to take our comfort in the old homestead, dear."

"This is a homestead, too," she flung back defiance to his gentleness.

"You know it ain't," still with his





Ross put his arm around her shoulders comfortingly.

deep tenderness. "Grandsire Holton never lived an hour in it, an' 'twas built a good ten mile from any Holton kin. Granny didn't prize it really."

"Did, too! Look how she'd come 'long up here every time 'twas her month."

"That was out o' contrariness to grandsire."

"Think what a handsome, great house it is!" shifting her ground.

"It's as good a dwellin' as there is in the county," he conceded; "but it ain't home."

"You an' me'll make it our home." Her face was raised to his, soft and

flushed and intent; he dropped to his knees beside her, and kissed it with a love like reverence.

"Our home, dear—ain't that a sweet word?" He stood up again, his hand resting on her shoulder. "You look down there, Silvy."

Her eyes followed his pointing hand to where, in a fold of the hills, the curl of smoke from his time-hallowed habitation mounted slowly into the still air.

"They were all raised down there, dear," he said murmuringly; "all the ol' LaMays that I sprang from—father an' grandsire an' all o' 'em—all trained in the nurture an' admintion o' the



Lord. I ain't got a memory o' joy or sorrow, nor an experience that's taught me judgment an' manhood, that ain't wrought into the walls o' that ol' house. An' see!" His hand still on her shoulder, he drew her from her seat, and out in the light, where, far away under the tall pines, the old graves showed their white memorials.

Silvia looked, her eyes filming with bewildered tears. "Yes, Ross," she whispered.

"They're all there—the worn-out bodies o' them, spent an' broken with faithful toil on the land an' in the house, for wife and children. When I'm a-plowin' or harvestin' in my grain, why, I can feel 'em all round me, watchin' me, an' helpin' me, an' urgin' me to a like steadfastness to my duty. That's what makes a home, my dear; not the ownin' o' grand, glitterin' gear."

His voice broke on the words; he turned from her to hide his face. Silvia swayed as if swept by the wind of this passion. Yet it was his emotion, not her own, that moved her. Answers—keen, practical—from the sage stores of common sense crowded to her lips; but love for Ross, whom she could not understand, silenced her. She thrust her arm in through his timidly that he might feel her near in actual pressure at least.

He turned slowly, still trembling a little, and, putting both arms around her, kissed her with deep feeling. "That's a good girl!" he whispered into her soft hair.

Silvia quivered in fear; did he think she had yielded?

That night, when they all sat together on the front steps in the sweet, faint summer starlight, Artemesia said suddenly:

"Ross, Gid Hisler was askin' me to-day, when I was over to Pettipaug, would you sell him this house for an ell part to his own, which ain't large 'nough to fit his growin' family."

Ross blew out a cloud of smoke from his pipe, and watched it drift away before he answered mildly: "You tell him, Artemesia, I'm a-goin' to live in my own house myself."

"Well, now, Ross LaMay, if I was Silvy Tate, I'd be switched afore I'd give up that reg'lar palace for this old contraption!"

"My country, Art, you do dote on the sound o' your own voice!" admonished her mother tartly. "You'd be tickled to death to own so good a place." The Torrances lived in three small rooms in the house of a cousin.

"I should say I would!" agreed her daughter heartily. "But I'm talkin' 'bout Silvy here. She ain't one to be content 'long o' what I'd deem plenty nice 'nough for me."

"Oh, sho, Artemesia! Silvy ain't any finer'n her neighbors," Ross protested good-naturedly.

Silvia sprang up. "I don't know 'bout the rest o' you, but I got a day's work ahead o' me to-morrow. Good night." Her voice sounded quick and pleasant as usual, but in her heart she raged at Artemesia and at Ross.

"This old shack ain't fit for an Injin to live in!" she cried furiously to herself, as she put her candle down on the dresser before the small, blurred mirror. "Look at this chamber—so low I have to sit on the bed to brush up my hair! An' look at those windows—crooked as rams' horns, an' the glass all wavy! An' no closet to hang my gownds in—an' the floors raised up in great bumps. An' ev'ry room downstairs as bad. I declare for it, Ross LaMay's cracked!" With this she flung her clothes on a chair, and sprang into bed, her prayers unsaid, her heart a hot fire of anger.

For a whole week Silvia did not go near her own house, her excuse that cooking for the extra new men come to help in the haying kept her too busy. In reality, she could not bear to see that palace of fairy while her heart beat out bitter blood, lest she tarnish the glitter of her treasures.

So hard driving was that week that Saturday afternoon found her still at her baking. The day was damp and clouded, the sun burning through a haze in a kind of steaming heat more exasperating than the fiercest blaze. Artemesia and her mother had driven to



town; she was alone, and tired to the point of tremulous rage. All day the work had marched heavily; now the tedious waiting upon the ancient Dutch oven was no longer to be borne. If only she could have baked the bread and pies in her own smart stove! She rose stiffly from peering into the oven, and jerked a hot, moist face around over her shoulder.

"Forever, Ross! Where you goin'?"

The young man stood in the doorway, brave in all his meetin' clothes; and this the tail of a haying week! He flushed deep into his neck, smiling and hesitating.

"Well, Sil, I've got up my spunk to visit Parson Card, seein' to-morrow's the Sabbath. Banns called three Sabbath a-runnin', an' then—the weddin' day!"

Silvia stared at him dumbly. He drew her hot hands up against his freshly washed, cool cheeks.

"Poor little girl! Clean beat out!" His voice was exquisitely tender.

By a queer jar of the mechanism of her nature, this tenderness stirred her to rage.

"I guess I am beat out! The works I've had over this contrary ol' oven!"

"Ter'ble tasty goods come out o' it when 'tis done," he soothed her.

"I'll take my comfort bakin' once I'm settled up to my own house with the good cook stove," unappeased.

A startled look flickered over his face, hidden at once by a laugh as he rubbed her hands up and down his face.

"It's consid'ble tryin'; I'm convinced o' that."

But Silvia had caught the glance, and cried out upon him, in headlong perversity:

"You reconciled you to the idea o' leavin' this house, Ross?"

He pressed her to him. "Why, dearie, this is my farm. My crops are all in the ground here, an' my stock's pastured in the meadows."

"Your farm runs up to within fifty feet o' my kitchen door."

"Let's not argue any more, Silvy," he pleaded. "It's a dreadful tejus fash-

ion o' day, 'nough to get a saint het up."

She pressed back her head till she could look into his lowered face.

"Ross, dear," she whispered coaxingly, "you goin' to come live in my gran' house when we're wedded?"

So still was the room that the creak of the rusted hands of the ancient clock, the whir of an insect in the bushes, the tinkle of a distant sheep bell were shatteringly loud. Minutes dragged by, it seemed, till he answered very gently:

"No, Silvia."

She twisted herself free. "I won't live here! What you goin' to do?"

The young farmer seated himself slowly, as if to face a crisis to be met only by fine patience and deep restraint. Silvia seated herself opposite him, very small and stiff, her slim feet, in their clumsy slippers, set rigidly side by side.

"It ain't the distance from my work," he began carefully, "though that's worth thinkin' on, a freezin' winter mornin', say. It's the feelin' I have for the ol' home. Why, the walls an' the floors are just full to the brim o' the lives o' them that's gone before me, whose blood an' bone have made me the sort o' man I am."

"An' pretty walls an' floors they are, too!" she countered him fiercely. "Crooked an' smoke-blackened an' saggin'! Many's the time I've liked to get my death an' destruction stubbin' up again' a ridge in the floor, or slippin' on one o' the downhill hollows. An' look where I have to work!"

She rose and flung open the door into a dark little pantry dramatically.

"The only place I have to keep even the best china. An' no cellar! Have to haul the milk an' butter up out o' the well till my arms are most out o' their sockets. An' I'll thank you to show me the sink an' the pump in this kitchen!"

"It ain't modern an' up to date," her lover conceded, in his unchanging gentleness. "But ain't it a snug, warm little house, though? Cozy as a burrow days when that ol' town meetin' buildin' up there's all ashake with the wind."



"An' the looks o' the place!" Silvia swept on, unregarding. "Why, I'm 'shamed to have folks see me livin' in this worn-out, black, tumble-down shelter!"

"Folks as self-respectin' as you, Silvy, have been proud to live an' die in it," he told her somberly.

"Let 'em!" in a reckless rush. "I ain't, when I got me an elegant, good house, all full o' handsome gear, waitin' for me."

"This one looks good enough to me," he admonished, his gravity deepening all the while; "but I'll let that be. This is my home; it's the place that's seen my story, an' the story o' all my forbears, till there ain't a board in it but can tell some word o' the old LaMays—how they fought cold an' weariness an' dangers an' inner enemies, too—covetousness an' resentment an' wicked desire—for they were men an' women with hot blood in them—an' how they conquered in the end, an' died in the faith they'd kept. Why, child, this ol' house you think so meanly of is *me!* You tear me out o' it, an' I'll *die*, same as some creature you tear out o' his shell!"

The girl stared up into his face in angry wonder. How strange the impassioned man! How strange the devotion to this, or any, house!

"I guess you can't sense how it is, dear," he said more quietly. "You've got to have been born an' raised in an ol' homestead like I have to know."

She flared out upon him: "An' I was born under a hedge, an' never had any kin o' my own! But I tell you, I got a house o' my own now, an' I mean to live in it, too, if I have to spend my days alone!"

"Silvy," he pleaded, "don't run on so! You an' me are tokened for life, an' Parson Card's goin' to call the banns to-morrow."

"Will you live in my house?"

His face worked like a child's about to cry. "I can't, dear."

Her heart quailed before his gentleness more than it would have at rage.

"Not to make me happy, Rossie?"

"It wouldn't make you happy," he

said, with a kind of dogged tenderness. "It's that makes me hold out. I'd be a miserable man up to the other house, an' I'd spoil your life so."

"It's just bein' a great, grown-up baby," she reviled him.

"I know it. I ain't makin' any boast o' it, but it's the way I'm formed."

"Then change the way!"

"I can't," patiently always. "This is ter'ble mean, sweetheart, to you—don't think I don't sense that—but 'twould be meaner yet if I let you tote me up there, an' then made you miserable. It ain't that I don't set by you—I do; more'n I can tell you in any words I know. This is somethin' way back o' that, down deep in the blood. 'Twould be like askin' me to steal for you an' then be happy afterward."

She laid a timid hand on his shoulder. "We might do like grandsire an' granny—turn an' turn about."

"No, sir!" with a sudden snap of fire. "They lived down the laugh o' folks, for they were two o' the most spirited folks ever born in this township; but I don't believe you've got the backbone to stand it, an' I know I ain't. I can hear all Pettipaugh a-haw-hawin' now: 'Rosswaine an' Silvy have set a-goin' right 'long in the old folks' tracks, same as sheep after a leader.' No, we got to live right here."

"Or never wed at all!" finished Silvia vehemently.

"There ain't any 'or,' dear." The softness of his gaze, the deep love in his voice, robbed his words of their imperious flavor.

Silvia felt her resolution floating from her in the sea of his devotion.

"Listen, Ross; I never owned anythin' in my whole life. Now I got somethin' that really belongs to me—can't I be let take my pleasure in it?"

"Take all the pleasure you've a mind to, so long as you don't ask to live in it."

"You talk foolish, an' you act foolish!"

"I know I do," humbly. "I'm ashamed o' it—an' yet I ain't ashamed o' it, either."

The girl opened her lips to answer,



when across the turmoil of her spirit blew a breath of homely daily life—the odor of burned bread. With a cry, she plunged her hand into the ashes, dragged out the forgotten Dutch oven, and snatched off the cover. All her Saturday baking an ugly black crust! On what a little hinge the gate of destiny swings! The sight of her ruined handiwork seemed to her the culmination of years of wronged labor, all due to Ross' sentimental whims.

"I view it up an' down *selfish*, an' you've got every call to be ashamed o' that!"

Ross was a sweet-spirited fellow, unused to give or take sharp thrusts. He winced at the words, still more at the harsh tone.

"I wouldn't say things like that if I was you, Silvia," he warned her, his cheeks hot, his eyes very bright.

"I will say it, an' more, too. That's my opinion o' you, an' you might as well know it right now. An' you ain't under any obligations to wed me if you don't feel to."

"I do feel to, Silvy, dear girl, I do! You listen to me," he besought her, in an extremity of distress, his hands reached out to her.

"You got to choose between me an' your house. Which will you take?" Her face was as scarlet as his, and in her eyes, too, burned deep fires; she flung the words at him.

"You got to choose between me an' *your* house," he answered steadily.

A dreadful silence fell between them, while they measured each other like wrestlers in a ring. She spoke first, high and quick:

"I won't give up my house."

His words came draggingly: "Dear, for my sake! You know I can't give up."

They stared at each other, two foolish, miserable children. Silvia realized that in all her wholesome life she had never before been angry, and that it should be with Ross, her playmate and lover!

"I won't wed you, an' if I'm not goin' to do that I won't live in your

house another minute! I'm goin' up to my own."

She pushed past him, flew upstairs, and began to clutch together her few belongings, cramming waists and under garments ruthlessly into a carpet-bag, rolling them into a bundle, flinging skirts over her arm. Ross stood where she had left him.

When she came stumbling downstairs he took the bag and bundle from her without a word or a look, and strode ahead. Silvia had such insight into him from long habit that she knew under his stolid manner was a slow suffering and a numb acceptance of her will. Ross had never been a fighter; his strength was all pressed down into passive resistance.

When he set her bag down on the floor of her own kitchen he turned to her his set, unhappy face.

"I'll send Artemesia up after supper."

"If you do, I'll slam the door in her face!" she flared at him.

"You can't stay here all 'lone to-night."

"I'm a-goin' to stay here all alone the rest o' my life, if I live to be as ol' as granny. I might as well begin right now to get wonted to it."

His answer was to walk out of the house.

There was no food in the pantry; nor, indeed, was Silvia in a state to eat it; but she found some tea in the caddy, and brewed herself a bitter drink. Then she made up her bed in the little room over the kitchen, from which she could see the chimneys of the house in the hollow, and, while the sunset still reddened the sky, went to bed.

She was not at all afraid—there were no tramps or robbers in that long-ago Pettipaug—but an eerie sense of all the years past and to come threaded in and out of her veins till her whole body twitched. She lay with hot eyes watching the moonbeams shift across the floor while the eight-day clock boomed out nine, ten, eleven, midnight.

"I wonder if I was to make the room real dark would I drop off?" She followed the thought out of bed to the



window. There she halted, her hand reached out to the shutter. A man had just slid off her kitchen steps and hidden himself in her woodhouse.

"There ain't anythin' but a few sticks o' wood in the shed," she told herself reasonably. "He must be waitin' for the moon to set 'fore he breaks in the house." Then she scoffed at her own fears. "Who ever heard o' a robber in these parts? It's just some fellow footin' it over to Candlelight Hill, an' turned in to rest a spell. I'm a-goin' to find out who 'tis."

She dressed quickly, and started downstairs. In spite of her reasoning and her stanch courage, she found her heart drumming like a mill race, and her feet creeping stealthily. She let herself out into the mild splendor of the moonlight, and listened, pressed into a shadow. Neither sight nor sound came from the woodshed. She found herself longing to be out in the road, running for the safe shelter of home and Ross; but to reach the gate she must pass straight in front of the open door of the woodshed.

Silvia had never been actually frightened in her whole life, and quick decision, wise or reckless, was imperative in her will. Now she found herself cold and damp with fear, and wavering like a leaf between the agony of waiting and the terror of the swift flight. Circumstances acted for her. A thin gust of wind blew around the house, and with a sharp clatter banged to the door she had left ajar behind her. Instantly the man's figure appeared at the other door.

She was over the steps in one leap, and running in a frenzy of terror for the gate. It was locked, and she could not find the latch. Steps thudded behind her. She could not escape him. Well, face him, then!

"What you doin' in my woodshed?" Her voice sounded almost cool.

"Don't be scared. It's just me."

She could have shrieked with the release of taut nerves; instead, she cried again, now fiercely, in anger: "What you doin' in my woodshed?"

Ross came close to her. "I couldn't

let you stay all 'lone in the dark in that great house," he murmured humbly. "I thought I was hid, but a shutter banged, an' I went to see to it, an' you caught me."

"You can't sleep in my woodshed every night way into winter."

"I guess I'll have to if you won't agree to Artemesia's company."

"I won't let you!"

"I reckon you'll have to, dear."

Silvia sank against the fence, appalled. His gentleness had an inexorableness in it, like the flow of the tide or the fall of the rain. She could not turn him any more than she could those processes of nature.

"Silvia, can't you stand the poor ol' house if it's got me in it? Won't you come home to me?" His voice was movingly sweet; his arms were around her; his breath was warm on her cheek. She trembled with longing to give him love for his love, and yet like a wall between them was his foolish and selfish denial of her comforts and rights.

"Ross, can't you come here for my sake?"

"Dear Sil, it's like cuttin' off my hand for you. I'd be maimed all my life. I'd feel it, an' you'd feel it, an' 'twould poison the sweetness o' our cup o' life. I would cut off my hand for you, little dear, if you needed to have it so, but just for a few trashy things an' a bigger place to swing round in you'd—"

"But why do you prize it so—that old, black place?" She was struggling in an honest effort to comprehend—prosaic sense against the poet's heritages.

"I don't know, Sil—I don't know," in bewilderment as deep as her own. "But it's all that makes me, the generations o' my forbears strengthenin' my hands for my daily work; the ol' farm's just *me*."

She drew away from him sorrowfully. "I can't, Ross; oh, I can't! It's so queer in you it sets me against you most. But I'll do this for you. I don't want you hangin' round all night in my woodshed, an' I don't want Artemesia my housemate, either—her an' me don't



hit it off real well—but I'll go down to Pettipaug, an' I'll find me some good, reliable body to stay 'long o' me nights—Aunt Dilly Cappel, or ol' Mis' Purdy—so you won't have to pester yourself 'bout me any more."

With a great sigh, like a sob, Ross accepted his defeat, following her back to the house to spend the rest of the night on the forerom lounge, while Silvia, wearied out with all the griefs of the day, slept dreamlessly in her little "kitchen chamber."

Summer stole by on noiseless feet. The delicate, virginal flowers, pale roses, forget-me-nots, madonna lilies, were thrust out of the garden by bold hollyhocks, jaunty poppies, and high-spirited trumpet blooms.

Then they, too, had their day, and ceased to be, and the hardy marigolds and asters kept banners of color waving for a brief season. The sedges in the marshes by the river burned in red flames, cooled down to umber ashes, blackened, and died out.

The wrangling of insects, the drone of bees, the whistle of birds all quieted into the great silence of fall in the country. Only the high, lonely cry of wild geese flying south pierced the stillness at dawn or dusk. Mornings were crisply cold, evenings the pools glazed over with a scum of ice. Winter—snug,



*She swung herself over the edge of the low porch, and dropped to the ground.*

housekeeping, isolated, desolate winter—was shrouding the country in its long sleep.

Every morning Silvia rose with a brisk affectation of pleasure in her independence, ate her breakfast in the bow window, where once she had planned to set a table for Ross and herself, and trudged down to Pettipaug. At night she trudged back to her warm kitchen and the Widow Purdy, serving up a frugal supper. For—startling word to Silvia—"if man will not work, he shall not eat."

She owned the handsomest house in



the county, set in a noble lawn, and a barn large enough to shelter both Pharaoh's lean and fat kine, but of herb or plant, fish or flesh to comfort her hunger she had not one. She could deck herself in ashes-of-roses silk, and serve herself with thin old silver, but truly her feast would be a Barmecide one, and it seemed she and the Widow Purdy had the appetites of ogres.

As soon as she left his house, Ross, who although she had always thought poorly of his practical sense, yet, in this stress of change, was the one to grasp the essentials of the situation, came up bearing gifts—vegetables, a bag of flour, eggs, a ham. She accepted them perforce, but she made him understand that it was only that once—she must and would stand absolutely alone.

Then she went "lookin' for work"—how it took her back to the roving, meager life of her childhood!—and after many discouragements found it as clerk in the "ladies' side" of the general store of the village.

It was not agreeable to her, for she had the nomad's detachment from interest in her kind, and it was weariful, for nearly all feminine Pettipaug's desires were either down cellar or on the topmost shelf; but it kept fire in the stove and food in the cupboard.

Ross came to see her every Saturday night, exactly as if he were a Pettipaug sweetheart courting her; but all his talk was of the farm or the village life; he never spoke of their broken pledge or of the future. Yet when he left he always held her hand in both of his, and looked down into her eyes with a strength of love and pleading in his own dark ones that sent her to bed trembling with a kind of miserable joy.

Artemesia and her mother kept house for him with a comfortable skill that left him no longings, she knew, for her as a substitute in just material ways. She could not be jealous of the lively Artemesia—unless it were that she secretly guessed both mother and daughter upheld him in his perversity—for Artemesia was to be wedded herself in the spring to an up-and-coming farmer.

Often in the long November evenings Silvia pictured them to herself, in the low, small, kind room, around the kitchen hearth roaring red with flames, popping corn and telling over old stories, broken by Artemesia's lusty crow of laughter, and Ross' deep note; then she would look across the stove at the Widow Purdy, a gaunt, silent woman, given to gusty sighs and doleful headshakings, and murmur to herself: "This house would be all complete if only Ross was up here."

"As I view it, we're in for a snow-storm," the Widow Purdy remarked on one of these evenings, as she rolled up her knitting preparatory to going to bed.

The widow was always prophesying storms—it was part of her view of life—so Silvia was not moved by this particular prediction. Yet when she went to fasten the outer door she saw for herself great drifts of mackerel clouds and thick rows of mare's-tails all over the sky.

"It does look doubbersome," she conceded to the widow.

"An' if it comes on for a real snow-storm, I'll thank you to tell me how you cal'late to het up this monstrous barn o' a place with the little wood you got in?"

Silvia did not answer; she did not know.

She slept soundly all night, for she was tired. When she woke the world lay deep covered in snow, which the wind whirled by her window in fantastic dances. There is something solemn in the first storm to country folk; it so definitely sets a seal upon winter. Spring is beyond, they know, and winter itself, when it is once accepted as part of the scheme of things, brings its own pleasures; but at the first sight of the white, shrouded fields and hills, all their friendly landmarks blurred out, a sense of desolation, of helpless loneliness in a forsaken land, darkens over the spirit of the dwellers in far-away farmsteads. Silvia shivered, crouching in her little cotton nightgown against the window. She longed to curl up again in bed, and sleep there till the



first crocus held up its bright cup by her fence.

It was Sunday; no one could be expected to plow a way through to meet-in'; indeed, the sexton would not even light the fires, so sure would he be that "the goin' was too tejus for folks to make it through." Silvia remembered other such stormy mornings, when grandsire and Ross, stamping their boots and blowing on their reddened hands, dug paths to barn and well; and she and granny, gossiping cozily, watched them from the snugger of the kitchen before beginning to cook the especially savory dinner. This was a day to sit by the fire and "count your marcies."

Yet the middle of the morning found her fighting her way through the drifts down into the hollow. Her ostensible errand was to carry dinner to old Aunt Tempy Liggett and her husband, Uncle Billy; really a great restlessness of the spirit drove her forth. The sun had come out, drying the snow into powder, but the wind still roared tempestuously. In their cheerful kitchen, bent Aunt Tempy and hobbling Uncle Billy were entertaining a visitor, Rosswaine La-May.

"No, thank you, I can't come in." Silvia backed away hastily when she saw their guest. "I just brought you down some roast sparerib an' a pie. They're kind o' heartenin' on a winter day."

"I'll go 'long with you, Sil," Ross announced calmly. "My folks'll be needin' me to keep up the fires."

Nodding good-by, they started on together.

"Pretty rough sleddin' uphill," Ross remarked; then, as if no more explanation were needed, he thrust a strong arm in under hers, and drew her close to him.

Silvia felt as if they were again boy and girl coming home from school together. Involuntarily she pressed herself into the hollow of his arm.

"I took down some trade o' Artemesia to those poor ol' folks," Ross went on. "I didn't go to talk business

on the Sabbath, but Uncle Billy he begun on it."

"What business?" She had to shriek above the wind.

"Why, I've bought his farm—didn't I tell you?" His deep voice was under the storm. "He an' Aunt Tempy's goin' off to their children over to Zoar."

"What you goin' to do with it?"

"Turn it into pasture, an' keep more cattle. 'Twas always a desire o' grandsire's—the two farms lyin' side by side. I'll turn the house into an extry barn."

"Ain't that a kind o' a pity—such an excellent, good house as 'tis—story an' a half, an' a lean-to?"

"I don't know how 'tis, Sil," he told her humbly. "Grandsire never deemed I was much o' a hand for business, an' granny was outdone with me plenty o' times for my slack ways, as she called 'em; but everythin' I've undertook has prospered. I'm makin' money. An' you want to know how I feel 'bout it?" He halted in a drift. "I don't give *that* for all the dollars in New England since I can't have the girl I want."

A rush of wind flung her against him. So she need not answer; and in silence they struggled up to her own door. There, sheltered by the corner of the house, they stood in a quiet space, catching their breath.

Ross turned her around in his arms, and set her in front of him. His soft, limpid eyes were piteous with feeling; his serious, gentle face atingle with the beating of his heart. Silvia's own heart leaped, sank, halted on its march; she knew herself yielding at last.

"When you goin' to stop this tomfoolery o' livin' up here by yourself, an' wed me, like you promised?" The words came in a rough, angry voice.

It is the ill chance of the mild that their rare flares of irritation are regarded as so out of nature as to be unjustifiable. Silvia was rooted to the ground in her amazement. All the soft languor of surrender left her. Stamping her foot on the crisp snow, she flung back at him fiercely:

"I ain't ever goin' to leave my house long as I can keep the roof over my





*She stumbled around behind the blazing ruins. A man staggered toward her.*

head!" With a jerk, she was free, and flying from him.

All day the wind clashed and boomed around the house; all day the Widow Purdy sat by the shining stove and fed it chunks of wood to keep its heat raying out into the room. To Silvia it seemed burning to ashes all her own youth, and the hopes of it; and her face was pale and set with unhappiness. Sometimes she wandered to the window to gaze out on the still world, white and remote and icy-hearted, till the lonesomeness of it drove her back to the fire. And so the long day wore itself out.

That night she lay in bed long awake, asking herself: "Ought I to give in to Ross? Do I set by him enough not to cast it up at him by an' by? If I

can't give in to him, ain't that a proof I don't prize him like I ought to wed him?"

Dreary questions whose answers brought no peace. Finally she slept, only to dream wildly of wrecks by sea, of caved-in mines, of lost trails in dark woods, through all which dangers she toiled after Ross, gone out of sight somewhere just beyond.

She woke from one such nightmare, trembling and fevered. Although she sat up in bed, she could not breathe; something like a great hand clutched her throat; an acrid stifle was in her nostrils. She cast a startled glance out the window, and saw the snow glittering in a scarlet glow.

"Widow's set the chimney afire," she told herself quietly.



With calm speed, she dressed herself, and opened her door onto the stairs. A thick black cloud rolled in upon her, in which points of red licked up into her room. Her candle went out, leaving her in utter darkness. She slammed the door, pushed up her window, and crawled through it onto the porch roof. The whole kitchen beneath her was a glare of light; flame banners streamed from the windows.

She swung herself over the edge of the low porch by her hands, and dropped to the ground, unconscious of the jar as she struck. The Widow Purdy slept downstairs in a room off the clock room; she might yet be saved. Silvia, one cold spot in her throbbing brain controlling all her acts, crashed in the bedroom window with the handle of the snow shovel left on the porch.

"Get up!" she shrieked above the roar of the storm and the crackle of the flames. "Fire! Fire!"

The Widow Purdy had survived many adventures in her day. She snatched her clothes, and ran for the front door.

"You try to save what you can," screamed Silvia. "I'm goin' for Ross."

Already the air was full of flying sparks, whirled downhill on the gale, and a great brand dashed into the locust tree by the gate and set its withered branches ablaze. The dry, powdery snow on roof and floor smoked and dripped a moment, then scorched away in steam. As Silvia ran, the glow of the burning house sped ahead of her in a crimson path across the snow. The distance to the house in the hollow—only a few rods—was like the trails of her dream, miles upon miles.

The four women and Ross worked steadily to save some of the furniture, for the house itself they knew to be doomed, even if the only well had not been inside the kitchen. Silvia flung far out into the snow linen, dresses, chairs, pillows, whatever came to hand in the few snatches the heat allowed.

Some one came galloping down the road, shouting:

"Fire! Fire! LaMay, your house's afire!"

No one heeded him till he leaped his horse over the fence in among them.

"Your own house in the holler's caught," he shouted. "Get down to that—maybe we can save it!"

It was one of the Lindley boys, from the only other farm on the ridge. His two brothers and his father rattled up in a hay cart, and all rushed for the other house. A great brand had dashed against the roof, dry with a century of life, dropped onto the shed, thick with dead vines, and rolled against the light arbor at the kitchen door. All three places caught, and blazed exultantly.

Men and women side by side fought in grim silence for the life of the old house, passing up buckets of water to Ross on the roof, and helping Dan Lindley keep the hose on the woodshed. The well was far from the house, the water low, the fire line thin; their labors, gigantic, savage, only delayed the inexorable fate. The old house, dry as tinder, seasoned to the core, burned like a royal bonfire.

"She's goin'. It ain't no manner o' use to try for her no more," cried old Lindley. "In for the gear, boys!" He himself dashed into the kitchen, now all alight.

Silvia leaned against the fence, grasping the rail with her half-frozen hands, and sobbed in an ecstasy of excitement.

"You poor little crittur! Come down to my house. You're like to drop."

It was Aunt Tempy, from the house down the road.

A new horror of this mad night gripped the girl. "Your house afire?" she gasped.

Aunt Tempy pointed to the sky. The freakish wind had altered just half an hour too late, and was driving the sparks in clouds across the bare, plowed fields toward the woodless mill pond. The barns and stock were safe.

"You go right down with Aunt Tempy, an' let her give you some warm drink," a new voice urged Silvia. People had begun to race up from Pettipaug; this was Parson Card's house-keeper.

Silvia looked over her shoulder, and



saw some men carrying out the tall clock and her grandmother's cedar chest; here was help enough now. She must say one good-by to her own beautiful house. She slid out of Aunt Temy's grasp, and ran, heedless of her tired body, back up the hill.

The great house stood out grandly, every line and point cut sharp in scarlet, its center a furnace of gold and green and crimson. A few village people stood by the fence, powerless to help, watching the fall of the roof. Silvia entered the gate up the lawn, to watch apart the ruin of that which had been at once her high joy and her deep unhappiness.

"Sil!" She heard the shout plainly, for the wind was going down. "Sil, be careful!"

Ross had followed her, running in long strides, his face dark with smoke, tragic with meaning.

"Don't go near it!" he called urgently. "You can't tell how a wall's goin' to strike when it gives way."

A mighty crash drowned his voice. The front wall toppled over. Silvia went down on her face under the shock, but she was untouched, and on her feet in an instant. Ross was gone! She

shut her eyes, and waves of agony swept her, scorching her like the flames of the fire. She stumbled around behind the blazing ruins. A man staggered toward her. She sank forward into his arms, and they clung together, tears running down the cheeks of each.

"Oh, Rossie, I thought you were killed!"

"Thank God, Silvy, you're safe!"

For a long moment they held each other, his wet cheek pressed down against her tear-washed one; then she cried tremulously:

"Rossie, dear, if I only could, I'd live in your house to-morrow. Poor boy—it's dreadful for you!" Her own loss was swallowed up in pity for him.

"Little sweetheart, it's mighty hard—your gran' house gone!" He had forgotten his pain in hers.

"Don't you grieve too deep, dear." Her arms were around his neck. "We can live in Uncle Billy's nice house. Nothin' really counts if we've just got each other."

"That's the word, darlin'! We got the home o' our hearts. The other, after all, was just a symbol o' that; the real thing ain't been so much as scorched by the fire."



### In Arden Wood

**I**N Arden Wood the dreaming trees  
Were hung with lovers' ecstasies,  
From whittling schoolboy's "heart" and "dart"  
To elder swain's delicious art  
That swung light verses on the breeze.

Hard, hard, in prosy times like these  
To track those steps of Poesy's  
Far from life's grind and clamorous mart,  
To Arden Wood!

Yet, while the world goes round, the breeze  
Shall carry lovers' whispers; tease  
Girl-ringtlets with its breath. Apart  
We lurk, we bards, and ply our art  
In a dream world, 'mid sighing trees,  
In Arden Wood!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.





# A Hopeless Combination

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY H. Y. MAYER

YOU ask me why a single life  
I lead, fate's threads to snarl 'em,  
And why I do not take to wife  
Sweet Nancy L. o' Harlem.  
She's fair, you say, as month o' May,  
And she can cook that fancy  
Her pies is sweeter than the lips  
Of home-adorin' Nancy.  
You tell me this, and I agree—  
But oh, my deep-sea mister,  
*You've* only saw sweet Nancy Law;  
But *I* have saw her sister!

For sister's homely like the fence  
Composed o' plainest mud, sir;  
Her disposition is intense,  
Her talk a constant flood, sir.  
Whene'er I call at Nancy's house  
To hold a lover's meetin',  
Sweet Nance sets quiet as a mouse  
While sister does the greetin';



Oncet I got close to Nancy's ear  
 And very sudden kissed 'er,  
 Whereat she says, "Be kind, Jack dear,  
 And don't forgit poor sister!"

Whene'er we go to Coney's isle  
 To try each dip and slide, sir,  
 I takes sweet Nance—but, wretched chance!—  
 Her sister goes beside, sir.  
 To both their hands I have to cling,  
 For both is equal timid;  
 Then sister faints, the reckless thing,  
 Till I'm completely jimmied.  
 And when we go to shoot the chutes  
 Adown that breakneck twister,  
 Says Nancy, "Whee! Oh, don't mind me—  
 But please hang on to sister!"

For love o' Nance me heart doth throbb  
 So I am near to frenzy,  
 But when her sister's on the job  
 Me love gits influenzy.  
 Suppose I should propose to Nance—  
 Would dooty then befall so  
 That I with fate must take a chance  
 And ask her sister also?  
 Suppose the weddin' wreaths was twined  
 And I, the bridegroom, mister,  
 Should step into the church and find  
 Not Nancy, but—her sister!





# THE Debut of Buckie Minn

By  
PLANTER CHASE.



ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

"that's rough enough, even from you!"

"Time somebody was rough with you, Jess," returned Buckie slowly, his glance considerably measuring her wrath by the signs of her eyes. Buckie went to night school at Cooper Union, and some of his words were good English. Also, he had ambitions and a purpose; he worked daytimes and respected himself, so that some of his ideas were good sense. Notably, this idea

of his that Jessie Baler, the girl he desired to marry, was unsuited to the stage career she coveted, and was doomed to more or less painful disappointment, had a foundation in clear-headed, sagacious perception.

"You just got a bug, that's all," he elucidated. "You ain't the kind that could get your stuff across. Oh, yes, you can sing—don't get mad—you can sing and dance pretty good, in a parlor. But I've seen lots of 'em who could do that fine who couldn't put it over the footlights. You got some pretty ways, all right, but you ain't got the one thing you have to have to make 'em go. Gall—see?—just plain gall is the thing you can't get along without in that game—and that you ain't got—and I'm glad you ain't, too."

His piecemeal lengthening of his sentence, more than the substance of it, betrayed his genuine feeling. Any one at all but an angry girl could have seen that he cared, that behind his words was genuine concern for her, and no mere

**B**UCKIE MINN stretched his long legs gingerly out across Mother Baler's best front-parlor rug, and pushed his big hands down into his trousers pockets. His shrewd gray eyes turned under their bushy, rust-colored brows to regard the girl beside him judicially.

"Jess," he said slowly, "you got about as much chance to make a hit down at Miner's on amateur night as a lightning bug has on Broadway."

Jessie Anabel Baler, slender, fair of hair and of skin, pertly pretty, flushed from chin to bangs. Her blue eyes opened wide in plain amazement, and the pupils narrowed with an odd suggestion of taking aim. For an instant she held back the breath within her red lips; then it came out with an explosive little burst of words.

"Is that so?" She slightly strained a normally gentle voice till it broke with her effort to express high-pressure resentment. "Well, say," she added,



masculine assumption of superior knowledge, no paltry jealous desire to be the dictator. But Jessie Anabel Baler had risen to a high degree of emotional temperature. Jessie Anabel's singing and dancing were her pet accomplishments; her ambition to exhibit them in public her long-cherished project; and both were taken very seriously indeed. Of course, she was angry. Indeed, she was furious.

Now innately Jessie Baler was a nice girl. If she had not been, Buchanan Minn would not have loved her, and she would not have appreciated, even in cooler moments, the solid worth of Buckie's sort. But it is hard to have your ambitions and your vanity simultaneously sat upon by one to whom you have looked for true sympathy, not to say flattery; and Jessie had looked, not unnaturally, to her lover, for exactly the one, if not exactly the other. She had found, instead, high disapproval of her little scheme—her innocent plan to try out her musical and histrionic gifts in that most obvious of openings for the beginner furnished by amateur night in the Bowery palace of vaudeville.

"I'm goin' on, Friday night, at Miner's, Buckie," she confided, while the spark waxed in her eyes.

"Nix," was the prompt response.

And from such seed, so sown, the disagreement rooted, leaved, and flowered in a breath.

"I am sorry to go without your approval," said Jessie Anabel, with cold dignity, and with her Alice Lloyd uptilt of a small chin that was rather too fetching for real impudence. "I've made up my mind that I'm going on the stage, and I can't get a start anywhere else. If I can make good down there——"

"If you can make good down there," interrupted Buckie—and then he interrupted himself to wince at the bare notion of her attempting the thing. Jessie Anabel was charming, close at hand and under the parental parlor lamp. Her eighteen-year-old charms would even endure daylight perfectly. But they were not of the sort that endure the spotlight.

Young Minn was not an habitu e of

the Bowery theaters, but his gray eyes were of the sort that see things not written on the programs there or elsewhere. He had seen amateur and other nights, and his impressions amounted to convictions. Jessie Baler's pert, girlish prettiness, like her thin, sweet little voice, both of which he adored, bore about the same relation to the sort of thing that would carry in a vaudeville theater as natural color bears to grease paint, for the same purpose.

He had heard the flatteries of her other friends, but he had seen parallels of her case get into public; and he had never been of the fiber to enjoy the spectacle. Any stage, at any time, would be bad enough. Public appearance anywhere would inevitably bring her only disillusionment and suffering. A Bowery stage on amateur night was no place for persons possessing less than positively blatant attractions of voice and person. A girl with parlor notes and a parlor face compared favorably, in his judgment and metaphor, with a canary at a band concert. And an audience at Miner's is something more than ruthless.

Hence he set his face stonily against her project and said all these things aloud, as well as he knew how, with his Cooper Union schooling.

Jessie Anabel was surprised. But she knew her young swain well enough to be quite sure that he was wholly sincere, and that he was about as likely to change an opinion of this sort as he was to start smashing the Baler furniture. So, determined none the less, she gave her Olga Petrova shrug, and ceased argument.

"That means you'll do it anyhow, doesn't it?" queried Buckie slowly, who felt as only a sweetheart's shrug, after serious argument, makes a man feel.

"Of course," answered Jessie. "Did you think you could stop me?"

"Well," said her youthful lover gravely, "I sort o' hoped so."

"Well, you can't," responded Jessie Anabel. She rose from her end of the settee, and crossed to the piano. She sat down with attempt at careless nonchalance; but the face she turned back



to him was hot with angry blood. Having given tongue to the beginnings of wrath, she had quickly arrived at the stage that she might have described as "good and mad." "And," she added, with spiteful venom, "if this is what you come up here for, you might 'a' stayed away. You can *stay* away next time!"

Young Mr. Minn stared an instant. Slowly he drew his big hands out of

"Well," he commented, "maybe you do, then. But you ain't goin' on at Miner's," he ended firmly.

The girl forgot her music and turned in amazement. "I ain't?"

Buckie Minn shook his head at her wide blue eyes. "No," he replied distinctly.

"Well!" exclaimed Jessie Anabel. "Well! Who'll stop me?"

"I will," replied Buckie.



"Jess," he said slowly, "you got about as much chance to make a hit down at Miner's on amateur night as a lightning bug has on Broadway."

his pockets, and pulled in his long legs. He stood up and walked slowly across to the piano.

"You don't mean that, do you, Jess?" he inquired gently.

"Yes, I do," she averred, beginning to play "Ma Mississippi Sue," while she grinned at the piano keys, a wicked little grin of triumph over the notion that she held this big chap by her side between finger and thumb.

Buckie regarded her seriously.

The girl got up from the piano stool and faced him, for a moment half daunted. Then she laughed, with a sudden little watchful snicker. "You!" she ventured, semicontemptuously. As he remained undisturbed by that, she let her anger flame. "You think you can boss me? Well, I guess not!"

"Not boss; no, Jess," answered her lover. "Just stop you from foolishness—and from gettin' hurt."

Fair little Miss Baler grinned at him,



as long as she could stand his gaze. Then she dropped down at the piano again and took up the neglected thread of "Ma Mississippi Sue." Buckie Minn turned slowly away and to the door of the Baler front hallway. "Well, then, good night, Jess," he said, and went out.

The girl at the piano stopped playing again suddenly. As she heard the outside door close, she jumped to the window and peered over the inside blinds. She caught her breath quickly as she saw him pass the street light at the corner and strike across the square. Then abruptly she turned back and threw herself down on the vacant settee and burst suddenly into hysterical tears.

Whether or not Jessie Anabel would carry out her rash intention, Buckie Minn was in doubt. Shocked at first by the announcement of her notion, he found it easy later to see how and why the idea tempted her. She believed in her powers. That belief, bolstered by the flattery of foolish, inexperienced friends, might carry her far. Buckie was hurt by the way his kindly meant opposition had been received, but he was not the sort to let pique interfere with his effort to save Jessie a painful experience. Pain for her would be the only result of her misguided attempt, as was sure; and pain for Jessie Anabel was something more to Buckie Minn.

That was why, when Friday evening saw the gathering of ambitious amateurs at the stage door of Miner's Bowery Theater, there appeared among them a tall, long-legged, big-handed young man, who gave his name as Buchanan, and his specialty as tumbling—to constitute a passport to those mysterious regions behind the scenes.

Herded with the rest who were to offer their callow stunts before the most ruthlessly critical audience in the world, he was directed to the semidark space bounded by whitewashed brick walls and the back of the final set for the evening's professional show, to await his turn for his debut. And with seemingly morose, and obviously watchful, taciturnity, he planted himself against a convenient scene brace and waited.

Buckie still half believed that Jessie Anabel would not come. He wanted to believe it, for if she stayed away it would be equivalent to a tender of the olive branch between them. And Buckie Minn's heart was sore and lonely for his girl. If she did not appear he would have a right to think she cared, after all, for what he said and thought. And he could go straight back to her and find again what he had had before and what he was loath to do without.

So it was with a lightening heart that he looked about him, in the bare and disillusioning place at the back of the stage, while the roaring final chorus of the professional musical show was in progress just the other side of the flimsy set. He did not see her among the giggling girls and intently sober boys who were gathered to offer their untried wares. She was not there. If she were intending to carry out her purpose, she would certainly have arrived by this time. She was not coming!

The chorus outside ended. The storm of applause with which the auditors beyond greeted the end of the show rose in a crashing din, then faded, as the curtain sank between it and Buckie Minn, then rose and sank again for an after call or two. Then suddenly the scene set, back of which the young fellow stood, was struck, and he found himself behind the main curtain only, on the wide, open stage, which looked big and hollow enough to swallow all the rather forlorn little bunch of amateurs.

And Buckie commenced looking the latter over with a new eye to their forlornness, as his hope began to take sure hold of his mind. He began to pity them, too, instead of himself and Jessie Anabel. They were about to go through what he had feared for Jessie. Some of them would suffer rather cruelly. But she would not—and the fact that she would not meant much to him.

The sceneshifters were setting up a curious structure in the first grooves. It was a wall-like affair, but pierced with many openings, which were, in turn, covered with curtains, half doors,



pliable strips, and similar veiling or concealing, but unsubstantial, barriers. One of them was a full-sized door, hung on a pivot near the center from top to bottom, so that a push on the upper half would cause it to swing inward. Behind this and some of the other larger openings in the scene, mattresses lay upon the floor. And, while the novice observed, two or three stout fellows appeared, armed with slapsticks, pillowlike bags stuffed with feathers, and other implements of curious nature, and for purposes more or less obscure.

One of these wielded a long pole at the end of which was a loop, perhaps of heavy wire bound with protecting cloth, and large enough to go about a corpulent human body. He waved it in unholy glee at the little group of amateurs, and Buckie Minn recognized it soberly. It was the hook—with which the unlucky candidate who failed of favor before the footlights would be unceremoniously removed on demand of his audience. "Get the hook!" or just plain "The hook!" is the damning cry of the displeased gallery gods, and their will is the law of amateur night. Like the crowd in the ancient Roman amphitheater, they hold the power of life and death—for budding dramatic aspirations. "Get the hook!" is their "Thumbs down!" and many an innocent is thus slaughtered to make a Bowery holiday.

Nervousness was abroad, but Buckie did not feel it. He watched others of the little group about him crowd forward to the peepholes in the set, as the curtain went up and the announcer came from the wings to make his bow and give the name of the first aspirant.

"The first performer on the program," Buckie heard the penetrating voice of the announcer say, "is Joseph Bailey, a——" He paused, with a long hold on the article, and a roar came up from the house:

"Singar-r-r!"

They are good guessers—also they are well informed regarding their amateurs, these Bowery audiences. So they do part of their own announcing.

Buckie himself had now no thought of remaining to see the show out. He had never had an intention to perform. He knew a place to which he wanted to go—some one he wanted to see. But his curiosity was stirred by this unusual inside view of a thing familiar from the front. He found his way to a peephole in the set, as Joseph Bailey, "singar-r-r," debouched from the left first entrance.

Then he watched while the orchestra began Joseph Bailey's music, and the soloist struck his first note. And Buckie Minn's own heart jumped, as he stared into the hundreds of yellow, hazy, intent, half-laughing, only half-seen faces beyond the blinding footlights. He only vaguely heard Joseph Bailey's first effort, which soared bravely, cracked, and failed; but he saw the instant wild laugh burst like a scorching flame from the yellow faces out there in the dusky auditorium, and heard the pitiless din of hoots and screams for "the hook!"

There's no chance for a weakling at Miner's. Buckie winced to the soul, as his thoughts ran back to Jessie Anabel and her thin little voice. Thank fortune, she had taken his warning!

One of the stout fellows behind the set dropped his slapstick, and burst through an opening at hand, and out upon the stage. Another ran around the end of the scene. They approached the unlucky "singar-r-r" from side and rear. They assaulted him. They lifted him bodily; and next moment, to the accompaniment of yells of joy from the audience, he came headfirst through the upper half of the turning door, and landed in a discomfited and disconsolate heap on the mattress behind it.

Buckie laughed a little. He did not care much how rough a tough youngster like Joseph Bailey might find it. But for girls—of course, they would be less violent with feminine failures, on the stage, but the best was pretty strong. As for Jessie Anabel—well, she had not come! He wondered rather surprisedly why he had not thought of proposing that she see this thing from the audience, as a means of curing her





*He gave his specialty as tumbling.*

ambition, before he had antagonized her by fixed opposition.

A girl came next. She sang. She had a big voice that would have ranked as contralto had its quality been somewhat further removed from a motor's honk. But she got away with it—which means that she pleased. The audience applauded; dimes and nickels and quarters came sprinkling surprisingly down upon the stage about her as she delightedly responded to recall. And she came off stage with a handful of jingling change and with a new set of the lips, and a conscious droop of the eyelashes over flushed cheeks that spoke volumes about a future made or marred

by the little event, which was trifling to every, one else but her.

After that the hook itself was administered to a youngster who undertook with elaborate preparation to introduce an exhibition of legerdemain. His tricks were mostly gestures, and, though he produced handkerchiefs from empty hats, flags of all nations from a burned basket, and even a rabbit from a bowl of water, he didn't last. He produced besides only brief mirth, and no astonishment at all in the spectators. He came off stage by way of a slit in a painted store front, and landed on his ear on the pad behind.

Following these beginnings, a girl was hooked, a darky buck-and-wing dancer made good, an Irish monologue "artist" met his Waterloo by means of the slapstick

and the half door—though he actually put up a fight to save himself the ignominy.

But Buckie tired. He wanted to see Jessie Anabel. Therefore he buttoned his overcoat and made for the stage entrance. He felt no need for ceremony in taking his departure. And one more minute, or fraction thereof, would have seen him off through the night. But in the half light behind one tall standing scene piece, he came suddenly upon a small figure, apart and alone, that stopped him short in his tracks.

She was masked! But Buckie was sure the instant he looked into the eyes behind the holes in the fabric.



"Jess!" he cried at her.

She looked up at him for a single instant, as if too much surprised at his presence there to-credit her eyes. Then she dodged away from him, and ran around the scene with a nimble-footed skip that easily gave him the slip.

Buckie Minn's blood surged up into his head, and ran hot there. But Buckie stopped to think. She was in gala clothes—a homemade sort of imitation of a show girl's toggery. Her hair was puffed and powdered. That much he had anticipated. But the mask was a touch he could not have foreseen, and somehow it gave him a shock even greater than the sudden encounter itself. He could not have told why, but it half enraged him. It stirred a passion of dumb remonstrance against what she was doing.

His hope that she cared for what he thought was dashed, of course. So was the happy feeling that he could go home to her and to the old relation. He faced now a worse situation than when he had come to the theater. She was defying him, his wishes, his warnings, his earnest request. And the way she had run from him showed perfectly that she had no feeling about it except to follow her own purpose.

There was a little sense of sickness upon Buckie Minn's spirit for a moment. Then he roused himself slowly, turned, and rounded the scene, and felt determination coming back upon him. She should not do it! He would not let her. She was a little fool, all right, but he loved her, and he would not see her suffer—would not allow her to be ill-treated by that bunch of hoodlums out there in the pit, nor by this strong-arm squad of bouncers on the stage itself. He knew her powers; he knew exactly what would happen. And with fresh impressions gained from others' experiences within the last ten minutes, he grew furious in advance at the thought of what would be hers. He would go to her and take her away by force from it all. He would—

But he stopped short at that point in his resolutions. He had come in range of the front of the stage, with a full

view of it from the wings. He heard the end of the announcer's brass-voiced enunciation of some fanciful false name, and he saw the flirt of a skirt, the gleam of fair hair out there, and realized that the girl—his girl, whom he had come there to meet and stop in this mad undertaking—was already before the audience.

Buckie Minn had a moment of blank, so far as he could ever afterward recall. Then he turned slightly giddy, and reached out to steady himself against the brick wall next to the electrician's switchboard. Next second, however, he was clear-headed enough to hear a thin, piping little soprano voice starting to sing out there in front, and to see, albeit dazedly, a slender little defenseless-looking form posturing in its semidisguising frippery. And then the inevitable began to happen. There was a raucous call from the gallery, a yip and a yelp, and the house went off into guffaws, meows, hissings.

"The hook—hook, hook, hook! Get the hook! The hook! Get the hook!" came the hilarious cries. They were like lashes on the raw to Buckie Minn. In an instant he was maddened by them. A red-coated figure of a bouncer started out from the set behind the singer, and made for her with arms spread. Buckie saw him.

And then something happened that was not, nor ever has been before or since, on the program of a Bowery theater. A young man, with very bright, hot eyes, long legs, and very big hands, shot out from the wings as if he had been thrown upon the stage. He caught the stout little bouncer by the scruff of the neck, and heaved him bodily from the floor. With a twist and a toss he sent the squirming, sputtering red figure through a place in the back that looked like a manhole in a pavement. Then, very straight and very tall, and apparently almost unconscious of the big audience that was shrieking appreciation of this innovation behind him, he turned on the shrinking girl as if he were going to devour her.

"Come away!" he cried. "What did you do it for? Didn't I tell you what



would happen? Come away! They shan't touch you! I'll beat their damn' heads off if they do. I'll kill 'em! Come—quick!"

The howling people in pit and gallery did not hear him. But no Bowery audience could fail to see genuineness and character in such a scene. Also, the followers of vaudeville are swift to scent a novelty. Half convinced of a clever hoax, in form of an act intended to entertain, half puzzled by the curious power of the scene, they suddenly stopped yelling. The whole hot, tobacco-hazy auditorium fell under a hush, like the hush on the stands at a pop fly with the bases full.

In the sudden stillness Buckie Minn's voice boomed out clear: "Why did you come? Couldn't you believe me? Did you *have* to try it for yourself?"

He went forward with a hand out toward the girl.

"Keep away! What do you want? You let me alone!" came the thin little answer.

But both voices carried the power of absolute sincerity. The audience was breathless. The girl shrank back against the set, then started to creep away. The man sprang forward and caught her arm, and held her. He had no consciousness of any other exit from the place than the way he had come in. He meant to take her that way.

She struggled for an instant, like a frightened little kitten, and one yelp of joy went up from the seats. Then the man put out a big arm and gathered her in close to him and turned; and the mob went silent again. When, all at once, the big fellow seemed suddenly to realize the stillness and the attention centered upon him, and looked out across the footlights, his jaw sticking out and his free hand clenching, something in the temper of him caught them.

There was a yell of approval from somewhere in the back of the house. Then a couple of men in the gallery began to beat their hands together wildly. The thing spread like the flaming laugh Buckie Minn had looked upon. A tumult began to mount. Cheers burst out. A man down in front leaped to his

feet and shouted hoarsely and waved his hat. And in another instant half the men in the lower part of the house had followed suit. The clamor became an uproar. That shrewd-eyed crowd had seen a thing that touched its primitive sensibilities, and it knew how to express appreciation. It bellowed in riotous emotion!

The girl under Buckie Minn's arm trembled as he led her off. At the exit she clung to him. She was sobbing. She tried to hide her poor little masked face against his breast. He moved toward the alley door, but she shrank against him and stopped him. The manager was running after them. He seized them and shouted for them to wait.

"Here, don't go!" he cried. "Good God, don't you know they'll give you the prize for that? Listen to the money hit the stage out there! What's the matter with you boobs? Go back and get your coin—wait and get the prize!"

The girl suddenly straightened and stiffened. She stopped sobbing and raised her head, listening to the still-howling house and to the spat and ring of falling silver. Then abruptly she laughed with an hysterical little gurgle.

"Oh, sure!" she cried. "It's so! Come on—it's so!"

But Buckie Minn stood still. For a second he stared at her. Then he swore softly, and reached out with a motion too quick for her to dodge. He snatched the flimsy mask from her face and looked down into the flushing, startled countenance beneath. Next moment he gasped and swore again. The face was one he had never seen before in his life!

He shook her off and whirled away. His brain was dizzy with the shock; he could hardly imagine the thing that had happened to him. He made again for the door.

Immediately the manager, with business instinct to give his crowd its way, seized his coat and shouted at him. "The prize, you mutt! It's ten dollars—don't you want it?"

"Prize—hell!" snarled Buckie, tearing himself loose. Then, swinging to-





*"Go back and get your coin—wait and get the prize!"*

ward the girl with a sneering, bitter laugh, he pointed into her tear-wet, greedy face. "Give it to her!"

He reached the cold darkness of the alleyway a moment later. Scarcely knowing what he thought, he staggered down its length to the street. Then he turned blindly toward home, running into people, cursing them and himself, muttering like a man in a whisky craze.

She had looked like Jessie in figure—and he had been excited! How else the thing could have occurred he could not understand. He had been sure—absolutely unquestioning—about the girl's identity. And he had been utterly fooled. He was simply astounded—helplessly amazed.

But he had not taken a dozen steps before he felt his arm seized. A voice



—a voice he knew beyond a peradventure, a voice that had wild excitement, tears in it, but a voice he knew—was at his ear:

"Buckie! Buckie Minn! Wait for me! Here I am, you foolish boy. It's me, sure enough, now!"

He stopped and looked at her. It was—Jessie Anabel! He knew the pert, pretty little face, the round, excited blue eyes, the full red lips of her, all unmistakable in the light of the street corner's white arcs.

"Where'd you come from?" he demanded roughly.

"Miner's!" she answered, her seeming fright leaving her, and her eyes meeting his with a glow like nothing he had ever seen there for him before. "I

wanted to see if it was like what you said. I saw you! I came out quick to catch you."

"You saw me?" he gasped.

"Yes," she answered, breathless. She nestled closer against him. "You thought she was me, didn't you, Buckie? And you wanted to stop me, didn't you? You knew what would happen. And I—didn't know you—cared so much, Buckie!"

He took one of her hands that was on his arm. Her head was almost against his shoulder. He led her away down the less brilliant street. He heard her sigh a little, then laugh briefly. Then she looked up at him quizzically, and the eternal feminine spoke:

"But—who was she, Buckie?"

### A New Invasion by Women

THERE are in the United States more than eleven hundred women photographers, and in their number are some who have improved the art by their ideas and inventions.

### A Chinese Woman Physician

YAMEI KIN is a demonstration of the fact that the women of China are coming to the front in the learned professions. She is a physician who holds an imperial commission as the head of the Imperial Peiyang Women's Medical School and Hospital near Peking. What is more to the point, she is a graduate of the Woman's Medical College of New York, and has built up a reputation as a hard worker in the slums of the Celestial kingdom.

### The Most Famous Heels of Modern Times

MRS. CHARLES ANTHONY, of Muncie, Indiana, is famous everywhere newspapers are read because of the fact that occasionally, when other effects in dress do not appeal to her, she appears in gold slippers that have diamond heels. Incidentally, it might be mentioned that she has six pairs of this footwear, each pair having heels worth two thousand dollars—which is pretty good evidence that the story about Cinderella was rather an unimportant and insignificant affair.

The manner in which Mrs. Anthony tripped up the ladder of fame on the bejeweled heels is interesting. She first wore them at a reception at the White House in Washington, and only one newspaper woman, Mrs. Vylla Poe Wilson, noted their splendid effect. Keeping her information to herself, Mrs. Wilson had a talk with Mrs. Anthony, and found out that the wealthy woman had to keep her ballroom slippers in the safe of any hotel at which she stopped. They were not exactly shoes to set outside the door for the hall boy to shine up during the night.

Moreover, Mrs. Wilson "scooped" the whole newspaper fraternity on that story.



## DARE TO BE YOURSELF

By Edwin L. Sabin

**M**OST of us are afraid of our shadows. Isn't that so? We don't care so much for what we are as for what we appear; and the shadows that we cast to impress the world are our dearest treasures.

Let me start over with white duck trousers. White duck trousers may not seem closely related to the start already made, but the thought stretches back taut and straight far into the past. Robert Louis Stevenson spent a year upon one short essay; I have spent a dozen upon this. It may not be worthy of such lineage, yet the fact remains that many small things have required great effort, and that writers earn their keep.

Permit me to return to some white duck trousers, of a year A. D. We were a party of city youth—save one—gathered together on the first of July, an extremely hot night; garb: conventional Chicago spring garb, except in the case of that ill-advised wight above denoted, a stranger from the rural districts. He was all glorious in white ducks. Fancy! White ducks on the first of July!

He was beautiful and cool; we, in Chicago spring attire, as light of weight and feeling as we dared to make it, were unlovely and broiling. He apparently reveling in his superiority of physical condition, and seemingly all innocent of impropriety, we must take him down a peg; particularly as he had the eyes and ears of the girls.

So we seized opportunity.

"Er—are they wearing white ducks, already, where you come from?" we queried—of course not in chorus, but by spokesman.

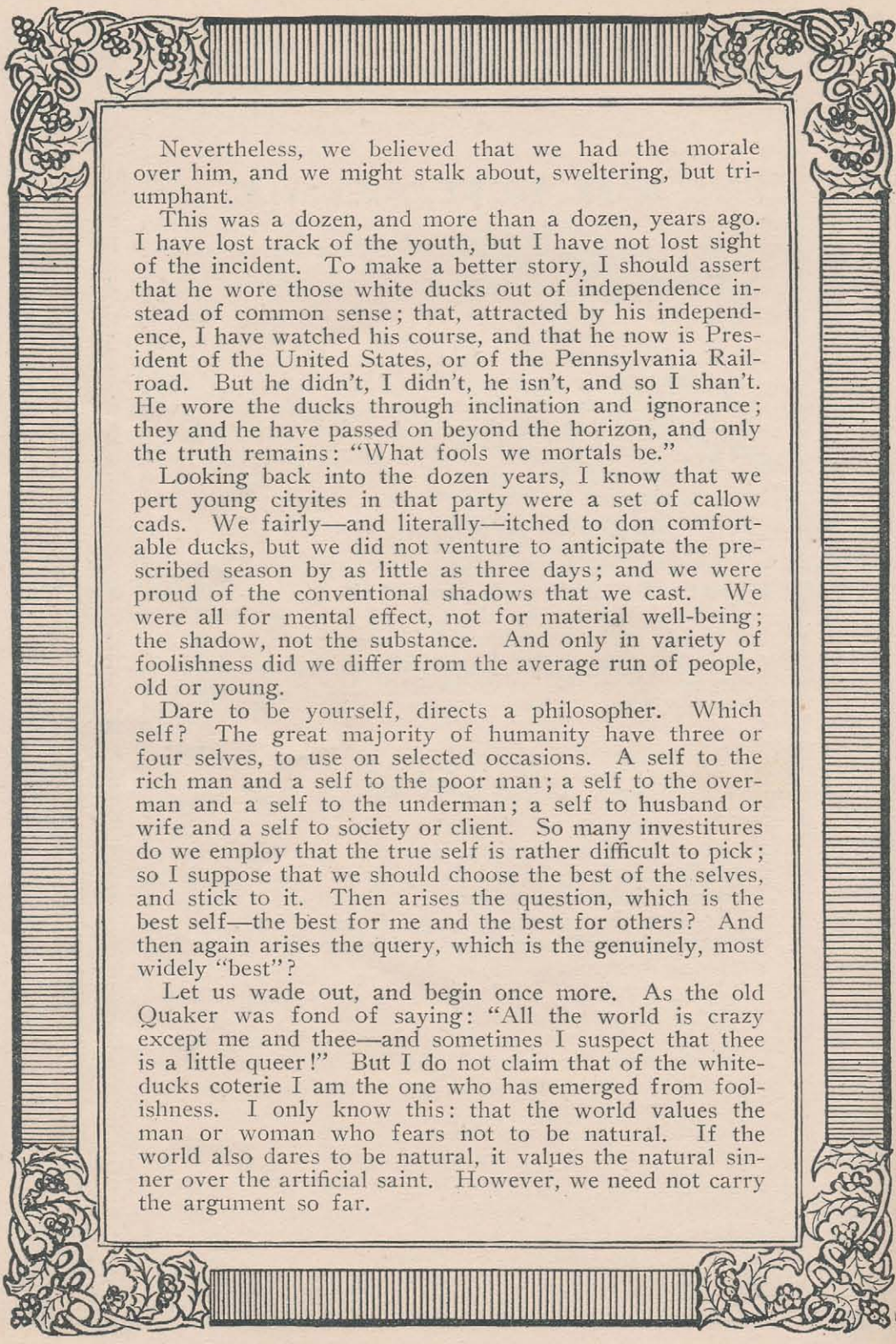
"Why, certainly. It's been plenty hot enough for two weeks; don't you think so?"

"Ya-as. But, you know, nobody in the city wears his ducks until the Fourth. The Fourth of July is the time. We all have our ducks, but we don't wear 'em yet. Season hasn't begun."

He flushed, but he was stanch.

"I don't care, boys. Summer's here, and this is as hot weather as we'll have, so I put mine on. What's the sense in waiting?"





Nevertheless, we believed that we had the morale over him, and we might stalk about, sweltering, but triumphant.

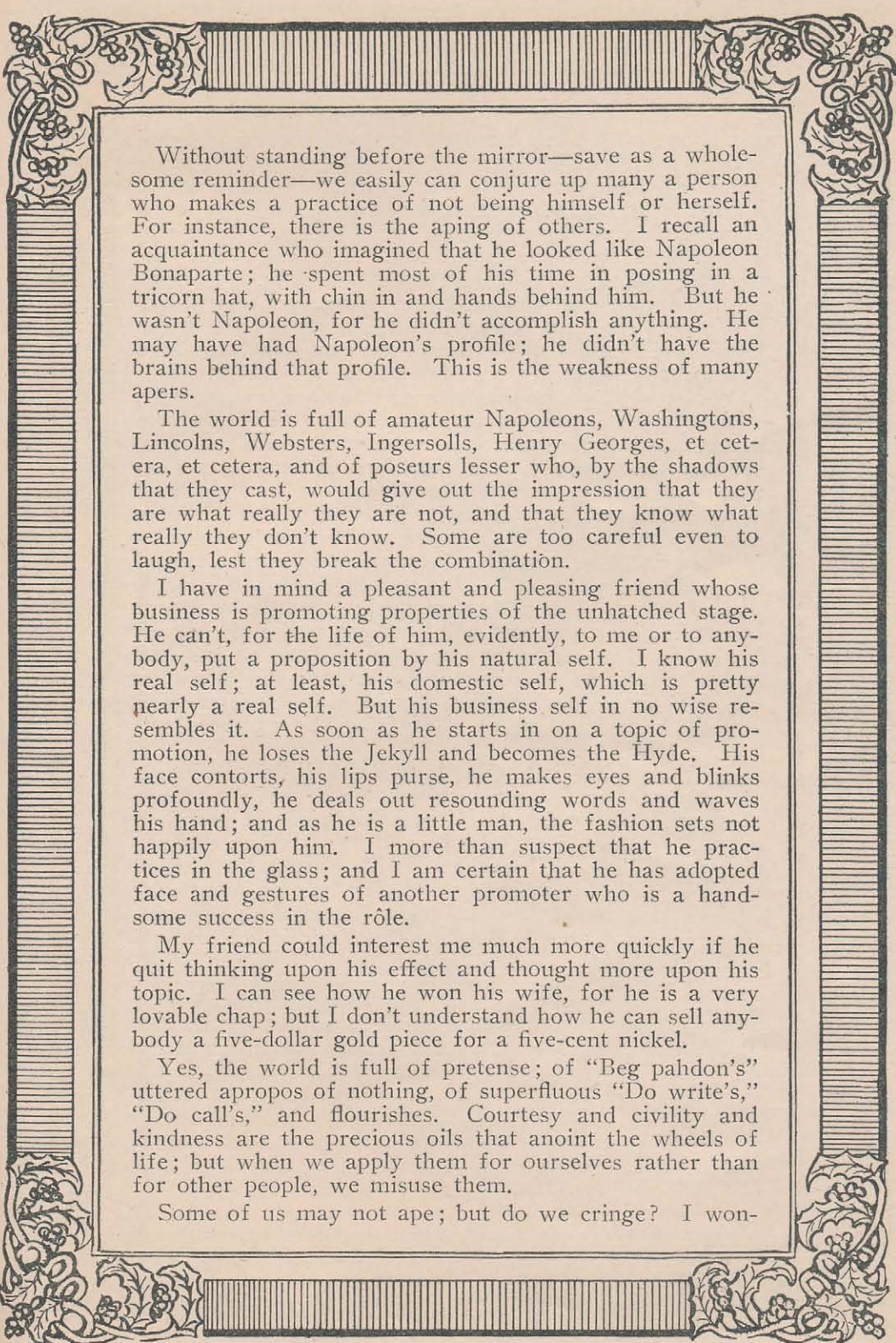
This was a dozen, and more than a dozen, years ago. I have lost track of the youth, but I have not lost sight of the incident. To make a better story, I should assert that he wore those white ducks out of independence instead of common sense; that, attracted by his independence, I have watched his course, and that he now is President of the United States, or of the Pennsylvania Railroad. But he didn't, I didn't, he isn't, and so I shan't. He wore the ducks through inclination and ignorance; they and he have passed on beyond the horizon, and only the truth remains: "What fools we mortals be."

Looking back into the dozen years, I know that we pert young cityites in that party were a set of callow cadts. We fairly—and literally—itched to don comfortable ducks, but we did not venture to anticipate the prescribed season by as little as three days; and we were proud of the conventional shadows that we cast. We were all for mental effect, not for material well-being; the shadow, not the substance. And only in variety of foolishness did we differ from the average run of people, old or young.

Dare to be yourself, directs a philosopher. Which self? The great majority of humanity have three or four selves, to use on selected occasions. A self to the rich man and a self to the poor man; a self to the overman and a self to the underman; a self to husband or wife and a self to society or client. So many investitures do we employ that the true self is rather difficult to pick; so I suppose that we should choose the best of the selves, and stick to it. Then arises the question, which is the best self—the best for me and the best for others? And then again arises the query, which is the genuinely, most widely "best"?

Let us wade out, and begin once more. As the old Quaker was fond of saying: "All the world is crazy except me and thee—and sometimes I suspect that thee is a little queer!" But I do not claim that of the white-ducks coterie I am the one who has emerged from foolishness. I only know this: that the world values the man or woman who fears not to be natural. If the world also dares to be natural, it values the natural sinner over the artificial saint. However, we need not carry the argument so far.





Without standing before the mirror—save as a wholesome reminder—we easily can conjure up many a person who makes a practice of not being himself or herself. For instance, there is the aping of others. I recall an acquaintance who imagined that he looked like Napoleon Bonaparte; he spent most of his time in posing in a tricorn hat, with chin in and hands behind him. But he wasn't Napoleon, for he didn't accomplish anything. He may have had Napoleon's profile; he didn't have the brains behind that profile. This is the weakness of many apers.

The world is full of amateur Napoleons, Washingtons, Lincolns, Websters, Ingersolls, Henry Georges, et cetera, et cetera, and of poseurs lesser who, by the shadows that they cast, would give out the impression that they are what really they are not, and that they know what really they don't know. Some are too careful even to laugh, lest they break the combination.

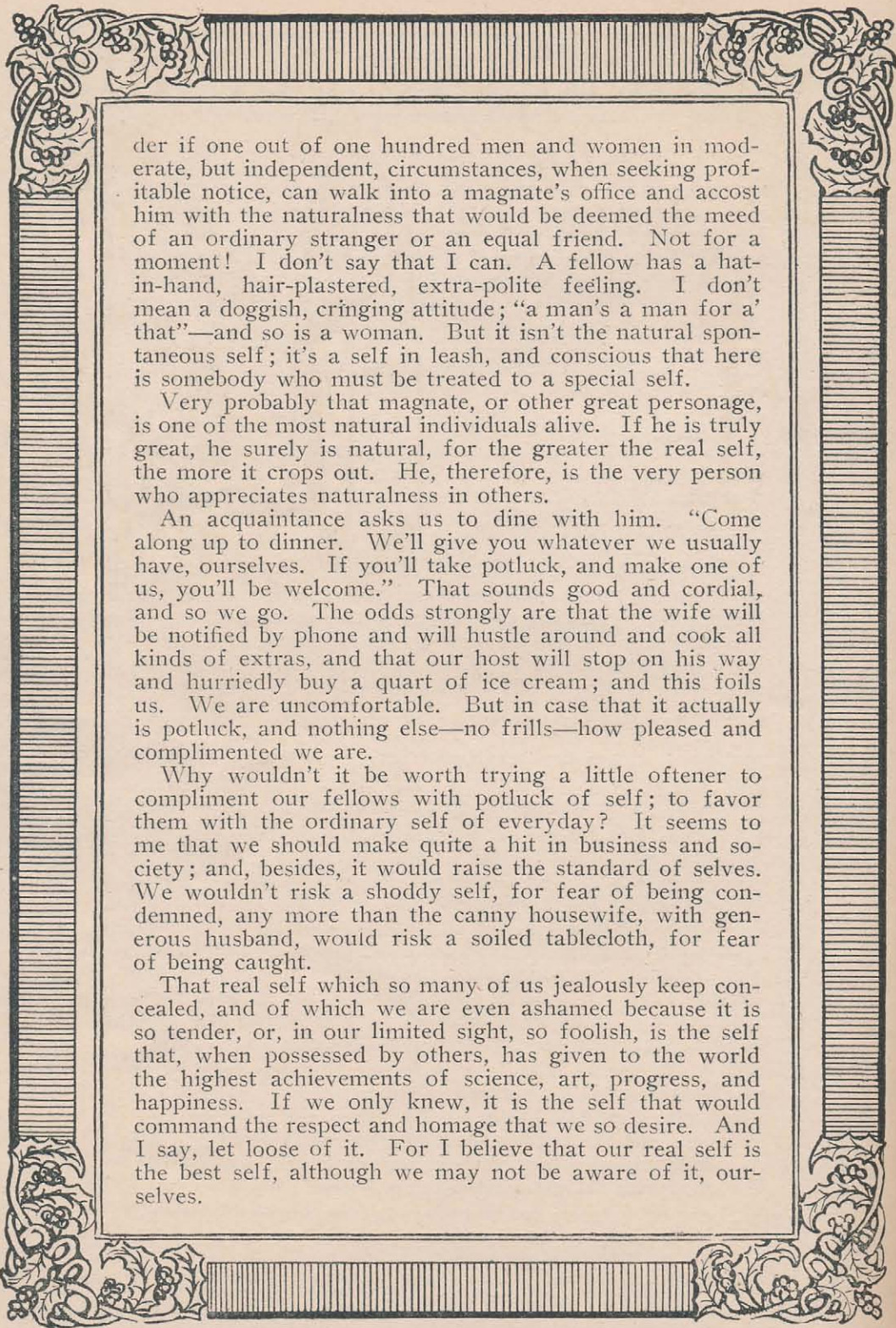
I have in mind a pleasant and pleasing friend whose business is promoting properties of the unhatched stage. He can't, for the life of him, evidently, to me or to anybody, put a proposition by his natural self. I know his real self; at least, his domestic self, which is pretty nearly a real self. But his business self in no wise resembles it. As soon as he starts in on a topic of promotion, he loses the Jekyll and becomes the Hyde. His face contorts, his lips purse, he makes eyes and blinks profoundly, he deals out resounding words and waves his hand; and as he is a little man, the fashion sets not happily upon him. I more than suspect that he practices in the glass; and I am certain that he has adopted face and gestures of another promoter who is a handsome success in the rôle.

My friend could interest me much more quickly if he quit thinking upon his effect and thought more upon his topic. I can see how he won his wife, for he is a very lovable chap; but I don't understand how he can sell anybody a five-dollar gold piece for a five-cent nickel.

Yes, the world is full of pretense; of "Beg pahdon's" uttered apropos of nothing, of superfluous "Do write's," "Do call's," and flourishes. Courtesy and civility and kindness are the precious oils that anoint the wheels of life; but when we apply them for ourselves rather than for other people, we misuse them.

Some of us may not ape; but do we cringe? I won-





der if one out of one hundred men and women in moderate, but independent, circumstances, when seeking profitable notice, can walk into a magnate's office and accost him with the naturalness that would be deemed the meed of an ordinary stranger or an equal friend. Not for a moment! I don't say that I can. A fellow has a hat-in-hand, hair-plastered, extra-polite feeling. I don't mean a doggish, cringing attitude; "a man's a man for a' that"—and so is a woman. But it isn't the natural spontaneous self; it's a self in leash, and conscious that here is somebody who must be treated to a special self.

Very probably that magnate, or other great personage, is one of the most natural individuals alive. If he is truly great, he surely is natural, for the greater the real self, the more it crops out. He, therefore, is the very person who appreciates naturalness in others.

An acquaintance asks us to dine with him. "Come along up to dinner. We'll give you whatever we usually have, ourselves. If you'll take potluck, and make one of us, you'll be welcome." That sounds good and cordial, and so we go. The odds strongly are that the wife will be notified by phone and will hustle around and cook all kinds of extras, and that our host will stop on his way and hurriedly buy a quart of ice cream; and this foils us. We are uncomfortable. But in case that it actually is potluck, and nothing else—no frills—how pleased and complimented we are.

Why wouldn't it be worth trying a little oftener to compliment our fellows with potluck of self; to favor them with the ordinary self of everyday? It seems to me that we should make quite a hit in business and society; and, besides, it would raise the standard of selves. We wouldn't risk a shoddy self, for fear of being condemned, any more than the canny housewife, with generous husband, would risk a soiled tablecloth, for fear of being caught.

That real self which so many of us jealously keep concealed, and of which we are even ashamed because it is so tender, or, in our limited sight, so foolish, is the self that, when possessed by others, has given to the world the highest achievements of science, art, progress, and happiness. If we only knew, it is the self that would command the respect and homage that we so desire. And I say, let loose of it. For I believe that our real self is the best self, although we may not be aware of it, ourselves.



# Warming over *The* Milish

by

HOLMAN  
F. DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

**T**IME: A particularly salubrious morning in early June.

Place: The selectmen's office in the Scotaze town house.

Characters on deck: Cap'n Aaron Sproul chosen the day before—despite his protests and his private convictions regarding the matter—chairman of the general committee in charge of Scotaze's Fourth of July celebration, entitled "Panoramic Pageant of Progress"; Miss Flobelle Hanks, professional promoter of pageants.

Miss Hanks, *loquitur*: "I'm so glad to see you around bright and early for this first conference of ours, Cap'n Sproul. I'm sure we shall get on together lovely. Now our first work, of course, will be to stir up all the interest we can in this thing that's coming off."

Note in regard to Miss Hanks: She was a cousin of Mrs. Lycurgus Snell, president of the Scotaze Daughters of Liberty, and therefore came to town with a bit of a pull when she proposed to get up a pageant for a certain per cent of the gross received for church dinners and the evening's entertain-

ment. The Daughters of Liberty roped in the parish-aid societies and the rest of the women's organizations, and a delegation of fifty matrons, led by the cap'n's wife, fairly picked the cap'n up and thrust him into office.

With the preamble thus stated for mutual understanding, we may hasten into the story.

Cap'n Sproul did not seem to be infected by the brightness of the morning or to partake of the breezy cheer of Miss Hanks. He stared solemnly at her.

"I say, we must get everybody in this town just as interested in us and our plans as they can possibly be—that will be our first work," repeated Miss Hanks.

"Knowing this town better than you do, marm, I shall have to differ with you about getting *everybody* interested. There are some men in this town that better be kept out, even if we have to take and dull their interest with a rock."

"I don't understand," pleaded Miss Hanks, her blue eyes wide open.

"I hain't got time to go into full de-



tails, and if I did you'd throw up the job—heave the thing over the rail, and dodge out while the dodging was good," confided Cap'n Sproul sourly. "I have been dragged into first one thing and then another in this town—just like I've been shanghai'd into this thing against my best judgment—and I know what usually happens. Some men begin to take too much of an interest in what's going on—want to grab in and help too much."

"Why, I really don't see how a general spirit of helpfulness is going to harm a public project like this, sir."

"Mebbe not! You have to find out about it, the same way I did."

"But please give me a few hints, now that we are just starting, for it's always essential to start out right. You know I have never lived in this town—I don't know the people."

"It ain't much use to hang out storm signals now, so far ahead, marm. You never know how quick the wind will change in this town. All we can do is wait and worry."

"But you can at least give me some idea—some hint. If we are to work together, I think you ought to be very frank and outspoken."

"I hain't never been accused of being tongue-tied when it comes to a pinch. I'll be outspoken enough, marm, when it is time to speak. For instance, when that Jared Grant Sparks comes in here and offers to play a guitar solo, I'll——"

"But Mr. Sparks has already volunteered to play at the evening entertainment, and I have accepted him with thanks."

The cap'n's eyes narrowed balefully.

"There you go at the start, with one of that bunch that will put a hoss knot into the running rigging of anything that comes off in this town. He only knows one tune, and that's 'The Angel's Serenade,' and——"

"That's a very beautiful selection."

"Well, no audience in this town has ever found that out from Jared Grant Sparks' playing of it. You can't hear anything five feet away from him. If there's anything any worse, it's to

listen to a pome by that long-haired, tufted Houdan of a Consetena Tate."

"But one of the ladies of the auxiliary said that Mr. Tate wrote beautiful poetry, and he has already started in on one at my personal request. Really, Cap'n Sproul, I hope you are not unduly prejudiced. Both of those gentlemen showed so much interest that I was quite taken with them."

"Does a hossfly show interest in a blind mule whose tail is too short to reach the juicy spot?" demanded the cap'n irefully.

"I cannot say that your metaphor is very elegant," reproved Miss Hanks.

"It wasn't planned to be, marm. It was one to fit my notion of the subject. If interest has gone as far as you say it has in this thing, I suppose you have put the Scotaze Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association down for a free feed on your programmy to pay them for parading. Them grasshoppers usually are the first to have interest break out in 'em. And you've probably let Hiram Look start in getting up a circus end of the show—and if anything he gets up ain't dynamite with a short-time fuse hitched to it, then may tar never stick to a Portygee. And you've probably arranged——"

"Just one moment, Cap'n Sproul. You mustn't start in by quarreling with me. I cannot be expected to know all about your local prejudices. Mr. Sparks and Mr. Tate are on the program—and I'm quite sure they will do nicely. But I know nothing about your firemen's association, or about Mr. Look. I do not know the gentleman."

"Then the proposition ain't quite so dead as it might be," admitted the cap'n, exhibiting a bit more optimism. "But don't go to having false hopes that he ain't going to show interest. He'll be around pretty quick. But I'm on the job now, and that may help some. Sparks and Tate dodged in ahead of me, but we'll see what can be done about pickpoling off the rest of these interested parties."

"I never heard a man talk so strangely before about public interest," stated Miss Hanks. "That's what I al-



ways strive for first—I base my success on getting public interest started.”

Cap'n Sproul had no further opportunity just then to express his opinion on the dangers of public interest in Scotaze. Colonel Gideon Ward, his brother-in-law, came in.

Colonel Ward nodded stiff greeting to the cap'n. For some time the relations between them had resembled an armistice in which both parties had clung to their weapons. The colonel

one by one, and draped them over a chair.

“Blue coat with buff trimmings,” he announced, “red belt, and a green baize vest. White pants. Tall, flaring chapeau, and a red pompom on it. There they are—and I tell you, Miss Hanks, we made a pretty scrumptious showing at the old muster days, where the hard cider flowed like water in a tailrace, and gingerbread was piled sky-high. Now I think I can scare up fifty



*“But you’ve got to have something besides a matched game of jackstraws and a potato race. Ginger it up—ginger it up!”*

began to unwrap a parcel that he had brought under his arm, and addressed his remarks to Miss Hanks.

“I reckon that this pageant, if my wife tells me right, is going to be something in which I can take personal interest,” averred the new arrival. “When I was young, the big institution in these parts was the old militia—the milish, the boys used to call it. All the leading citizens belonged. I was colonel in it. I’ve brought one of my uniforms that has been laid away in camphor.”

“How delightful!” cried Miss Hanks. The colonel snapped out the articles,

and mebbe a hundred of the members of the old milish in these parts, who have saved their uniforms like I have saved mine.”

“This is a perfectly wonderful find,” purred the promoter. “Oh, I do hope that you mean by showing interest that you’ll take part in the street pageant!”

“Guess it’s only necessary to ask us officially,” stated the colonel very graciously.

Cap’n Sproul was displaying a surprising indifference. He took a look at the garments on the chair, shoved his hands deep in his pockets, and



walked over to the window, turning his back on the colonel.

"Cap'n Sproul, I want you to confer with Colonel Ward on this matter," said Miss Hanks.

"I refuse to be drawn in," replied the cap'n, with much positiveness.

"But why?"

"Let him tell you."

"I don't care to do any business with that person, Miss Hanks," declared the colonel tartly. "It was a mistake to put him on the committee."

"You and me agree on that point—and it's the only thing we ever did agree on," commented the cap'n, without turning his head.

"I'm willing to enlist under *your* banner," pursued the colonel, with a gallant bow. "I'll do my best to get the others to join in with me, if we can do all our business with you personally, Miss Hanks. But I have had a lot of trouble with that person over there. I'll admit that he is my brother-in-law, but I have always been perfectly frank in saying that he pushed his way into my family against my desires. I want you to know it, as a stranger in our town. Every time I have tried to do business with him there has been trouble."

"Three clinches, two jawing matches, four free fights, and a riot," tabulated the cap'n.

"But I'm not going to be kept out of a public duty—so I consider it—by this person, so long as I can do business with you. I say again, I'm much interested in this proposition of the pageant."

"Do you remember what I was just telling you about interest, Miss Hanks?" demanded the cap'n, facing about. "Now's your time to put your foot down."

"You are so ungracious that you fairly shock me," protested the promoter. "I'm rather blunt, myself, sometimes, in expressing my opinions, Cap'n Sproul; I cannot understand why so many of the ladies were anxious to put you at the head of the committee."

"It's because they know what some of these other critters in this town would do if they had the handling of things," stated the cap'n, not flinching

under the scowl of his brother-in-law. "Hiram Look would have arranged for a rooster match, a prize fight, and a circus show, peppered up with bunko steers and skin games. I never heard anything about this milish business before, for I haven't lived in this town all my life. But if it is anything that Gid Ward recommends, it will be like wheeling a powder keg into Tophet—something it's advisable not to do."

"I don't need to make any comments on the style of that person, Miss Hanks," cried the colonel, with a contemptuous flourish of his hand. "I'm sorry to have any disagreeable talk before you—but you better start in with a good understanding of what you've got to deal with. The best way to show a man up is to let him do it himself, out of his own mouth. You have just noticed how he has sneered at a noble body of men who were banded together in the old days for the defense of their native country."

"Was your militia in the Civil War?" asked Miss Hanks, much impressed.

The purple knobs on the colonel's cheek bones deepened perceptibly in color, and he was not so assertive when he answered:

"Well, not hardly, my dear young lady. You see, we were all business men—prominent men, and we felt that we could do more for our native land by staying at home and attending to business. This pageant will be like a regimental reunion," he hastened to state, trying to change the topic. "We have been thinking of having one."

"If what I have heard about that regiment is true," remarked the cap'n, "I should think it would bring up old memories better if you hold the reunion over in Canada. That's where you all skedaddled to when the war broke out."

Even the presence of Miss Hanks might not have restrained Colonel Ward at that moment. He did explode one terrific oath that startled her. Then Hiram Look came into the office—and when Hiram Look entered a room in a hurry and in good spirits, he had the power to break up any sort of situa-



tion very effectively. His plug hat was on the back of his head, and his coat tails flaunted breezily.

"Well, folks, what are your plans for gingering up the show?" he demanded. "You want to remember that the scheme is to get the folks into town and get 'em to spend money. The business men need the cash. The board-of-trade boys are willing to chip, and I'm talking for 'em now. But you've got to have something besides a matched game of jackstraws and a potato race. Ginger it up—ginger it up! In these days the boys with coin don't spend it in coming into town to see a hayrack full of high-school girls in white dresses and blue sashes riding along the street and singing 'The Star-spangled Banner.'"

"General interest seems to be starting," said the cap'n to Miss Hanks. "This is Hiram Look, esquire. I was speaking to you about him."

In that reference to girls with sashes Miss Hanks seemed to find slighting reference to some of her promulgated plans.

"You must understand, Mr. Look," she said, "that a considerable part of a pageant, as best usage directs nowadays, consists of floats, historical and otherwise. Each one of the ladies' societies is to furnish a float."

"That's all right. But that ain't ginger. What have you got for ginger? I've been in the show business most of my life. I know what the people want. I'm no sort of a hand to put myself forward, Miss Hanks, but I can't help feeling an interest in a show proposition. I don't see why they didn't put me onto the committee. My friend Sproul, here, is a dead one on knowing what the people want."

Cap'n Sproul was never backward in displaying proper resentment. That remark touched him.

"The town of Scotaze, as represented by the decent folks in this place," said he, "remembered the show you did manage when you had every hootchie-cootchie girl and shell-game operator this side of Hackenney operating here on the streets. When it comes to giving

a show, you ain't got any more moral nature in you than a Patagonian devolvulus has got—and the one I see down there had et all his family except his grandmother—and she was too tough."

"I think it's perfectly terrible, the way you prominent citizens quarrel and talk about each other," declared Miss Hanks, tears in her blue eyes. "If you keep on this way, you'll spoil the whole pageant. You ought to sink your personal feelings for the good of the cause. Now, Cap'n Sproul, I think you ought to join hands heartily with Colonel Ward on what he proposes."

But the cap'n turned his back again and resumed his gloomy survey of the outer world.

"If the colonel is proposing anything with ginger in it, you can count me in," volunteered Hiram Look, with enthusiasm. "When progress hits the grade, you never find me sitting on behind and dragging my feet."

Miss Hanks drew his attention to the garments on the chair and eagerly explained Colonel Ward's offer. The colonel added a word or two of his own. Showman Look examined the uniform, and then stood back and fingered his nose, plainly dubious, his enthusiasm dampened.

"I ain't saying anything against your good intentions, Colonel Ward, and you mustn't reckon me into the class of knocker with my friend, Sproul, over there. I know how to be a gent under all circumstances. But I can't see where a lot of old Methusalems doddering down the main street with them uniforms on is going to give the show any ginger."

"You don't expect men of our age to turn cartwheels or play leapfrog, do you?" demanded the colonel hotly. "You seem to be missing the whole spirit of the occasion."

"No, sir! I know spirit when I see it, and I can't see any spirit in this thing, so far. You ain't to blame, because you're old—but, blast it all! You *are* old, and you can't march for green apples. Them that don't walk with crutches will be treading on the loose ends of their whiskers every other step.





*"You go ahead and run your show, and I'll run my own."*

Now, colonel, it's no use for you to get hot over this thing. I'm talking about a show that will draw money into this town—and it's no time for hair-oil talk."

Once again was an awkward situation relieved by the entrance of a new arrival. It was Batson Reeves, the lately elected foreman of the Scotz Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association. Cap'n Sproul took one look at Reeves over his shoulder, and continued to study the June landscape; association with Reeves on the board of selectmen had supplied the cap'n with a vigorous crop of dislike for that gentleman.

"I have called around to see what

place you want the Ancients to fill in the pageant," explained Mr. Reeves. "When anything comes off in town, we're usually reckoned in as pretty important."

"What has been the usual custom?" asked Miss Hanks humbly. "I'm a stranger here, and I really want to suit folks."

"You see we're the oldest fire company in the State, marm," said the foreman, with much pride. "Heclly, our tub, is one hundred and twelve years old. We carry leather buckets, puckering-string drilling bags, and bed-wrenches just as they did in Revolutionary times."



"That is so picturesque!" cooed Miss Hanks.

"I ain't going back on the Ancients—I used to be foreman, myself," said Hiram Look. "I've always stood by 'em. It used to cost me more'n two hundred dollars a year, giving 'em free feeds. But the Ancients have marched in every parade we've had here for a hundred years—from a funeral to a Sunday-school picnic—until everybody knows just how many cracks there are in the side of that old tub. We need something new—something with ginger in it." He snapped his fingers impatiently.

"I don't know what you mean by ginger," stated Reeves sullenly, "but if the Ancients ain't recognized as usual by being invited to parade, and having a free banquet by admiring citizens, then your show might as well be given up. We'll run it into the ground by word of mouth."

"For mercy's sakes, what sort of a town have I dropped into?" cried Miss Hanks, twisting her hands, and staring from face to face. "Cap'n Sproul, you are the chairman of the general committee. Why don't you do something? You started in by discouraging every proposition I made."

"Well, didn't I tell you the truth?" inquired the cap'n, facing around. "I warned you that the principal danger would be in having some men get too much interested in what you was trying to do. Here are some of them—the others are probably on the way."

"It would be a grand success, now wouldn't it, if somebody didn't drop around and help out?" sneered Hiram Look. "It is easy enough to stand and growl about your betters, Sproul. Why don't you grab in and help?"

"I declare, I think Mr. Look is right," affirmed Miss Hanks. "I don't understand your attitude at all, Cap'n Sproul. These gentlemen assemble here very patriotically and offer their services. How on earth do you figure that any harm is to come from accepting those services? I feel that I shall get quite angry unless all this nonsense is stopped."

"I've been to sea most of my life, marm," stated Cap'n Sproul. "That has given me an instinct for weather signs. I can smell trouble a long ways ahead. In figuring on weather, you take this sign and that sign, and combine 'em and get your prospects. I've got the same instinct on shore. First, you've got to know your signs. I know Hime Look, and Gid Ward, and Bat Reeves, and Jared Sparks, and I want to warn you that unless some almighty slick steering is done, you are going to head into a social tornado that will lay your proposition onto its beam ends. I don't propose to be bashful about talking right out loud."

"Look here, Miss Hanks," shouted Mr. Look, "I don't propose to have you scared by a man who got his manners off'm the Fiji Islanders when he was sailing in them parts. You need men in this scheme who will boost instead of bump. Sproul hasn't been backward about expressing his opinion of us. Let me say to you about him that he never had an original idea in his life. If the weather is bad, a sailor is scared; if it's good, he's scared just the same, for he thinks a fine day is a weather breeder. So a sailor is always hanging back. Let him hang back. Let's you and me go ahead."

"Now, I propose to show you what a man of original ideas can do with poor material, when he has a talent for the show business. Them Ancients is an old story in a parade. Colonel Ward, here, and his Methusalems, trying to march, wouldn't make a hit. You hold on, colonel, I've got the floor now! It's time for open talk. And I know what I'm talking about." He held up his hands and clacked fingers smartly into the palms.

"It takes talent, I say, to ginger up poor material. Colonel, you take your men and call 'em the Continental Army, and get a bunch of hair and make yourself up to look like General George Washington—and have the Ancients, with their red shirts, be Cornwallis' army—Bat, here, being old Cornwallis—and have Cornwallis surrender to you. Eh? Why, it's a cinch! It will



catch the crowd. Fifes and drums a-playing, old Cornwallis surrendering to you—and then girls to wave the star-spangled banner—and a man and a woman dressed as Uncle Sam and Columbia to come up and shake hands with you! It'll be a howl—for folks like to have their patriotic feelings stirred up. I'll have more details later. This is just first thought. But you see how quick talent—real talent in the show business—grabs onto material."

"I'm going to say to you that you're a genius, Mr. Look," declared Miss Hanks, with fervor. "You're a real originator. It's the first big idea that counts. Now that you have suggested the thing, I can think of a dozen little touches of my own to add. But I give you all the credit for the main thought. I want you to work with me."

"I'm always willing to help boost," said Hiram. "And a wish from you is a command on me," he added gallantly.

"I like the idea, myself," stated Colonel Ward. "I'll ride on a white hoss. It'll be an honor to represent George Washington."

"Why, man," cried Hiram, "your old milish, as you had planned for it, was a cold dish—cold for more'n fifty years, and I propose to warm it over. It'll be relished—I can tell you that. There'll be ginger in it!"

"It's positively an inspiration—that's what it is," was Miss Hanks' encomium.

"Mebbe it is," interposed Mr. Reeves, digging his fingers into his grizzled mane. "But it ain't going to be no proud moment for me, representing that old cuss of a Cornwallis—and though I haven't sounded the Ancients, I'll bet it'll be their sentiment that they'll want a more popular part than being British soldiers who have been licked out of their boots. There's a lot of spirit in the Ancients, and it's hard to crowd it down."

"You go to 'em and put up the proposition and tell 'em that Hiram Look will throw in a banquet for 'em after it's all over—a banquet that will beat every other one he ever tendered 'em," cried the old showman. "That's

how much of a booster I am when I get interested in a thing. The Ancients will never go back on me."

"It's going to make a lot of difference in their feelings—having the banquet," admitted Reeves. "And I won't stand in the way of the boys getting a good feed, even if I have to represent old Cornwallis. But I can tell you it's going to rankle!"

"It's all a part of the show—and I've been in the show business long enough to understand," insisted Hiram. "Folks don't lay anything up against a villain in the show, if he takes his part well. Now let's all get busy."

He strode across the room and slapped Cap'n Sproul on the shoulder.

"Come, now, Aaron, let up on your sulking and your growling. You can't stop a good thing when it gets started. We're going to make a show of this—a *show*, understand?"

"There ain't any doubt about it," agreed the cap'n.

"Well, what do you propose to do?"

"Go home, snug all upper canvas, hang out oil bags, rig a sea anchor, and make ready to ride it out."

"I don't understand your sailor lingo."

"I'm going to get out of this thing and stay out of it," roared Cap'n Sproul. "All hands, even down to myself, are agreed that it was a mistake ramming me into it. You have picked your helpers, Miss Hanks. And you're going to get a lot of help. You don't need *me*. I seem to be complicating things by staying around, so good day."

Miss Hanks pouted and allowed him to go without protest. He did appear to be a reactionary and surly old sea dog, who was not assisting her to any noticeable extent. The cap'n, when he slammed the door behind him, heard Hiram fortifying her faith in her new corps of coadjutors.

During the next few days various ladies belonging to the local societies made efforts to coax the cap'n back into the activities of the pageant, but he was not to be moved by entreaties. Then they let him severely alone, and the reproachful Louada Murilla, his wife,





*"Give up your sword, sir. I demand it in the name of the Land of the Free."*

brought word to him that he did not seem to have a friend left in town. But Cap'n Sproul refused to offer any comments on the situation. June was his busy time with his "garden sass," and he kept away from the village.

It was borne to his ears, however, that Miss Hanks seemed to have lost control of her volunteer helpers. She had announced the plans of her "Pageant of Progress" early in her campaign, and it was the artistic dignity of the scheme that had attracted the interest of the women of the town. Every girl in Scotaze had been drafted for the emblematic floats and the proposed tableaux in the village square. Every schoolboy had signed a pledge to refrain from firecrackers, and was being trained to take part in the big show. Miss Hanks' advertising made much of this phase of the pageant, and her bills had little to say of the proposed demonstration by the embattled veterans of the town.

Hiram Look stormily demurred. He had confined his attention wholly to this end of the show, and piled up more details in most voluminous manner.

"It's the big feature," he informed the fair promoter. "I'm making it so. I understand the show business. It's the only thing that will have ginger in it—real ginger. You ain't playing it up big enough in the advertising."

"But we mustn't let the tail wag the dog," insisted Miss Hanks. "Your plan is interesting as a feature, but not especially important."

"Say, look here, that's casting a slur on my ability as a showman. I'll bet you five hundred dollars that my end of it will be the only thing the crowd will care a hoot about."

Thereupon, Miss Hanks was both angry and shocked, and made her feelings plain to Hiram Look, and also expressed her entire faith in the excellence of her own ideas regarding spectacles for the public.

Hiram Look was not a patient man, or a man to allow a rival to triumph. He had expressed his opinion in regard to the relative values of the features of the great day, and now he set about making himself a true prophet. He covered all the dead walls for miles about with flaming posters advertising



"The Surrender of Cornwallis." Beside these bills, Miss Hanks' modest announcements showed only as stars at noonday. When she took the volcanic and impetuously active Hiram to task for his unmannerly tactics in putting his own exploits ahead of her own, the split came in earnest.

"I never did get along very well with a woman who was trying to do a man's job," he tartly informed Miss Hanks. "You go ahead and run *your* show, and I'll run my own."

"But there are not two shows, sir. I came here and started this project. It's my business, getting up pageants. Your scheme is only one feature in it. You must subordinate it."

"No such thing," blustered Hiram, carried away by his enthusiasm as to his private project. "I've got a reputation to keep up in this section as a showman. They are looking to me to give 'em something lively. I shall live here after this is over, and after you go away. I don't propose to have it slurred that my part of the show was the punk end. No, sir! Go ahead and do the best you can. But I'm the boy that'll deliver the goods."

"This is simply outrageous!" flamed Miss Hanks. "I demand that you and your crowd stay out of my way."

"We shall," declared Hiram, with vigor. "You won't have any crowd. I want to say to you, Miss Hanks, that when you coaxed me into this thing as a helper, you were getting somebody who knows his business in the show line. And I can't stop now, when I've once got started, and you can't expect me to sacrifice my reputation by doing so."

And after that run-in Hiram Look attended strictly to his own show, and Miss Hanks tried to forget her misgivings and do the same thing.

Cap'n Aaron Sproul did not hurry down to the village on the morning of the Fourth. He arrived in the square, moving leisurely, rather late in the forenoon. He glanced about him with some astonishment. There did not seem to be any crowd visible. Clumps of people were scattered about, to be sure, and the emblematic floats were massed on

one of the side streets and were surrounded by the young folks who were to participate in the exercises. But the mass of holiday spectators was not in evidence.

The cap'n strolled along and came face to face with Uncle Jordan, never-failing fountain of information in Scotaze.

"Well, I want to say to you, you being a prominent citizen, Cap'n Sproul, that this is a devil of a note," blurted Uncle Jordan, manifestly filled with disgust.

"Must say that for all the advertising that has been done the town doesn't seem to be drawing in much of a crowd," stated the cap'n serenely. "But I ain't a bit surprised, Jordan, that the folks have stayed away. This thing hasn't been run right from the start—and I was in at the start and predicted what would happen."

Uncle Jordan looked the cap'n up and down, and his disgust became mingled with astonishment:

"Say, look-a-here, where have you been keeping yourself that you don't know any more about what has been going on here to-day?"

"I have been staying close at home, fighting squash bugs and minding my own business."

"Don't you know what that infernal Hime Look is doing here—riding rampant over the whole programmy?"

"I can give a general guess—having predicted what would happen, but I haven't heard any of the details," confessed the cap'n. "What has he done—rid Miss Hanks out of town on a rail, and fed poisoned candy to the children?"

"That's sarcastic—and I know it, but he has done almost as bad so far as the success of this day goes for the good name of this town," whined Uncle Jordan. "There's my daughter, the school-teacher over there, with the little flock she has set up nights to drill, and train, and it's past time for the parade—and now there ain't nobody here to see 'em parade. Hime Look has scooped all the crowd. I never saw such devilish actions. He has two brass bands.



Every time, since early morning, any crowd has got together here in the village, he has come in with a brass band and marched up and down, and has hollered to everybody to come over into the Sands' pasture, where the big show is. And people are fools. They'll follow a band. He has been in here more'n ten times with them bands. One follers him and the other stays and holds the crowd. Miss Hanks has gone over to plead and beg—but she might just as well talk to a howling cyclone. Blast him, here he comes again. He'll stam-pede the young ones next."

Showman Look marched ahead of the blaring band, bellowing hoarsely through a megaphone. Behind the band rode Miss Flobelle Hanks, in a decorated pony cart. To judge by appearances, Miss Hanks had joined the opposition show. The band made a stormy circuit of the village square, and was led away by the vociferous Hiram. Human nature has its limitations; one is prone to follow the crowd in this world. Most of the spectators who had remained loyal to the real pageant gave up the struggle with their inclinations at this point, and marched away behind the band.

"I ain't a quitter," confided Uncle Jordan to the cap'n, "but, I swow, there must be something consid'able going on over in the Sands' pasture—they're all going over, and nobody's coming back." He hurried away and joined the file-closing stragglers.

It was borne in upon Cap'n Sproul, at that juncture, that Miss Hanks was in no way a part of the procession. She drove up to him. The white reins trembled with the trembling of her hands. Tears could not drown the anger in her eyes.

"Cap'n Sproul, I want to apologize to you," she cried. "You told me the truth about those dreadful men. You're the only man in this town who seems to have any good sense and honesty."

"You're putting it strong, but I ain't going to get into any dispute with a lady—it wouldn't be polite, marm," returned the cap'n.

"I have been chasing after that howl-

ing lunatic, and he won't even stop and listen to me."

"Take Hime Look when he has got a circus fit on him, and he ain't more'n half human. I know all about him—I've had plenty of experience with him in them fits."

"He has spoiled my pageant. He has taken unfair means. He has two bands of music. He is giving away cider and gingerbread, and it's all just a low and rowdy affair, the way he is conducting it. And I do think a number of those old men are intoxicated, Cap'n Sproul. It's disgraceful!"

"I could say a lot about Hime Look, marm, but I'll simply state that if he was given the job to train a class of boys for a Sunday-school exhibition, he'd bring 'em out onto the platform with boxing gloves on their hands, and steel spurs on like fighting roosters. He'd call that gingering up the show. The trouble with him is he has circused it too much."

"But haven't you any influence with him?"

"You'll have to excuse me if I don't dip into it, marm. I don't want to be considered as twitting you on what's past and gone when I say that. You had your fair warning, and didn't see fit to use it. The best I can say now to comfort you is this: I have seen Hime Look operate before now in gingering a thing up. He most always jabs in so much ginger that the thing gets to going so fast it stubs its toe and tumbles down. As I have said before, I've got a sailorman's instinct in smelling trouble. It's coming over there in the Sands' pasture pretty mighty sudden. My best advice to you is to set quiet and tight, and amuse the young ones in the shade here, and when the squall is over go ahead and make the most of what's left. So I'll bid you good day and good luck."

With a drag of his foot and a sailor's salute, he took his departure. Miss Hanks sighed when she noted that he, too, was headed in the direction of the opposition show.

The cap'n trod somewhat cautiously along the outskirts of the throng that packed the Sands' pasture. There was

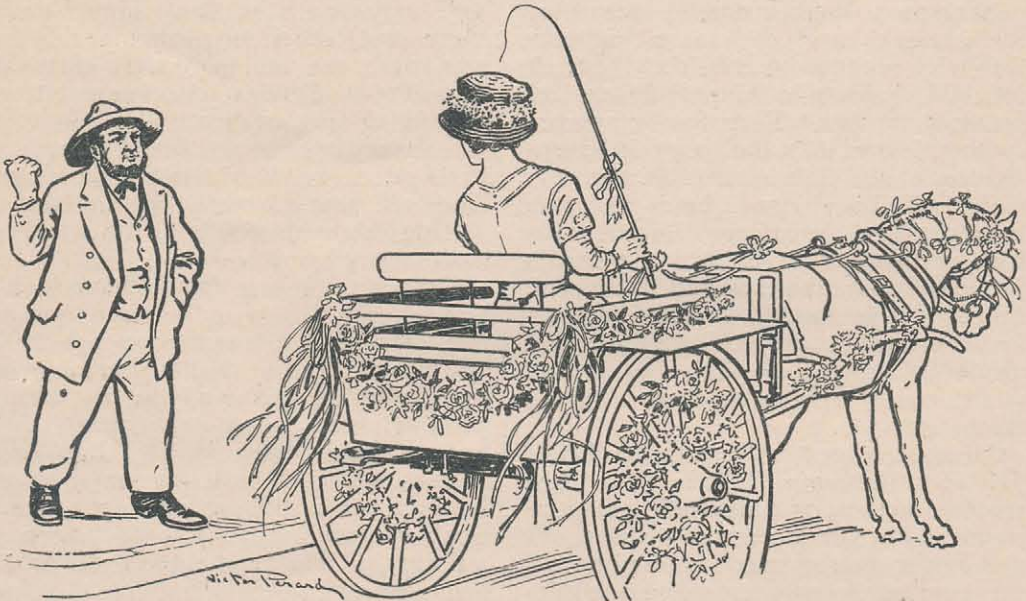


clamor in the air. Bands bombarded the ear with lively tunes, barkers were hawking their wares, and the multitude swayed, and twisted, and pushed this way and that. The cap'n was promptly informed that this ferment of the mass was caused by the efforts to crowd up to the cider barrels and the gingerbread tables, where all comers were served free. Cap'n Sproul allowed himself to be sucked into the whirlpool of humanity. He was not a man to dodge the storm center of events.

Finally he came in sight of Hiram

Washington, and the part of the British soldiers will be taken by the Scotaze Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association, who have consented to sink their natural patriotic feelings, for this day and date only, in order to make up a British army, hoping that nobody will misunderstand their feelings about their own country. Give them room, good peep-ul! The band will now play 'The Star-spangled Banner' while the preliminaries are being arranged."

At that moment Constable Zeburee Nute came thrusting through the press.



"Better get your show ready to start, marm. They're having the last tableau in the other one."

Look. The old showman had mounted a barker's rostrum, and began to shout through his megaphone:

"Good peep-ul! Good peep-ul! List-un one and all! The big show is about to begin. One of the greatest and most instructive spectacles ever afforded on the American continent—an event that will be talked about—the grand representation of one of the biggest events in history—the surrender of Cornwallis to the brave and mighty George Washington! To take place here and now! Those brave and patriotic heroes, the Cuxabexis Intrepid Militia, will take the part of the army of

His face was grave, there was a worried scowl on his forehead, and he addressed himself to the cap'n, speaking in low tones:

"I'm looking for Tophet to split loose here, Cap'n Sproul, and I wish I wasn't constable of this town."

"I have wished that, myself, in them days when I was selectman, and had to call on you for duty," declared the unfeeling cap'n. "What are you bringing your troubles to me for?"

"I've got to talk to somebody who has got common sense, and ain't full of fight, foolishness, gingerbread, and hard cider. I'll say this—George Washing-



ton is all right, and seems to feel some sense of responsibility, and ain't disgracing the high name. But his army is tea-ed up to a point where they ain't respectable. Cornwallis—I ain't going to mince my words in this crisis, Cap'n Sproul—is drun'ter'n a boiled owl. I have pitched into him about it, and he said he had to go to work and dull his sensibilities or he couldn't act out the part. It ain't going to be no kind of a show that will add credit to this town. Them Ancients are fuller'n goats—they have been dulling their sensibilities, too. They've got to the point where they don't know whether this is a tub squirt or a barn-raising bee. It's all right for Hime Look to be generous, but he ought to know that when some men are around where stuff is free gratis for nothing, they'll make hogs of themselves."

"Hime Look don't know anything when he is circusing," retorted the cap'n. "Go and arrest him for inciting a riot—that's what this thing will turn into."

"I don't dare to do it," stammered Nute.

"I knew you wouldn't dare to, and that's why I suggested it—my advice wouldn't get me into the mess, anyway." The cap'n displayed no more interest in Nute's forebodings. He crowded to the front of the throng in time to see Colonel Ward emerge from his tent, arrayed in regimentals, wig, and cocked hat.

He took his stand in front of the scattering line of his army—about twenty ancient men in the uniform of the "old milish." The band played "Yankee Doodle," and the crowd howled. George Washington's army promptly showed that it felt the thrill of life in its venerable legs, and the old men began to jig feebly in time with the music with most unseemly antics from a military standpoint. Their commander squinted along the line of the red shirts of the Ancients. He did not find the redoubtable and defeated commander of the British. There was a stage wait, and then the missing general came teetering around the end of the line.

"Pipe off Corned-wallis," suggested

one of the local humorists, a remark that was greeted by the crowd with great hilarity.

But Mr. Reeves was serious even to the point of rancor.

He took his stand in front of his men and scowled across the narrow dividing space at General Washington. There was another stage wait.

"Go ahead and make your speech, Cornwallis. Get busy. The people are waiting," prompted General Manager Look, from the side lines. "Get to it. Surrender."

"I've deshided 't Ancients can lick any body of men in this county," stated Foreman Reeves, in thick tones.

"That's got nothing to do with this show," yelled Hiram, stepping out of the line of spectators. "You're the British army."

"I say 'twas a mishtake t' take a noble body of men like Ancient and Honububbles and call 'em Bri'ish army," insisted Foreman Reeves. "I rise t' point of order. I refuse t' be called Bri'ish army. We'll lick any man 't calls us Bri'ish army."

"Look here, Cornwallis, you go ahead and surrender," commanded the infuriated Hiram.

"I've deshided not t' surrender. What's good surrendering when I ain't licked? I didn't want to be that cussed old Cornwallis t' start with. Ancients can lick anybody, and ought to be American army."

By that time General Washington was in an impatient mood. He straddled across to Cornwallis, and shook a lean finger under the British nose.

"Give up your sword, sir. I demand it in the name of the Land of the Free."

"I'd like to shee you get it!" yelled Reeves. "Lay your old paw on it and I'll cuff your chops."

Hiram Look came stamping down the line and passed close to the cap'n.

"In warming over your milish I reckon you got a little mite too much ginger in the water," suggested Cap'n Sproul, meeting Hiram's flaming glance with eyes that twinkled. "Mebbe you'd better give Reeves ether and extract that sword."



Hiram did not pause to discuss the matter with the satirist. He ran to Cornwallis, grabbed him by the shoulders, and shook him to and fro as if he were trying to rattle a little common sense back into him.

"I'll trip him, and you take his sword away from him," the panting Hiram suggested to General Washington, after a few minutes. Cornwallis had suddenly begun to put up a very respectable resistance. He was trying to get his sword out of the scabbard, and was kicking about in dangerous fashion.

The Ancients rushed forward to the scene of the struggle.

"Just hold on a minute, Squire Look," warned one of them. "When a man is our foreman we stand behind him. There can't no dirt be done to him. He ain't no Cornwallis right now—he's Foreman Reeves, and you take your hands off'm him."

Cap'n Aaron Sproul at that moment pushed his way back into the crowd, forced his bulk valiantly through it, and started back toward the village.

"I've seen too many fights to take any

further interest in 'em," he remarked to himself. "I hate to get squat in a jamming crowd and have my feet stepped on. Furthermore, I've got a little word to take to Miss Hanks."

He did not turn his head when the uproar behind him grew louder.

"How long it lasts will depend on how many friends each side has got in the crowd," he mused. "But I reckon it won't amount to much. They'll fall down making motions at each other."

Here is the message Cap'n Aaron Sproul delivered to Miss Hanks, whom he found sitting disconsolately in her pony cart: "Better get your show ready to start, marm. They're having the last tableau in the other one. The crowd will relish your show more than ever now. So cheer up. It's coming out all right. They'll need a lot of your show, so as to take the taste of Hime Look's show out of their mouths."

And the vanguard of a disgusted crowd promptly verified Cap'n Sproul's declaration—and Miss Hanks smiled, and in due time led forth her Panoramic Pageant of Progress.



### A Girl at a Ball

**A** DRIFT upon the music's tide,  
 The dancers float along;  
 High in the flower-twined gallery  
 The viols' thrilling song,  
 The harp's thick golden voice, go on.  
 You're smiling with the throng,  
 But slender one, O tender one,  
 I watched you—was it wrong?  
 I saw a look you could not hide,  
 And—though you knew it not—you sighed.

The world would have you wed that youth  
 Who stands so near; but, child,  
 Your straying look goes not to him;  
 Eager and almost wild  
 Your young eyes quest about for one  
 Whom, spite of woman's art,  
 A love more sweet, a love complete,  
 Thrones in your inmost heart.  
 I may not speak, but time will test.  
 I think, I feel, you love me best!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.



# Our Bookshelf



## A LITTLE TALK ON A FEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE DAY

By Edward Everett Hale, Jr.

IN writing of the books of the day, we shall make no attempt at a broad survey or, in effect, a history of literature at the present time. We shall take a much more humble, perhaps, but certainly a more useful task, and try merely to point out each month a few books that people will like to read. And as people are most apt to read novels, we shall begin at least with half a dozen of what seem the most entertaining of the novels of the last few months.

We shall not pretend that they are the best; we shall not endeavor to analyze them and weigh their excellence; we shall not affect to be posterity sitting in judgment. We shall simply talk of them as any one might tell of any book that had seemed amusing or entertaining.

Then, because people generally like to have in hand something beside a novel, we shall each month speak of some more serious books. And here we shall try to be appropriate to the season, so that our readers may always find something suited to the spirit of the hour.

### THE LEE SHORE.

Such a name as this perhaps will make one think of sailors or smugglers or wreckers, or some good ship being driven upon the rocks. But this book, by Rose Macaulay (G. H. Doran &

Co.), is not a sailors' story. It is a very beautiful story about a very beautiful character. It tells us how Peter Margerison, after he had taken a pilot and made a good start in life, found himself drifting to leeward.

Peter was one of the most engaging young fellows in the world, and not only made many friends, who were eager to help him, but was not unable to help himself. But he was also not unwilling to take some interest in the condition of others, and some responsibility for their misdoings, especially of those of his Brother Hilary and his good-hearted wife, Peggy. So things were perpetually harder and harder to make head against.

But the real thing in the book is not Peter's character, or the misfortunes of his brother. It is shown by the motto, which reads: "The division, the division of those who have and those who have not runs so deep as almost to run to the bottom." Peter was really one of the "have nots." So was his Cousin Lucy, who expressed his position and hers, when she said: "I'm in the under lot, with you and father, and all the poorer people who don't get things, and have to find life nice in spite of it."

But somehow Peter got mixed up with the other set, with those who had things, or at least behaved as if they had things. And it was the unconscious



effort to stay with such people that was more and more a failure, and that set him more and more on a lee shore.

It is a very charming story of England and Italy, partly of artistic life, partly of a nondescript life of penury, but always full of interesting people.

#### THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL.

Almost any one will confess to a first prejudice against "The Poor Little Rich Girl," by Eleanor Gates (Duffield & Co.), when he hears what it is about, because it will appear to be merely an imitation of "Alice in Wonderland," and that does not seem at all the thing. "The Poor Little Rich Girl," however, is much more than that; in fact, the first half of it is not an imitation of anything. It is a study of the life of a little rich girl, one of those prisoners of wealth who are always so surrounded by the circumstances of riches that they can never be themselves.

Poor little Gwendolyn is always in a world that presses upon her, a world of familiar faces and familiar circumstances, it is true, but also of many strange conceptions. Her father, for instance, is said to be "made of money," to be "always in harness," to be "burning the candle at both ends." She hears some visitors say that her mother "has the social bee in her bonnet," "has bought a pig in a poke," that she "makes the money fly." A "little bird" has told some one all this. Everywhere are strange things. In the street is "a man who makes faces"; somewhere in the house is a "snake in the grass"; such a one "split her sides with laughing," another "had a flea in her ear."

There are some very curious things in Gwendolyn's world, and among the least comprehensible are father and mother. They love her, but they so rarely see her!

Well, in time comes the solution of all these problems. She finds herself with "the Man Who Makes Faces," and one by one those strange things of which she has heard are made clear.

Her dear father puts off his harness, and gives up burning the candle at both ends; her mother gets rid of the bee in her bonnet, and gets the pig out of the poke. The snake in the grass is there, and Gwendolyn sees that it is the hypocritical governess; her own maid, Jane, who has got very fat, splits her sides with laughing. So at last everything is made clear.

And then, of course, Gwendolyn finds herself in her little bed, with her dear father and her lovely young mother on either side of her, anxiously waiting for her to come back to herself and them. It appears that she has been sick. So it turns out well. The wise doctor prescribes the country and "Johnny Blake." Father and mother forget their business and their social ambitions, and meet each other once more over the sick bed of their darling. All ends happily.

#### THE ARMCHAIR AT THE INN.

We could find no better name for a book by Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith; it suggests just the things we expect to find in one of his books—namely, good things to eat and drink, and good stories and talk. Of these two matters, perhaps the former bulks more largely in one's remembrance, although it certainly does not in the books themselves. No author but Charles Dickens is so associated with good cheer, but Charles Dickens usually stays at home in the heavier old English hospitality of rounds of beef and dozens of oysters flanked with pots of porter and glasses of spirits-and-water. Mr. Hopkinson Smith's imagination, on the other hand, is more of a bon vivant, and more eclectic, in that he knows the good things to eat and drink of the whole world.

In "The Armchair at the Inn" (Charles Scribner's Sons) he has broken away from the terrapin and canvasback of our own shores, and established himself in a charming Old World inn in Normandy, the very place, if not to live in, at least to spend a few days or weeks in during the afternoon of life.



Here at the inn are a party of old friends, a painter, a sculptor, an engineer, and one or two others, with a charming woman who happens in now and then, and their after-dinner talk makes up the book; for there is little action save a love story that goes quietly on. One and another tells his story, gives an experience, or expresses his opinion; tells of a girl who lived among the Dyaks and got tattooed, or of an Englishman who became an African slave trader with a bunch of thirty oil-rubbed wives, or of a man who took a statue of a madonna in an Italian church.

Entertaining talk it is mostly, with enough connection and development of idea to hold it together and carry the reader along, if not with the fervid interest of a detective story, at least with the pleasant charm of after-dinner talk, which, after all, is just what it is.

#### THE CROCK OF GOLD.

As for "The Crock of Gold," by James Stephen (Macmillan), I suspect that any one who reads it for the story will become impatient, for there cannot be said to be any story, in the sense of a definite plot. There are plenty of people, and plenty of things happen to them. Thus there is a philosopher who sets off on his travels to find the God Angus Og, and first meets a big, comely woman with whom he shares his breakfast, and, in fact, gives her a kiss in the eye; then meets a very old woman with stones in her shoes; and finally two men and a woman in doubt which to marry, who would have married the philosopher but for his going away in the night.

So there are things enough happening to the people, and people enough for them to happen to; for there are two philosophers, and their wives, and their children, Seumas and Brigid—for it is an Irish story—and Meehawl MacMurrachu, and his daughter Caitilin, who minded the goats till the day she met the great god Pan, and followed him when he called her, and the great god Angus Og, and Shawn, the police-

man, and, in fact, so many people it would be tedious to name them.

And indeed it is not the people or what happens to them that makes up the book so much as it is the general wisdom of life that is poured out on every page, whether like basketsful of pearls in the speeches of the philosophers, or one by one in what is said by the children or by Caitilin, or, indeed, not said by anybody, but just apparent in the story.

It is an amusing book if you get over being vexed at finding not much of a story, and are willing to browse about in a leisurely way, taking what there is instead of grumbling at what there is not. Then you may have snatches of Irish peasant life, Celtic lore, touches of nature, a bit of a fairy tale, common sense or wisdom or epigram from the philosophers, allegory from the author, something of old Greek myth—in fact, so much of a choice that you would be very hard to please if you didn't find something to like, and very catholic in taste if you liked it all. But that, of course, isn't necessary.

#### THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

Mr. Hutchinson's "The Happy Warrior" (Little, Brown & Co.), has met with the greatest appreciation in England, which is not surprising, but it promises to be exceedingly well received here as well. The story deals with the law of primogeniture, and the sudden changes which may be wrought in some obscure family, on the failure of a direct heir in the principal branch.

A new Lord and Lady Burdon, and Rollo, the baby heir, duly take possession of Burdon Old Manor, and all that belongs to it. But the succession is only apparently correct, as the Lord Burdon killed on the Indian frontier really left behind him a young wife, soon to be a mother, and around this unknown fact with all its proofs in order turns the story of "The Happy Warrior."

Cruelly repulsed by the Lady Burdon in possession, Audrey barely reaches her lodging, where she dies in silence,



leaving her son to the care of her Sister Margaret, who prepares a vengeance which must wait for the apparent heir, when the two boys come of age. But she delays too long; justice keeps well, but time has strange fortunes for vengeance. The boys grow up to love each other, and the vengeance takes a strange turn.

Most of the minor characters are excellent. There is the stout Mr. Hannaford, who supplies horses for the circus, a great friend of Percival Redpath, the ousted heir, a gay-hearted, honest, loving little fellow, who delights in his lunches with the good man, the "chickening dinners," as he calls them. There is a little whiff of Dickens at his best, and also of "Little Lord Fauntleroy," in the story of the dinners and the ride on the little horse after them; but it is only a little whiff, and a pleasant one.

There is also Japhra, the somewhat idealized and philosophic gypsy, the friend of Percival's boyhood and the wise counselor of his youth, with his sweet, silent daughter, Ima; and even poor Egbert Hunt, with his hatred of "tyrangs" and "bloodsuckers." They are all human and possible and alive.

We have also a short, but most exquisite, love scene, almost as beautiful as the one in "Richard Feverel." Also some boxing matches, and one great fight with bare knuckles, to which only an expert could do justice, but we have the testimony of the *London Times* that it is magnificent.

The book has an atmosphere of sanity and elevation about it; it gives more than temporary pleasure, and it has the prime qualities of interest and beauty.

#### CORPORAL CAMERON.

It is not necessary to speak of anything so well known as Mr. Ralph Connor's deep interest in the Canadian West, and of his ardent admiration of the Northwest Mounted Police, of whom he tells us the astonishing fact that five hundred of these trained men have kept in order over ten thousand Indians.

In his last book, "Corporal Cameron"

(G. H. Doran & Co.), we find with pleasure some of his old favorites, the fine old Presbyterian missionary to the Indians, the splendid athlete as a hero, the pretty, sensible girls, and his own deep and sincere religious faith, breathed through the whole story.

His hero gets into undeserved trouble in Edinburgh, after a course of dissipation which nearly brings him to ruin, so that he tries his fortune in the New World, the Dominion of Canada.

Book Two finds him in Montreal, with a good letter to an influential banker. One wonders whether Cameron is a fair specimen of a young Scotchman who at home has been a fine athlete, and is now placed in unusual circumstances. His ignorance and helplessness are, we hope, unusual, and if he were not an extremely nice fellow, with great muscular power and unerring knowledge of just where to hit his opponent, we fear he would have to abdicate his position as hero.

However, he valiantly tries farming, and on the farm he finds a delightful little boy who adores him, and Mandy, a rough, awkward girl of seventeen, with beautiful eyes, who adores him, too. There are good things in this part, a capital sermon on the parable of the ten talents, and an exciting account of the merrymaking on Dominion Day.

But Cameron leaves the farm, and in Book Three we find him attached to the survey near Row River, under one MacIvor. From this time the interest of the story increases, and the adventure of the blizzard, and the whisky runners, and the murder of the two Stonies are very thrilling, and the excitement is well kept up to the moment when Cameron finds a congenial position in the Mounted Police, first as constable and then as corporal.

If Mr. Connor intended to point a moral in this tale, it probably was that it is a bad thing that a man should be taught nothing about the art of living and succeeding in this very strenuous world, and how much help he would get from a little training before he went into a new world to make his fortune.



## A BOOK ABOUT FLOWERS.

Now that flowers are everywhere, one has need of a flower book. In fact, two months ago, if one were keen about it, there was need of a book, except that the keen ones very soon get so that they do without a book except for reference. But now that there are so many flowers all around one, it is harder to find out just what they are than it was when there were but a few. And when one gets started with a book, now well on toward midsummer, one finds how many of the most beautiful flowers have gone by.

The very first flowers of spring are apt to be the most delicate and exquisite, the flowers of the woods, while toward midsummer come the more brilliant and at the same time the coarser flowers of the roadside and the meadow. But with all of them arises the question of the book.

The first use of a book is to tell us the flower's name. Many people say: What is the use of just knowing the name of a flower? The real thing is to know its look, its beauty, its habit of growth, its manner of life, and if you know these, the name is a minor matter; while if you don't know them, the name amounts to little. People just looking for names, they say, are like Indians hunting for scalps. They make lists of the names that they know, and are far more concerned with the names than with the flowers themselves, with their fresh and intimate beauty.

All this has a good deal of truth to it, but even allowing everything, it is necessary somehow to know the names. To which it may be added that the little work needed in looking up the name opens one's eyes to many things about a flower that one would not otherwise notice. So, granting that we want a book, the question is, What book out of so many?

There are really only two kinds of flower books—the scientific and the popular; and one can easily decide between them. The important difference is not that the popular book has attractive pictures of the flowers and pleasant

gossip about them, while the scientific book has only dry statements of fact, with cuts of ovaries and so forth. The real difference lies in the arrangement. The popular book is arranged according to things that everybody will notice, like color; the scientific book is arranged according to things that are more essential, but not so obvious, like the number of cells in the ovaries.

It is not a question of exactness or correctness; both should be exact and correct. It is a question of what kind of arrangement is best for you. And for the beginner the popular arrangements are undoubtedly better. They are in general two—one according to color, and then according to season. According to this double arrangement, it is generally easy to find the flower. At first, then, the popular book is easier; it is just what one wants. But after a while one wants something more particular, and then one will turn to the scientific books.

There are many reliable books of each kind. Gray's "Manual" is probably the best known of the scientific books, and Mrs. Dana's "How to Know the Wild Flowers" is one of the best-known popular books. There is no noteworthy flower book announced for this season, so we will close with a mention of one that appeared some years since, but has lately come more into notice. This is J. W. Henshaw's "Mountain Wild Flowers of America" (Leroy Phillips, Boston), a book which calls attention to one of the most delightful forms of flower finding, the looking for mountain flowers, especially for those that grow above the tree line.

Miss Henshaw uses the word "mountain" liberally, so that we shall also find here many of the flowers of the lower hills as well as those that grow in those wonderful places among the rocks upon the lofty summits. It is a popular book, not unlike Mrs. Dana's in plan.

We should make one criticism on its saying nothing as to the flower's habitat. Of course, if you have found a flower, you know one place at least where it grows. Still, it is good to know where



else it may be found, and if one is planning a trip, one wants to know what flowers one may expect to find. Otherwise the book will be delightful to all who love to get a little above the world, and find there those charming little things that seem to have gained a greater beauty from their isolation.

#### THE WEAKER VESSEL.

"The Weaker Vessel" is one of the best of E. F. Benson's novels. It is a story practically of the development of character of the two chief people. The question of the book might be: Which is the weaker vessel, wife or husband? At first it seems that it must be Eleanor, an impressive, half-regulated creature, accustomed to the routine of a semiclerical existence, but hating it all, and longing for some other forms of life, occasionally breaking out by playing a waltz during organ practice in church and in other such ways.

Then there is her husband, who is a smart, brilliant, self-confident sort of person, and it turns out that he can write plays. Late at night he writes them, as a rule, and as he writes he smokes and sips away at whisky and water. He seems to need some stimulant to do his best. It is as if some other self possessed him at times, and made him write the real stuff. At other times, what he writes is miserable, weak, mushy, and with no sort of snap. One morning, when he has worked late, his wife makes a discovery. She finds him lying on his bed in a drunken stupor. It becomes plain that he is becoming just a drunkard. So it goes on, and we shall not tell the outcome, save to mention that Eleanor is a very beautiful and lovable person indeed.

It is a very charming story. It is not set in the great world that is so often the scene of Benson's novels. It goes on in the theatrical world, so far as there is any world except the home of these two.

He is a dramatist, and his wife proves to have dramatic power, and becomes an actress. Then there is a woman who becomes his mistress, who is

an actress, too, and the fourth is an actor-manager. It will not do to leave out her father and mother, though they have little to do with the story.

#### THE WIND BEFORE THE DAWN.

"The Wind Before the Dawn," by Dell H. Munger (Doubleday, Page & Co.), is the story of a woman's freeing herself from the servitude into which she had fallen in marriage, and making for herself a sensible freedom in which she and her husband may both have their rights, and neither be forced to insubordinate silence.

It took her a long time to manage this, and the book takes almost as long. She had ample warning, for she saw how her father and mother lived, and not only observed, but studied the relation between them. Her mother was so utterly cowed and crushed that she scarcely imagined that there could be any other way to live than that in which she lived. But Elizabeth had more imagination. She saw no reason why there should not be another way; not a sort of seesaw in which each one got the better of the other by turns, but some kind of pulling together in which they managed to get the strength of both right on the thing to be done.

After she was married, however, she found her ideal somehow slipping away from her, as one by one she submitted to her husband's desires without making them her own. And finally it did slip away from her, and she saw nothing of it for a long, long time.

As to how it reappeared and what it was like when it came, we must leave all that to the reader. The book is a bit long, and dusty, as one might say, and monotonous. But that is no more than saying that life out on the Kansas prairies is dusty and drab, and so must the book be that pictures such a life.

But the book comes to its appointed end, and that is like life, too. In fact, it is all very lifelike, not only the scenes and incidents, but the people, Elizabeth and Aunt Susan and Sadie and Elizabeth's mother. The men, perhaps, are a thought less natural, but not enough to count.



# The Handicap

By Allan Updegraff

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

IT was on a memorable afternoon in the sixth September of his life, while he walked homeward with the six or eight other primary-grade boys who lived in the West End, that Herbert Rockwell became acquainted with his great disability. Said Harry Platt, swinging his slate at the end of a long strap: "My father is a butcher, and if it wasn't for him, none of you could get any meat to eat!"

Three days of school had been enough to establish Harry as the autocrat of the group. His boast suggested that the others show up, to odious comparison, their achievements in the way of fathers.

"My father's Peel the Grocer, and he has bushels of things in his store."

"Aw, a grocer ain't nothin'," said young Platt.

"My father's got an office on Commerce Street."

"That ain't even as much as a grocer," decreed Platt.

"My father's a conductor—and he rides on the train every day. I guess that's nearly as good as a butcher, anyway!"

The group paused to see how their leader would get around this terrible truth. For a moment his clenched fists threatened violence; then he sniffed and marched on. Ignoring the conductor's son, he diplomatically turned the attention of the group toward another boy.

"Who's your father, Herbert?"

"I dunno," said the boy.

"You dunno? How do you mean?"

"I guess I hain't got any," said Herbert Rockwell, watching the dust that spudded up between his bare toes.

This astounding state of affairs ef-

fectively disposed of the embarrassment caused by the conductor's son. Every other boy in the group had a father; therefore the only right and honorable thing was to have a father; therefore Herbert Rockwell's condition of fatherlessness was a sin and a shame. So their subconscious reasoning, if it followed the solid channel of precedent, must have run.

"Gee! He hain't got no father!" commented Harry Platt, more in pain than in anger. "Wha' do you think o' that? Huh!"

"He hain't got no father!" repeated the others, in varying keys of pain, astonishment, and contempt.

"Yah! You hain't got no father!" Young Platt's voice arose in wrath, driving home the attack. "Yah! No father!"

"Yah!" echoed the others. "No father! Shame! Yah, yah!"

The victim of their perfectly natural cruelty plodded along with a countenance as gray and sodden as the dust he shuffled through. His chubby face, his big, brown, doglike eyes, confessed his misery and guilt, and a sort of desolate wonder that he should be so depraved. The very stockiness of his figure, the very roundness of his cheeks, made his grief seem more poignant.

"You don't know everything!" he protested feebly, as their condemnation threatened to be converted into blows. "Maybe I've got one! Maybe I'm just fooling you!"

His voice and manner convicted him, only too plainly, of disbelief in his own innocence. The others gathered around him; they "Yah-ed" their contempt into his ears, they pushed him about, and





*"Well, wha' do you think o' that?" he asked the boy.*

made faces at him, they threatened him with fists, tongues, and feet. Finally they went on together, leaving him to follow alone. He had been judged, convicted, and sentenced, as summarily as if he had committed a murder.

But, agonized as he was, his sufferings, child's way, were as brief as they were bitter. Even while he wiped away a few tears on the sleeve of his blue-

checked shirt, the peculiar wail of machine-sawn timber reached his ears. His eyes gladdened at the sound, and his gray cheeks regained some of their usual color. The long-drawn humming shriek announced that he was approaching the West End ax-handle factory, that heaven of interests for small boys, and the thought of it was as the waters of Lethe to his shame-burdened soul.



He hurried along, around a bend of the road where overhanging trees made the dust cool and velvety to his feet, and came in sight of the clearing that surrounded the factory. The engineer was in the act of motioning the other boys on their way; as with most other heavens, the appreciation of the ax-handle factory by its devotees was largely imaginative. The group went reluctantly away, and Herbert, sniffing a little because of the memories the sight of them aroused, slowly approached the place they had left.

At the front door of the long, low, narrow building, which pulsed and vibrated like the home of an indignant chained dragon, sat the engineer. The boy stared at him; next to the heroes in the "Mythology," he admired that engineer, for the engineer fed and controlled the flaming-mawed beast whose rumblings filled the air and shook the ground. Slowly he went till he stopped altogether by the open door.

The blur of a great flywheel was visible over the shoulder of the engineer, and the single flaming eye of the black engine beast glared dully in the gloom. The boy lingered some yards away, hoping to see the beast fed. His big eyes, wide and staring with attention, combined with the tear marks on his cheeks to make him look much more lugubrious than he really felt.

"What's the matter, son?" asked the engineer.

As was natural before the utterance of so great a man, Herbert was stricken dumb. He stared unblinkingly at the engineer's lean, blue-overalled figure; at his furrowed face, cut across by a little sandy mustache, lit by two bright, blue eyes; at his long-billed cap, which was pushed back like the helmet of Athene in the "Mythology."

"What's the matter?" repeated the engineer, smiling very comfortably. "D' they give you the go-by?" He jerked his thumb in the direction the group had taken.

"Yes—sir," said Herbert; he had been told to say "sir" to the minister, but it seemed even more applicable to the engineer.

"Come over here!" The engineer's voice was most friendly and consolatory. "Want to look in while I fire up?"

He wished to so much that he could barely gulp out his thanks. The engineer made him sit down on the beam that formed the sill of the doorway, and then went inside and opened up the dragon's mouth. A terrific red glare filled the gloom of the engine room, breathed from the dazzling, fiery maw of the beast. Into the midst of the maw flew a shovelful of sawdust and shavings; the dragon responded by shooting out a sheet of flame nearly a yard long, like a great, red, writhing tongue. The boy hugged his knees and gasped in an ecstasy of fear and admiration. Another shovelful brought another wild exhibition of appetite from the dragon. But the second was not so fierce as the first, and with succeeding shovelfuls the great tongue ceased to leap forth. Finally the beast seemed satisfied. The engineer closed its mouth and came panting into the open air.

"Well, wha' do you think o' that?" he asked of the boy.

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Afraid?" The engineer laughed in a way that showed he was perfectly calm. "But now I guess you'd better run along, or your ma'll be worrying about you."

The boy rose reluctantly, the light of a great awe and admiration on his face. "I think you're the bravest man that ever lived!" he declared. "I think you're as brave as—as the lion-hearted Achilles! And I wish you were my father!"

For a moment the engineer was quite overcome; then his face muscles twitched into the beginning of a smile. But he could not smile into the boy's religiously worshipful eyes.

"I reckon it's up to me to say I think you've got awful good taste!" he remarked, at last. "Whose boy are you, anyway?"

"I'm Sarah Rockwell's."

The engineer's face showed some comprehension. "Lives down there beside the main line?"



"Yes."

"Well, she must take a power of comfort out of you, anyway. And now you better run along home to her."

With many backward glances, he went on his way. When the factory was hidden by trees and the West End crossroads opened before him, he quickened his steps, afraid lest Harry Platt or the son of Peel the Grocer might be waiting before their fathers' shops to fling insults, or even stones, at him as he passed. They did not appear, and with great thankfulness he turned down the little blind alleyway that led to the railway tracks.

The Rockwell home lay in a V-shaped bit of land, bounded by a twenty-foot hedge on the town side, by the main line of the St. Louis railway, and by the backs of several stores that fronted on Commerce Street. The two-room cottage, with a lean-to that served for the kitchen, had lacked paint for so long that the weather had made up by turning it a wonderful silver-gray. Climbing honeysuckle and Dorothy Perkins roses nearly covered it, and a clump of huge sunflowers concealed the dilapidated entrance. Herbert made his way through a hole in the hedge, stepping carefully to avoid thorns, and passed through the trim little vegetable garden to the door of the lean-to.

His mother was in the sitting room, as he had expected, busy with the "plain sewing" by which she earned a living for herself and her son. She smiled at him over the piled-up mass of goods in her lap, and continued to look at him while she bit off a thread. Her wide blue eyes were vague and tender.

"I've been expecting you for some minutes, sonny-boy," she said. "In a little I'd have gone down the road to look for you. You mustn't loiter; it makes mumsey nervous."

There was a peculiar lack of self-consciousness in her round face, with its faint, drooping lines around the corners of the eyes and mouth; indeed, her look suggested that she hardly ever became conscious of herself. She seemed one of those persons whom Life uses almost without their knowledge, and

dowers with trust and contentment in return for their blind obedience.

"Mumsey," said the boy, coming directly to the matter that troubled him, "who's my father?"

For a moment something like consternation came over Mrs. Rockwell's face. She allowed her hands to fall limply on her work.

"Whatever made you think of that?" she asked.

"The other fellers was telling who was their fathers," explained Herbert solemnly, "and they asked me; and I didn't know."

She took up her sewing again. "Perhaps I'd ought to have told you before, sonny; your father's in heaven," she said, and closed her lips firmly as if she had made a profession of faith.

"In heaven?" repeated the boy.

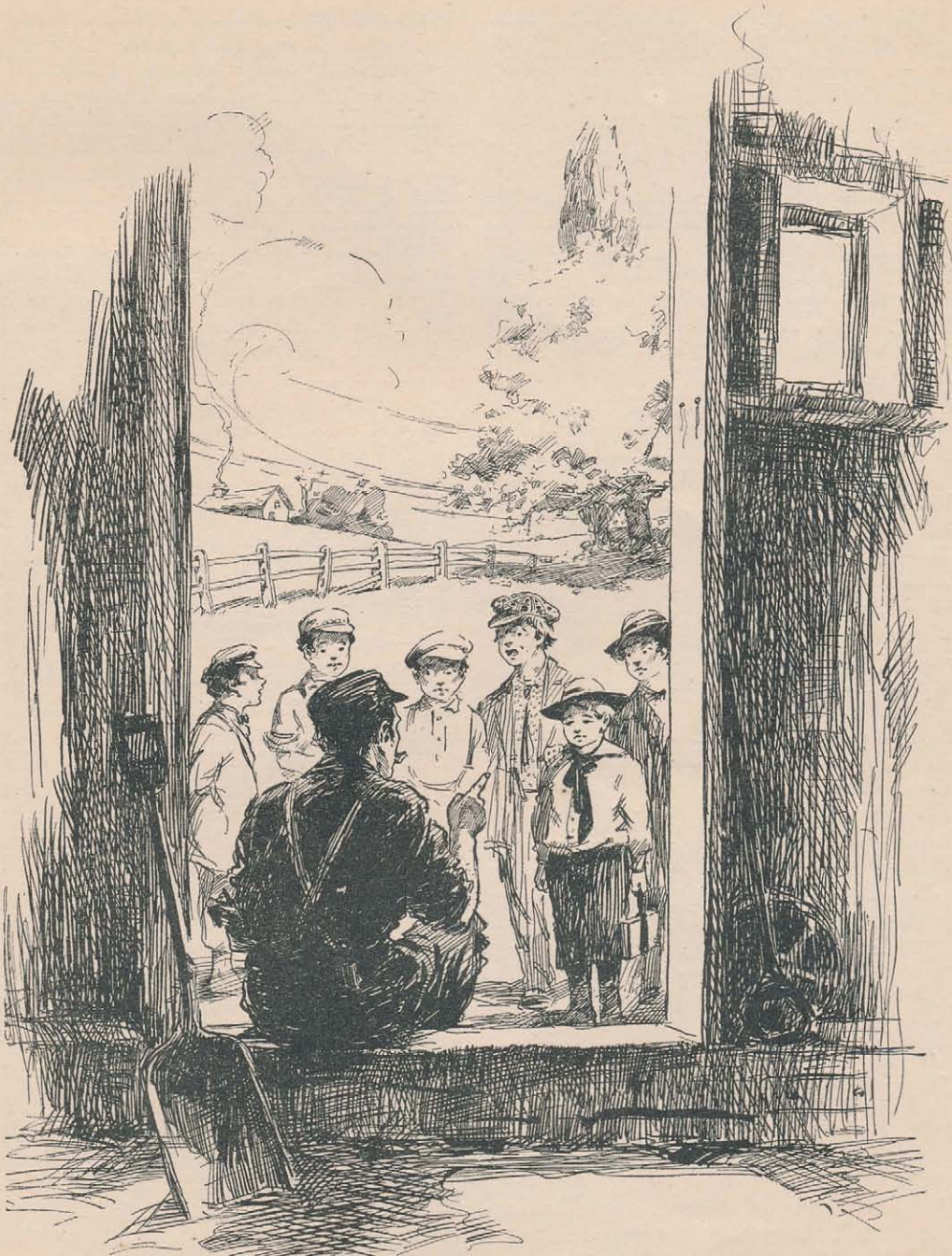
"Yes; God is merciful! Now don't think anything more about it, but run out and cut your kindlings, and bring in your wood. And mother'll stir you up some batter cakes for your supper."

He obeyed the injunction about the wood and kindling, but as to the other matter his mind ran into a morass of doubt and foreboding. He was not even thoroughly convinced that his father was in heaven; the touch of doubt in his mother's answer had not escaped him. Besides, being the son of a father in heaven was not the same as being the son of a butcher, a grocer, or a conductor. The shame of being different was not lifted by his discovery. He shed a few tears over the matter, before going to sleep, and wondered why he had ever been born.

Then he magnificently dreamed that he was the son of the engineer at the ax-handle factory, who let him throw a handful of shavings into the mouth of the dragon. Bitter was that awakening!

He went to school unusually early the next morning to avoid the taunts of the other boys, and escaped at noon into a near-by strip of wood, where he could eat his luncheon undisturbed; but at the four-o'clock dismissal his place with the "R's" near the end of the line





G.W. HARTIN

*"You get your hand off his collar!" demanded the great man, pointing a sudden finger at Harry's nose.*

brought him out into the group of Platts, Peels, Elberons, and Johnsons.

"Yah! There's the boy that hain't got

no father!" bellowed Harry the Autocrat, as they turned off Main Street into the West End road.



His loneliness of the day prompted him to make some defense. Instead of fleeing before or dropping behind, he faced his accuser.

"You think you're smart, don't you?" he demanded. "I guess I've got as good a father as you have!"

"Fight! Fight!" chirped the son of Peel the Grocer, delighted with the prospects opened up by this sudden show of rebellion.

"Yah! Who is he, then?" demanded young Platt, squaring shoulders for battle. "Tell us who he is, or I'll knock your block off!"

His eminent danger was less potent than his dream of the night before in prompting the reply that sprang from Herbert's lips.

"My father's the engineer at the ax-handle factory!" he said. "So there!"

The sheer audacity of the reply made it, for the moment, effective. Harry Platt's broad German face became quite stolid with amazement, and the other boys, taking their cue from their leader, forbore to break the awed silence that followed. Herbert walked steadily along, looking neither to the right nor to the left, as if the matter were settled and done with.

"Well—wha' do you think o' that?" murmured Harry, after the group had marched for, perhaps, a hundred yards in perfect silence. "Whyn't you say so before?"

"I wanted to s'prise you," lied Herbert fluently. His imagination gave him an advantage over the matter-of-fact butcher's son. He stepped proudly along, conscious of the awe his ancestry was evoking from the boys who had so lately despised him. His pleasure was doubly sweet after his recent pain. His sudden prominence quite intoxicated him.

"The engineer at the ax-handle factory has been my father ever so long," he volunteered; "almost ever since I was born!"

The son of Peel the Grocer plucked young Platt by the sleeve.

"Don't b'lieve him!" he whispered into his leader's ear. "He's makin' it all up!"

Harry the Autocrat, although plainly astounded by this suggestion, nodded as if the thought had already occurred to him. The other boys whispered among themselves. Only the fact that Herbert was marching on ahead, wrapped up in a dream of his own greatness, kept him from realizing that a delicate moment had arrived in his affairs.

"Ask him whether his father lives at his house!" counseled young Peel. "The engineer lives at Mrs. Briggs' boarding house—I know, 'cause I follered him home one night!"

Harry strode after Herbert and took him firmly by the arm.

"Does your father live at your house?" he demanded.

Even before this swift and unexpected attack, the fabricator bore up nobly. "He don't live with us," he explained, "because our house ain't grand enough for him. Soon he's going to build a big house for us on Grant Avenue—then you'll see!"

Harry looked around for his counselor in chief.

"'Tain't so!" declared young Peel shrilly. "He's makin' it all up! He's a great big fibber!"

Herbert extended his fists as a sign that he was ready to put the matter to a trial by combat; the son of Peel the Grocer was near his size, and the chances seemed good for vindicating his claims. But Harry Platt restrained him.

"We'll just ast the engineer!" decided the leader shrewdly. "And if you've been foolin' us— Come on, fellers!"

The trapped fabricator, as soon as he could overcome his consternation, argued that the engineer would not like it; that he might throw them all into the mouth of the dragon; that he wished the matter to be kept secret until the new house was finished. But Harry the Autocrat, assisted by the cynical counsels of young Peel, was not to be moved. With the liveliest misery and dejection in every feature, Herbert was dragged down the road toward the factory. Only the natural optimism of childhood, the hope that something would certainly



turn up to save him, kept his legs from giving way beneath him.

He made a frantic break for freedom, as they approached the clearing, but superior force recaptured and held him fast. Then he stood in judgment before the engineer.

"What the—particular cats!" gasped the great man, coming from feeding the dragon to find the staring assembly awaiting him. "Here, you—let go of young Rockwell, you big bully!"

Harry rapidly got behind his prisoner. "I ain't hurtin' him," he pro-

tested. "He says you're his father—and we think 'tain't so—and we've got to *git* him for it! That's all."

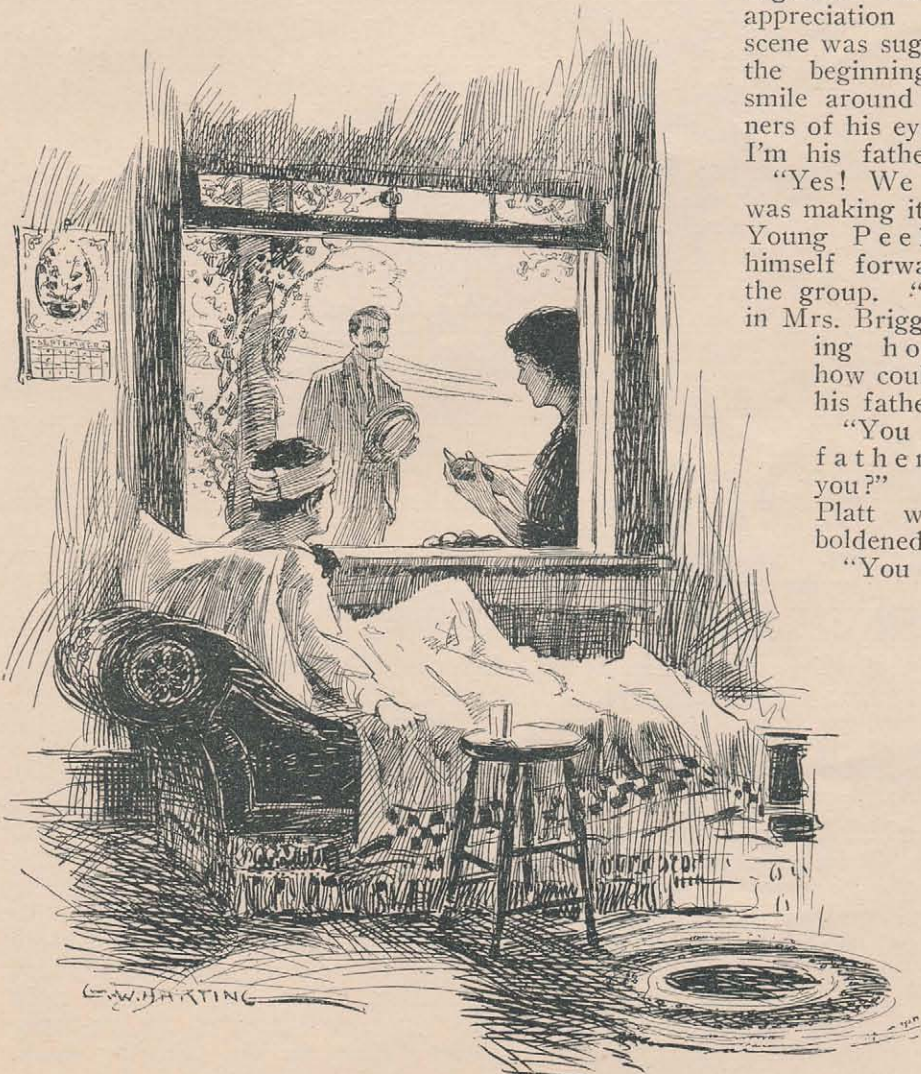
As when a crisis is come in the trial of a great criminal, all who heard that indictment were dumb. The engineer passed one hand dazedly across his forehead; his quick blue eyes looked from one member to another of the staring group. Harry stood staring at the ground, both hands hanging limp, his face flooded with a scarlet agony of shame.

"Says I'm his father?" repeated the engineer. Some faint appreciation of the scene was suggested in the beginnings of a smile around the corners of his eyes. "Says I'm his father, eh?"

"Yes! We knew he was making it all up!" Young Peel pushed himself forward from the group. "You live in Mrs. Briggs' boarding house—so how could you be his father?"

"You ain't his father—are you?" Harry Platt was emboldened to ask.

"You get your



With pride he heard the engineer accept his mother's invitation to step up on the porch and sit a while.



hand off his collar!" demanded the great man, pointing a sudden finger at Harry's nose. Harry did so.

"Takin' the wish for the fact," continued the engineer, screwing his face up into an expression of oracular finality, "which, as everybody knows, is sometimes proper to be done—as when before a coroner's jury it's murder if you wanted to kill a man, but nothin' but an unavoidable accident if ye didn't—takin' that fact into consideration, I may say Rockwell ain't so far wrong—maybe, perhaps, and all things considered. Now look here: you boys remember just what I say, and don't go saying I said something I didn't say! And now clear out—all of you—and leave that boy alone! Go on—scatter!"

They scattered, and Herbert ventured one worshipful glance into the face of the protector of his person and honor. Overcome with thankfulness, and with the knowledge of his own guilt, he burst into tears. The engineer laid a soothing hand on his head.

"There, now, sonny, don't cry!" he said. "Set down there till you get back your nerve. Want to see me fire up?"

But the burden of his extreme wickedness kept the boy from any very lively appreciation of the dragon feeding; the fact that the engineer did not reproach him made his shame greater rather than less. He lingered around the doorway, trying to frame up some sort of an apology for his outrageous claim of sonship with his hero, until the engineer positively ordered him to go home. When he finally dragged himself away, he had not been able to mention the matter of his lies and repentance.

Down the road he plodded, miserable to desperation with his misdeeds of the past, full of misgivings for the accounting that might be exacted of him in the future. On coming in sight of the West End crossroads, he stopped; he knew enough of boy nature to be sure that the engineer's evasive answer hadn't satisfied his judges, and the chance of meeting them was not pleasant to contemplate. He went on slowly, considering the possibility of fetching a compass around the place. Suddenly

there was a roar and a wild rush from a clump of bushes beside the road. He turned, instinctively as a scared cat, and sped back toward the factory. But Harry the Autocrat, being long-legged and muscular, soon fastened a hand in his collar.

"Now I got you!" panted the son of the butcher, while the other boys raced up and gathered around. "Who'd you say your father was? Hey?"

"Lemme go!" shrieked Herbert, the white color of desperation overspreading his face.

"Your father—the engineer!" panted Harry. He was overcome with righteous wrath, and the other boys looked stern and sanctified as a jury that has just handed in a conviction. "Your father was nothin'—but a rotten little real-estate shark—and he got drunk and got run over by the St. Louis express! Yah! My pa—he told me all about you! Yah! You dirty little——"

Herbert twisted loose and flew at him like a frenzied little animal. The Autocrat was so staggered with surprise that he gave ground; a whirling fist hit him on the nose, another connected with his mouth, before he had time to realize that he was actually being attacked. Then rage arose to inspire his superior muscles and training. Herbert staggered suddenly backward from the *mêlée*, under the impact of a fist that struck full on his chin, and flopped to the ground like a log dropped small end first. The back of his head thudded into the dust, and he lay with his eyes closed, white and still.

The son of Peel the Grocer, who had been raising a savage war cry of "Fight! Fight! Fight!" led a stampede away from the place. The criminal had been punished a little more thoroughly than even his judges had intended; they disclaimed responsibility by leaving him to his own devices. The jar of his fall had made his nose bleed. Presently he choked, coughed, moaned, and sat up. There was no one in sight. The humming shriek of the ax-handle factory filled the air, mingling dizzily with a sort of roaring inside his head.

He got to his knees and looked back



in the direction of the factory; he had just time to see that the engineer was standing at the edge of the clearing, looking toward him, before a rush of dizziness brought him once more prone on the ground. He put his hand to his face, and withdrew it sticky and red with blood. Then he heard the quick sound of the engineer's feet, running, two strong arms picked him up, and he was carried swiftly, comfortably, back to the factory.

The engineer put him down on a pile of shavings, got him a drink, and told him to lie quiet. He obeyed, feeling much improved because of the water, and rather important because of his wounds. While the engineer fed the dragon, he watched fearlessly, looking quite blissful and cherubic.

"Feelin' better now, son?" asked the great man; and when Herbert said he was, the engineer suggested that they go outside, where the air was better, and there wasn't so much noise. There he was sitting, telling the engineer the whole story of his troubles, when his mother came in sight on the road. She was hurrying along in the direction of the school, with her little black bonnet jolted somewhat askew by her haste, and the engineer had to call her several times before she heard.

Herbert listened with pleasure while she thanked the engineer, and the engineer assured her that it was no trouble at all, and then walked homeward by her side. Although he repeated the whole story of that afternoon's crime and punishment, she reproached him scarcely more than the engineer had done. In some way his injuries seemed to have made expiation for his wickedness; he felt it in the increased tenderness of his mother toward him, and it made him rejoice as a sinner whose sins have been forgiven.

After supper he lay on the sofa before the opened front window, with a cooling bandage around his head, and watched the twilight steal in over the vague green cornfields on the other side of the railway tracks. On the front porch, just outside the window, his mother was peeling potatoes for the

next morning's breakfast. Suddenly he caught a glimpse of a tall man, dressed in very fashionable black clothes, coming around the side of the porch. His mother arose hastily, dropping her paring knife; from where he lay he noticed a pink color come into her cheeks.

"Good evening, Mrs. Rockwell; I just thought I'd drop around and see if the boy was coming on all right," said the man; and then Herbert dazedly realized that it was the engineer. He lay back on the couch, struggling with the problem of the change in the engineer's appearance. He remembered the story of Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, who could change himself into a hundred different persons. Perhaps the engineer, in addition to his other herolike characteristics, could do something like that.

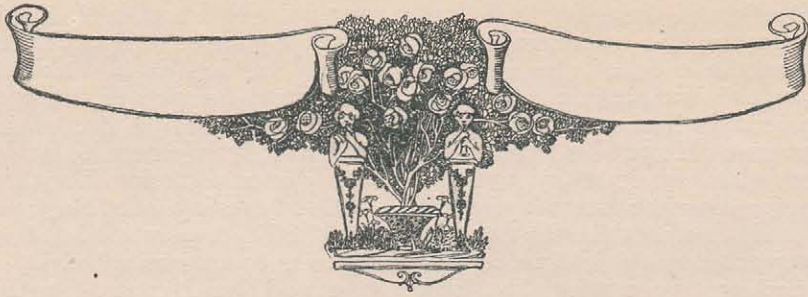
With pride he heard the engineer accept his mother's invitation to step up on the porch and sit a while; with approbation he heard her thank the great man for his interest in her son.

"He's a fine lad," said the engineer. "I'll sort of look out for him after this, if you'd like me to, to see that the other boys don't bully him too much. It's queer what funny notions a bunch of boys will get, ain't it?"

Then he heard them talking about different things, their voices gradually blending, as he grew sleepy, into a sing-song rhythm without beginning or end. There was a sort of feeling about the rhythm, a feeling that made him contented and happy without exactly knowing why. He frequently had feelings about things of which his reason told him little or nothing.

So now this feeling of his assured him that everything about him was good and happy, and full of hope—his mother, the engineer, everything. In some dim way it reminded him of his dream that the engineer was his father, and let him throw a handful of shavings into the dragon's mouth. Although he had not dreamed that dream on a Friday night, nor yet told it on a Saturday morning, his peculiarly joyful feeling almost persuaded him that it would come true.





# Dancing for Health, Youth, and Beauty

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

AN English lady of title has appeared on the dance-hall stage; and crusty old college professors are practicing—behind closed doors—the light, fantastic toe. What does it all mean? Are we going mad? Is the world coming to an end? Or is our present-day pace so rapid that we require further exhilaration to keep it up? Happily, none of these. The tremendous interest now being taken in the dance by all sorts and conditions of people is simply a wholesome reaction against the stultifying effect of modernism.

We cannot trace the origin of the dance; it is lost in remote antiquity, and from the very beginning of time it has existed in one form or another. Every race and every grade of society has its representative dance, which gives expression to the nature or "temper" of the people. Thus the Highland fling is a very different dance from the

Irish jig; the Spanish dances are almost entirely confined to sex; while the stately minuet is characterized by an elegance expressive of the most formal and polite society.

It is only within our time that the art and beauty of dancing has descended grossly and been almost effaced by our overwhelming commercialism. Still, the true spirit of the dance always survives, and the keen ardor with which it is being pursued now proves how great is our desire to throw off the artificial shackles that bind us, and to revive an art that enables us to give true expression to human emotions.

It is a long, long time since we have danced only for the love of God, and many of us do not even know that dancing was the handmaiden of religion in those far-away days when men lived ideas. "But dancing has fallen into evil ways," says some one. Not at all; "evil to him who evil thinks" is just



as apt as that "beauty lies only in the eye of the beholder." Furthermore, beauty that enters through the senses has an inspiring rather than a degrading effect.

The wonderful impetus given to everyday dancing in this country is unquestionably due in large part to the marvelous performances of the Russian imperial ballet dancers, whose exquisite art enables them to interpret every shade of the human soul. The revival of the classical art has been developed

ing forms a necessary part of every boy's education, men are endowed with far more grace, poise, and high-bred manners than characterize the men of our country. It is very true that our people are intent on more strenuous matters; but that is not all. It is because in America boys are not regularly educated in the dance, and therefore never become apt, but remain awkward and clumsy.

A well-known dancing master in New York City declares that boys should be



This physical-culture dancing imparts lightness, swiftness, delicacy, grace, and ease to all one's body movements.

by an American woman, who has since become famous; her exquisite interpretations are like a quaff of nectar to a parched throat. She draws her inspirations from rhythmical nature—the trees, the clouds, the waves, dancing sunbeams, et cetera—and from everything that is noblest in the human soul.

Aside from the highest power that dancing possesses—the power of expressing emotion—it has others, and perhaps even greater qualities in its psychological effect, and in its physiological action. In Europe, where danc-

made to attend dancing classes regularly from the sixth to the twelfth years. During this time they would accumulate grace that they would never lose; and they would become so well grounded in the foundations of the art that they would be splendidly equipped for any future social life into which they might enter. Even though they might never dance, they would have acquired an ease of manner and of deportment that it is very difficult to assume in later years. Again, a knowledge of dancing will by no means be a hin-



dance, but rather a help, to the more strenuous out-of-door games and sports in which a healthy, lusty boy of twelve enlists.

Since the object of dancing is primarily enjoyment, it necessarily brings out the lighter and more wholesome qualities, smiles instead of tears; so it infuses into the atmosphere a blending, a mixture of joy, happiness, and hope, an optimism regarding life's problems, that may be termed *the spirit of the dance*. Women, being far more emotional than men, experience this to a greater extent, and therefore are greater devotees of the art, and more expert dancers.

While dancing is an art and an accomplishment, it is above all the highest form of physical culture, and both men and women are awakening to a realization of its great value in this respect, and are practicing it for physiological purposes.

Those who first become acquainted with the art of dancing after reaching maturity are horrified at the stiffness of their joints; at their ungainly gestures; at their complete ignorance of body balance to rhythmic tones; and this discomfort is heightened by observing their awkwardness and clumsy movements in comparison with others. One who is well balanced becomes a good dancer, and this very essential human attribute—*balance, or mental poise*—can be acquired and developed in the dance.

It must not be supposed, however, that the execution of graceful evolutions can be performed without a good deal of preliminary practice; it is, therefore, a capital plan to devote a short period each day to such simple exercises as will limber the joints and impart pliancy to the muscles. These exercises are so simple that they scarcely require an explanation; for instance, stand firmly upon the floor and slowly raise and lower the body upon the toes; then rise upon the toes, balance, and rock the body gently from side to side by means of the ankles only; next, lower the body to the floor from the hips by unhinging the knee joints, as it

were; next sway the body from side to side with hip action alone.

After this it is well to study the essential positions of the feet; unless this is correctly understood, much of the value of dancing is lost. In all these positions, the body should be held erect, the shoulders thrown back, and the knees kept perfectly straight and turned outward. In the construction of dances, these positions combined form steps, steps united make movements; and aside from the fact that these movements, when arranged together, form dances, it is by means of these movements that advanced physical culturists are overcoming many physical weaknesses, deficiencies, and actual diseases, such as rheumatic joints and muscular rheumatism, obesity, indigestion, enlarged liver, feeble circulatory systems, and so on.

The correct positions of the body in dancing are five. *The first position* is formed by placing the heels together and throwing the toes back, so that the feet form a straight line. In the first attempts at this position, the toes should not be turned out more than will admit of the body maintaining its *proper balance*; they must be brought to the proper position only by degrees, until the feet can be placed, heel to heel, in a straight line without affecting the steadiness of the body or arms.

*The second position* is formed by moving the right or left foot sideways from the first position to about the distance of its own length from the heel of the standing foot. Of the foot thus placed, the heel must be raised so that the toe alone rests on the ground, the instep being bent as much as possible, and the foot retaining its original direction outward. In this case, as in the first, the foot should be brought by degrees to perform this action correctly, and the toes thrown back as far as one's power to preserve body balance will permit.

*The third position* is formed by drawing the moving foot from the second position to the middle of the front of the standing foot, the feet being kept close to each other so that the heel of





One who is well balanced becomes a good dancer, and balance or mental poise can be acquired and developed in the dance.

one is brought to the ankle of the other, so they are nearly half crossed.

*The fourth position:* In this the foot is moved about its own length forward from the third position, keeping the heel forward and the toe backward during the progress of the foot.

*The fifth position:* Draw the foot back from the fourth position so that its heel is brought close to the toe of the other foot, the feet being completely crossed. The heel of the moving foot is gradually brought to the ground as it approaches the standing foot.

These five positions should be practiced alternately, the balance being sustained throughout by the opposite foot. If, when one foot is placed in advance of the other, you balance your body on the foot that is in front, the other foot is in the fourth position behind, and it is the same with regard to the third and fifth positions when the weight is on the foremost foot. The positions, if properly made, will form a perfect cross.

Now the simple preliminary exercises given above should be performed while

practicing these positions; for instance, bending the hips and knees so as to turn the latter outward and rather backward without raising the heel, and while lowering the body, still keeping it perfectly erect, imparts flexibility to the instep, and greatly improves the balance. In this exercise, the knees should be but slightly bent at first, and it may be necessary to support oneself on a firm object until greater power and facility are acquired.

Now, when the bends in the various positions can be performed perfectly without any support, and without decomposing the proper state of the body, at the conclusion of each bend, rise upon the toes, keeping the knees straight, and the feet in their exact positions. This "points" the feet, and increases the power of instep and ankle. Now practice balancing of the body on one foot, extend the other in the second or fourth position, raise it as high as the knee, allow it to fall into the fifth position, and cross either behind or before.



These foot-and-leg exercises are called physical-culture dancing, and impart lightness, swiftness, delicacy, grace, and ease to all one's body movements, and immensely facilitate the rhythmic action of dancing. Even if the dance is not the object sought, these steps correct weak and clumsy ankles, as well as other mild joint and muscular deficiencies, and should be indulged in if only for the acquirement of grace and suppleness.

Much has been heard lately of the freakishness of present-day dancing. Things only become freakish when out of their environment. The turkey trot—now called the "one step" in polite society—if genuinely danced in a fashionable ballroom, becomes ludicrous, because the turkey trot is an evolution of the cakewalk. Now, the cakewalk, if done fittingly, is a wonderful means of expression of that class who originated it; seen in proper surroundings, the cakewalk is delightful; but shorn of its elemental characteristics it becomes a hybrid, a freak, a degeneracy.

These same steps and figures modified, or refined, and attuned to a higher class of society, constitute the turkey trot. It is done in two-four time, with very pretty figures, and is a great improvement, and really an advancement, upon our ordinary, commonplace, prosaic two-step. Aside from adding zest to the dance, and giving it a new interest, it is an admirable form of exercise.

In the first place, the movement should be graceful. Rise on the foot as if "stepping on an egg and afraid to break it." *There must be no shuffling.* Advance gracefully, lightly, on the toes, counting eight; reverse eight; two measures of four each around, followed by the side or *wing* step, weight being thrown on the forward step, wing on the back step.

This completes the dance with some, but it contains another and very pretty figure, *the grapevine*, which consists of four steps done diagonally, side-stepping all the while. There is absolutely nothing bizarre about the turkey trot when done becomingly; the action is all

from the hips and ankles. The arms must not be swung; in fact, must not be used at all, the sway and rhythm of the body being done entirely with the lower joints.

The turkey trot, when rapidly executed, becomes a very good and easy means of reducing one's weight.

Better than this, however, are the new waltz steps, introduced some years ago by a fashionable dancing master in Boston, and known as the "Boston short," the "long Boston," the "dip," and the "glide." All these steps are sometimes combined into one dance, the execution of which brings into very active play every muscle in the body. It is a very strenuous dance, and the combination is rarely seen in a ballroom, being performed by professionals or privately. Of all these steps the long Boston is doubtless the only one that will survive; properly danced, it is perhaps the most graceful of all dances, but one seldom sees it correctly done.

The Tango-Argentina, a Spanish dance recently introduced, has met with great favor. It is most delightful, but contains a great many steps, and, therefore, is not only difficult to acquire, but impossible to dance with many on the floor. It is really a Spanish minuet, and the revival of these graceful dances, with the exquisite courtesy necessary to make them successful, opens tremendous educational possibilities for the rising generation.

The bending, swaying, rising, and falling inflections of the body in the Spanish dances are among the best possible methods of treating myriads of functional derangements to which flesh is heir, notably rheumatic ailments and obesity. Beside the physiological improvement that invariably follows a systematic course of physical-culture dancing, the rejuvenating influence upon one's spirit must not be overlooked.

In the great cities, where life is one ceaseless round of strenuous endeavor, men and women who are accomplishing the world's work engage in the dance; and more and more is this means of relaxation and rejuvenation sought and



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| Structural Engineer       | Industrial Designing       |
| Concrete Construction     | Commercial Law             |
| Mechan. Engineer          | Automobile Running         |
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## DANCING FOR HEALTH, YOUTH, AND BEAUTY

found, and more and more is it being pursued, because, despite much that has latterly been uttered against the new dances, they are filling a need, and in so doing the best that is in them will prevail and endure.

NOTE: Lubrication of the feet not only keeps them pliant and young, enhances their usefulness, and facilitates their action, but prevents foot troubles.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**JIMMIE.**—The fashion of using hair oils has recently been revived, and it is a good one, as it cleanses the scalp, doing away thereby with so much washing, and nourishes the hair as well. A German preparation that has been in use for years is called: "Klettenwurzel Haar Oel," known in this country as: "Burdock Root Hair Oil."

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Olive or benne oil .....   | 16 ounces |
| Fresh burdock root .....   | 2 ounces  |
| Castor oil .....           | 1 ounce   |
| Oil of bergamot .....      | 1 dram    |
| Oil of rose geranium ..... | ½ dram    |

Digest the olive or benne oil with the burdock root for about one-half hour, at a moderate heat, then decant the clear liquid, add the other oils, and color, if desired, with any coloring matter you choose. Coloring adds only to the appearance, not to the virtue, of the preparation. Many so-called burdock hair oils do not contain any burdock root at all; and most of them are put up with oil of benne, instead of olive oil, because it is cheaper.

**EFFIE.**—A bust of a disfiguring size may be reduced by the following means:

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Tristol .....               | 2 grams  |
| White vaseline .....        | 30 grams |
| Essence of peppermint ..... | 10 drops |

This is well rubbed into the parts, which are then covered with a compress soaked in:

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Alum .....            | 2 grams   |
| Acetate of lead ..... | 30 grams  |
| Distilled water ..... | 400 grams |

Cover the compress with oiled silk, and keep on for twelve hours.

This treatment must be pursued nightly for months before results are gained.

**JANNETTE.**—Probably the reason why you always find an eruption at the seat of former blackheads is because you squeeze them out with your finger nails. This is bad practice. Correct treatment for these disfiguring facial blemishes will be sent you on application.

**JOHN.**—Yes, from your description I judge that they are blackheads; these blemishes

frequently appear on the chest and back, as well as upon the face. In such situations they can be given more vigorous treatment, because the skin is not so sensitive as it is on the face. Pulverized pumice, applied daily with a bath brush, should remove them from these situations.

**ANXIOUS.**—Small scars resulting from severe acne can be removed. Directions will be sent on application.

**JERRY.**—The term "blackheads" is not given to these unsightly facial blemishes because they are actual worms with black heads. They consist of accumulated oily matter thrown out by the glands, of bacteria, and of soil or grime; in other words, of dirt on the surface of these tiny masses, which gives them a black appearance. When they are squeezed out, the black tip emerges first; the remainder of the mass is light in color, and the minute speck appears like a grub. Whenever blackheads resist persistent treatment, the daily habits of life are faulty. Health rules as well as treatment for blackheads will be mailed on application.

**E. T., Milwaukee.**—A simple face bleach consists of:

|                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Lemon juice .....                   | 3 ounces |
| Rain or rose or distilled water.... | 1 pint   |

Write for stronger bleaches if you wish them.

**HULDA.**—Many requests come to this department for a shampoo such as is used by high-class hair specialists. The following is a very popular one:

|                           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| White castile soap .....  | 1 ounce   |
| Potassium carbonate ..... | 1 dram    |
| Borax .....               | 2 drams   |
| Cologne water .....       | 2 ounces  |
| Bay rum .....             | 2 ounces  |
| Water to make .....       | 32 ounces |

Scrape the soap and dissolve in the water over heat, occasionally replacing the water lost by evaporation; add the borax and potassium carbonate, then the cologne water and bay rum, and filter.

**TIMOTHY.**—Equal parts of olive oil and chloroform is an old and favorite remedy for earache. Saturate a piece of cotton and place it in the ear; cover it with a larger piece of dry cotton.

**MARY.**—You will find the following a very elegant preparation for oily skin:

|                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Oil of rosemary .....     | 1 dram   |
| Oil of lavender .....     | 1½ drams |
| Oil of petit grain .....  | 20 drops |
| Tincture of balm .....    | 3 drams  |
| Orange-flower water ..... | 1 pint   |
| Spirits of wine .....     | 1 pint   |

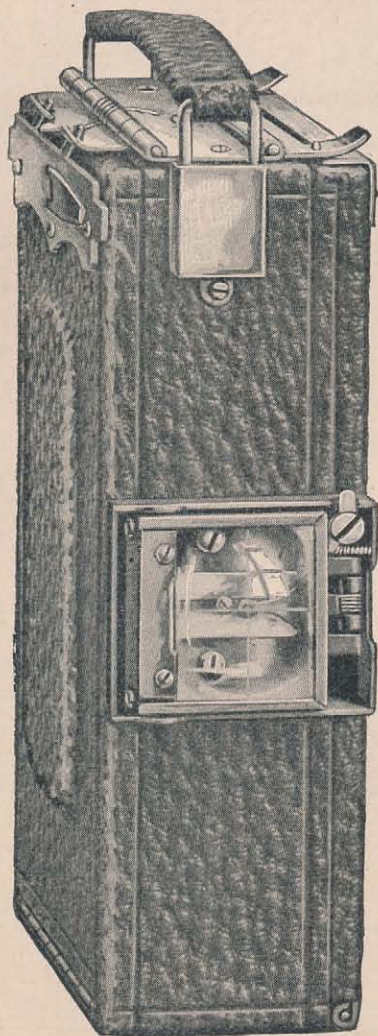
It can be used clear on the skin or diluted with water for a face bath.

**Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.**



Just a trifle larger than  
the picture it makes  
and costs but \$5.00

# Premoette Jr.



Actual Size of Camera



From a Premoette Jr. No. 1  
Negative (Actual Size)

Beautifully finished and fitted with tested meniscus lens and Ball Bearing automatic shutter of great accuracy.

Loads in daylight with 12 exposure Premo Film Packs and is so simple to use that you can start right in and make good pictures without any previous experience.

An excellent camera for your vacation—amply efficient for all-around every day work.

The illustration shows the Premoette Jr. No. 1, for  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  pictures. There is also a similar camera for  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$  pictures—the Premoette Jr. No. 1A. Price, \$8.00.

### Get the New Premo Catalogue

It describes these and many other Premos, as well as the Premo Film Pack and tank developing system. Free at the dealer's, or postpaid to any address on request.

### Rochester Optical Division

Eastman Kodak Co.

Rochester, N. Y.





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Have imported roller chains, sprockets and pedals; New  
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Tiresome, Torturous Trusses Can Be Thrown  
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**STUART'S PLAPAO-PADS** are different from the  
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Just a little touch of **CARMEN** radi-  
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Entirely different from  
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—and They Got It

They are **JANE SHIELDS**,  
daughter of Mrs. J. N. Shields,  
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**VOSBURG**, daughter of Mrs.  
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Both of these girls had In-  
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walk nor stand alone when  
brought to this Sanitarium.  
After being here 8 months,  
they can now walk every-  
where without braces or  
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the results unusual.

Write their mothers; they  
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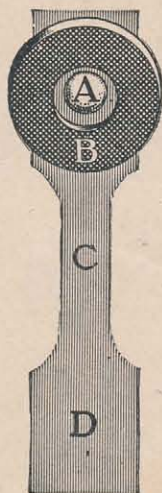
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(286)

How often have you pared it, just to keep it down?

How many old time, foolish treatments have you applied to it?

Yet the corn remains.

During all this time a million corns monthly have been taken out by Blue-jay.

Folks apply this little plaster, and the pain stops instantly. In 48 hours they remove the plaster, and the corn lifts out.

No pain, no soreness, no discomfort whatever. And no more doctoring of that corn.

Think of it—a million corns monthly are ended in this way while you, in other ways perhaps, still treat the same old corns.

Why not try the new way on one corn?

- A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.
- B stops the pain and keeps the wax from spreading.
- C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.
- D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

## Blue-jay Corn Plasters

Sold by Druggists—15c and 25c per package  
Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters.

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc.



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It's a simple treatment, which may be used by yourself in your own home.

There is positively **NO EXERCISING, NO STARVING, NO MEDICINE.**

"FATOFF" makes fat fade away from the parts where it is applied. It reduces the waist line, double chin, fat hips and fat necks. It keeps the skin smooth and youthful, the flesh firm and healthy and you may always have a figure slender and graceful.

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Send for booklet "A-4." Gives full particulars of actual results. Mailed free in plain, sealed envelope.

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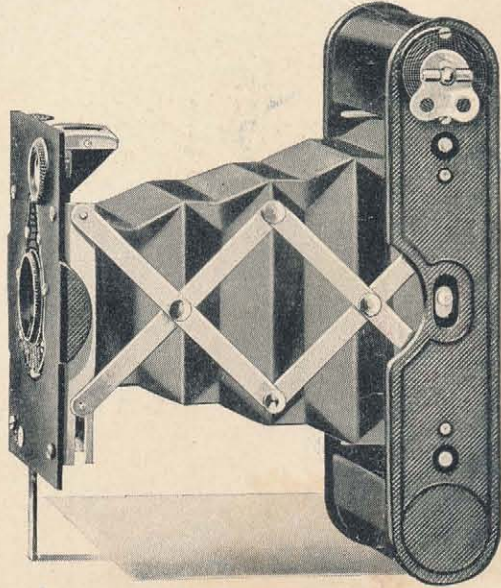
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Pictures,  $1\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

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EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City.*





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(BORATED)

Open a box of Mennen's Violet Talcum, and notice the exquisite perfume. To the regular infant toilet powder we have added a perfume so delicately sweet and flowery in character, that it rivals the violet itself.

Before dressing—particularly before indulging in outdoor sports, or doing anything to create perspiration—sprinkle the body thoroughly with Mennen's Violet Talcum. Be especially generous wherever the skin is subject to irritation or excessive perspiration.

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