

REDBOOK

MAGAZINE

AUGUST 25¢

For the Canada Post

This issue's
**COMPLETE
BOOK-LENGTH
NOVEL**

"THREE SHUTTERED
HOUSES"

by **BEN AMES
WILLIAMS**



Beginning —

STAR OF MIDNIGHT

The Romance of Post Repeal New York

by **ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE**



"Last Night of the Old World" *by* Rt. Hon. **WINSTON CHURCHILL**

AUGUST

1934

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REDBOOK MAGAZINE

VOL 63 No 4

Vacation is no time for headaches!



OFF TO THE MOUNTAINS . . . the beach . . . or the sea . . . away for a glorious vacation! Don't let a dull head spoil your good time. With a bottle of Bromo-Seltzer always at hand, the haunting fear of headaches need never worry you.

Bromo-Seltzer has stood the test of forty years' dependability for promptly relieving headaches, neuralgia, "morning after", and pain of nerve origin. It is not "just a mere pain-killer" but a balanced preparation of five medicinal ingredients—each with a special benefit. Here's what happens when you take Bromo-Seltzer.

As it dissolves, Bromo-Seltzer effervesces. Drink it while it fizzes. The carbonation is one of the reasons why gas on the stomach is promptly relieved.

Then Bromo-Seltzer quickly attacks the pain. Before you know it your headache is relieved. It works faster because you take it as a *liquid*.

At the same time nerves are soothed and calmed . . . you are gently steadied, refreshed. And your alkali reserve (so necessary for freshness and well-being) is built up by the citric salts.

Best of all, Bromo-Seltzer is pleasant and dependable. It contains no narcotics and it doesn't upset the stomach.

No mere pain killer can give the same prompt results as Bromo-Seltzer. It is a balanced compound of 5 medicinal ingredients each with a special purpose.

This vacation take along a bottle

of Bromo-Seltzer. Always ready to bring quick, dependable relief. Simply follow directions on the bottle. You can also get Bromo-Seltzer at any soda-fountain. Look for the famous blue bottle with the name "Bromo-Seltzer" blown in. Imitations are not the same . . . are not made under the same careful system of laboratory control which safeguards Bromo-Seltzer. Emerson Drug Company, Baltimore, Maryland.

NOTE: In cases of persistent headaches, where the cause might be some organic trouble, you should, of course, consult your physician.



EMERSON'S



BROMO-SELTZER

Quick

Pleasant

Reliable

"Sure - I'll shut up if you say so - but THAT won't stop 'PINK TOOTH BRUSH'!"

"**H**AVE your own way! But just ignoring 'pink tooth brush' won't get you anywhere.

"Any good dentist will tell you that 'pink tooth brush' is the first sign that your gums are soft and tender, and that they need exercise and work. You know the kind of food we all eat—soft food, creamy food—with nothing hard or crunchy to give your gums exercise and stimulation.

"Well, it's no wonder that gums get soft and flabby. Then they start to bleed. Pretty soon, unless something is done, you may get into a real jam with gum troubles as serious as Vincent's disease, gingivitis—even pyorrhea.

"What can you do about it? Do what I've been doing about it. Clean your teeth with Ipana . . . and after every cleaning massage a little extra Ipana into your gums.

"The dentist said that gum massage takes the place of the exercise your gums *don't* get. Besides, there is something in Ipana—ziratol, they call it—which helps tone and stimulate the gums.

"I wouldn't fool with 'pink tooth brush' if I were you. That is, if you really want to be on the safe side and take no chances. If you don't think I know what I'm talking about, go and ask the dentist. He'll tell you."

READ THE TESTIMONY OF DENTAL AUTHORITY!

- *By a famous scientist*
"Modern food is too soft and does not call for a hard effort to chew it."
- *By a dental authority*
"Brushing of the gums is of equal importance to brushing the teeth."
- *From a dental treatise*
"Gum massage should be a part of the routine of mouth care."

IPANA

TOOTH PASTE



BRISTOL-MYERS CO., Dept. G-84
73 West Street, New York, N. Y.

Kindly send me a trial tube of IPANA TOOTH PASTE. Enclosed is a three-cent stamp to cover partly the cost of packing and mailing.

Name.....
Street.....
City.....State.....



EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*Associate Editors, DONALD KENNICOTT and VOLDEMAR VETLUGUIN • SID L. HYDEMAN, *Art Editor*

Next Month

HOOVER
OFF THE RECORD

HERBERT HOOVER

HOOVER talks—not from a printed sheet in front of the mike, not in guarded sentences intended for international consumption, not in answer to typewritten questions, but in the privacy of his study, where there is no one to overhear him except his faithful private secretary, THEODORE ("Ted") G. JOSLIN. What Mr. Hoover said to the New York bankers at that mysterious conference in Andrew Mellon's apartment, when the financial structure of the world was crumbling under the weight of the Crisis. . . . What Mr. Hoover thought of the Presidency, which he described as "a twenty-ring circus with a whole lot of bad actors." . . . What Mr. Hoover was trying to do on the eve of the Banking Holiday. . . . What made him spend a sleepless night before he started on his speech-making tour in the fall of 1932. . . . What was his real estimate of the Congress. . . . What were the relations between him and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. . . . What was the true picture of his personal finances. . . . What made him hang for eighteen hours on the long-distance wire to Chicago.

These and scores of other revelations will be found in "Hoover off the Record," by Theodore G. Joslin—a tensely dramatic epic which will appear in REDBOOK beginning with our next issue. No document of greater historical importance has been published in the last fifty years. It is "compulsory reading" for anyone interested in America's present and future. Order your September copy of REDBOOK at your newsstand well in advance. There won't be many of them left twenty-four hours after its appearance.



OCTAVUS ROY COHEN

"With Benefit of Clergy"—a complete book-length novel by OCTAVUS ROY COHEN. If you still think of the South in terms of white goatees, mint juleps and garrulous colonels, you won't like this true-to-life romance of present-day Dixie. It minces no words; it is free from buncombe; it is frank and courageous to the n'th degree. We read it in one sitting—we could not lay it aside. It is that sort of novel.

Life begins at sixty. . . . Ridiculous? Not quite. Wait till you read MARIE DRESSLER'S autobiography (beginning in our next issue)—a fascinating story of a woman who was down and out at sixty, but who finds herself now at the pinnacle of success, in the forefront of the darlings of the gods. A glutton for punishment, she greeted the proverbial wolf with outstretched hands, then saddled him and rode on his back toward glory and riches.

Continued novels by ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE and KATHARINE NEWLIN BURT. Short stories and special features by THOMAS BEER, DAWN POWELL, CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, Jr., BOGART ROGERS, "ED" STREETER, ERIC HATCH and many others.

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A COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL—50,000 WORDS

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The short stories and serial novels printed herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events.

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The Redbook School and Camp Directory will be found on pages 108 through 116.

IT IS *Dangerous* TO FORGET

A pretty girl, a charming girl, well-dressed, witty and sympathetic—but she never gets asked anywhere. What's the trouble? She'd give a lot to know . . . and so would thousands of other girls like her . . . yet even her best friend wouldn't tell her . . . After all, the subject is rather delicate.

Halitosis (unpleasant breath) is the unforgivable social fault. The tricky thing about it is that you yourself never know when you have it. Moreover, you are more likely to have it than not, for the reason that many cases are caused by the fermentation of tiny bits of food the tooth brush has failed to remove.

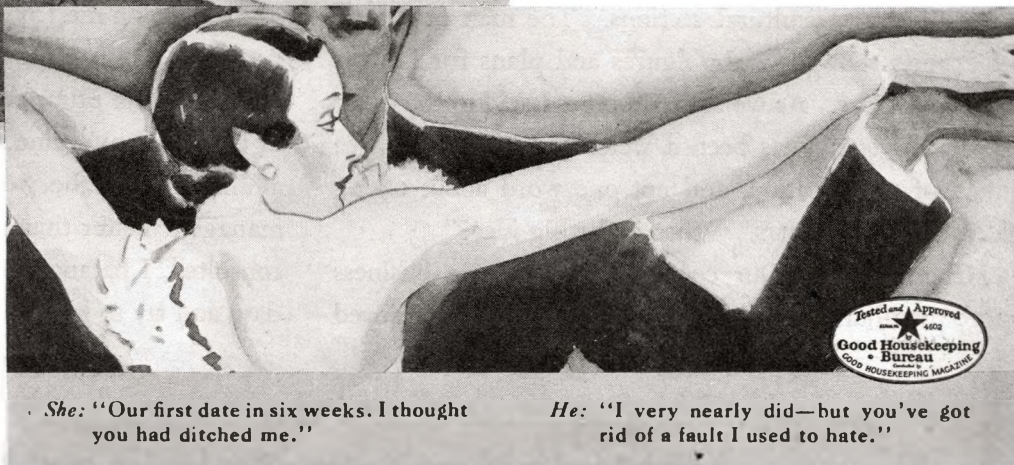
Therefore, don't assume that your breath is okay. Don't take foolish chances on offending others needlessly. It is so easy to render your breath wholesome and agreeable with Listerine.

This safe antiseptic and quick deodorant quickly halts fermentation, the cause of odors, and then attacks the odors themselves. Deodorizes hours longer, too.

If you wish to be welcome to others, keep your breath agreeable. Use Listerine morning and night, and between times before social or business engagements. It's an investment in personal attractiveness. Lambert Pharmaceutical Company, St. Louis, Missouri.



Before any
social engagements
use
LISTERINE
to end halitosis
(*unpleasant breath*)



She: "Our first date in six weeks. I thought you had ditched me."

He: "I very nearly did—but you've got rid of a fault I used to hate."



THE TIMES

BY BRUCE BARTON

ON two recent evenings I dined with the officers of two different companies. The conversation at the first dinner related almost entirely to political and economic troubles. One man discussed the discouraging efforts of the industry to arrive at a satisfactory code. Another dwelt at length upon the fallacies of the President's monetary policy. The company's lawyer viewed with alarm the distortion of the Constitution, and the implied threat to individual freedom and private property.

By the time the evening was over, nearly every one of us had helped to make the others more certain that things were in a terrible fix.

Talk at the other dinner was quite different. The head of the laboratories told of research-work that shortly will culminate in three new products. The sales-manager had reports from every part of the country, and was particularly pleased by the improvement in some of the agricultural sections. The man in charge of exports showed us the figures and plans for Europe and the Orient. As we started home, I said to the host:

"This evening has been a welcome surprise. Three hours of conversation, and not one word about GREAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. What is the big idea?"

He answered: "Our company has been in business more than half a century. In that period it has enjoyed



good periods and survived bad periods. Our point of view is that *the times are the times*. We cannot change them. We can only accept them, and keep busy trying to better our products and adapt our methods to whatever conditions prevail."

He added, humorously: "One of our departments makes paint. If the White House continues to be white, it's our job to try to sell the Government white paint. If the Reds take over the show, why, we make red paint too."

This may sound as if these gentlemen were dodging the responsibilities of citizenship, but such is not the fact. They are good citizens, who try, in their respective communities, to express their best judgment about the administration of public affairs. But they are not grumblers. They do not sit back and say: "The rules of the game are being changed so fast that we won't play."

I endorse this philosophy. As a writer I feel it incumbent upon me from time to time to advise the President and the Congress how the country should be run. As one of the proprietors of a business, I use very little of the company's time in talking of world affairs. Those affairs are like the weather. I often feel that I could manage it better than it is managed, but since I am not consulted, I balance the sunshiny days against the rainy days and try to keep alert.

asis

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The Famous LONDON DRY PROCESS

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Philadelphia, Pa.
55 PROOF

DIXIE BELLE
TRADE MARK
**DISTILLED
DRY
GIN**

ONE QUART
CONTINENTAL DISTILLING CORP.


Distilled by
CONTINENTAL

For tall, cool drinks
on long, hot days — mix with
DIXIE BELLE dry GIN. It has the pleasant,
aromatic flavor that comes from controlled distil-
lation — with a subtle bouquet that adds delicious
fragrance to cooling rickys, fizzes and cocktails.
Other Continental products: Diplomat Straight Bourbon
and Rittenhouse Square Straight Rye Whiskies, Envoy
Club, Snug Harbor and Sweep Stakes Whiskies
and Cavalier Distilled Dry Gin.

DIXIE BELLE DISTILLED *dry* **GIN**

Distilled by CONTINENTAL DISTILLING CORPORATION · PHILA.

This advertisement is not intended to offer alcoholic beverages for sale or delivery in any state or community wherein the advertising, sale or use thereof is unlawful.



"Knee-Action Wheels?
**Great, of course, and that's only
half the story !"**

NATURALLY, you'll try the Chevrolet before you buy any low-priced automobile—it just isn't good business to overlook a car with so many enthusiastic owners. And when you do, you'll discover that Chevrolet's Knee-Action wheels are only one great feature among many. *Even without them Chevrolet would still be the one best buy.* It would still be the only car with Blue-Flame speed and economy—the only low priced car with Fisher Body luxury and *safety* . . . with *cable-controlled* brakes, the Starterator, the Y-K frame, and Syncro-Mesh gear-shift. That's why the thousands who *try* the Chevrolet, also *buy* it. *Everybody* appreciates a better value.

CHEVROLET MOTOR COMPANY, DETROIT, MICHIGAN
Compare Chevrolet's low delivered prices and easy G. M. A. C. terms

CHEVROLET *for* **1934**
A GENERAL MOTORS VALUE

DRIVE IT ONLY 5 MILES

and you'll never be satisfied
with any other low-priced car



IN TUNE WITH OUR TIMES



TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Clarence Sinclair Bull

Once more we may raise our collective eyebrow at Elinor Glyn's "Three Weeks." For it will soon be released as a

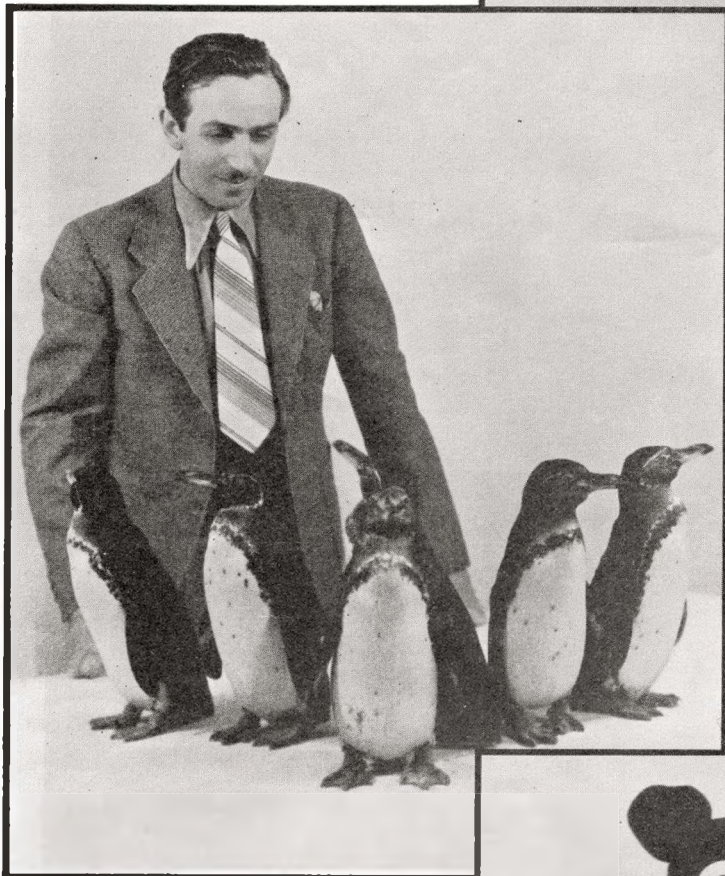
picture—with Gloria Swanson (the lady posed with the tiger) as the star of stars. Just two old favorites getting together.

MICKEY
AND THE
PENGUINS

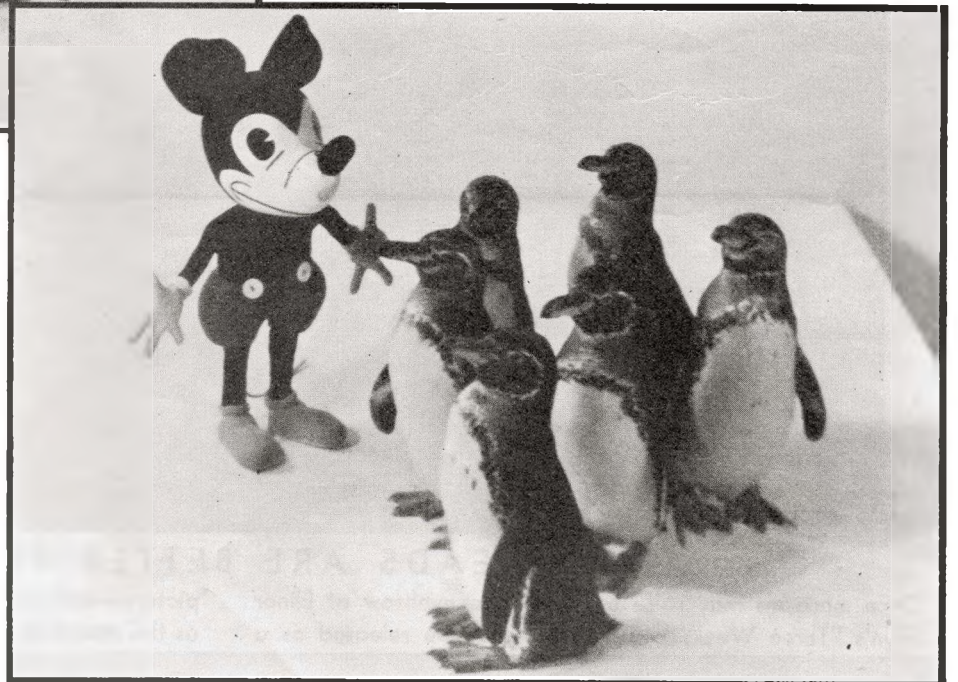


Clarence Sinclair Bull

It is rumored that United Artists recognized in the peculiar walk of the penguin a substitute for their star Charlie Chaplin during his temperamental absences. So Walt Disney, that connoisseur of stars, carefully picked the most peculiar penguins in captivity, and will elevate them to stardom in his new Silly Symphony "Peculiar Penguins."



AND WHAT'S
P E C U L I A R
ABOUT THAT?



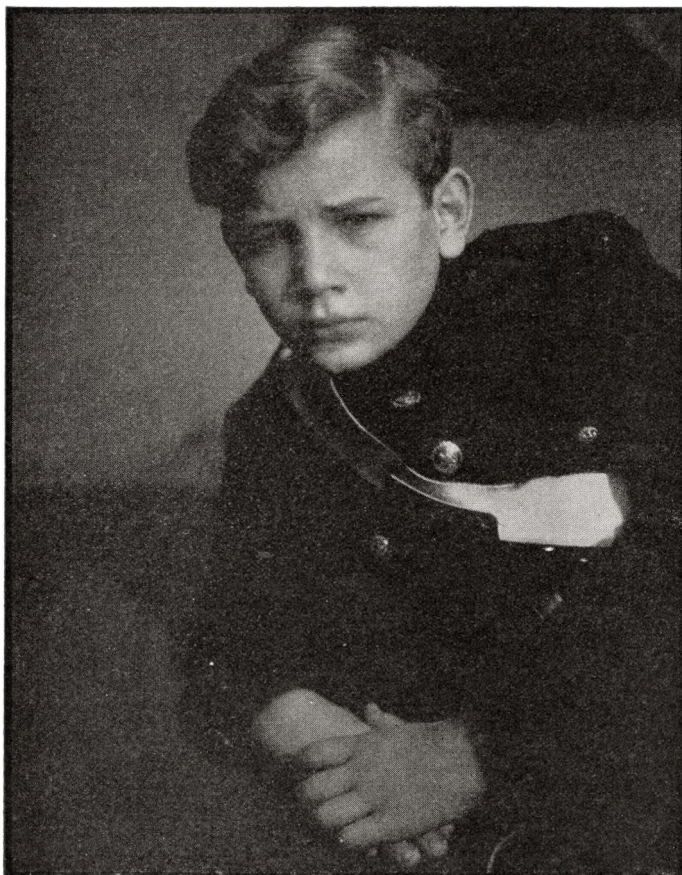
MORE OF HARLOW

Harlow, ready to dive in—to make as big a splash in the water, perhaps, as she has made in the movie arena. She rested this way between the production periods of her most recent MGM motion-picture "One Hundred Per Cent Pure." Her previous pictures were "Red Dust," "Dinner at Eight" and "Bombshell."





Alfredo Valente



WEDNESDAY'S CHILD

As a reward for his brilliant acting in the Broadway production of "Wednesday's Child," RKO has called eleven-year-old Frank Thomas to Hollywood for the moving-picture version of the same play. He walked away with the New York show. And he may very well walk away with the picture—in spite of the fact that he will have John Barrymore, no less, to compete with. At the age of eleven, without the mugging and usual tricks of the trade, he possesses sincerity and emotional understanding of dramatic rôles that would be rare even in most adult Thespians. He has previously taken part in the stage productions of "Little Ol' Boy," "Carrie Nation," "Thunder on the Left" and "Good-by Again."

I N T U N E W I T H O U R T I M E S



Pach Bros.

MODERN COVERED WAGON GIRL

Elvy Kalep—aviatrix, caricaturist, musician, inventress, writer, artist and linguist. She is from Esthonia, but she is really an internationalist. For there is hardly a spot in the world on which she and her little plane have not landed. She ranks high among the aviatrixes of the day. She would be hap-

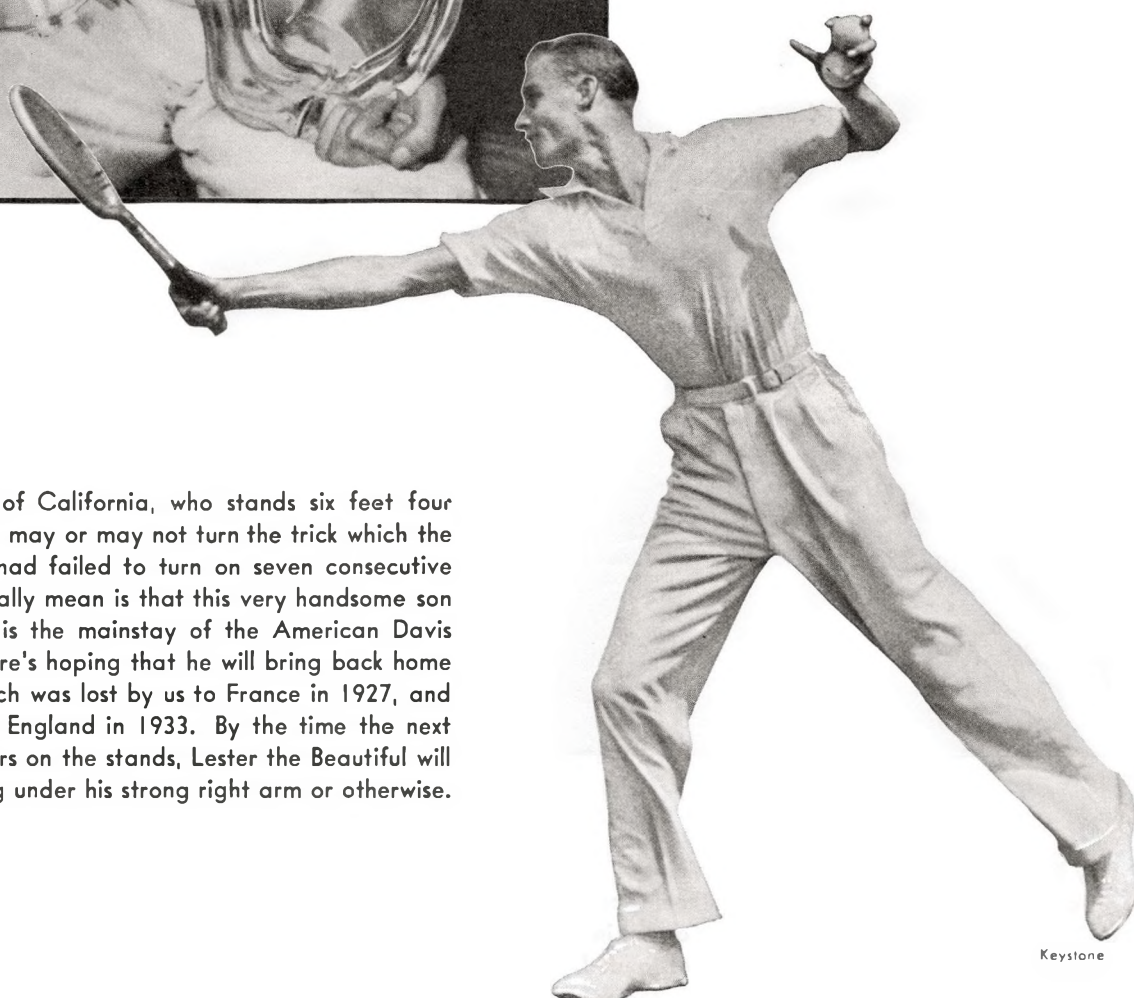
pier if she could live in a plane. She is writing and drawing books on aviation for children, instructive and amusing, calculated to make each American child air-minded, and every little girl a future pilot. She would be attractive enough without these accomplishments; but with them—gangway!

I N T U N E W I T H O U R T I M E S



Wide World

THE WHITE HOPE OF 1934



Keystone

Master Lester Stofen of California, who stands six feet four in his white tennis shoes, may or may not turn the trick which the American racqueteers had failed to turn on seven consecutive occasions. What we really mean is that this very handsome son of sun-kissed California is the mainstay of the American Davis Cup Team of 1934. Here's hoping that he will bring back home that venerable mug which was lost by us to France in 1927, and which was captured by England in 1933. By the time the next issue of Redbook appears on the stands, Lester the Beautiful will be back home—the mug under his strong right arm or otherwise.



MRS. J. GARDNER COOLIDGE, 2ND

**CAMELS ARE MADE FROM
FINER, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS
THAN ANY OTHER POPULAR BRAND**

Copyright, 1931, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company

Three things women enjoy especially in smoking Camels

"I enjoy their full, rich flavor," says Mrs. J. Gardner Coolidge, 2nd... "They never make my nerves jumpy," reports Mrs. Thomas M. Carnegie, Jr.... "They are smooth and mild," adds Mrs. James Russell Lowell... Again and again women make these same points about Camels.

"I find Camels delightfully mild," agrees Mrs. Potter d'Orsay Palmer... "Camels never make me nervous," Miss Alice Byrd says. "I like their taste better," states Miss Anne Gould... Why don't you see if your nerves and taste aren't exactly suited by Camel's costlier tobaccos?



MRS. JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



MRS. THOMAS M. CARNEGIE, JR.

*Camel's
costlier tobaccos
appeal to*

Miss Mary Byrd
Miss Alice Byrd
Mrs. Powell Cabot
Miss Anne Gould
Mrs. Potter d'Orsay Palmer

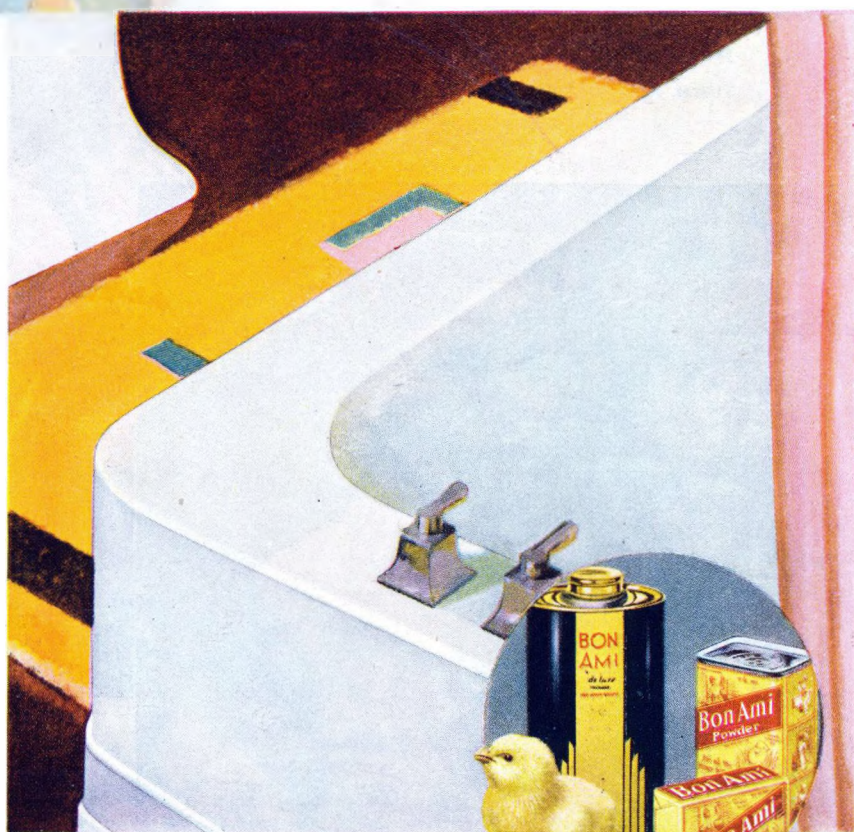


“I have learned by actual comparison *(writes a lady from Vicksburg, Mich.)* that Bon Ami lasts twice as long and does far better work”

“I have a friendly suggestion to make to your advertising department,” writes Mrs. C. S. Southworth. “It is my belief that the economy motive for using Bon Ami could be stressed a great deal more. I have learned by actual comparison, a box of Bon Ami lasts twice as long as the ‘grittier’ cleansers and does far better work. Since the majority of housewives are in the class where budgeting is necessary, it seems to me this would appeal to them above all else.”

Mrs. Southworth wrote us unsolicited. Her letter is typical of many we receive from women who write just because they like Bon Ami so well. Many prefer Bon Ami because it does more than clean, it leaves a beautiful polish. Others because Bon Ami doesn’t redden hands. Or because it leaves no gritty sediment—because it doesn’t clog drains—because it is so pure and odorless.

For all these reasons, Bon Ami is the finest cleanser you can buy. Try it on your bathtubs, your sinks—and for *all* your cleaning.



Copy. 1934, The Bon Ami Co.

Bon Ami “HASN’T SCRATCHED YET!”
To suit your taste—a Cake, a can of Powder and a Deluxe Bathroom Package.



The glamorous romance of post-repeal New York, the pageant of toilers and idlers, heroes and assassins, dowagers and chorus-girls, men-about-town and women-without-home.

by

Arthur Somers Roche

Illustrated by Maurice Bower

DALZELL stared at the cocktail glass. He frowned faintly; the drawing together of his black brows accentuated the deepness of the setting of his fine gray eyes. He shook his head slightly.

"Mrs. Corey serves cocktails, Swayne," he said.

The valet agreed.

"Yes sir, very bad. The gin is not authentic. I would not touch the Burgundy. The white wine is very good, and the brandy excellent. The Wilsons will be fifteen minutes late, so you have plenty of time."

Dalzell smiled; his ascetic features, whose austerity was denied by the generous breadth of his mouth and the perceptible fullness of his lips, seemed suddenly those of a man in his mid-twenties rather than his early thirties. Amusement took years from his appearance. The grave scholarly face became that of a rakish gallant.

"I suppose you even know who is sitting beside me at dinner," he said.

"Yes sir. Mrs. Furness on your left, and Mrs. Teasdale on your right. Mrs. Corey refused to seat you beside Miss Donna Mantin."

Dalzell sat down deliberately; he took the cocktail from the tray, sipped it, nodded approvingly and then stared at the valet.

"Now, this savors of black magic, Swayne," he said. "I suppose it would spoil the fun if I asked you to show me the mirrors or the hidden thread?"

"Not at all, sir. I phoned the Corey butler to ask if the gin had been

Dalzell loved the hurrying crowd on Broadway.... He found here a kind of adventure not to be found anywhere else.



changed recently, and he volunteered the other information."

Dalzell shook his head admonitorily.

"Sorry I asked. It spoils the illusion. You should refuse to give away your tricks. You don't happen to have any stable information about what's going to happen to the dollar, do you?"

"No sir," replied Swayne gravely. "You've not looked at the *Evening Star*, sir. Mr. Tennant has a brief item about you."

DALZELL took the paper extended to him. He glanced at the column headed "TENNANT TELLS," and halfway down the section of type he saw his name.

"Dazzling Dalzell, who is Broadway's beau when he isn't Park Avenue's pet, and who knows all and says nothing, cashed a phony check for a friend in the sum of \$2,500.00 night before last. This is no news to Dalzell; he knew the check was no good, and tore it up immediately he had cashed it. But it may be news that there still exist in this town men who will go twenty-five C's for an old friend in tough luck."

Dalzell put the paper down and looked expressionlessly at his valet.

"Get me Mr. Tennant," he said.

He drank the rest of his cocktail, and had smoked a third of a cigarette when Swayne returned from the pantry, where he had put through the call, to announce that Mr. Tennant was on the wire. Dalzell picked up the receiver.

"Tennant? Dalzell speaking. Will you keep my name out of your column?"

"Now, listen, Mr. Dalzell: That was a boost. You're news. It's a good thing for people to know that there are still men who remember—"

"I know. When you aren't a scandal-mongering champion, you're a purveyor of good cheer. But I'm not having any. Got it?"

"Okay, if you say so. Say, listen. I've got two beaus. One of them is so hot I wouldn't even mention it



"Oh, a smart guy! Maybe it will be me dropping in at the hospital to see you."

over the phone, but I'll be around about ten o'clock if you'll be in."

"What's the other?" asked Dalzell.

"One of your friends," chuckled Tennant. "Donna Mantin. She takes afternoon tea in the apartment of Jimmy Kinland. Is that hot, or just sizzling? You're the grandpappy of all the debutantes in Manhattan. Why don't you look after them better? Why do you let a nice li'l doll like the Mantin baby chase around with a gangster?"

"You're not printing that one," said Dalzell.

"Show me cause," laughed Tennant.

"Doris Weatherby's parents will announce her engagement to the Marquis of Maidstone next month. Trade?"

"Well," said Tennant hesitantly. "that's not so exciting; but I suppose it will have to do. Better tip the Mantin gal to watch her step. I'm not the only smart snooper in town. But the other one is the real dynamite. No friends of yours, and you won't care. But there's an angle on it where you might give me some advice."

"Give it to you now: cut your throat. An honorable ending to a risky career."

"With love and kisses from my admiring pal, Clay Dalzell," chuckled Tennant. "Sorry I can't oblige. My skin is too tender. I'll be seeing you."

Dalzell hung up the telephone. He rose and permitted Swayne to assist him with his overcoat. He walked to the outer door of his apartment, then paused and spoke to the valet.

"If Mr. Tennant arrives before I return, tell him to wait."

"You're going on to the theater with Mrs. Corey's party?"

Dalzell shook his head.

"I've seen 'Star of Midnight.' Mrs. Corey has excused me after dinner. Do I disarrange your plans? If you want to go out, it will do Tennant no harm to wait outside until I come back."

"Thank you, sir." He opened the door, and as he did so the telephone rang. Dalzell returned to the living-room and picked up the receiver.

"Yes?" he asked.

"MR. CLAY DALZELL." It was a woman's voice, and very faintly it impinged upon a chord of memory.

"This is Mr. Dalzell. Who is it, please?"

"It doesn't matter. You don't know me. But will you do a favor for a woman you don't know?"

Dalzell hesitated a moment; his brows almost met in a frown of concentration. He had heard the voice before; this he knew absolutely. But where had he heard it? She couldn't

be an intimate, or memory would play no tricks upon him.

"That's rather a large order, isn't it?"

"I know it is, and I wouldn't dare ask it of anyone but you."

SHE said he didn't know her, and yet he had heard her voice. But then, he must have heard the voices of thousands of women whom he had never met. Only, why should this one linger in his memory?

"Suppose you tell me what the favor is?" he suggested.

"Tennant, Tom Tennant of the *Evening Star*, is coming to see you tonight. He's going to ask your advice about a story. I want you to prevent him from printing it."

"What's the story?" asked Dalzell.

"You'll know what it is when he mentions it," she replied.

"Why not tell me now?"

"Because perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps he doesn't have the story."

"And if he doesn't, you don't want me to know it, eh?"

"I don't want any one to know it. Will you stop him, Mr. Dalzell?"

Dalzell laughed.

"You know, of course, that I don't own the *Star*."

"I know that you have as much—or more—power as any other man in New York," she said. "Will you do it, Mr. Dalzell?"

"Well," he said slowly, "I'll at least give the matter very serious consideration. If you'd tell me who you are—"

"Please don't ask that. If Tennant tells you the story,—and he will if he knows it,—you'll know who I am."

Dalzell laughed again.

"Well, if it's as serious as you sound, I hope that Tennant doesn't know about it, even though that means I'm denied knowledge of the identity of the possessor of a very charming voice."

"Sometime, if he doesn't know, I'll let you know who I am. And thank you. Good-by."

He heard the click of the receiver as she hung up. He replaced his own telephone, and for a moment stared blankly out the window of his living-room. He saw below him the shipping of the East River, more romantic with the lights of night even than in the day. Automobiles crawled across the Queensboro bridge. A light twinkling over Long Island was not a star but an airplane.

Life, movement, thousands coming into the city for an evening of gayety. And somewhere in the city a harassed and frightened woman, so terrified that she called up an



utter stranger for aid! Yet was he an utter stranger? That voice, full and rich and vibrant with that impalpable thing called magnetism, had not identified itself with continued speech; but her later conversation had but confirmed the impression of her first utterance, that he had heard the voice before.

But what did it matter? If her bizarre appeal had any truth or sense behind it, he would know who she was when Tennant told his story. And if Tennant didn't tell a story that identified the voice—well, what did it matter, anyway? He glanced at his watch; unless he made great haste, he would be even later than the Wilsons. With a nod to Swayne, he hastened from the apartment.

"You're so difficult, Clay," said Mrs. Corey ten minutes later. "Every young blood in town sees at least one act of 'Star of Midnight' every night. Are you immune to the charms of Mary Smith—do you think that's really her name—or has she turned you down?"

"Not a bit immune. I think she's lovely, so lovely that I don't want to see her again," he replied.

"I don't follow that, but then I never do follow you, Clay."

HE shrugged wide shoulders. "It's simple enough. She couldn't be as lovely as I thought she was at the opening of that play. No woman in the world could be that lovely. And so I want to cherish the recollection of her as the most charming thing I've ever seen. I don't want to spoil one of the few illusions left to me by seeing her again."

"Your father wouldn't have felt that way," smiled Mrs. Corey. "He'd have had a tent by the stage door."

"I think it unkind of you to remind me of the fleshly weaknesses of my sainted sire," grinned Dalzell.

"Sainted sire," scoffed Mrs. Corey. "Of all the charming, rake-helly rascals that ever breathed—God love him!" she sighed.

She turned away from the latest arrival as dinner was announced. As the guests moved into the dining-room,

"Such kindly impulses!" smiled Dalzell. "Am I in danger of an accident?"

Donna Martin, that dashing blonde who had, in the two short years that had elapsed since she came out, jilted five despairing fiancés, whispered to Dalzell:

"I've simply got to see you, Clay. Will you take me to the theater?"

"Sorry. Not going," he replied.

"Then after dinner? For just a minute. I asked Mrs. Corey to put me beside you, but the old cat wouldn't do it. Clay, I *must* talk to you."

He patted her hand. "We'll get in a few words," he promised her.

HE walked directly to the right of Mrs. Furness and sat down. Blanche Corey screamed.

"I want to know how he does it," she said to the table at large. "Did you see him? He didn't look for his place-card; he walked straight to his chair. It's second sight. Clay, it's simply uncanny. You know more gossip than any man in New York. Everyone knows that if you chose to open your mouth,—bless your heart, you never do,—half of Long Island and most of the Avenue would be getting out of town on the first train or boat or plane. We're all used to the fact that you know more about us than we know about ourselves. Everyone unloads their troubles on you, and of course in the unloading they're apt to spill other people's troubles along with their own. And I know you have your father's and your grandfather's brains, and can deduce more from a missing button than other people could from a missing coat. But how in the name of all that's inspired, can you walk into my dining-room and know where you are seated, without looking at your place-card?"

Dalzell caught the eye of the Corey butler, who at the moment was disposing the footmen properly. The butler's eye almost imperceptibly winked. Dalzell looked gravely at his hostess.

"It's second sight, that's all," he told her. Then he turned to the forbidding Mrs. Teasdale, and prepared to make the best of a bad evening. His preparations were justified by the event. Blanche Corey, old dear that she was, had a positive gift for ferreting out bores and gathering them at her table. Of course, they were well-bred bores, but that

made them no more endurable. Dalzell wondered how Donna Martin had happened to be at the dinner, for Donna was not a bore. But probably Donna, like himself, dined dutifully with Mrs. Corey every six months or so. One owed one's parents' friends certain courtesies. But thank God he wasn't going to sit in a box at the Prince Theater and listen to a lot of old fogies comment on the musical play.

It was a blessing that the party went on to a play; otherwise the dinner would have been interminable, and he would have been compelled to linger in the dining-room for an hour after dinner, while old Radford Blake reminisced of his dull youth, and Frank Teasdale told of his shooting in Scotland. As it was, ladies and gentlemen both rose from the table at around eighty-three, and there was almost a scurry for coats and wraps. It was a tribute to the prosaically named leading lady of "Star of Midnight" that no one cared to miss her opening song, which came just after the curtain rose.

DONNA MARTIN drew Dalzell aside; she led him into the library.

"Clay, I'm in trouble."

"You don't mean the conventional—or unconventional—trouble, do you? I'd hate to think that you went that far with a man like Jimmy Kinland."

The high color—she was the kind of blonde that would have delighted the Nineties, pink cheeks, blue eyes, yellow hair and a shade better than plump—receded from her cheeks. Her eyes were frightened.

"Clay, how did you know? My God, you know everything."

"And sometimes I have to tell the things I know in order to keep people from hearing other things. I had to give Doris Weatherby's engagement to a newspaper columnist tonight to keep a nasty bit of scandal out of the paper: a statement that you were going frequently to Jim Kinland's apartment. Doris won't mind my telling; but I don't like bargaining with people like Tennant."

"He was going to say that?" Her voice was a harsh frightened whisper. "He was going to print it? Clay, you won't let him!"

"He won't print it. But if you continue running around with a thug like Kinland—Damn it, Donna, you girls ought to be spanked! What right has Donna Martin to sanction the kind of life that Jim Kinland lives by her friendship? If a cheap racketeer can become an intimate friend of a girl like you, what's to make him think that he isn't as good as your brother? If decent women won't take a stand for decency, there's damn' little hope for society. Will you quit Kinland?"

"That's it. I can't. He has letters—silly letters; and—he's threatening me."

"Are the letters more than silly, Donna?" he asked.

She nodded shamefaced assent.

"And you want to get through with him?"

She nodded again, and the eyes that met his were beseeching. He squeezed her hand reassuringly.

"Stop worrying right now, this minute. I'll be seeing Kinland."



"Mary Smith, the star of 'Star of Midnight,' has disappeared," the account read. "The police, as well as private detectives engaged by Abe Ohlmann the producer, are making every effort to find the missing singer."



"Her past life," Dalzell read, "is a complete mystery."



"Dal, you're a peach," she said, her eyes bright with gratitude. He shook his head.

"No, I'm a sap. But I'll settle Kinland."

THERE was a mirror set in an ornately carved frame whose gilt had become dulled with the years that had elapsed since the Grand Monarque had deigned to give it his royal approval. Dalzell stood before it and straightened his white tie. Amusement flickered in the eyes reflected in the mirror and as he turned to

eted man as tall as Dalzell, more impeccably dressed, catlike of stride and confident of manner.

"Mr. Dalzell, eh? Glad to meet you. Heard of you a lot. Funny we've never met."

"Life is full of surprises like this, isn't it? But we were bound to run across each other sometime. At Sing Sing, or Auburn, or more probably Atlanta. It's almost certain that I'll drop in at one of those places one day to gather material for some book or other I'll be writing, and you'll be there. (Please turn to page 80)

survey the room his lips curled in mirth.

White and gold, and as fragily furnished as the bedroom of a courtesan of the Empire.

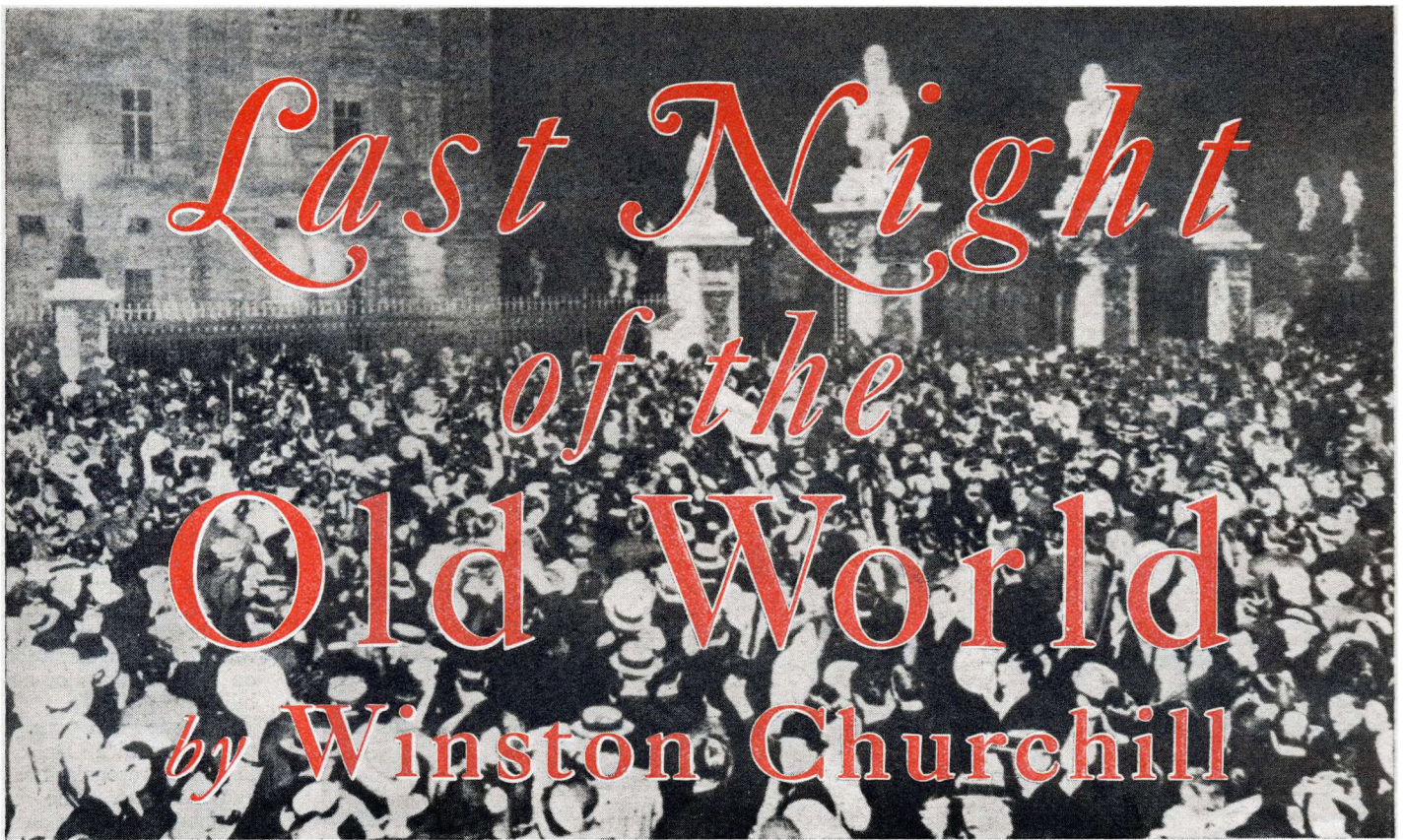
If through the hangings that veiled the farther entrance to the room had glided a billow-breasted beauty with parted hair and ringlets over her ears, carrying with her the indefinable aura of royal liaison. Dalzell would have been prepared to bow from the waist and kiss the extended, ringed fingers.

And this was the setting in which Jimmy Kinland had placed himself. The amusement Dalzell felt gave way to disgust. What a world it had become, a world in which the gangster took on the trappings of nobility!

On one wall was a painting which Dalzell instantly recognized as authentic. A king of England had summoned from the Continent the greatest painter of his day and commissioned him to paint the portrait of that lady who had been born a princess of Aragon and was now the queen of England. The power and the beauty and the genius of an era had combined in order that a Manhattan hoodlum should have a "pretty pitcher" on the wall. The glory of the past had existed but to magnify the importance of the criminal of today.

AT that, Dalzell conceded, absurd as the room was, it was lovely. Whatever decorator had been engaged by Kinland to "fix him up a swell joint" had done his or her work with faithful artistry. He wondered how Kinland felt in such surroundings. If only Kinland would come into the room now wearing a cap and carrying a sub-machine-gun, anachronism would reach its sublimest heights.

But through the hangings came a dinner-jack-



AUGUST, 1934! August, 1914! Twenty years have passed since the great catastrophe, which for nearly fifty years had been preparing, broke upon the world. We have traveled a sorry road since then. The most complete victory ever gained in arms has left the victors more anxious, more alarmed, and perhaps in greater danger, than they were before. The result of all their sacrifices and of their absolute triumph has left them only the prey to regathering fears. The war to end war which devastated the manhood of Europe has left its mark upon the American military history, and has brought us all to an uncomfortable conviction that something even more hideous may be in store. Years of disarmament-conferences have ended. They are to begin a new life under the sinister heading of *re-armament* conferences. But this change inspires no hope except in the bosoms of the politicians and diplomatists, naval, military and air experts and official observers, who perhaps feel that at last there is a new excuse for another series of banquets, perorations, formulas, protocols and Geneva discussions. The unhappy League of Nations, deserted by her United States progenitor, spurned by Germany and Japan, derided by Fascist Italy and Bolshevik Russia, struggled vainly against primordial forces; and a thick cloak of velvet humbug is cast over the whole scene by the governments and leaders of almost every country. Luckily, everyone still feels poor, and Germany has not yet finished re-arming. Crazy scene! Luckless world! Poor humanity! . . . It is curious to look

back across these twenty tragic years to the thrilling emotions of those July and August days in 1914. In those days war presented itself to the nations and to millions of men as some tremendous, terrible, yet at the same time fascinating and ennobling new experience. There was a mood in the world in those days, a wish to suffer and dare. With what alacrity the democracies of all countries obeyed the signal to spring to arms! With what noble self-denial their men and women threw themselves and all their belongings into their national cause! A fever of excitement laid hold upon the brains of mankind, and the blare of martial music and the cheers of multitudes continued till they were drowned by the cannonade.

It is very different today. The world loathes the idea of war; it has been stripped of all romance and glitter. Generalship, the sense of prowess, the aspiration to great deeds, even the appetite for booty—all are gone. Science has infected Mars. We now see war as nothing but a filthy, squalid process of waste and tyranny, driving scores of millions to the shambles, and in the future sparing neither age nor sex—involving all, men and women and children, in a common torment. Still it is coming nearer.

But on that August night twenty years ago, one had the feeling that dangers threatened which could be overcome, that wrongs were being done which could be righted, and that beyond a period of struggle and sacrifice, there would be an era of peace and justice and well-being. Grievous and grim as was the trial, few felt that it





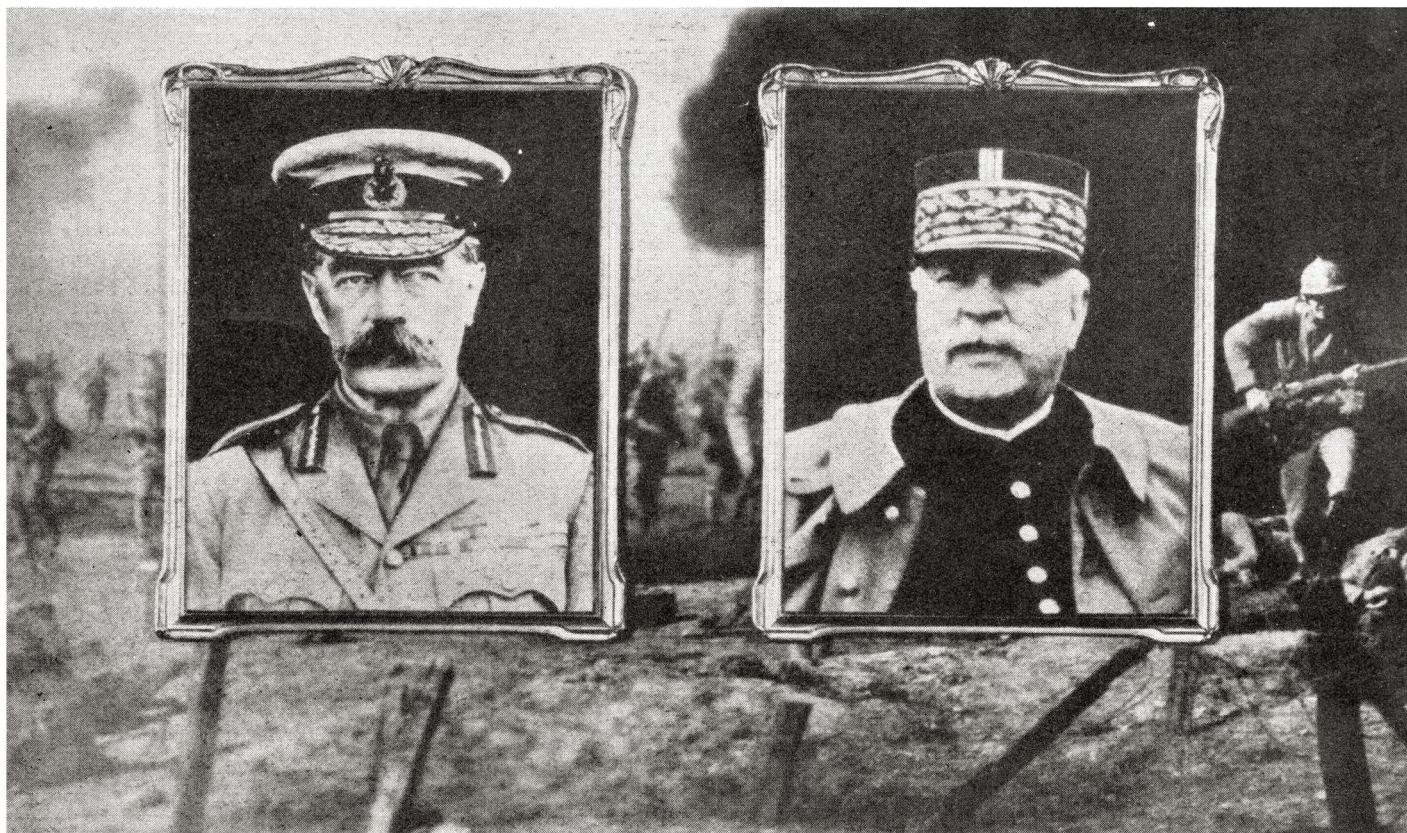
Photomontage by Lazarnick

A STATESMAN, an orator, a writer, a soldier of fortune, Mr. Winston Churchill had made two major threats in the course of his crowded sixty summers. At the age of seven he warned his governess that he'd "run away and worship idols" rather than wash behind his ears. At the age of forty—First Lord of the Admiralty by that time—he told the Kaiser that Germany would have to cope with His Britannic Majesty's Fleet if she continued her march through Belgium. Threat No. 1 remained unfulfilled: Mr. Churchill is still a Christian. Threat No. 2 wound up in the World War: Mr. Churchill

was a leading actor of that drama which Europe staged in the closing days of the month of July 1914. In fact, it was he who inspired the terms of the British ultimatum to Germany, and who was the first one to receive the flash that the Kaiser said "No."

"What is it, Winston?" asked the Prime Minister anxiously as Mr. Churchill walked into No. 10 Downing Street at the stroke of midnight of August fourth. "Is it peace?" "It's war," said Mr. Churchill.

Read this article carefully, and you will hear the tumult and the fury of the Year of Damnation Nineteen Fourteen.



would be unendurable. Awful as were the hazards, the rulers thought that they could be controlled. . . .

In those days I had high and particular responsibilities. I was First Lord of the Admiralty. I had to be sure that if war should come, the British fleet was ready. It had not been tested for a hundred years. The British Empire had for four generations reposed an unshakable faith in the Navy. It was certainly still by far the strongest in the world. But would it be ready? Would all the ships be fit to put to sea? Would all the sailors be there to man them? Would every vessel out of five or six hundred ships of war be in its proper station, should the dreaded occasion come?

For three years we had worked at the Admiralty to prepare ourselves for such an ordeal. We had worked so hard that in the end we were almost inclined to feel that it would never come.

AND then it came—came upon us suddenly in a few decisive strides. At the beginning of the last week in July, Europe was enjoying its summer holidays. Emperors and presidents were on cruises of ceremony or pleasure. Ministers and ambassadors were at the seaside. Russian, German and Austrian generals hobnobbed, taking the waters of Homburg or Carlsbad. One of the chiefs of the German Foreign Office was on his honeymoon. As for the British Cabinet, it was absorbed in some frantic party business about Ireland. There was more anxiety for Europe in the United States than in Europe itself. So much for the last week in July. Ten days later at least twelve millions of men were marching to each other's slaughter.

The peculiar organization and strategy of the British Navy made it necessary that a fleet strong enough to fight the whole navy of Germany in a decisive battle should be moved with all its attendant vessels from its dock-yards along the south coast of England to the extreme north of Scotland, and should be there somewhere around the Orkney and Shetland Islands before war could possibly come. Once the Grand Fleet, as it used to be called in the old wars, was concentrated and in its proper station, we were

sure, so far as human beings can be sure of anything, that no mortal injury could come suddenly to our island or its Empire. Apart from our navy, we were a country with only a tiny army, and with minds, habits and industries utterly unprepared for war. But if the day should come, and if we were found in our right positions when it did come, we believed—nor was the belief unfounded—that we could choose our own course freely: could stand out of the war if we chose, or if we entered it, could be sure of realizing at leisure the whole unorganized but ultimately enormous resources of the British Empire. Therefore all depended, as it seemed, on having all the King's ships ready, and where they should be.

Naturally this task dominated my mind, and I watched, almost as a detached spectator, the swift degeneration of the European system and the convulsions of the Liberal Cabinet. The ministers sat together for four or five hours every day. Telegrams flowed in from all the capitals of the world. The mobilization of the huge Continental armies proceeded, at first covertly, and then at full roar. No one could tell what Parliament would say; one could only argue about what the nation would do. But anyhow one felt that if the ships were in their right places at the right moment, we could somehow or other be pretty sure of saving our life and freedom. Therefore in those days I concerned myself solely with making sure that all our levers of precaution and defence were pulled over in proper succession and in good time.

SO we reached Sunday the second of August. Austria had for a week been at war with Serbia. Germany and Austria had declared war upon Russia. Germany had declared war upon France. The German advance guards were already breaking into Belgium. The Cabinet was splintering into fragments. Parliament was dumfounded and powerless. No one knew, although some of us had faith in, what the British people would do. Far less could we predict the action of remote self-governing communities. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. Still—the ships were in their places.



“Even though he (the average man) shells, he was destroyed by the



I shall never forget Sir Edward Grey's famous speech in the House of Commons and his conquest of the assembly. Nor can I lose the impression of his answer to me when I asked him as he left the House, "What do we do now?" and he replied: "Now we send them an ultimatum to stop invading Belgium within twenty-four hours." But my work, such as it was, was already done. At the Admiralty there was a great calm. We had everything where we had meant to put it. There was nothing to do but see what happened. I remember spending the afternoon and evening of August 4th in my house at the Admiralty in my chair, and opening almost mechanically from time to time red boxes full of agonized telegrams from the chancelleries of Europe, while sheaves of naval messages were brought from time to time by silent officers and secretaries. I had a strong feeling that the particular task which had absorbed me for three years was done, and that events would now take a course beyond individual control. Outside, the streets were thronged with swarming crowds whose songs and cheers could be heard even in those quiet rooms.

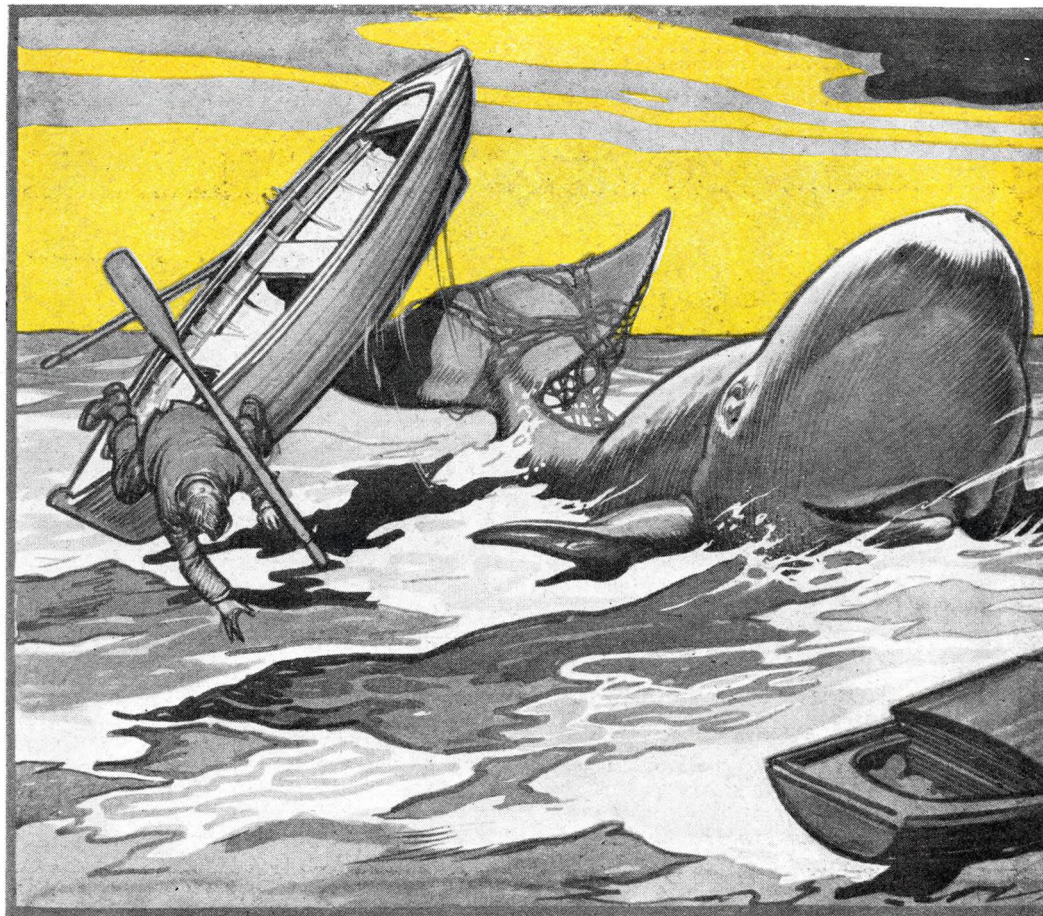
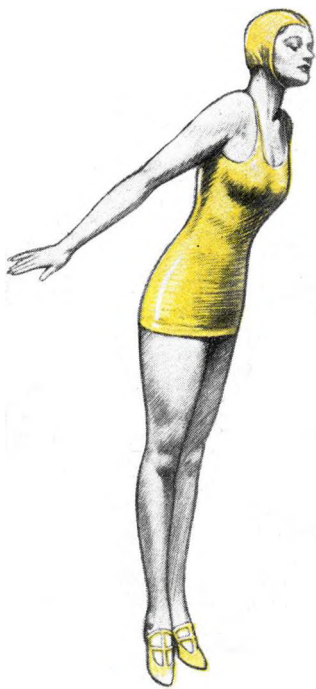
It was a much greater night, even, than that of the Armistice. For in the victory we dreamed our struggles were at an end; at the outbreak we knew that everything was beginning. Certainly I sat for hours in my chair that afternoon and evening of August 4, trying to measure the meaning of all that was coming upon us. What would this war be like? What form would the collision of the great armies now everywhere gathering take? What surprises were in store, and what new weapons? Was the French army all that our military experts had led us to believe? What would be the value of the Russian Colossus? What would other great powers do? Already we knew that Italy would not enter upon a side hostile to England. From the very first I hoped that the United States would intervene. How could the great republic of the west watch the trampling-down of Belgium by the innumerable legions of the Kaiser without active protest? One had the feeling that they could not remain unmoved by the emotions which dominated us. It was no doubt an oversanguine reflection. It made too little allowance for the gulfs of ocean and of history.

But how much happier, how much safer, how much more prosperous the world would be for all of us, victors and vanquished alike, if at the very outset the United States had said and done (Please turn to page 106)

may have escaped its war." —Remarque.



The Whale, the Cluck



If he had thrown a spike into a buzz-saw, he couldn't have stirred things up

"SISTER," says Mort, "the pool will be full when it's full; that's all I can tell you. So suppose you go roll your hoop, or your marbles, or whatever you've got, and leave me alone. I'm busy."

It was the day before the Fourth of July, and we were sitting on the edge of the pool with our feet hanging over the gutter, about as busy as a pair of lizards on a warm brick. I saw the girl turn white clear down to the neck of her bathing-suit. "I can't very well dive into a pool with no water in it," she said.

No man in his right mind would think of buying a whale; but Mort was not even a cluck – just plain balmy. As for the Diving Venus, she loved to mother babies, all sorts of babies, even baby whales.

by James M. Cain

who wrote, "The Postman Always Rings Twice"

Illustrated by Frank Godwin

"And who cares?" says Mort. "If you were a trouper, 'stead of a punk amateur trying to chisel in on something you don't know anything about, you'd be glad to get the morning off. 'Stead of that, all you do is hang around and ask questions."

She walked away, and began testing the high ladder she used for her dive. "That's a nice way to talk," I said. "And specially to her."

"What's the matter? You stuck on her?"

"No, I'm not stuck on her. But she's a nice girl, and the least you could do is to treat her decent, and call her by her name. *Sister!* If there's one thing I hate, it's a guy that calls a woman 'sister'."

"Sure she's a nice girl, and she gives me a pain in the neck. It's no racket for a nice girl. It's for bums that can take it on the chin, and maybe cuss you out if you get too tough. Her doing a dive act, that's just a pest."

"Well, you need whatever trade she draws."

"What's that, a crack?"

"Yeah, it's a crack. Why didn't you stick to the Wild West show, and things you could understand? But no. You had to have a pool. Right in the middle of a resort that has an ocean for a front yard, and a bay for a back yard, you had to have an open-air salt-water swimming-pool. Why didn't you buy some fur coats and try to sell them in Florida?"

"Give it time. Rome wasn't built in a day."

"No, but it was built in the right place. And then, when a girl comes along with something that might put it over, you treat her like smallpox. If you ask me, you're a pretty dumb cluck."

"Nobody's asking you. And lay off the dumb part. I know what I'm doing."

"All right, then. Just a cluck."

She came over again. "The pool will be full at twelve. Miss Dixon," I said. "I'm starting the pump now, and it takes two hours."

and the Diving Venus



quicker. Next thing I knew, I was in the water, and I thought it was Niagara Falls.

"I was afraid something was out of order," she said.

"Everything is O. K. We have to drain it once a week to sluice it out with the hose."

"Oh."

She stood there, and looked around like she had lost something. All of a sudden Mort picked it up, and handed it to her. It was a lipstick.

"Thank you," she said, and left us again.

"Well," I said, soon as I had started the pump, "that was a little better. You treat her like a lady once, maybe she won't give you such a big pain in the neck."

BUT he wasn't listening. He was looking out to sea. I looked, and then I saw there were a lot of people running down to the beach. We ran too, and when we got there, we saw a little fishing steamer about two hundred yards out, towing something in the water.

"What you got there?" somebody sang out.

"We got a whale," came the call from the boat. "He got tangled up in the net, and we ketched him alive."

"Come on, Dave," says Mort. "We're going out there."

We pushed a life-guard's skiff through the surf and rowed out. "Give you a hundred dollars for your whale," Mort yelled out as soon as we got close enough to talk.

"Ha-ha-ha!" says the Captain. "That just makes me laugh." It sure did that, all right. You could hear him to Henlopen Light.

"All right," says Mort. "No harm asking, though. By the way, what you going to do with him?"

That stopped the laughing pretty quick. The Captain went into a huddle with his crew, and then came to the rail. "Five hundred," he says.



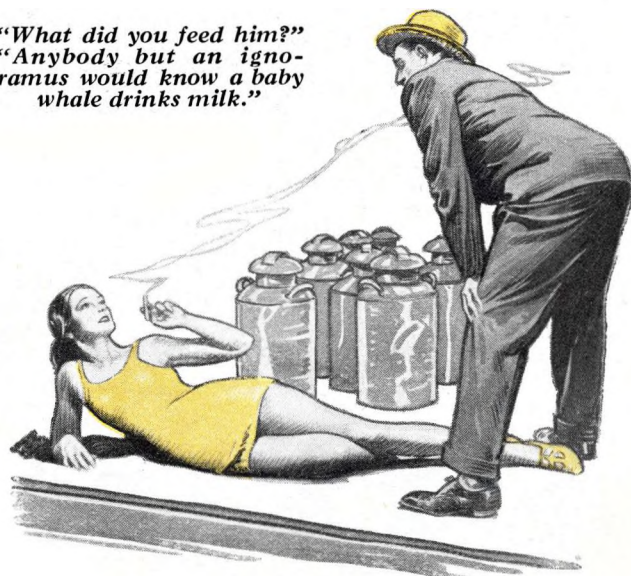
Mort began to beat him down, and pretty soon offered two hundred and fifty dollars.

"Sold," says the Captain. "Come get your whale."

We swung in closer, but then I began to back water on the oars. Because that whale, anybody could see he was alive, all right. He wasn't a

big whale—just a young whale, about twenty feet long and four feet thick; but he was plenty big enough. When he began to buck, and blow, and hit the water with his tail so it sounded like a cannon-shot, our skiff, that had seemed almost as big as a washtub

*"What did you feed him?"
"Anybody but an igno-
ramus would know a baby
whale drinks milk."*



when we started out, all of a sudden wasn't any bigger than a soap-dish.

"Cluck!" I says. "You're not even a cluck; you're just plain balmy. Take your paw off my knee. I'm going home."

But he just shook his head, where he was scrawling a check with my knee for a desk; and about that time the whale yawned the steamer around so it was almost on top of us. Mort passed the check up to the Captain, then shoved his watch, fountain-pen, checkbook and pocket-book into my hand, and kicked off his shoes. "All right, Dave," he said. "Now all you got to do is get the whale into the pool." And with that he went overboard and cut for shore.



I rounded up ten bums that didn't have any sense, and sent them down.

DID you ever try to move a whale? I sat in that skiff and got so mad I had to screw my eyes shut to keep from crying. The crowd on shore began to give me the razz, and the crew of the fishing-boat kept yelling: "Where you want this whale put? You don't say something pretty soon, we're going off and leave him." I was just getting ready to tell them they could take their whale and boil him for glue, if they wanted to, but when I opened my eyes I didn't say it. Because I was looking square at a way to get the whale into the pool, and it came to me I would get more satisfaction out of it, when I finally got a chance to cuss out Mort, if he couldn't say the job had got my goat. It wasn't anything but a tramp steamer, tied up to the steel pier about a mile away, but I knew it must have a winch on it, and it gave me an idea I thought might work.

"You take that whale," I said, "and tow him to the pier. Lay near the steamer, and I'll be there and tell you what to do next."

They wanted twenty-five extra for that, and I paid them and went ashore. I called up a guy that had a truck with a big trailer on it, that he used to haul lumber, and told him to go down to the pier with it. I bought me a couple hundred feet of two-inch hemp hawser, and a couple rolls of one-inch rope, and I sent them down. I rounded up ten bums that didn't have any more sense, and I sent them down. Then I got into a cab and went down myself to look things over.

There was plenty to look at, all right. My ten bums were there, and my truck and trailer, and my hawser and rope, and about two thousand people, and the Boy Scout band, that had been practicing for Fourth of July, and did one good deed anyhow when they quit blowing their horns and went down to see the whale. He was just coming in under the bows of the ship; and when I saw him, I knew I better get a move on. Because the net, that had been all around him before, had worked up on him like a nightshirt does on a fat man, until all that was holding him was big bunches around the head and flukes.

But Captain Jennings, the skipper, snapped into it pretty quick to help me out, and in a few minutes he and his Finns had made a running noose out of my hawser, and we had two boats over, he in the bow of one and I in the bow of the other, and we were creeping up on the whale. He had a chain link on the noose, to spread it under water, and a float on the free end, just in case we

lost it overboard—and it looked like we might make it. The Finns had shipped their oars and were using them as paddles, and we weren't making a sound. We got to within twenty feet of him, to ten feet, to five feet; then we were up even, and the noose was just going past his tail.

Then I saw Captain Jennings look up. There were a bunch of people in boats, by that time, watching the show, and one of them, a guy in

an old clinker-built launch, had drifted within a couple of feet of my boat, and in a second we would hit. He had a camera and was taking pictures. I found out afterward he was a newspaper photographer. I looked at the Captain, and the Captain looked at me. We were afraid to speak, on account of the whale. And then the guy seemed to wake up he was in a pretty bad spot himself. He reached out, caught the stern of my boat, and pushed himself back. The Captain yelled, but it was too late. Because half of that push sent him back, and the other half sent me ahead, and that meant right into the whale.

If he had thrown a spike into a buzz-saw, he couldn't have stirred things up quicker. Next thing I knew, I was in the water, and I thought it was Niagara Falls, the way it was churning around. I came up, saw a big tail swirling over me, and ducked under. Something hit the water so hard I thought my ears would pop. I came up again, saw the boat bottom-up about three feet away, grabbed for it, missed, and went under again. Something hit my leg an awful wallop. It stood me on my ear so bad I didn't know which was up and which was down, and I began to grab wild. I felt something in my hand, and held on. It was a bumper the crew of the fishing boat had thrown out. They pulled me in, and I stood on deck and looked around.

IT was a shambles, all right. Both boats were floating bottom-up, and around them were oars, lifebelts and seats. Finns were climbing out on both sides of the fishing-boat. But what broke your heart was the whale. That last flurry was all he needed. The net was hardly holding him at all now, and he seemed to feel he was pretty near loose, because he kept jerking and fighting, and you could see it was just a matter of minutes.

Captain Jennings stepped up beside me, all wet, and it did my heart good to hear that man cuss. But then he began to yell at another boat the ship had put out to gather up the wreckage. "Look," he says to me. "It's got him! The hawser is on his tail!"

I looked, and our float, on the end of the noose, bobbed up for a second and then went under. We jumped in the boat and began to grab for it. It was like trying to catch a frog in a slippery bathtub. Every time we would get to where it was, it would whip under again, and we wouldn't have any idea where it would come up. And all the time they were yelling from the pier, and the fishing-boat, and everywhere, that the net was almost gone and he was going to break loose.

We didn't get it. We never would have got it. But then something flashed down from the pier and cut the water not five feet from the boat. It was this girl, this Mabel Dixon that did



the dive act in the pool. She was up there with the rest, saw it was an under-water job, and went right over. In a second or two there was the float, about five feet under, and her red cap beside it, where she was wrestling the hawser. We pulled it in, and her with it.

"He's loose! The net is gone!"

We went boiling out to sea about fifty miles an hour, then slammed down on the seats and stopped with a jerk, because they had kept the falls swinging over us all the time, and Captain Jennings had thrown the hawser over the hook. There was just enough slack to bend it and catch the end under, and then, thank God, I heard the steam go in the winch.

THE first pull left him half in and half out of the water, because our hawser was so long that was as far as the boom could lift. But we got another loop on him, a short one, and they dropped another falls to finish the job. Captain Jennings gave the word, and up he went, across the deck, his blow-hole going like the pop-valve of a locomotive, and both flukes fanning the air like propeller-blades. The crowd cheered, and it was a sight to see, all right; but I didn't have time to look at it.

I scrambled across the ship to the pier, backed my trailer in, and had them let him down until his head was just touching. Then I had them lower him an inch at a time, and as he came down, I had my ten bums rope him. It was ticklish work, because those flukes were nothing to monkey with. But we got done pretty quick, all except his tail, and I had to let that hang down because the trailer was too short and I had nothing to rope it to. So we started out. First came the Boy Scout band, that came to life and began to play "Shine, Little Glow Worm." Then came me. Then came the truck, going slow and backfiring about every six feet. Then came the whale, blowing like he would explode, and smashing the ground with his tail. Then came my ten bums. Then came the two thousand people. We were a hot-looking parade, and sounded like a reunion of the field artillery.

When we got to the pool, things were going on pretty lively. Out back was a truck, putting up a strip of canvas all around, that had been around the Wild West show. Out front were a couple of roustabouts from the Wild West show, and a bunch of cops, yelling at a big crowd of people, trying to make them get in line. And up top was another pair, hoisting up a big sign that read like this:

ALIVE! IN THE FLESH!
Giant Sperm Whale of the Arctic Seas
ONLY SPECIMEN IN CAPTIVITY
Captured by Scientific Expedition
After Furious Struggle
And
HEAVY LOSS OF LIFE
See
JONAH
Mighty Leviathan of the Deep
Admission \$1
Children 50 Cents



"I don't defend this, see!" he yells. "It's their whale!"

I headed for the shallow end, unhooked the trailer, rolled it into the pool on some planks, sent my bums in, and cut the whale loose, all except a little piece of net that was hanging to his tail—and there didn't seem to be much to do about that after he jerked free and began swimming around. And then, while I was hauling the trailer up and fishing out the ropes, I heard somebody yell.

I looked just in time to see this truck, the one that was putting the canvas out, back into one of the guy-wires of the ladder the girl used for her dive. You could only see that guy about a mile, on account it was all strung with flags for Fourth of July, but of course this truck, it would have to back into it. It snapped, and the ladder began to lean, from the pull of the other guy. I just had time to yank one of my bums out from under it, and then it hit with a crash you could hear ten blocks.

I had lost track of the girl at the pier, but she must have got to the pool ahead of me, because she came running over, and Mort was right behind her.

"Gee," he says, "that sure is tough."

They went over to where the ladder was lying, all smashed to kindling-wood, and Mort kept mumbling how tough it was. "But I got nothing to do with it," he says pretty soon. "It's right there in the agreement. Not responsible for anything that happens to you or your equipment; so that lets me out. Don't it?"

She didn't say anything, and he went off.

"So he's got nothing to do with it, hey?" I said, as soon as I could get to her. "First he's got nothing to do with the whale, and then he's got nothing to do with the ladder. He'll find out. Come on."

She just stood there, looking at the ladder.

"SAY, didn't you hear what I said?" I asked. "Let's go. You're going to hear something."

"And what am I going to hear?" she snapped. "We go in there, and you bawl him out. He says he's busy, and then we come out again. No, thanks. I do this my way."

"Yeah? And how do you do it?"

"Do you really mean it? Do you want to get even, or are you just talking?"

"Mean it? I mean it so hard I could sing it."

"Then it's our whale too, isn't it? Didn't we catch it? We're going to claim our part of it. We'll fix that young man. And we'll fix him in the pocketbook, where it hurts."

"Well, now, say! He bought this whale."

"I thought so. You *don't* mean it."

"I know, but I work for this guy—see."

"Say it. Yes or no. Because *I'm* going to."

The first customers had come through by then, and the roustabouts were dumping herrings into the pool for the whale to eat, and they were gaping at us, and I would have said anything to make her shut up.

"All right, then. Yes."

(Please turn to page 90)



The Golden Rule is America's "Ism"!



Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, reading over his article for Redbook.

IF I were to go to the same ball-game that Mr. Warburg speaks of in the introduction to his article which appeared in the last issue of Redbook, and choose one hundred men of the crowd at random, and ask these one hundred men the simple question, "Do you want to change our form of government and have Socialism or Fascism or Communism?"

In my opinion, the hundred men would turn back to watch the ball-game, saying:

"What do these theoretical questions have to do with the practical matters that affect our daily lives? Ask us something really important."

Then, after watching the game awhile in their fashion, probably ninety-five would turn around and say:

"If by these questions you mean that we are doctrinaire and want to go to the extreme of any one of these ideas, the way that some governments have done, our answer is no. But if you mean that by calling a thing Socialism or Fascism or Communism you are going to scare us away from practical and necessary changes in our existing system, our answer is that when putting such a question to us, you are trying to confuse the issue. We suspect you do not want us to come to grips as individuals with the things that will better ourselves; you want us to surrender to you, or to some one else like you, the problem of deciding specific questions and specific human needs, instead of having us do it in our own democratic way."

But if, following Mr. Warburg's dialectic method, I should return to these one hundred men and ask them the following questions, they would probably in each case answer in terms of the conditions and necessities that their knowledge of each individual situation justifies. I may add, without attempting to disparage Mr. Warburg, that I am enough of an old-fashioned Democrat to believe that I would get more wisdom from their answers than I would from a hundred men like Mr. Warburg, who, great in technical knowledge, are so wedded to the hard, dogmatic and selfish theory in which their training has nurtured them, that their minds turn to confusing and deceptive theories rather than to specific wrongs and specific remedies.

I believe that our citizens are our government, and that officers are but their agents. I hold that sound control over the issue, circulation and safeguarding of money is a government function, and is essential to the existence of democracy. If bankers, through private initiative as an agency to aid in the performance of such functions, utterly failed to satisfy the requirements, as they have, and admittedly so in the recent past, and continued impotent, then the Government would be compelled to take over *in toto* the functions of banking, and such an act would not be destructive of our form of government, but on the contrary would be an act of preservation.

In short, I am a believer in the wisdom of the average man, because I am a believer in fundamental old-fashioned American doctrine. I would like, therefore, to put to the hundred men the following questions, and indicate what, in my judgment, their answers would be. When they have answered the following questions, I would then point out to them and to Mr. Warburg certain essential facts which distinguish the country which these questions and answers would describe. At the very end, it would not be necessary for me to discuss with them further the bugaboos raised by Mr. Warburg, because the entire reality of these bugaboos would be dissipated in the clear air of common sense.

SO let us be on our way, and despite the fact that these one hundred men have paid their money to see a ball-game, set them the task of thinking a little about some things that have affected their ability to go to ball-games at all.

My questions would be:

1: "If conditions in the railroad business, and in finance and

by The Hon. Key Pittman

an answer to James P. Warburg's now famous "Choose Your 'Ism' Now," in July Redbook. Senator Pittman, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U. S. Senate, speaks as a foremost champion of the Administration and the New Deal.

business generally, have brought the railroads to a point where there was grave danger of their becoming bankrupt; and if the owners and managers of these railroads were to come to the President of the United States and say that they had found it impossible by private action to effect the economies that they needed, and they were unable to borrow money to meet their debt charges and their deficits; and if they asked the President to lend them money out of the great credit of the United States, and also to give them the machinery necessary to effect their economies—what would you, as a citizen, want the President to do?"

THE citizens would answer, I believe, that transportation is an essential of commerce; that the free, expeditious and economic flow of commerce is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the highest standard of development and prosperity established by our citizens; that railroads are therefore public utilities, and if they are unwilling or unable to perform properly such functions, then it is the duty of the Government to take over such functions, and such act would not destroy our form of government, but would preserve it; that the President ought to talk to the owners of the railroads and then to the holders of railroad securities and to representatives of the men who work on railroads; and that he ought then to turn to the great Interstate Commerce Commission, now successfully operating for forty-five years, and see if he could find some one to help the railroads out of their difficulties by helping them agree on economies.

The citizens would probably add that the President should then see whether the United States could afford to lend certain railroads the money to save them from the excessive costs of bankruptcy (wherever possible), particularly those railroads which were so badly organized and operated through private efforts that it appeared impossible to save them. He should then make sure that the reorganization of the roads would be worked out to the satisfaction of all those concerned—owners, managers, workers and creditors.

I think that the citizens would say that they feel that the President did just this thing in a sensible way, and that it has been a satisfactory operation.

2: "If conditions in the field of banking had reached such a serious pass that banks were closing all over the country, and that in order to save the rest of the banks many States were declaring bank holidays; and if wise men in the field of banking came to the President and said that they felt he ought to exercise power to close them all, in order to protect the savings of the people while there was worked out a single comprehensive plan for all banks in the country—what should the President do? Should he perchance tell these people that it is wrong for the public to come to Washington every time they are in trouble, that they ought to go home and work out their own salvation, that the things they are asking for are altogether too great an extension of the power of the federal executive, and that such an extension would not be approved by the bankers of this country?"

I believe that the citizens would answer that no real American vested with authority is in the habit of avoiding that authority by any cowardly passing of the buck in the name of some theoretic objective. The President would have said: "I am a practical man. I believe the people trust me, and I am going to do what seems to be wise, particularly inasmuch as the bankers themselves and the people seem to have agreed that I am the only authority in the country able to solve this problem." I believe the one

hundred citizens would say that judging by what they saw happen in the past years, a pretty sensible course was followed, and that they certainly felt that the actions taken saved serious public disorders, perhaps a revolution, and that the test that he made showed what a democratic country could do in an emergency.

3: "If the business of agriculture throughout the country had become so depressed because of low prices that the farmer was reduced to a state of poverty and need such as the country had never seen before; and if the leaders of agricultural societies and organizations, the Senators and Representatives elected by farming communities, and other experts, had made it clear that the depression of prices was caused by the production of more agricultural commodities than could be consumed and exported, and that a method had been finally agreed upon among farm leaders to reduce this surplus; and if they had asked the President for a trial of this plan, what should the President do?"

I believe that the answer would be that a people's President would give this plan a chance. He would not condemn it out of hand. He would give it a fair trial; and if it did not work, he would come back and tell the people, and they would try another plan, always agreeing that what they want to do is to raise the prices of farm products.

I believe further that the one hundred citizens would say that as they understood it, the President had done just that, and that they were confident that on the basis of the common sense he had shown in meeting the situation without evading it, he would use the same common sense in continuing to work toward the solution of the problem.

4: "If it became apparent that unemployment in the industries of the country might become so serious as to threaten to strain the resources of the country in extending direct relief, and if there appeared to be a process, by a wise system of cooperation between business and government, by which certain of the rigors of the anti-trust laws might be suspended, provided industry would work together to secure employment and to eliminate the wastes attendant upon unrestricted competition, what, in your opinion, should the President do?"

I BELIEVE that the citizens would answer, as I think Mr. Warburg would have answered at the time, that with due consideration of all the interests involved, business would be helped in the working out of such a plan. I believe the answer would be that, considering the origins and support that the NRA had, and considering the disposition on the part of most of those individuals that have profited by it and want to retain their codes, and considering the disposition of labor to recognize that they have gained certain rights for which they have fought for many years, and considering that great social objectives such as the abolition of child labor have been attained—the citizens would say that those business men and others who asked the President to establish such a method of cooperation were wise, and the President wise in listening to them.

5: "Do you as average citizens of the United States feel that because of the monetary policies of the President, you have been deprived of one of the main incentives toward saving? If so, how do you explain the tremendous interest which you have manifested in your life-insurance policies in the last few months? Why have you been putting more money into savings-banks? Why have you been so willing to go back to work when work has been offered to you? Do you see anything wrong with the policy of the President in going off the gold standard when that (Please turn to page 68)



Photos Gray-O'Reilly



"Indeed I have bought a party dress, Mr. Tuttle—a gold one, with slippers and stockings to match."

*Illustrated by
J. M. Clement*



Miss Peake

THERE was something about Miss Peake that made me like her, the first time I went to work painting the old school-house. Not many teachers would have had time to say more than "Good morning!" to a school painter; but Miss Peake did. We became very good friends after that week she was away sick, and came back to find that I'd watered the plant on the windowsill in back of her desk. Elmira Fink, the monitor, promised to water it, but I guess she forgot. Miss Peake thought a great deal of that little plant.

"It's not an ordinary nasturtium, Mr. Tuttle," she said. "You'll see that, when it blooms. It's a double one, and quite rare."

"Is that so, Miss Peake? Well, well, well! I don't think I've ever seen a double nasturtium."

Miss Peake's mouth always puckered a little. Perhaps she held her upper lip so tight over her front teeth that it had set that way. There were funny little grooves running to her mouth, which seemed tucked in a little. But I liked her mouth, which wasn't like the mouths of some of the young Valley girls, all smeared with scarlet paint.

I'm a man who could never bear to see one of God's children paint her face like a Jezebel. I told Miss Peake so, when we became a little more friendly. And she was pleased, too. "You're right, Mr. Tuttle," she said to me, pushing a lock of her thin straight hair off her forehead. "I guess I'm what you might call old-fashioned."

"You are, Miss Peake, and bless you for it," I said. "It fits into a noble educational environment like this, where a woman should have dignity. I can never bear to look at a teacher sit-

ting with a painted face, and her hair flying in all directions on her head, right in front of young children. It mortifies me to see shiny finger-nails snatching at the Bible when they open school, mornings. In one school where I worked, there was face-powder spilled all over the teacher's desk every night; and once I caught her looking, without shame, at the naked picture of a prize-fighter. 'There's a man for you, Tuttle,' she said, and she smacked her lips so loud I was afraid the children would hear it."

Miss Peake always blushed in little red spots all over her neck, and I knew I'd been too indelicate. "Not entirely naked," I hastened to explain. "But there was such a small part of him covered that no respectable lady should have looked at a picture like that in public."

I didn't dream at the time that Elmira Fink, the oldest girl in the school, had put a photograph of a man most as bad as that on Miss Peake's desk between the covers of her geography.

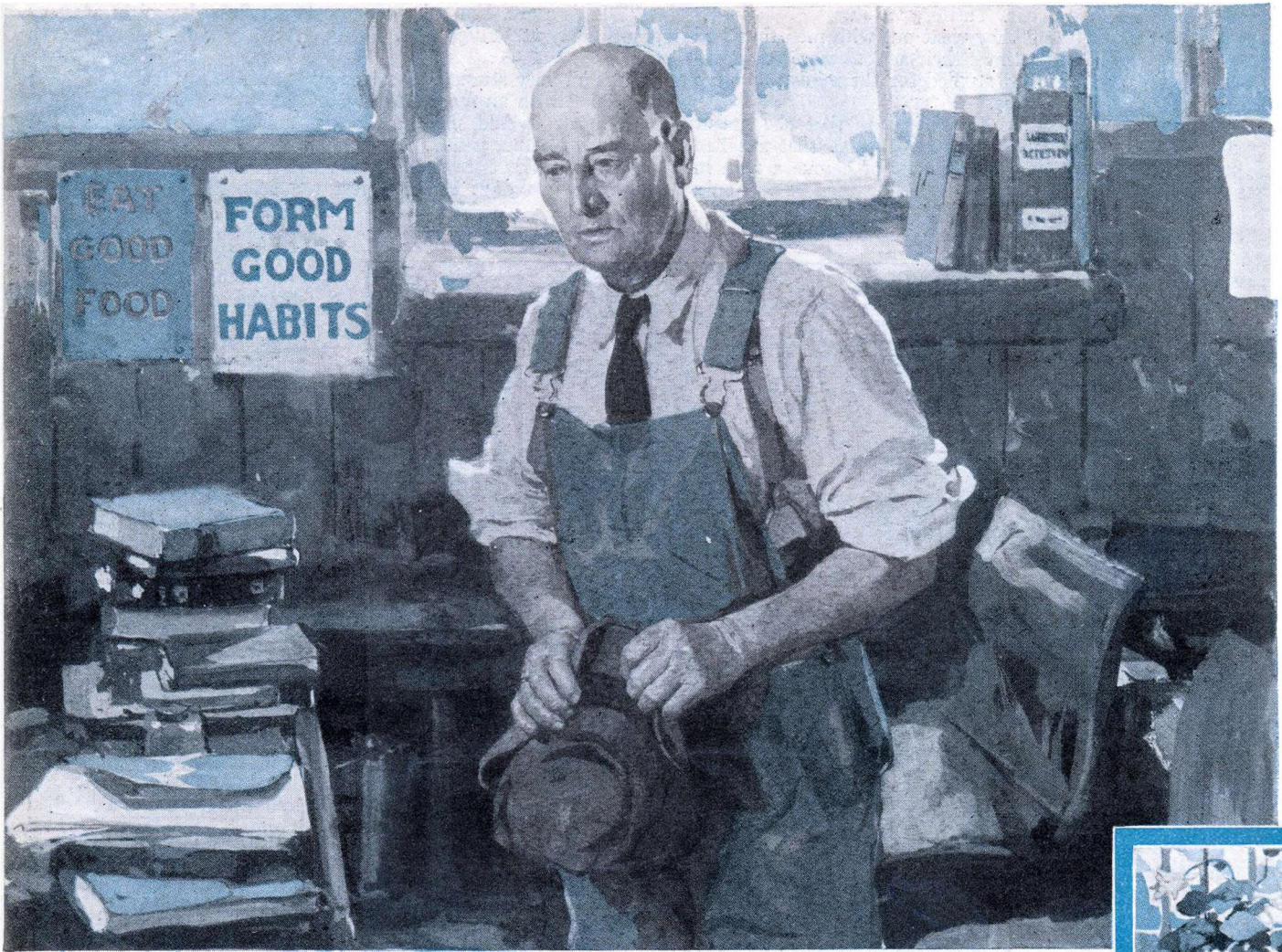
The story of what Elmira Fink had done spread through the Valley and her ma give her the devil. With my own ears, I heard Elmer Larson laugh about it.

"Don't laugh at Miss Peake, Elmer. The poor thing never had a chance in life," said Dr. Griswold. And it burned me up to hear him speak that way about Miss Peake, just because she didn't wear dresses that showed what the Lord intended only for the eyes of a husband.

"What she needs is a man!" Elmer Larson said right out.

"Poor old maid!" says Dr. Griswold.

I coughed to let them know I overheard them. I didn't care a whit if Dr. Griswold didn't like it; I wasn't going to be a party



America's most famous scenario-writer makes her bow with a short story of stark realism and grim beauty.

by Frances Marion



to such loose talk, and I was tempted for a moment to say something; but a man in Dr. Griswold's position, head of the school board too, isn't one to take any reproval from a school painter.

When the double nasturtium bloomed, Miss Peake called me in to look at it. She clasped her thin hands, and her face seemed to shine as if a light had been turned on inside her.

"Oh, Mr. Tuttle, I was so afraid they wouldn't mature," she said, as if she were speaking of children. *Her* children, I thought to myself, and I was ashamed of my familiarity. "Aren't they beautiful?" she said, and she leaned over to look more closely at them, for she had left her thick glasses on her desk. "Do you know what they remind me of?"

"Nothing but flowers," I said.

"They're like a party dress!" she cried, with a queer kind of excitement. "A gold party dress, all flaring ruffles at the bottom, and showing little green slippers and green silk—"

BUT she stopped right there, and I noticed those red spots came out on her neck again. Miss Peake wasn't like some of the Valley girls; she couldn't bring herself to speak about stockings to a gentleman, when stockings suggested nothing else but a woman's legs. Our hands touched as we stood there and looked at the nasturtiums. Not boldly,—I don't want you to misunderstand my feelings for Miss Peake,—but just lightly, as hands meet hands when you dream. But when I looked at her, I must say that I found her very pleasing; and after knowing her that close, I couldn't bear to have Miss Peake think of me only as a school painter.

"I am a musician," I said to her one day after school.

"Really! A pianist?"

"No. But I play the oboe fairly well," I answered, trying not to appear vain. "I played it fourteen years in an orchestra at the old Tivoli Opera House in San Francisco."

"Why, Mr. Tuttle, how exciting! You must have seen quite a bit of life, then."

"Indeed, I did, Miss Peake." But my mind had become alive with memories that were not entirely delicate.

"Why, I didn't dream you'd had such a past!"

"I suppose it could be called a past," I said; and I hastened to assure her that when they brought their vulgar Gilbert and Sullivan comedies to take the place of the delightful old operas, I was forced to resign. Shortly after, I became an evangelist; and once I was arrested for venturing into the Barbary Coast to plead with the fallen men and women to pray, because the world was coming to an end.

"I have never heard an oboe," said Miss Peake. "I mean, apart from an orchestra. What a pleasant experience you must have had, sitting there night after night looking up at a beautiful stage, with all its gay people and bright colors! I'm sure I would have enjoyed it too much ever to have left it."

"Yes, you would. Miss Peake, you would!" . . . I lowered my voice when I heard the squeak of Dr. Griswold's new boots coming up the steps. "Some of the chorus-ladies had no morals. They smoked and drank, and even painted their faces."

"But they were actresses, Mr. Tuttle."

"I mean, *off* the stage! And they went out with men they had no intention of marrying. Sometimes their actions were reprehensible. Even toward *me*, who had studied for the ministry before I took up my career with the oboe."

"Not with *you*, Mr. Tuttle!" I wasn't sure that she meant that for a compliment. It made me kind of wish that she had seen me before I lost most of my hair; but of course a man in his fifties can't expect to look as well as he did when he was only forty.

"I'd like to hear you play the oboe," she said politely, but I shook my head.

"I'm afraid I'm out of practice, Miss Peake. You see, it's been over twelve years since I've had my hands on one."

THE next season I suggested she get petunias instead of double nasturtiums, and I must admit I felt a little bit hurt when she thanked me for the petunia-seeds and said she'd take them home with her.

"It's this way, Mr. Tuttle," she said as she explained it. "I can't get away from their gold party-gowns. Sometimes, when there's a lull in my class, I like to imagine what fun it would be to have a gown, all flaring, with ruffles like the petals, with green slippers and lovely green stockings to match them."

You can see how our friendship was growing, for now Miss Peake could talk quite freely about stockings.

Then one day—I'll never forget it!—Miss Peake didn't stay an hour after school closed as she had done every day for years and years, but she rushed right through her reports, leaving papers every which way on her desk. And she flew out of there without even stopping to say good night to me!

I asked Elmira Fink, though I didn't like talking to her, if there had been a death in Miss Peake's family.

"Death, your grandmother!" she replied in her usual bold way. "Old Peake's come to life; that's all. She's gone clear to Napa to buy herself a party dress. Now have a laugh at *that*!"

A party dress! Well, of all the extravagances! I was certain that Miss Peake had no intention of going to a party.

I could hardly sleep that night trying to figure out whether or not Miss Peake was really going to a party. Next day I stopped by the school, and going up to her right in front of Dr. Griswold, I said: "Is it true, Miss Peake, that you've bought a party dress?"

She smiled at me, the widest smile I'd ever seen on her face. "Indeed, I have bought a party dress, Mr. Tuttle. A gold one, with green silk stockings to match."

Remember, this was right in front of Dr. Griswold, and I felt my face burn scarlet.

"What's more, I'm going to a party on Saturday night. A very grand party at Vallejo, Mr. Tuttle. A Navy ball! There, how's that?"

"It's all very strange," I said, trying to hide my feelings. "Are you going with an escort, Miss Peake?"

"Perhaps." And she actually was spinning her little gray hat on the end of her pencil.

"Oh!" I didn't stay as long as usual that afternoon, and on the following two days she had left the schoolhouse before I got there.

On Sunday, Miss Peake and I always saw each other in church, although we never stopped and spoke to each other when we met on the steps. A school-teacher with a fine reputation like Miss Peake couldn't make free with men in public places. However, I always tried to sit where I could see her. But the Sunday after the Navy ball, she didn't come to church, so I decided that she must have missed the last trolley from Vallejo to Napa.

It was quite a nightmare, now I look back on it, the change in Miss Peake after that experience. I call it experience, because you never would have believed what a gay time she'd had at the ball, unless you'd heard it from Miss Peake the way I did. In the first place, her gold dress, as she described it, must have looked for all the world like a double nasturtium. Men, as well as women, had admired it more than any other gown at the ball. It wasn't like Miss Peake to speak freely of such things, but she confessed right out that she had even tasted champagne; and when she got home, there was a big runner in her green silk stockings; that's how much she had danced during the evening.

To hear some of the Valley girls, Miss Peake couldn't have had the exciting time she said she had. They wanted to know where she'd suddenly learned to dance. She'd never danced at any Valley party. And how'd she meet this grand naval officer she talked about so much? But to my way of thinking, girls who put red paint all over their mouths can't be depended upon for the truth. They did admit they'd seen the poor old thing start out for Vallejo, all dressed up in her party dress. That's exactly what they called her, "a poor old thing," and I was mad as a hornet.

I tried not to see it, but from the night of that ball, there was a real change in Miss Peake, and you didn't have to put your glasses on to see it. In the first place, she began to hum in her class until Dr. Griswold had to speak to her about it. Then she bought a new hat; and would you believe it, right in front of it was a bunch of red cherries!

I'd always noticed Miss Peake's shoes, which were nice and sensible; but one day I saw her all toggled out in high-heeled



Miss Peake's naval officer had told her to invite all of her friends to this farewell party.

shoes. "French heels," she said, giving them a foreign name just as easy as if she was saying, "Light wines and beers." And I was so dumfounded, I couldn't speak.

"You aren't going to another party?" I asked her.

"I certainly am, Mr. Tuttle, and another and another!"

Then she walked right out of the room without even stopping to water her nasturtium.

It wouldn't have been so bad if Elmira Fink and some of the other children hadn't noticed her, and giggled as if she really was funny.

"My Lord, did you get a slant at old Peake?" That's exactly Elmira's words. "I think she's off for the kill."

When she came in, the night of the school exercises, with her hair all frizzed out, and the girls flocked around, I felt as weak in my stomach as if I'd eaten those red cherries right off her hat. I couldn't believe my own ears when I heard that Elmira Fink say to her: "What kind of face powder do you use, Miss Peake?"

"Lover's Kiss," said Miss Peake, and all the girls laughed. Miss Peake laughed too, though I knew she must have been embarrassed.

Her lips seemed a little colored that evening, but I laid it to a fever, for her cheeks looked brighter than usual. I would have given anything in the world if I hadn't looked up just as she raised her hands to pat her hair over her forehead, for her nails were shiny as glass!

"Come on, Miss Peake, fess up," said Greta Petersen, who always was too free with the men, "and tell us who was at that last party you went to."

"Oh, nobody much," Miss Peake didn't even resent their impudence.

"Sure there was! Somebody in trousers. It wasn't the naval officer again, was it?"

"Perhaps," Miss Peake said. "Now run along and tend to your own affairs." She was actually laughing as she ran out of the place.

I STOPPED at the school the next day, to see her, but she must have gone out on the heels of the children. The room seemed lonesome without her. There stood the nasturtiums dancing in their gold dresses; and—I hate to tell it, but I just pushed that flower-pot right off the window-sill and left it lying there broken into a dozen pieces! I couldn't help it. I wanted to get back at her somehow, and I knew that she'd feel pretty bad when she came in the next morning and found it there.

My conscience troubled me, though, and I had made up my mind to tell Miss Peake the truth about it; but when I started trying to explain, without making it too personal, she only laughed and said, "Never mind; we'll find another flower-pot, Mr. Tuttle, and the nasturtiums will go on living, just as I'm going on living for the first time in my life."

The next hat she bought had a bright green feather on it; and if she didn't get herself a coat of the same color! In fact, she began to buy herself so many new clothes that everybody in the Valley grew tired of talking about them. Then Hank Overbaugh let it out that boxes of candy and little presents for Miss Peake were coming through the post office. When he spoke to her about it, she laughed again, with her lips all red, and said: "Would you really like to know? Well, they're from my beau."

To me, it was just as if the Lord had said to one of the two thieves: "Hello, pal, how's tricks?" Something in me cried out, and I couldn't look at Miss Peake again. I tried to remember her as I first knew her, before she bought the gold party dress.

Almost every day a letter came to the post office addressed to her. One day she was so excited, she dropped one. Louie Petersen swears she did it on purpose. Anyway, he picked it up, and you'd have thought it was common property, the way he and the other men passed it from hand to hand. I came in just as they were reading it out loud: "I'm dreaming of you day and night, Bertha, and I'll be home soon," the letter ended.

"It's a real honest-to-God love-letter," Elmer Larson shouted. "Well, I'll be damned!"

"Indeed, you will be, Elmer Larson!" I told him. "How dare you pry into Miss Peake's life? How dare you read her mail behind her back?"

"Keep your shirt on, Tuttle," he says. "We're all tickled to death to know she's got a fellow. Nothing we'd like better than to see the old girl hitched."

My heart pressed a pain against my ribs the day Miss Peake came to the school wearing a diamond ring on her left hand. "I can't keep the secret any longer, Mr. Tuttle," she said. "I'm going to be married. He's a naval officer, Lieutenant Arthur Pomeroy, and we're to be married when he returns from Panama."

I couldn't seem to find anything to say to Miss Peake after that, but I heard everybody in the Valley talking about all her plans for the future, and they discussed certain things too intimate for me to mention. But a few days before the naval officer was to come, Miss Peake, who hadn't seemed to notice that we had stopped speaking, came over to me as I was painting a window-

sill, and said: "I'm giving a party for all of my friends on Saturday night, Mr. Tuttle, and I want you to be there."

"But Miss Peake! You surely don't want me!" I was dumfounded, but she said she meant me to come.

The party was held in the front parlor at Asa Fink's farmhouse, where Miss Peake was boarding. Arthur, that was Miss Peake's naval officer, wrote her to get the finest rooms in the Vallejo Hotel, but as he wanted a quiet (*Please turn to page 68*)



Everyone had a grand time, what with fancy dishes for supper, to say nothing of real wine.



by
Katharine
Newlin
Burt

who wrote "The Branding Iron"

This WOMAN *and this*

The Story Thus Far:

THE hunter from the East knelt with his glasses to his eyes and studied the valley, searching for game. He spoke to his guide: "What's that, Ed, over yonder across the valley on a big red rock?"

Ed took the glasses.

"That would be Jill," he answered, low and slow. "Virgilia—Virgil Diccon's girl." . . . Later he told the hunter the story:

"Virgil Diccon come into Jackson's Hole a matter of twenty-five years ago, prospecting. That same winter there was a pretty school-marm called 'Lady' teaching the kids of Kelly. Come spring, she was married to Virgil Diccon. He give up his prospecting, and took him a partner, Benjamin Krane, likewise newcome into the Hole, and recent married to a scrap of a female with scared eyes. Them two couple come up to this here creek and took up claims.

"But Ben Krane, he turned out to be a mighty bad partner. He took the pretty wife away from Virgil—just took and carried her on up to his own cabin. His own wife had gone out of her wits—lived there too, making nothing at all of another woman. Diccon give up his woman without any fight. But trouble come later. Diccon lost his water-rights to Krane, and the best part of his range. Seems like Ben had the law on him all over the place. Lady, she died one winter. The other woman, I reckon she's dead too.

"Now, there's left yonder in them two log houses Diccon and his girl Virgilia; and Krane, sleek, a smart dresser, a power in the country. His boy Griffith—the little halfwit's son; he answers to the name of 'Pony' hereabout—has learned to be a doctor."

That same day the guide Ed suffered an accident; and the hunter—Oliver Glenn—got him down to the Diccon house. But infection set in, and a physician was urgently needed if Ed's life was to be saved. Old Diccon set out for town and help; but it was a two-day journey, and Ed grew rapidly worse. Glenn insisted, over Virgilia's violent protest, that he was going to get young Dr. Krane. . . .

"I'm going to get that man," Glenn declared. "Will you let me go, Virgilia Diccon, or shall I be forced to tie you up first?"

"Yes, Mr. Glenn, you will have to do that. You will have to tie

me with the rope that hangs over there beneath the guns. . . . I am going to try to get to the guns first, and you'll have to fight hard, for I'm strong."

Glenn laughed, let go of her hands and turned to go out the door. He heard her run across the room to where the guns were laid on a rack against the wall. Then at last anger at her savage unreason came to his aid, and he sprang upon her and used his strength ruthlessly against her own. . . .

With Virgilia bound hand and foot, Glenn fetched young Dr. Krane; together, the two men moved Ed to the Krane house, where he could have the professional care he needed. . . . And next day there came to Oliver Glenn *via* the ranger-station telephone, a telegram from New York: his wealthy Aunt Leone was dying; and Kay—lovely little Kay Winter, to whom he was all but engaged—asked him to come back at once.

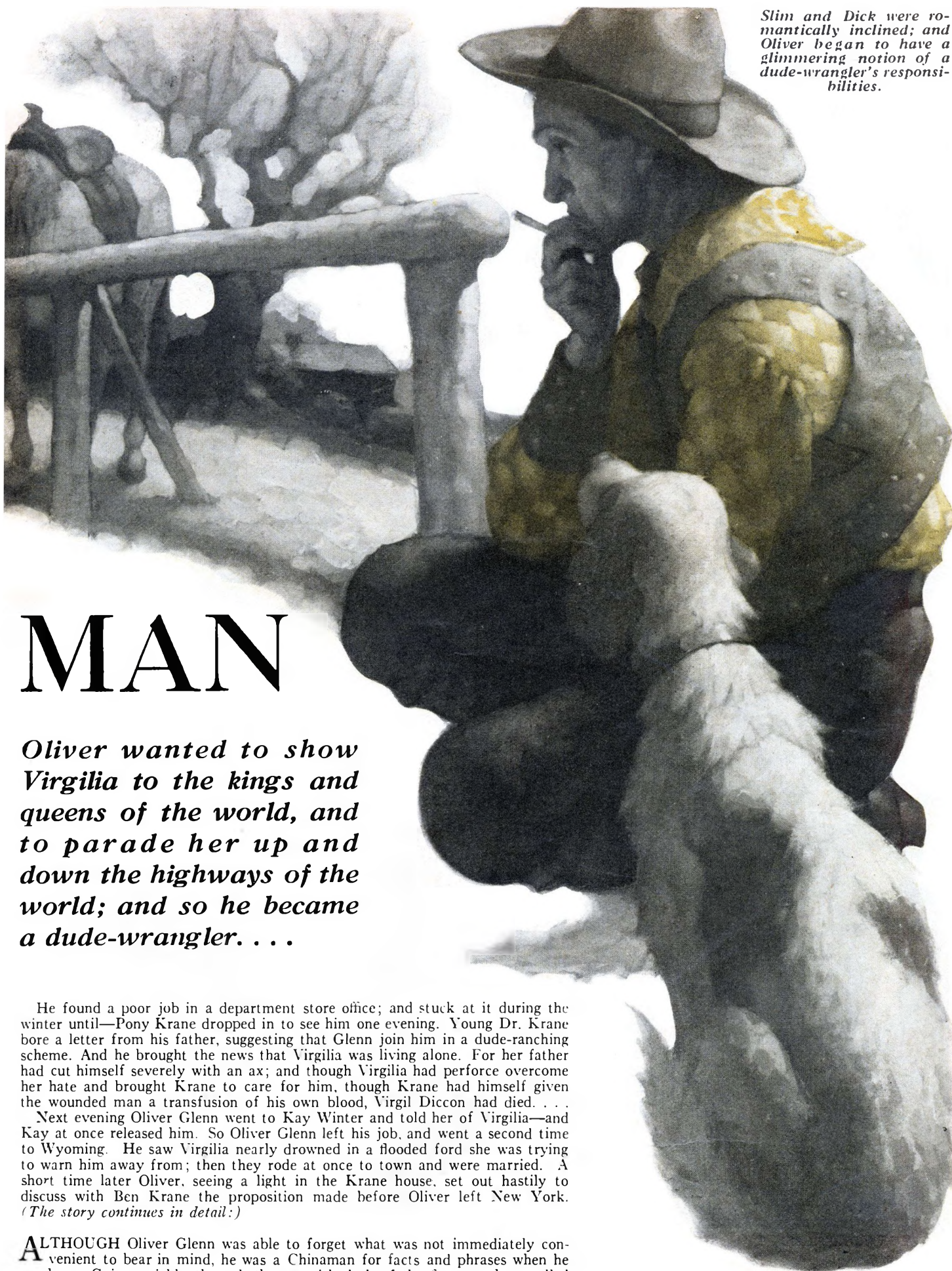
Glenn made ready to set out next morning; and searching for Virgilia to say good-by, found her in her favorite retreat, on a ledge of rock looking out over the splendid vista of Ghost Mountain. He took her in his arms and kissed her. . . . She gasped out presently, fighting for her breath: "I'm scared—it's something in me—something awful strong. . . . I want that you should go."

"I'll come back to you, Virgilia. I swear to God I will. You're beautiful, Virgilia. Remember I was the first man to teach you that."

He rode away. . . .

In New York, Glenn saw his Aunt Leone once more before her death; he saw Kay Winter, moreover; and their engagement became an accomplished fact. And then—his Aunt Leone's will was read and Oliver found himself cut off with a mere thousand dollars instead of the large legacy everyone had expected he would receive. Apparently his wily cousin Gertrude Stanhope and his cousin Will Mordaunt had profited by his absence. Oliver found the blow a double one, for the offer of a good connection with an important brokerage firm was withdrawn. Kay, however, remained stanch, though Oliver at once offered to release her.

Slim and Dick were romantically inclined; and Oliver began to have a glimmering notion of a dude-wrangler's responsibilities.



MAN

Oliver wanted to show Virgilia to the kings and queens of the world, and to parade her up and down the highways of the world; and so he became a dude-wrangler. . . .

He found a poor job in a department store office; and stuck at it during the winter until—Pony Krane dropped in to see him one evening. Young Dr. Krane bore a letter from his father, suggesting that Glenn join him in a dude-ranching scheme. And he brought the news that Virgilia was living alone. For her father had cut himself severely with an ax; and though Virgilia had perforce overcome her hate and brought Krane to care for him, though Krane had himself given the wounded man a transfusion of his own blood, Virgil Diccon had died. . . .

Next evening Oliver Glenn went to Kay Winter and told her of Virgilia—and Kay at once released him. So Oliver Glenn left his job, and went a second time to Wyoming. He saw Virgilia nearly drowned in a flooded ford she was trying to warn him away from; then they rode at once to town and were married. A short time later Oliver, seeing a light in the Krane house, set out hastily to discuss with Ben Krane the proposition made before Oliver left New York. (*The story continues in detail:*)

ALTHOUGH Oliver Glenn was able to forget what was not immediately convenient to bear in mind, he was a Chinaman for facts and phrases when he so chose. Going quickly through the greenish dark of the fir trees, he recalled Krane's letter. "If you should consider coming West again this summer and are

Illustrated by Jules Gotlieb



"Darling, has there ever been an investigation? Has any lawyer, I mean, ever looked into the death of Mrs. Diccon—or of the other woman?"

looking for an opening for moderate investment, there is a mighty fine dude-proposition I once spoke to you about, waiting for an Eastern man like you in connection with an experienced Western man like me."

That was certainly a proposal of business partnership with a suggestion for capital investment honestly included. Now what, Oliver demanded of a scolding chipmunk, was this dude-ranching business, anyhow? He'd have to "go slow"—a process, whether physical or mental, not in the least natural to him. He'd have to question, scrutinize, ponder and calculate—good sound words for serious exercises! In Jackson, on his way up the country, Oliver had made inquiries with an eye to this very partnership, and had heard only what was favorable concerning the business record of Benjamin Krane. In the past Krane had been and in the present he still was the executive brain of this region—to all practical intents not only its leading citizen, but its boss. His financial and political influence was paramount. And his reputation was clear from any accusations whatever of fraudulent practice. Ed Carter, of course, had told a camp-fire tale—but that was Diccon's feud talking, a mountaineer's romance. Men in the Hole trusted Ben and took pride in his success. Surely if a stranger, and a young one without experience, were going into business in this valley,—and where else now could he find any opening?—he'd be a fool to turn down the chance of association with this man. As for Virgilia—everything for her was changed, by her marriage. . . .

By the time Oliver, glowing with speed, concentration and eagerness, came to Ben's door, he had already sold himself to the dude-proposition—"if," of course, and "unless," "in case" and "provided that!"

Ben bugled, "Come in," and rose from a great elk-horn throne to greet his visitor. The room was warm after the cool of mountain twilight. A fire burned on its great hearth. This cabin was so much handsomer, more spacious and colorful, so much more luxuriously appointed than the one Glenn now thought of as his own, that for an instant it scattered his presence of mind. He stood like a country boy, staring. Ben laughed.

"Well sir—you've done it mighty thoroughly, eh?"

Oliver, flushing, laughed with him, and snapped back to his usual self. He glanced down at his laced forester's boots, corduroys and flannel shirt. He was conscious of needing a hair-cut, and knew that his hands were far from clean.

"I saw your light, Mr. Krane, and came straight over from the fields. I've been looking for a cow all afternoon. May I wash my hands?"

"Sure can. You remember the way to the bathroom?"

"Thanks—yes. Gosh, this is a great place of yours. We've got to rebuild down yonder. I suppose you've heard—"

"About your marrying the Diccon girl? Yes sir." Ben's eyes twinkled coolly, and his voice thinned to a Yankee twang. "I must say I thought it would be the end of our acquaintanceship, Glenn. How about—our feud?"

Oliver suffered a sensation of dismay.

"I thought that had been—buried with Diccon. Pony told me—"

"Surely. I forgot you had seen him in New York. I was having a little fun with you, Glenn."

"Diccon," said Oliver slowly, "is dead. And I am not feudal, Mr. Krane."

But going into the well-appointed bathroom, enjoying hot running water, good soap and linen towels, he found he could not scrub away a grimy sensation of disloyalty. He should have stopped to think of his Virgilia, should have asked her first. But what in thunder had he to ask, until he knew his facts? The first good mirror he had looked into since coming West gave him back a glowing, healthful face shadowed by this perplexity. He rubbed the shadow off, returned to Ben, and stood before the hearth, his hands locked back of him, his feet apart.

"I did see Pony in New York. He was looking very fit." Oliver glanced about. "Is he with you now?"

Ben had screwed his round body into its chair again, and was smoking. The floor about him was strewn with newspapers.

"Why, as a matter of fact, I'm looking for him any minute. He's coming in from Lander over Two-ga-tee—not by the Jackson way, this year."

Oliver remembered something with so keen a sensation of dismay that the blood left his face. And that was Pony's confidence. In the wild race back to Virgilia, and in his overwhelming happiness, he had forgotten the immediate spur to this achievement: acute and sudden jealousy. Now he realized that to Pony, his whole course might well appear an act of treachery. Under the influence of alcohol, Pony had told him that from now on Virgilia was "to be his job," that the feud was "ending in a shivaree." To which Glenn had replied only with the silent drinking of a health—and immediately thereafter had taken the train to Wyoming and had married Pony's girl!

"I think I savvy what's on your mind, son," quoth Ben. "But you can dismiss it. Pony's real love is his job. He don't know yet that Virgilia got married, but I'll give him about twenty-four hours to get over it. What's hard to get, always does look almighty important. Pony will be relieved. He was beginning to take his orphan kind of hard. I could see that myself out in Denver when he told me what had occurred. Those deathbed reconciliations are kind of romantic—for a doctor, likely—though they wouldn't get me that way. Pony didn't say anything about his feelings—but I know his brand and his earmarks. She had got him pawing up the gravel. But by now he's begun choking on his own dust. Virgilia Diccon is not such a good proposition for the wife of a Denver practitioner—though she's first class as the wife of a college man like you."

Oliver flushed. "You can hardly call me that, sir. But for whatever I am, Virgilia is certainly first class. I should think she would be for any man. But that's not the subject I've got to discuss with you, Mr. Krane. And I don't like to be so darned abrupt, but supper will be waiting; and my wife doesn't know just where I am." It was the first time he'd said it aloud to anyone, and he smiled gayly at Ben, taking him into a bridegroom's confidence in a beguiling fashion

of his own. "She thinks I'm still out after that cow."

"Your cow calved in my willow patch this morning. Glenn. Well sir, that's as good a place to start our discussion from as any. You are referring, I figure, to the letter I sent to you by the hand of Griff. . . . Cattle! When I first came in here, it was what I was after myself. Diccon was influenced by his wife,"—Ben was entirely casual in mentioning this lady—"who wanted the falls and the cañon and the view down-country of the Tetons, the trout-stream, riding-trails and what not. She was a kind of dude, was Lady. But I had my eye on hay and feed and water, winter shelter and fine range—which is just why Virgilia's ranch, and yours, lays all folded up and crowded in between the two ridges of Moon Mountain, and opens up only to get the wind and snow—with the pretty view! Well, sir."—Ben recrossed his legs in a quick sharp fashion, like the snapping together of scissor-blades—"times have changed. Times have surely changed. The cattle business in Jackson's Hole is dead, defunct and buried. Prices are just something not worth bringing up. To raise a steer in Jackson's Hole will cost more'n he's ever going to be worth on the hoof. Long winter feeding—hay bringing in more than the flesh of the animal a man feeds it to. Which is not so much to your purpose, but gives you one of my reasons for the proposition I outlined tentatively in that letter."

OLIVER nodded. "Yes, sir." And Ben added explanatorily: "Now, as I think I told you when you were visiting here last hunting season, there's two good ways of making a livelihood in here now. One's sheep. You can try that on, if you've a mind to. A sheep-herder from Idaho who run his sheep a mite too far over into the Teton country, got tied up and flogged. His sheep got killed. That's how these citizens feel (*Please turn to page 94*)

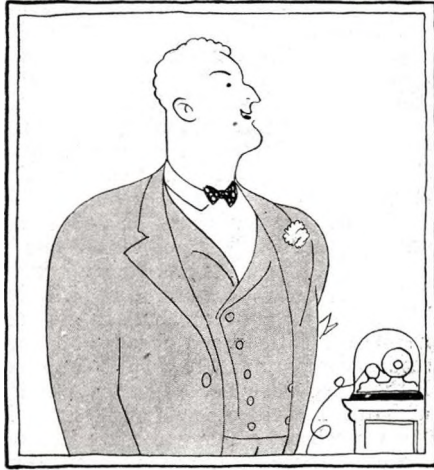
Next Month



Life Begins at Sixty

The autobiography of Marie Dressler, the miracle-woman of America, who staged her sensational come-back at an age when 99 99/100% of humans are thinking of retirement.

Anything But Business



A customers man.

Hotel Biltmore
New York N. Y.

DEAR Bibo,
Well old thingummy, as you'll see by the letter-paper, your Uncle Tooker is in Gotham at last. You just can't keep a good man down. Certainly not down on an Indiana farm. Who was that old codger—Horace Greasy or somebody—that used to tell young men to go west? Well Horace, their comin east again now, an theres nothing to stop them but the Atlantic.

The Penna R. R. delivered me here very quiet early this A. M. No reporters. No flashlights. Just Sam Arlington Tooker, private citizen, a little whiskery, looking for a job. No more supplyin sportin editors with free head lines for this bozo. Its front page or nothin now.

What I done for old Varsity is done. A guy with brains can't play football all his life. Theres nothing worse for brains than having them stepped on all the time. An you certainly can't use them in Elba, Ind. As soon as you do, you start leavin the place like I did.

As soon as I got here I came right to see that Mrs. Rosenkranz about a room like your Uncle suggested. She gave me what she calls a nice hall bedroom. That means a place about as wide as a hall, an square. It would make a good hang out for a undersized Fillipino. I won't be there long though. As soon as I make some money Im goin to live in this place Im writin from. Its got more life in it than Mrs. Rosenkranz ever thought of. Besides which its roomier.

In the meantime Im going to do all my writin from here. I stayed here once when I came east with the football team (or vice versa as I guess you'll say, eh Bibo) so its kind of like home to me.

Its kind of noisy here tonight. Theres some fellow gotten lost around the hotel. They seem to be pretty near frantic lookin for him. About every five minutes a bell-hop comes running up to the balcony where Im sittin an yells at me if Im Mr. So-an-so.

I keep telling them my names Tooker. Their so excited they dont seem to care though.

Its funny to think only two nights ago I was sittin in a picture show talkin to you. I suppose everybody thinks I got soft boiled brains to leave that nice job in Uncle Jakes garage. Thats because they dont understand, Bibo. A guy thats been mugged on every sportin page from Chi to Columbus isnt going to be happy spending the rest of his life mooning up at universal joints.

I didnt take my letter of interduction down to Enos an Quigley today. Time enough for them to hire me tomorrow. I wanted one day to see N. Y. You can't see much of it though on account of there being so many buildings. I finally went

to that esquimo picture I missed last winter when I had the hives.

Im going down to see Mr. Quigley first thing in the morning though. The telephone book says their stock brokers. I have a hunch I might be good at it. I always been fond of animals.

They got a swell orchestra here. Im goin to bring my guitar over some night an sit in with them. Maybe they know the last round up. At any rate I am
affec'ly your'

Sam

Western Union Telegraph Company
To
Miss Phæbe Bilboe
Elba, Indiana.

Saw mister quigley today he seemed pleased I gave him first chance at me job begin tomorrow not a regular partner to start with needed regular wages looks like nice work everybody in office wears col- lers will write you as soon as I find out what its all about.

Sam

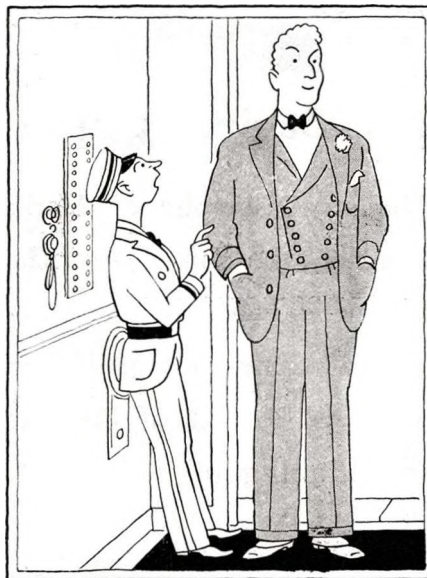
Hotel Biltmore
New York N. Y.

Dear Bibo,

Havnt had a chance to answer any of your letters for nearly two weeks. They sure know how to get their moneys worth out of you in this town. I didnt have to work any harder winnin football games for old Varsity. You have to stand on your feet in the office all day. Then you get into a subway, an everybody else stands on em. By the time you get home their in no condition for writin letters.

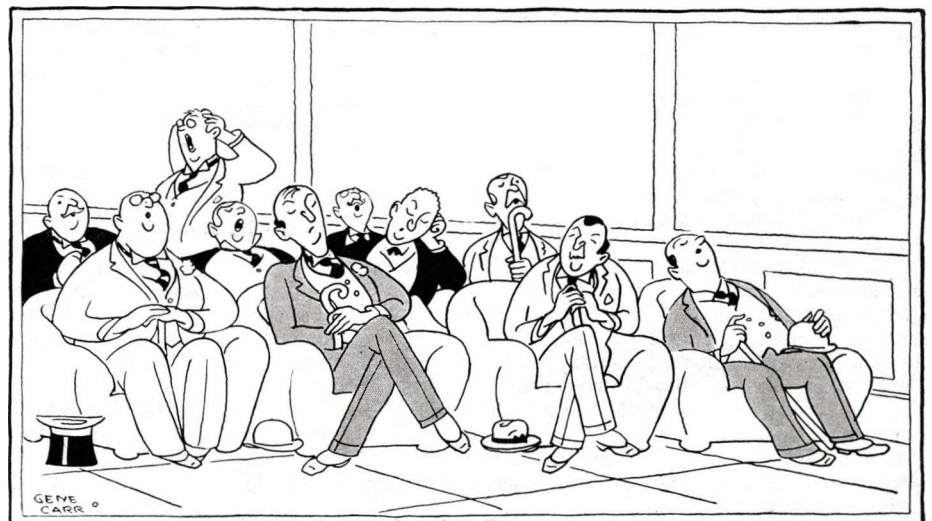
Well I suppose you'll want to know what Im doing. Ill try to tell you. Its kind of hard to explain to a womans mind though.

Enos an Quigley is in the brokering business. They got about two acers of space on the 10th floor of a big office building. If people want to buy or sell what is called stock, they come up there. Then somebody telephones a guy outside that hunts around



I finally asked the elevator boy. He knows about things like stocks.

Cartoons by Gene Carr



They come in every morning and sleep till four.

*A customers' man is a fellow without any money
that tells other people what to do with theirs.*

by **E. Streeter**
who wrote "Dere Mable"

till he finds somebody that feels the other way.

Im in sort of general charge of the office. I see that important papers gets put back if somebody kicks the scrap-basket over. When customers come in I make em feel at home by asking them what do they want. In my spare time I take memorandums from one partner to another. They all sit right next to each other. In big business though, guys dont talk to each other. They write memorandums.

In the middle of the place is a big room with one wall all covered with numbers. Their supposed to show you what your stocks is worth if anything. As fast as you find out theres a click, and another number pops out. This is called the board room. They certainly keep it filled with boarders. They come in every morning and sleep till four in leather chairs. They must do night watchin or something for a livin. I never saw a bunch so wore out.

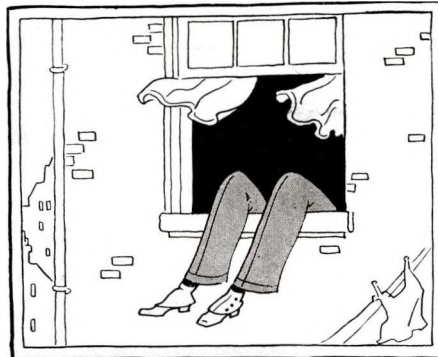
Besides the regulators they got a lot of transients. These are queer birds too. Their all alike. First thing when they come in they go to the board room an look at the numbers. Then they say my God an go to the partners room. They ask the partners what do they know. The partners say it looks like an inflation market but maybe its something else. That seems to satisfy them. They go away. Its a nice clean business but I dont see where any money comes in.

Every morning the partners have a meeting. They have it in what they call a conference room. It has a foney window to look like a church, and walls papered in wood to look like a cigar box. Every time Mr. Quigley comes in he says, "Well anyhow, theres fuel in them thar walls." Hes a live one, Mr. Quigley.

At one end of the room is an open fireplace. They keep it open mostly for cigarette butts. Over it is hung a painting of the first partner. Mr. Quigley says if the firm hadnt hung him, the Senate Investigation Committee would. Thats a financial



My job is to say their in conference. Then I find out who it is.



By the time you get home your feet are in no condition for writin letters.

morning an hangs his chart over the first partners picture. He looks at it, goes into a trance an tells whats going to happen for the next couple of days. Not what would be interesting to a girl of course, but what the markets going to do an things like that.

When he gets through the partners tell him hes crazy an he goes away. They dont mean it though. They just say it sos he wont ask for a raise. As soon as hes gone they write it all down in a letter an send it to their customers.

Its hard sometimes even for me to understand what its all about. Mr. Buntz is always insisting that everybody should go long or short or something. "Theres every indication," he says, pointing to the chart, "that the utilities is ripe. Your customers ought to go long of them. An on the other hand it looks as if you ought to go short of the coppers for the next few days."

I finally went an asked the elevator boy what it all meant. Hes been with the building 27 years an knows about things like that. He says when you go *long* of a stock thats just a Wall street way of sayin you sell it. When you go *short* of a stock thats just the same as buyin it.

The way these fellows make money is to go long of a stock (sell it) just before it goes down. Then when it goes away down, you go short of it (buy it) an up it goes again. Thats how simple it all is. Bibo. Mr. Buntz makes wiggeley lines. They tell him whats going to happen. Then everybody goes out to lunch an your moneys waitin for you when you come back. I certainly struck it soft when I landed this job.

Yesterday Mr. Buntz came into meeting an says hes been studying the rails. He didnt say if he meant brass or fence. He says anybody (Please turn to page 102)



He goes into a trance.

wisecrack. You have to follow the news reels close to understand these guys.

One of my jobs is to be at the meetings. If the phone rings, they got to have somebody handy to answer it. Partners arnt supposed to know how. My job is to say their in conference. Then I find out who it is. If its anything but business, they answer. Its interesting work an gives me a chance to learn the brokerin business from the inside.

The first thing at meetings is for everybody to tell how bad he feels. As soon as thats understood all around, they call in Mr. Buntz, who is the statistician. He wears thick glasses and shiney pants an knows everything. Mr. Quigley says if he knew any less, hed be a member of the brains trust.

Mr. Buntz would have made a great fortune teller if hed been a gipsie. Instead of tea leaves he uses charts. Give him enough wiggly lines, an he can tell you anything.

Well as I say Mr. Buntz comes in every

Two Women Too Many

by Eric Hatch

No yacht is big enough

RADTHORNE BATES sat in the vast cockpit of the *Annabelle Lee* and stared gloomily at the glassy surface of Long Island Sound. On his face was that expression usually found only on the faces of young men in love, or young men suffering from internal disorders. Radthorne Bates was quite the opposite from being in love, and he was fit as a fiddle. This view—the still water, the bright sunshine; the far-off blue shore of Long Island, the snowy sails above, was a thing to charm; yet Bates gloomed. On the opposite side of the cockpit, stretched full length on the air-filled cushions, lay his good friend Maury Pell. He had a tall glass in his hand, and a smug, comfortable smile on his face. Opposite him in an equally comfortable position was Mrs. Pell. It was a scene of utter expensive, luxurious peace—the sort of scene clerks and postmen and socialists dream of being in. Yet Bates gloomed.

It should have been very quiet there on the Sound, for the schooner was moving so imperceptibly that there was not even the noise of water bubbling past her hull; but it wasn't quiet, for from the depths of the vessel

came a constant whanging and banging of metal against metal, and the strained grunts of strong men wrestling with intractable machinery. Now and then one of the strong men cursed. Every now and then one of them said in a loud, clear voice: "He might yoost so well buy a new engine."

Every time the man said this, Bates winced. Presently he turned to Maury Pell.

"Maury," he said, "why on earth did I go and buy a yacht?"

Pell waved his glass.

"Because, as your little friend Wanda Worthington put it a couple of months ago, all rich mugs get yachts. You're rich, and you're certainly a mug. Q. E. D."

"Go to hell," said Radthorne pleasantly.

"Be glad to," said Pell. He seemed thoughtful for a second. Then he looked at Radthorne coyly. "Maybe you bought the old scow because you heard Trinket Jones had gone sword-fishing at Montauk. Maybe you were jealous of the laddy boy who took her."

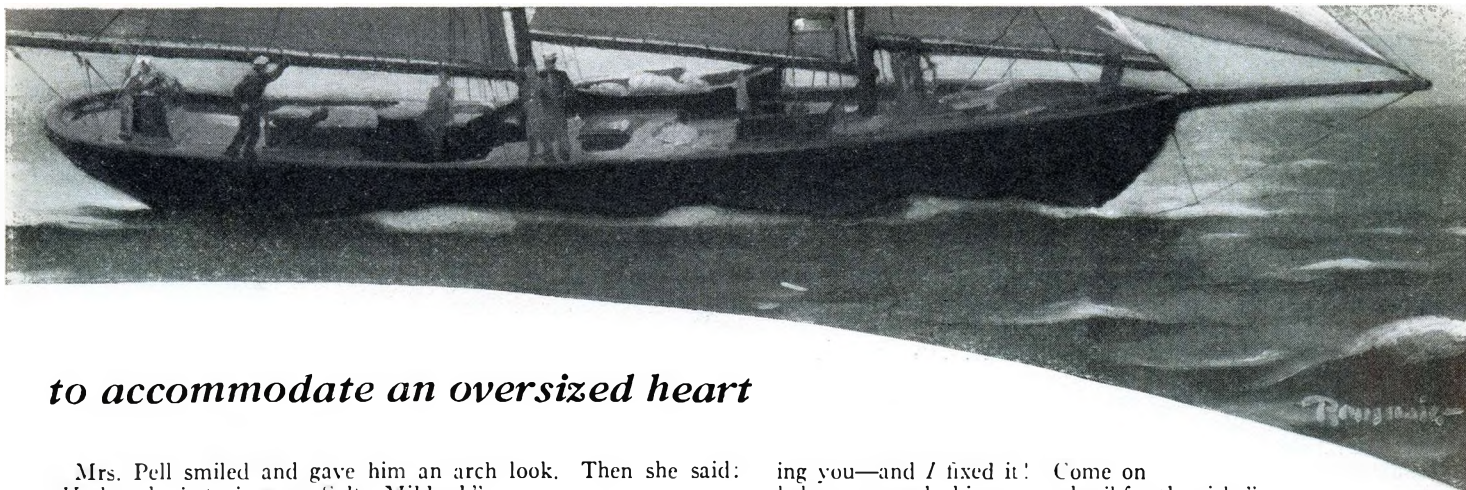
Bates didn't like people to speak to him of Trinket. Though that was all over now, he had felt the smallest pang when he'd heard it. He said: "Lay off, Maury. You know how I feel about that."

"Well, you're a mug, anyway. Why did you buy it?"

Trinket sighed. "Gosh," she said, "it's swell seeing you again."

Illustrated by
William Reusswig





to accommodate an oversized heart

Mrs. Pell smiled and gave him an arch look. Then she said: "He bought it to impress Salty Mildred."

"What d'you mean, impress Salty Mildred?"

"A few weeks back," said Peggy Pell, "Mildred told you she just loved yachts; and since you just loved Mildred, you went and did it."

"I don't love Mildred," said Bates. "There have been times, during the last few days, when I've wished I'd never laid eyes on her."

"Oh, Rad! Salty Mildred is a very beautiful girl."

"Salty Mildred's a damn' nuisance!" said Bates.

"Q. E. D.," said Pell again. "He's a mug, isn't he, Peg?"

"He might *yoost* so well buy a new engine!" said the strong man in the depths.

Bates got up and stood threateningly over his good friend.

"Listen," he said. "I know I'm a mug; I know I paid twenty thousand for this tub; I know I might *yoost* so well buy a new engine because this one won't run; but—you don't have to keep on telling me so!" Then he checked himself. "I'm sorry, Maury; the Mildred thing, and all this boat trouble—it's sort of got me down."

"Where is she now?" asked Mrs. Pell.

"Resting!" said Bates. "She's been aboard here for a week resting, and she's *still* resting. Bah!"

Maury Pell raised his glass again, but this time so he could see his wrist-watch. Then he said: "It's lucky for Rad he's got intelligent friends." He laughed—a phony, old-school melodrama villain laugh. "Heh-heh-heh!"

Peggy Pell got up and moved over beside Bates and put her hand over his.

"Seriously, Rad," she said, "we've got to do something about getting you shed of Salty Mildred. What's up there, really? She acts so possessive. Are you engaged or anything?"

He hesitated. Then he said, a little doubtfully, "No," and then: "No, Peg, I shouldn't say we were engaged, exactly. But to tell you Gawd's truth, I'm in sort of a jam."

"Oh," said Peggy, misunderstanding. "I see."

"There was a night," said Bates, looking into space, "the night of the Townsends' dance at Southampton. There was a moon, and the champagne was swell, and she had on one of those appealing sort of dresses, and we walked in the garden. I don't remember much about it, but I must have said things, because the next day when we met at the beach club, she took my hand and told me I wasn't ever going to be lonely again."

Peggy Pell giggled. "You ass!" she said.

He passed a weary hand over his forehead. "Peg," he said, "as long as I live, I'll never set foot in another garden!"

JUST then a voice, a silvery tinkling voice, floated up through the companionway:

"Ra-aadthorne—come visit with me."

"Never be lonely again," said Peggy Pell sadly.

Pell looked at his watch once more and sat up. "Quarter of six," he said. "Rout her out, Peg. Get her into the saloon."

"Why?"

"Part of a plot," he said. "Go on, Peg, will you?"

Shrugging her shoulders, Peggy Pell got up, crossed the cockpit and disappeared down the companionway. Maury, as soon as he and Bates were alone, lowered his voice man-fashion and said: "Boy, it's in the bag. I did a little telephoning when we put into Saybrook. I sensed this trouble, and I knew the answer. Boy, I'm giving you back your youth. Twenty minutes from now, there won't be a woman in North America who'd dream of marry-

ing you—and I fixed it! Come on below now, and whip up a cocktail for the girls."

"Who'd you call up?" said Radthorne, rising.

"Friend of mine," Pell was standing in the companionway. "Mind if I turn on the radio?"

He went below. Radthorne turned and stood for a moment looking out over the water. It was all very well, Pell being flip about things, but to him it was a pretty serious business. He didn't for the life of him see how, if Mildred Maiken continued wanting to marry him, he could get out of it; and this long, long week they'd been together on the yacht had taught him many things about Mildred Maiken. As he stood there, he was really a little afraid that if they did get married, he'd eventually shoot her. Then he laughed at himself for dramatizing, and followed Maury Pell below.

AT six o'clock of this summer evening the full afterguard of the *Annabelle Lee* were assembled in the saloon, or main cabin. Maury Pell, who, as usual, had stretched himself on a sofa, had an unusually expectant air about him. Maury had taken great pains to see that they would all be there.

On the opposite side of the room sat his wife. Beside her sat Mildred—blonde, beautiful, gushing Mildred. Radthorne Bates was serving Martinis. In the forward end of the cabin the radio was playing soft waltz music, so Mildred looked soulfully into Radthorne's eyes as he filled her glass. Maury Pell said, "Heh-heh-heh!"

The others turned to look curiously at him, and then the waltz music stopped. While they were still looking curiously at Maury, the radio chimes sounded, and then the announcer's voice came through.

"We will now hear Wallace Peek-a-Boo Twitchell—the columnist who knows more about you than you know about yourself. Mr. Twitchell!"

Because people always listen to the first few words anyone who has been introduced has to say, the afterguard of the *Annabelle Lee* held their cocktails suspended in midair while the harsh clipped-off diction of the gossip-writer came over the air.

"A red one tonight—a warm one—a sizzler! I've got it from one of his *closest* friends that Radthorne Bates—society's darling, the play-boy of the Eastern Hemisphere—is going to be sued for breach of promise."

Radthorne Bates set the tray he was holding down on the buffet and stared at the cloth-covered space of wall that concealed the loud-speaker. Peggy Pell leaned forward. Maury Pell stretched and pretended to yawn. Salty Mildred spilled half of her cocktail on the carpet—which was too bad, because it was a nice carpet.

"Yes *sir*! The boy's slipped this time for *fair*!"

Radthorne Bates closed his fists and muttered something. His face went completely white with rage. His jaws were clenched so hard that the skin over his cheek-bones moved up and down with his pulse-beats. He turned abruptly, and without speaking went on deck.

The three people in the cabin avoided each other's eyes. Peggy Pell reached over and shut off the radio. Mildred finished the unspilled part of her cocktail and carefully lighted a cigarette. After a ghastly silence that lasted for fully two minutes, she looked at Maury.

"Is that true?"

Maury, who was having the time of his life, nodded dolefully.

"Yes," he said. "Only it's much worse than that."

"Worse?"

Again Maury nodded.

"The child complicates it so," he said seriously. "If it was just the ordinary breach-of-promise suit, everything would be jake." He glanced at his wife, who was staring at him wide-eyed, and managed to give quite a good laugh. "Rad's so impetuous," he said. "Why he had to go and have a child, I can't imagine! He—"

Maury Pell stopped, because he saw Radthorne Bates standing at the foot of the companionway and knew he must have overheard. He didn't dare go on, so he turned his head and winked knowingly.

Radthorne Bates had come back to deny this awful calumny. Now a great light dawned. This was awful, but it was funny, and of course it would get him shed of Salty Mildred, who was sitting stock-still in open-mouthed astonishment. Very carefully he winked back; then he went over to Maury and whispered in his ear. He was pretty sure the girls would think he was just explaining. He said: "Maury, old boy, you're a genius! It's raw, but it's a knockout."

Maury whispered: "Smarter than you thought, I am. Eh? Too many highballs, eh? We men, boy! We know!"

"You bet!" whispered Radthorne Bates. Then, putting what he felt was a look of martyred innocence on his face, he stood up. And then Salty Mildred was upon him. She threw her beautiful arms around his neck and contriving a feat that many a professional contortionist would envy, pressed against him, at the same time managing to keep her beautiful face far enough away from his so that he could look down into it and see there the expression of loving trust she wanted him to see.

"My poor, poor boy!" she said. The look of loving trust changed to one of intense determination. "I know it isn't true; but if it is true—" She came about into the wind, so to speak, and filled away on another tack. "Radthorne, you *do* love me, don't you?"

The beautiful blue eyes filled with misty tears.

"Oork!" said Radthorne Bates. He was trying to remember any time in his life when he'd been more uncomfortable than he was at this moment.

"Is it true, Ra-aadthorne?"

BATES found it curiously difficult to lie, so he kept silent. It was the tacit admission.

"Oh, my poor boy!" said Salty Mildred. And then she brightened. "I'll be a mother to him, Rad—truly I will! I don't mind! Truly, I don't!"

"How do you know it's a boy?" said Peggy Pell.

"If it's *his* son, it must be!" said Salty Mildred. Which was typical of her. She took her arms from Bates' neck and stepped a pace back. "I guess I'd be pretty poor if I let this make any difference to us, Rad. Whether she really sues or not, I guess I would. I'll stick with you."

She put her hand to her temple.

"It—it's been sort of—sort of trying. I think I'll go on deck and rest a little." Here she smiled radiantly at Bates.

"Let the fresh air blow all these horrid things away!"

Achieving a really splendid exit, she disappeared up the companionway. Bates looked at Maury Pell.

"You fixed it fine!" he said. "Any time I want anything fixed, Maury, I'll just call on you. She wants to be a mother to him! Bah!"

"Bah yourself!" said Maury Pell. "It should have worked, shouldn't it? How could I know she'd come all over noble?"

A voice—a silvery plaintive voice, floated down from the deck.

"Ra-aadthorne, bring me my little private pillow, will you?"

Bates looked from Maury Pell to Peggy Pell and back to Maury.

"For God's sake, go and give her her little private pillow, will you? I'm going to drink six cocktails!"

Because he felt he had made a fine fool of himself, Maury got up and hustled about the pillow-getting. Bates poured himself another cocktail, then sat down on the sofa Maury had vacated, and mopped his brow a bit bewilderedly.

"Poor lad," said Peggy Pell in a deeply sympathetic tone. Silence.

"Comfort-loving wench," said Peggy Pell.

"Yes," said Bates.

"Doesn't that suggest anything to you, Rad?"

He shook his head sadly.

"It does to me," said Peggy. "Listen. I know the motor's rotten, but is this boat any good? I mean, could it stand a little buffeting of the elements?"

"Oh, sure." He was glad of the chance to talk. "Her hull's sound as anything. I had an expert pass on that. Sure, she'd go through any kind of a sea."



"Then it's true! You planned to meet down here!" she said. "You and

Peggy Pell looked at him out of the corner of her eye.

"I have heard," she said, "that yachts, even seventy-foot schooner yachts, can be, on the open ocean, about as uncomfortable as any place in the world—in a storm, hellishly so. How's the barometer?"

Bates crossed the room and stared at the mahogany panel where hung the ship's clock and the barometer. He tapped the glass of the barometer gently with his finger-nail. Then he turned and grinned at Peggy Pell.

"It's dropping," he said, "and we're only about ten miles from Montauk Point. Beyond that—" He broke off and gave a wavy gesture with his hand.

"Ah," said Peggy. "Hope springs eternal. By the way, isn't Montauk the place where people go sword-fishing?"

"Yes," said Radthorne.

"Better yet," said Peggy. "The world's a small place, isn't it?"

Bates gave her an odd look; then he stepped to the galley doorway. "Captain," he said, "stop mauling that poor defenseless engine. We are putting to sea."

"To sea, sir?"
Captain Peter-

sen seemed genuinely upset, as yacht captains always are when the owner suggests something. He waved his wrench. "But sir, the glass is dropping!"

"I know," said Bates. "It's swell, isn't it?"

"No sir, these boats bane hell," He bowed. "Pardon me, madam.—At sea, when there's weather."

Bates nodded to Peggy Pell, and like a prize-fighter, shook hands with himself. Peggy did likewise. Bates addressed the captain. "Are you absolutely sure of that?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Captain Petersen. "I know!"

Bates smiled at him.

"If you're wrong," he said. "I'll never forgive you."

At nine-thirty that evening the *Annabelle Lee* was ghosting along under a six-knot breeze. Dinner was over, and the after-guard were again lounging in the cockpit, but in heavy coats now, because it is cold at sea after dark, and the *Annabelle Lee* was some twenty miles offshore. Maury Pell was again stretched on the starboard cushions, Peggy on the port. Sitting very close together in the stern were Mildred and Radthorne. There was a bright slice of moon in the western sky. It lighted the long, gentle rolling swells and turned the foam of the ship's wake into snow. It fell on Mildred's corn-tassel hair and turned it to platinum. It fell on Radthorne Bates' brains and turned them to jelly. Since dinner, due to the acute embarrassment caused by Maury Pell's Great Thought, everyone had been extremely nice to everyone else—they had even been nice to Salty Mildred, who blossomed under it.

Presently Captain Petersen came aft to relieve the man at the wheel. When the sailor had gone, Petersen bent his head and addressed Bates.

"Mr. Bates," he said, "where are we going?"

Radthorne looked at him in surprise.

"You're the captain," he said. "Don't you know?"

"No sir, I do not."

"Well, if you don't," said Radthorne, "none of us do. I was sort of hoping you would. It's nice here, isn't it?"

"It'll be nice if this northerly swings around to be northeasterly!" said the captain.

"I thought it was pretty nice now," said Bates. "But you should know."

"If it does," said the captain, "we're in for it."

"I just love it the way it is, Rad," said Mildred. She groped about and took his hand. "You and I—here. No one else in all the world!"

"Except Captain Petersen," said Bates, "and the Pells and three sailors at a hundred a month apiece, and that lousy engineer and the steward and the cook."

Salty Mildred bent her beautiful head so her cheek rested against his, and turned her blue eyes up so they looked into his.

"You don't sound as if you loved me any more, Rad."

Being a gentleman, he said: "Of course I love you, Salty Mildred."

She turned pettish. "Why do you call me that?"

"Because you love yachts," said Bates.

"And you," said Salty Mildred, soothed.

"And I love you," said Bates.

"And you never loved anyone else?"

"Course not," said Bates.

"Oh, good God!" said Maury Pell, and sat up. "Must you?"

"Maury!" said Bates, reprovingly. In spite of the fact that he

wanted like anything to get rid of Salty Mildred, he couldn't for the life of him resist that curious romantic monkey-business that the deck of a yacht at night does to a man.

Mildred snuggled closer.

It was then that the sea a mile to the south of
(Please turn to page 74)

this strumpet! I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth!"



Murder in Moscow

*Wanted: a nobleman who hates the Soviets but
who can likewise play a good game of pelota.*

by Walter Duranty

Illustrated by Alfred Simpkin

I READ a magazine article not long ago in which some man said there had never been a woman detective, either in fiction or real life, because women lack logic or powers of deductive analysis—or words to that effect. Most generalities are silly, and generalities about women are sillier still; but of course this man had never heard of Hilda Petrovna, who works for the M. O. O. R. in Moscow. . . . For that matter he'd probably never heard of the M. O. O. R. itself.

The M. O. O. R. is the Moscow detective service, the criminal detective service concerned with crimes against individuals; the much better known Gay-pay-oo deals exclusively with crimes against the state. There are many crimes against the State in Russia, and so the Gay-pay-oo is heard of a great deal, with all these sensational trials of engineers for sabotage of state property and what not, which are reported in the foreign press. But there are also crimes against individuals that are not reported at all, even in the Soviet press, because the Soviet press disapproves of reporting such crimes and calls that "low bourgeois sensationalism"; so M. O. O. R., which deals with such crimes, isn't well known abroad like the Gay-pay-oo.

But those who know about M. O. O. R. think it very good at detecting crimes, and they think Hilda Petrovna is better than that. And I am one of them. I met her first when there had been a series of murders in Moscow, each of which ended with finding a naked corpse in a sack, neatly trussed up like a chicken ready to be roasted. They found them in cellars and under bridges and hidden among lumber for new buildings, all over the city. They found about thirty of them in six months; and some of them were unknown and untraced, and some were traced but unimportant; and one at least was a high official in the Commissariat of Agriculture; but all were equally naked in their sacks, and tied up with string like chickens, arms to knees.

Then one day it was announced that a certain cab-driver named Komaroff had been arrested by M. O. O. R., and I went round to M. O. O. R.'s headquarters to get the story. I had a note from the Foreign Office to one of the big M. O. O. R. executives, because a foreign reporter has to have some sort of guarantee when he visits any Soviet department; but the man to whom my note



"I came back with a patrol and found a trap door. . . . And hidden in the cellar, under some hay, was the last of Komaroff's victims, trussed up neatly in his sack."

was addressed was out, and his secretary told me, "You'd better see Comrade Gilder, who has charge of this affair, in Room 203."

I went to Room 203 and knocked, and there was a young woman with very bright eyes, blue like cornflowers under the braids of wheat-colored hair above her forehead, wearing a black leather tunic and short black skirt and high black boots. I thought, "This Gilder's a lucky guy to have a secretary like that," and asked her, very politely, whether I could see Tovarish Gilder.

She laughed and said: "Do you speak English? Because if so, you may know that Russians pronounce *H* like *G*, and I am 'Tovarish Gilda'—that is, my name is Hilda Petrovna."

She said this in perfect English, which made things easier, because while I could get by in Russian those days I was rather minus on the nuances one sometimes needs in the newspaper business.

So I told her who I was and what I'd come for, and added: "But how do you talk such good English?"

"Oh," she said, "my people were Swedish, and I was born in Riga—that is, my great-grandfather was a Swede, though after him they took Russian citizenship, but they married Swedes or German Balts. I had one Russian grandmother, and all the rest

were of foreign blood, and I had an English governess when I was a little girl."

"But you're a Communist," I said; and she answered coldly: "Of course I am—since I was seventeen."

I drew a bow at a venture. "Did you ever hear of the 'Riga Museum'?" I asked.

Hilda Petrovna went white as the paper on the desk before her, and her right hand gripped the arm of her chair till her nails and knuckles were bloodless. She licked her lips twice before she could speak, then whispered, "What do you know of that?"

It was only a whisper, but I never heard words so savagely spoken, and her eyes were hostile as bayonets.

"I have a friend," I said, "a Lettish revolutionary, he told me. They squashed his fingers in door-hinges, slowly, to make him talk, but he wouldn't. He told me about the Riga Museum."

"Damn you and your friends!" the girl cried furiously. "Why do you remind me, damn you! My brother Knut, he wouldn't



Shultz was found with a dagger in his heart, its hilt sticking out behind his left shoulder.

speak, either, but they broke him; he was broken to pieces when they sent him to Siberia, where I followed him and found him, and bought him free—to die in my arms.”

She put her head in her hands on the desk and sobbed.

She was what Edgar Wallace would have called one of the “Big Five” of M. O. O. R., which is the Soviet Scotland Yard, and I knew that. But she was a girl too, and I’d hurt her badly, without meaning to. So I didn’t stop to think, but patted her on the back and said: “I’m terribly sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you. You see, I know what pain is, myself. I had six months of it once, after a train-wreck, before they cut my leg off.”

SHE looked up at me sharply and doubtfully; then her face softened.

“I wanted to kill you,” she said, “but now I don’t. It’s all right now. . . . And why did you come to see me?”

About Komaroff, I told her; and she explained how the M. O. O. R. had tracked him. They’d examined the sacks in which his victims were left, and found that some of them had contained oats, and in one there was a baby’s diaper.

“That gave me an idea,” said Hilda Petrovna, “and I put it with another idea, that these crimes must be committed by some one who had a vehicle at his disposal; for anyone carrying sacks about Moscow would be noticed sooner or later. Next I got a map of the city, and saw that the points where the bodies were found all seemed to radiate from a common center. Then I sent

out a call to that section to look for a cart- or cab-driver who had his own horse and stable, who perhaps had been a butcher, because the bodies were trussed up like that, and who had one or more small children. They sent in four names, and we searched them all and found nothing.

“Komaroff was the last, and as this was the first big job I’ve had here, I wanted to show them. I mean that the whole point of work like mine is elimination, sifting and sifting away the unessentials, like washing dirt until only the gold is left. We’d eliminated the others and Komaroff was left. So the next day I went around with a paper from the Sanitary

Inspection Office, and talked to his neighbors. And one old woman said Komaroff’s wife was her second cousin, and one day she found her all upset, and she said that her husband had been angry with one of the children and had hanged him, a little boy about ten, in the stable, and then went out with his cab,

and she’d followed quietly because she thought he was going to beat the child, and was in time to cut him down, but hadn’t dared to say anything about it.

“That was enough for me. Mass murderers are all sadistic lunatics. I came back with a patrol and sounded every foot of that stable, and found a trapdoor. And there hidden under some hay in a cellar was the last of Komaroff’s victims, neatly trussed up in his sack.”

It was a good story, and I cabled it to the *Times*; but Hilda Petrovna wouldn’t let me use her name or mention her at all, which rather took the edge off it. Against that we’d got friendly, which is a rare and difficult thing for a foreign reporter and a Communist official. I mean that after breaking down like that, she either had to hate me or be friends, and I said as much when I was going.

“Then you really forgive me?” I said. “You don’t hate me?” She gave me her hand and looked at me straight and square. “I hate weakness,” she said, “and you have seen my weakness; but I think you understand, and you are my friend.”

THERE are few things that anyone has ever said to me which pleased me more.

I didn’t see Hilda Petrovna again for several months, but I asked about her discreetly here and there, and it seemed she stood pretty high with the party chiefs. Her brother had been exiled to Siberia in 1906, and she’d gone out there alone, six years later when she was only seventeen, and rescued him from a prison camp. “And what she paid for it you don’t need to ask,” one man told me; “but he died, and she joined up with the Bolshevik Underground Railroad system, to free our exiles and bring them back.”

“She commanded a battalion in the civil war,” said another, “which took no officer prisoners. A good shot, too—won the Fifth Army revolver prize one year. . . . Did some jobs for the Cheka, I’ve heard, and did them (Please turn to page 70)



“He looks like Count Festalfy.”



Hilda Petrovna

Kate Smith and her
pet temptation.

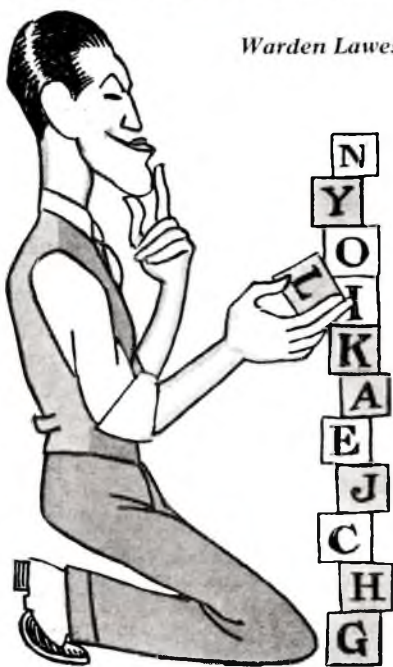


Irvin Cobb swipes apples.

The Foibles of the Great



Warden Lawes grafts matches.



George Gershwin
loves toys.



WARDEN LEWIS E. LAWES is a petty pilferer! Reverend S. Parkes Cadman is a born loafer, and Irvin Cobb says he wouldn't trust Rupert Hughes near his desk because. . . . But—to start with Lawes:

He sat in his large bright office, the walls of which display autographed pictures including those of President Roosevelt, Al Smith and Governor Lehman. He smiled, and turning his swivel chair, glanced through barred windows whence in a direct line he could see the sun impartially shining on the brilliant blue of the Hudson River, on the brown margin of the Palisades and on the dark red brick of Sing Sing's death house and the rough cement of the building that contains the one hundred-and-six-year-old cell-block, and so oddly matches the faces of its men.

He spoke softly: "Today there are twenty-three hundred men in Sing Sing; yet I have the feeling that for every prisoner now confined behind its bars, there are eight lawbreakers who should be inside the walls! The impressionable prison visitor is acutely aware of this, and senses something of that, 'There, but for the grace of God, go I!'"

"Each of us has a weak spot, some temptation we can't resist. It may be silly or it may be serious; but we've got it just the same. Look—look here!"

He leaned forward and opened the upper left-hand drawer of his desk, exhibiting the interior as if it were a valuable cache.

I saw several cardboard papers of matches topping a pile of little wooden match-boxes.

"I stole them," admitted Warden Lawes. "Faint-hearted souls call it borrowing and not returning; nevertheless, there's the proof—a drawer chock-full of match-boxes. For years I've smoked eighteen cigars a day, so you can imagine how many matches I must have stolen!"

He hesitated; then, slightly embarrassed, went on: "When it comes to pencils, I'm just as bad! I've only *bought one pencil in my whole life!* That was at a race-track! Here it is—I've had my name printed on it!" And Warden Lawes brandished a bright yellow pencil in my face.

IRVIN COBB steals too. Mr. Cobb, seated comfortably in his Park Avenue apartment, confessed that nothing on earth would ever induce him to purchase an apple!

"Of course I know such a fetish, like most of our idiosyncrasies, is a throwback to some youthful influence. As a boy in Kentucky I got all the apples I wanted for nothing, and now I feel it would practically kill me to have to buy one. So whenever I'm driving in the country, and happen to spy ripe apples dangling from a tree, I lose all moral sense, stop my car, climb over the other fellow's fence and help myself!"

"I would pay ten dollars for a bunch of hothouse grapes, but I can't part with a nickel for an apple! I think nearly everyone has an odd quirk like that. There's Rupert Hughes; take a tip from me, and never leave him standing next to your desk!"

"Why?" I asked.

Mr. Cobb answered in a dramatic whisper: "He steals rubber bands!"

Perhaps women are not as frank as men, or perhaps they have stronger wills. Sentimental, but with a canny business mind, Helen Hayes succumbs to only the most feminine weakness. Because she has had a great many responsibilities, because she has worked since childhood and does not know what a let-up means, it is not surprising that when she does go berserk, it is in a frivolous fashion.

"Bargains!" she exclaimed. "They've always been my besetting sin. I could be the best-dressed actress in the theater if I took the money I've thrown away on bargains and spent it on decent clothes. I wear the most awful hats, just because they were good buys. I've been stung with everything you can possibly think of! I'll buy things I've absolutely no use for—all they need is one feature: they must be marked down! Each time I swear will be the last; but let me read of a sensational sale, and I'm off, following it to the bitter end."

MAX BAER'S temptation has the element of tragedy. This is a revelation, for he is usually surrounded by a happy-go-lucky aura.

He towers above you, vividly healthy, as he proudly buckles the belt of a new polo coat, and he looks down at you and laughs. Although you want to dislike him for his obvious conceit, somehow you can't. So you laugh too, and you feel rather glad that he is so pleased with himself and his youth and the amazing fact that he can tap-dance, be a night-club entertainer, a vaudeville

clown, a good movie actor, a popular ladies' man, and contender for the world's heavyweight championship, all at the same time.

He sat himself on a spindle-legged chair that did not look as if it had the strength to hold him. Perilously tilting it, he talked, talked freely, with a frank air that had not a trace of self-consciousness.

"I'll bet no other boxer ever confessed to this temptation! It's smoking! After dinner I take two long puffs of a cigarette, and always before a fight! I remember just before the Schmeling fight, sitting there in my dressing-room. I grabbed a cigarette. I smoked two puffs. I had to!" He paused, adding: "I never smoked until the night Frankie Campbell died."

I must have looked puzzled.

He explained: "Until I was twenty-one, I lived an outdoor life on my father's farm in California. But I was a physical coward. Way back, even at school, I was scared to fight. I knew I was very strong. And I used to have a sort of nightmare. I could see myself striking a boy and having his head hit the pavement! I could see people crowding around and saying he was dead, and hauling me off to jail. I was afraid of jail.

"Then came my fight with Frankie Campbell. It was the night of August twenty-fifth, nineteen thirty. I'll never forget the date."

As he spoke, he leaned toward me, clinching one hamlike fist, and letting it beat the air as if to emphasize his words.

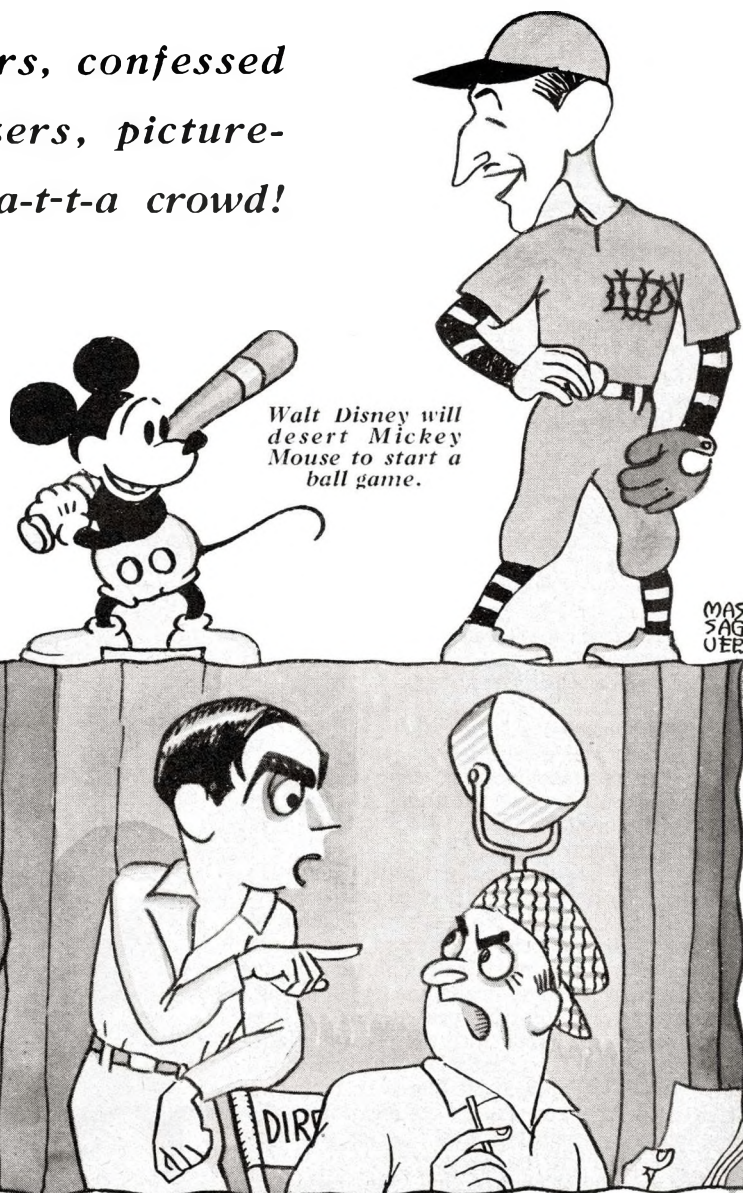
"I remember hitting him and seeing him crumple. I picked him up. He felt funny. I went back to my quarters. I planned to dress and then go over and wish him (*Please turn to page 103.*)

*Pilferers, inveterate loafers, confessed
gluttons, shameless kibitzers, picture-
snatchers, toy fiends, wh-a-a-t-t-a crowd!*

words by

Nanette Kutner

Portraits by Massaguer



George M. Cohan falls for baseball and rice pudding.

Eddie Cantor confesses himself to be a show kibitzer.

Sire Unknown

RICHARD ALLISTER FAYNE, the 3d, awoke on a fine April morning from a deep and peaceful sleep. Richard was of the Glywyn Faynes, hunting and hard-riding Marylanders; but since Richard himself had an extreme distaste for the sport, that fact was not important. This, however, was: he was in the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, and became extremely aware, as he vigorously massaged a still-sleepy skull, that the day gave promise of being different from any other day of all his life.

He turned his head to gaze across the narrow space which separated his own bed from its twin, at the occupant of the other bed.

She was very lovely, though her loveliness was hidden in the depths of the pillows. Her head, however, loosed a glorious flood of brown hair which caught little lights from the angling sunbeams.

One of her arms lay outside the billowy puff in a sweet and enchanting curve: it was white, far whiter than the leathery arms of the horse-handsome women that Richard had always known, and it was appended by quite the most dainty and the softest hand that Richard had ever seen or touched.

He fought an impulse to lean over and kiss it, but she slept so beautifully and so softly that he was loath to break the charming spell which held her. Had he so chosen, however, he had every right to do it, for the hand belonged, as did its lovely possessor, to him: she was the new Mrs. Richard Allister Fayne, the 3d—who, until nine the previous evening, had been Miss Fannybelle Boynton, of the Boston Public Library.

That was where they had met weeks ago. Richard, in his capacity as manager of the New England branch of Fayne Fishing Industries, Baltimore, was in search of textual data on lobster-meat packing. He had watched Fannybelle's pretty fingers flutter through a card-index until they reached "*CRUST-crustaceans*," and then, when she looked up at him with her humid brown eyes, had promptly forgotten all about his mission.

IN succeeding visits Richard was courteously but charmingly persuasive; and that was why last night—ah, last night!—they had found themselves parked by the sea-wall at Swampscott, watching the surf pound in, following a heavy spring blow. It had been glorious. The moon rose and lavishly splattered the flying froth with pale iridescent silver. The little dying wind softly caressed them. They had turned, mutely, to one another in sheer joy at the spectacle; and then had shared, suddenly, a breathless and exquisite kiss.

Richard had held her face in his shoulder away from the moon and the sea, that he might, for a moment, have her all to himself—and had said:

"I love you, Fannybelle. I want to marry you—now! Tonight!"

"Oh, Richard, no!"—faintly.

"Yes!"

"No!"—a whisper by now.

"Why not?"

"Horses, mostly."

"What do you mean—horses mostly?"

"Me, an assistant librarian. You, a Maryland Fayne. What do I know about horses? Nothing, except that they terrify me."

Richard laughed.

"Darling," he said happily, "both of us! Do you think I came North purely to pack lobster-meat for my uncle? No, ma'am. I came to get away from horses. I've hated them since the day I was six, and Uncle William put me on one bareback and made me stick it out. Year after year! For his pride's sake, so long as I lived there, I rode with the Glywyn Hunt. But I hated it. Then, last winter, when I found there was a job open in his Northern branch, I insisted on having it. It got me away from the two things I dislike the most: horses and oysters; they're both too slippery."

"But," Fannybelle protested, "he might not like you to get married now."

"Nonsense! Why, many's the time he's said

to me: 'Richard, my boy,' he's said, 'Richard, you ought to get married.' That's what he's said."

"Really?"

"Absolutely!"

"But he might not approve of me."

Richard did not add that Uncle William always qualified his sentiments about Richard's marrying by saying: "Take the Bartholomew girls of the Eastern Shore. Any one of 'em'd make a fine wife for a master of foxhounds."

Instead, Richard drew Fannybelle closer and murmured with vast conviction: "How could he help but approve of you?" and kissed her again to answer the question. The surf boomed in some more; the moon shone on; the kisses by now were becoming awfully important.

"Oh, Richard!" breathed Fannybelle after a moment or so; and Fannybelle, being Bostonian, was not in the habit of breathing her remarks; she usually uttered them in neat, clipped syllables. The words, and her manner of speaking them, seemed to galvanize Richard into action: he kicked the starter.

"Where?" Fannybelle asked in a tremulous voice.

"New Hampshire," Richard announced. "And a hurry-up wedding license."

Hurry-up wedding licenses cost money in any State, particularly in an eminently respectable early-to-bed State such as New Hampshire. Surely a J. P. routed rudely from his fireside must have ample compensation. And jewelry-store owners, who open a shop after business hours, may be excused if they add twenty per cent to the cost of a ring. There had to be flowers, too. Richard insisted on that. And then nothing would do but a luxurious midnight supper served in their room upon their return to Boston. After the last servant had been fed, Richard Allister Fayne, the 3d, realized suddenly that he had less than four dollars to his name, in all the world.

And that was why, when the lights were turned down and Fannybelle had fallen so sweetly asleep, he had turned them up again and stealthily composed and sent the following telegram, collect:

WILLIAM ALLISTER FAYNE SECOND ESQ

FAYNES ACRES

GLYWYN MARYLAND

TONIGHT TOOK MOMENTOUS STEP STOP NAME FANNYBELLE STOP MOST BEAUTIFUL CREATURE IN WORLD STOP I DID THIS BECAUSE SHE WAS OUT OF SHEER LOVE AND BY GLORIOUS FAITH WILLING GO IT WITH ME UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES STOP COULD I HOPE FOR SLIGHT ADVANCE AS COSTS MONEY TAKE THIS SORT STEP STOP IF YOU REFUSE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE AS I HAVE COURAGE AND SO HAS SHE AND WHAT WITH HERS WE WILL WIN IN SPITE OF ALL OBSTACLES HOPE YOU APPROVE AFFECTIONATELY

RICHARD

Richard sighed. *Would* Uncle William approve? He doubted it. As if in answer to his thoughts, the phone rang.

"This is the desk, Mr. Fayne. A telegram for you."

"Send it up," directed Richard with definite apprehension.

"What was that, darling?"

Richard gave a slight start. Fannybelle was awake, and was drawing, with a graceful hand, the lovely hair away from her clear brown eyes. How slim and delicate, he noted, a girl's wrist could be when unthickened by constant handling of reins.

"Hi, honey!" he said, and added: "A telegram from Uncle William. I wired him last night after you'd dropped asleep."

"Oh, dear!" she said in some alarm. "What did you tell him?"

"About three dollars' worth of you—how lovely you are both by the sea and by sunrise."

Fannybelle blushed.

"You've never seen me by sunrise—before this."

"True; but I imagined, my sweet."

Fannybelle smiled.

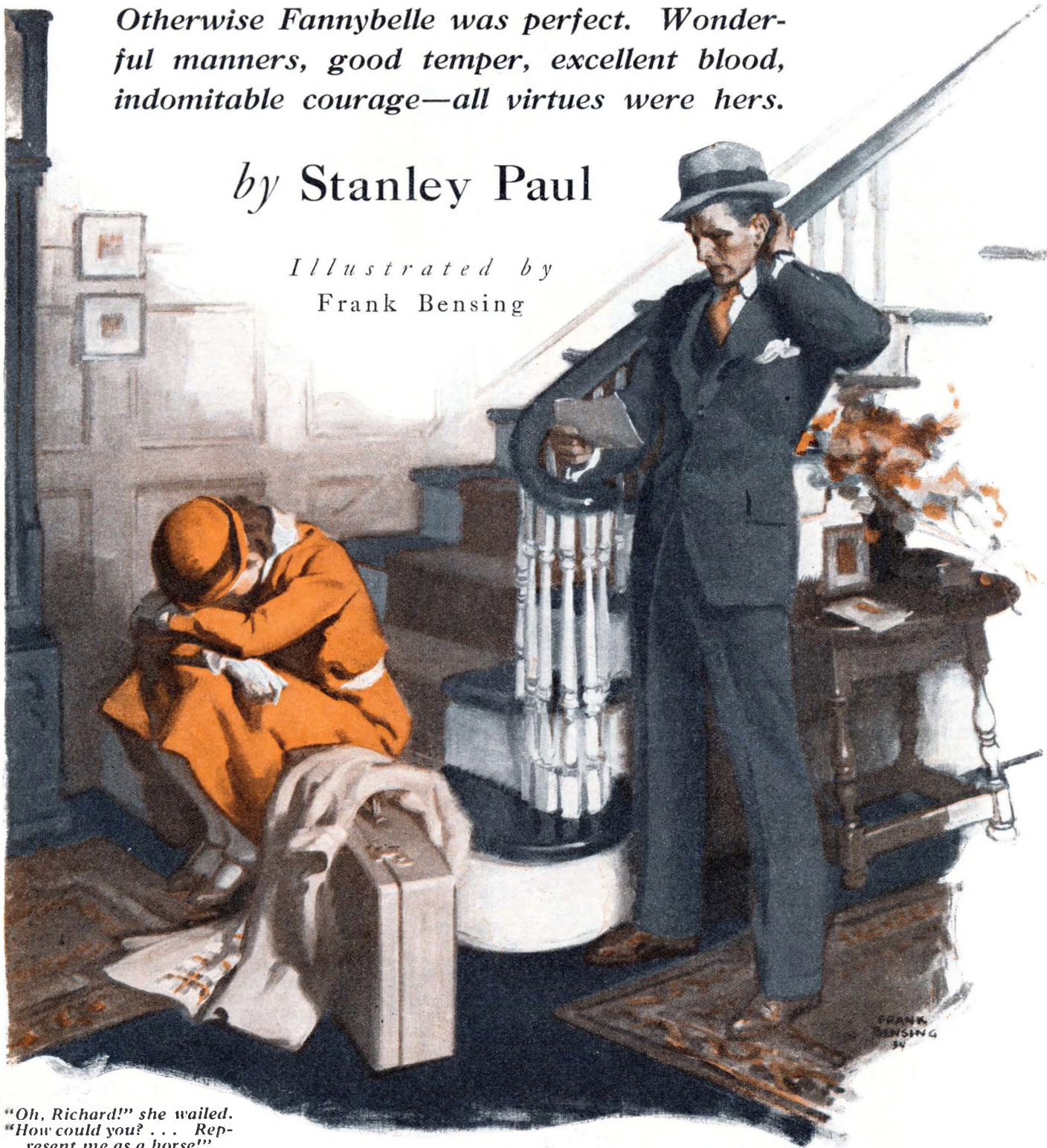


Fannybelle

Otherwise Fannybelle was perfect. Wonderful manners, good temper, excellent blood, indomitable courage—all virtues were hers.

by Stanley Paul

Illustrated by
Frank Bensing



"Oh, Richard!" she wailed.
"How could you? . . . Represent me as a horse!"

"Expectations fulfilled?" she asked.

"Surpassed!"

A knock sounded on the door; Richard went there and returned with a yellow envelope. He opened it and looked, with feigned cheeriness, at his wife. She seemed to sense the question.

"Go ahead," she said. "My chin is up."

"And a cute little chin it is," said Richard. "All right, then. Here goes."

And he read aloud:

"Dear boy: So delighted impossible express feelings so will indicate them by wiring you five thousand soon as bank opens morning. Stop. Spend it all on Fannybelle—"

Fannybelle uttered a faint little shriek and sat up straight in her bed.

"My goodness!" she said amazedly.

Richard grinned, and went on:

"Always felt your instincts would lead you to turf and timber—"

"Heh! Heh!" Richard said nervously, detecting a familiar idiom. "There he goes. You see, that's an old Fayne expression for marry and settle down, dear."

"Oh! How quaint! Go on."

"Do not doubt your inherited good judgment warrants description of her as beautiful creature. Stop—"

"Did you say that to him?" asked Fannybelle fondly.

"Of course. Aren't you beautiful?"

"Sweet! Go ahead."

Richard scowled in some perplexity as he continued to read:

Suicide Susan was saddled but by no means passive. Richard approached gingerly.



"Sheer love her dam wonderful manners good temper—" "Well," said Fannybelle, "what can he mean by that?" "Darling," said Richard hurriedly, "if you knew Uncle William, you'd understand. You see, he's very excitable, and after all, the poor old boy must have had quite a shock when he got my wire. I can just picture him—in his nightie, perhaps—spluttering into the phone at the telegraph-operator, and all choked up—he chokes over things—and coughing and mad as the dickens because she couldn't understand him. Practically frothing at the mouth, I don't doubt, and shouting into the receiver half the time. That's what I mean."

"But what does *he* mean?" "Oh!" Richard essayed a gay chuckle which didn't quite come off. "He probably meant that I was to be damned sure and love you, especially if you have good manners and a good temper." "Well," Fannybelle said a little uncertainly, "it's a kind thought, I presume, although I'd call it grotesquely expressed."

"YES," Richard agreed, and folded the telegram in his hands. "Aren't you glad, though, that Uncle William likes you?" "He didn't say that," remarked Fannybelle. "Darling! He's sending you five thousand dollars." "Ye-e-s," Fannybelle conceded. "But finish it, dear." "Finish what?" asked Richard. "The telegram. There's more, isn't there?"

Who could deceive Fannybelle on a bright April morning? Or deny her anything? Not Richard, anyway. He unfolded the message again, and fearfully resumed his reading:

"Her sire unknown to me but doubtless good blood—" "I suppose," Fannybelle interjected, "that he concedes that my father may have been a gentleman?" "Of course, dear. Although it isn't a concession; it's just Uncle William's—er—peculiar phraseology."

"Continue," said Fannybelle noncommittally. "Glad she has courage and note your enthusiasm concerning withers. Stop. How is her back? Stop. How are her legs? Stop—"

"Stop!" echoed Fannybelle. "The impertinent—the vulgar—the—"

"Sweetheart, listen! You don't understand. There's a family legend about Fayne brides of Colonial days. They were all—that is to say, there were several unfortunate choices. Grandfather Vicky Fayne, for instance, married a girl who aged and withered before her time. His uncle, another Fayne of distinction, had married a girl with lumbago; and Great-aunt Gwendolyn Fayne was a beauty to the world, but a disappointment to Great-uncle Tuniper Fayne, because she was bowlegged. That's why Uncle William's so concerned about you. That's why he's never married. That's why he hopes that you, the newest Fayne bride, do not run true to the old Fayne tradition."

He paused, anxious and out of breath, yet somewhat proud of his own imagination. "Well," said Fannybelle, "it's none of his business, and I think it's terribly personal; but you may inform him, if you wish, that I have none of those faults, so far as I know."

"I shall, dear. Now let's finish it."

Richard plunged ahead through the last few lines, determined to stop for no one:

"Give her an affectionate slap on the flank for me and feed her well. Always knew you would make good M F H. Love—Uncle William."

"There!" said Richard hopefully.

Fannybelle looked at him gravely.

"You know," she said. "I've been thinking it over. I believe your uncle thinks that you've bought a horse."

"A horse! A horse? Why, darling, don't be absurd."

"Then how," demanded Fannybelle, "can he say such things? Slap me on the flank—"

"That's just jocular affection, dear."

"It's an advanced stage, then. And feed me well—"

"He's anxious that I support you decently, that's all."

"Well, what then, is an M F H?"

Richard had a divine inspiration.

"Man for Her!" he elucidated.

"How weird! He doesn't know me. Under those circumstances, how can he make such an assertion?"

"He has hunches," said Richard quite truthfully. "Besides, he just knew I couldn't marry anyone but a fil—I mean girl who'd deserve the best in love and adoration."

"You're sweet, Richard," Fannybelle dropped a quick, soft hand on his. "You can't be at all like your uncle. And yet any man who wires five thousand dollars to an unknown bride of his nephew's must have something nice about him."

"That's right, dear."

"And I suppose, if one could set his—er—vulgarity down to his association with horses—and probably his vocabulary is limited to horse-talk—one could overlook some things, couldn't one?"

"One would be gracious, if one could," Richard suggested.

"All right. I'll be gracious. Give me the phone."

"What for, dear?"

"I want to wire him and thank him."

"Now, pet, let me do that. He'll get a much bigger kick out of having you thank him in person."

"When will that be?" asked Fannybelle.

"Sometime," said Richard vaguely; then he spoke into the mouthpiece: "Western Union, please."

He nearly set the phone down while he was dictating the address; for it occurred to him, suddenly, that he was really doing a dishonorable thing; at least, he was consciously continuing a duplicity that Uncle William had unknowingly instigated. No, by Jove! He'd not do it! He'd return the money and face the music! Just as he was about to execute this noble about-face, Fannybelle spoke.

She said, dreamily: "There's the sweetest little Colonial in Topsfield that can be had for two thousand down. Oh, it's lovely, darling! We'll be so happy there this summer. You can drive to your office in less than an hour—" Her voice trailed off.

RICHARD pictured Fannybelle in a little Colonial, himself coming home to her there each night: it was altogether too much for him.

"Yes," he said into the mouthpiece. "that's right. Fayne's Acres. And here's the message: 'Elated your attitude money order highly appreciated stop Fannybelle sends sweet whicker of gratitude across the miles between.' Sign it, 'Richard,' please. Thank you."

"I send what?" asked Fannybelle, as he replaced the receiver. "Whicker, darling. Another Fayneism—meaning kiss."

"Oh!"

"And now, sweet, how about breakfast? Shall I order it sent up?"

Fannybelle composed herself in fascinating languor and lifted her lovely arms toward Richard.

"Order something," she directed, "that takes a long time to prepare. Then come give your wife a great big sweet whicker."

LIFE in Topsfield with Fannybelle was, in the following weeks, too sweet for description. Not until May was well on did the first cloud appear on the horizon of Richard's ecstasy. Perhaps it was unfair to designate such a charming and courteous gentleman as Mr. Norman Winslow a dark cloud; but at any rate he appeared at the door of the little Colonial one afternoon and introduced himself to Richard. Fannybelle, fortunately, was in the kitchen.

"I'm an old hunting friend of your uncle's," said Mr. Winslow. "A day or so ago I had a letter from him asking me to look you up; said you had a new filly by the name of Fannybelle."

Richard, who until these words were uttered had held the door cordially open, now shut it quickly and stepped outside.

"How do you do," he said nervously. "See here, let's you and me walk about a bit."

Mr. Winslow glanced around the tiny yard.

"By all means," he agreed, and fell in step with his host.

"Are you an old friend of my uncle's? Could I speak to you as an old friend?"

"Well, I rode with your uncle in the Eighties."

"It's this way, then: You can give me away if you like. I have no filly. I mean to say, Fannybelle isn't a filly. She's my wife."

"Who is?"

"Mrs. Fayne—I mean Fannybelle is Mrs. Fayne's name."

"Oh!" said Mr. Winslow vaguely.

"You see, sir, I married very suddenly—wired my uncle the same night; and he, because he's so enthusiastically a horseman, got it all mixed up. He thinks I bought a filly. And he sent me five

thousand to train her with. I should have returned it—I know that. But I didn't have a sou marqué, sir. Couldn't even have paid our hotel bill. And she was horribly sweet."

"Who was?" asked the perplexed Mr. Winslow.

"Fannybelle—I mean Mrs. Fayne."

At that moment a sound reached their ears from the back porch. Involuntarily they both peered through the leaves. Fan-

nybelle was leaning out over the rail hanging a cloth on the clothesline. Most people are awkward when engaged in this task; but Fannybelle wasn't. Her profile, limned in the westering sun, was divine.

"Classic!" murmured Mr. Winslow; and then, as she turned and walked indoors, he added: "Thoroughbred, too. Oh, I beg your pardon, Fayne. I was thinking out loud."

"Quite all right, sir. I agree with you. Won't you come in and meet her?"

"I'd be charmed, I'm sure," Mr. Winslow said.

A half-hour later Richard saw him to the gate. They paused there for a moment. Mr. Winslow's (*Please turn to page 107*)



"Poor Uncle William!" she said.
 "You didn't know." She knelt and
 cradled Richard's head in her arms.
 "And we decided to forgive Richard.
 Don't you remember?"

Not *too* Much

*According to the first re
Contest, America likes
comedians and orches
use for gentlemen with*

by Drew



THE first few counties have been heard from in REDBOOK's Perfect Program Contest, and the early returns would seem to indicate that popular music and comedy acts still hold first place in the hearts of the radio public. Apparently those commercial sponsors who go serenely on, year after year, offering their audiences a dance band and a funny man, know very well what they're about.

Joe Penner, Burns and Allen, Jack Benny and Mary Livingston, and Will Rogers were most frequently mentioned among the comedians in the first batch of letters received. The amateur program-makers seemed to feel that no hour's entertainment would be satisfactory without at least one of these gagsters. One or two of the more fanatic comedy fans even demanded that all of them be included on the perfect program. Gracie Allen may be surprised to hear that she was chosen by one reader, not as a comedian, but as a singer. Ed Wynn, Jack Pearl, Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, the Aces of "Easy Aces," and Phil Baker were others selected to handle the comedy relief.

As for the orchestra leaders—lo, Paul Whiteman's name led all the rest! Practically everyone insisted that he furnish at least part of the music on the perfect program. Wayne King was second in popularity, with Guy Lombardo a close third. Several of the contestants, with a nice catholicity of taste, shared the orchestral honors of their programs between Leopold Stokowski, Arturo Toscanini or Walter Damrosch, and such popular conductors as Isham Jones, Gustave Haenschen and Fred Waring.

So far, there is a sturdy minority which holds out for symphonic music, and another, equally determined, which wants a solid hour of operatic vocal selections. Most of the program-makers, however, have striven for variety in the types of entertainment offered.

The singers who have, to date, received the most mention are Bing Crosby, Jessica Dragonette, Ruth Etting, Lawrence Tibbett,

Above, at left, is that well-known couple of stage and radio—Jack Benny, master of ceremonies, and his wife Mary Livingston; at right is the genial announcer James Wallington; below (in circle) is depicted the suave and smiling orchestra-leader Guy Lombardo.



Rav Lee Jackson

Virginia Rea and Nino Martini. The Boswell sisters, the Mills brothers and the Revelers were included in many shows.

The day seems to have passed when the radio-announcer was one of the prize attractions of any self-respecting program. There was a time, in the younger days of radio, when the announcer was quite as important and quite as much publicized as any prima donna. His sun seems to have set. At any rate, at least half of the programs thus far submitted have not even mentioned the announcer. The feeling seems to be that any man with a good voice who doesn't talk too much about the product advertised, will do.

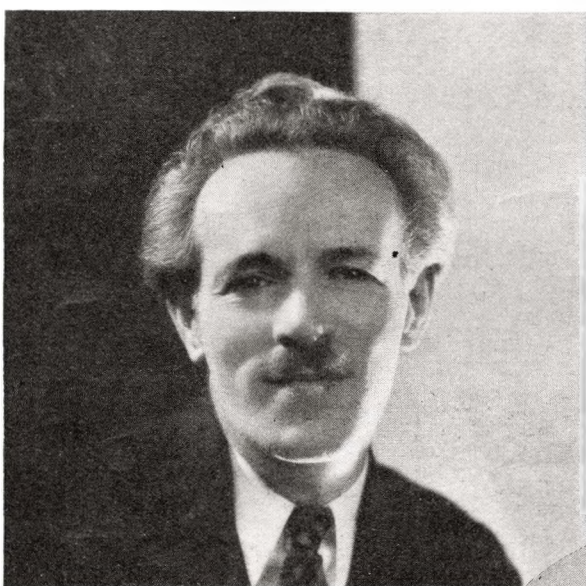
It may be true that the growing resentment against overlong commercial plugs is a factor in the waning popularity of the announcer, who is forced to become nothing more or less than an air-salesman. Sponsors would be smart to realize that the longer their sales-talk, the greater the probability it will be tuned out by a large part of the audience.

One type of advertising that listeners don't object to is the genial spoofing of the product done so successfully by Jack Benny. A comedian can get the trade name over twenty times in half an hour without offending those same members of the audience who would immediately switch to another station at a minute-and-a-

Talk, Please!

turns of Redbook's Radio singers and crooners, tra leaders, but has little a gift of fluent speech.

Kent



At right, above, are the inimitable George Burns and Gracie Allen; at left is David Ross, whose renditions of poetry have delighted thousands; below (in circle) is Wayne King, the orchestra-leader who specializes in soft and sensuous dance rhythms.



Maxwell Sherman

half high-powered sales-talk at the beginning or end of the program.

The announcers who did receive mention were Alois Havrilla, Milton Cross, David Ross, Ted Husing, James Wallington and Graham McNamee. In one letter there was the suggestion that Alexander Woollcott be engaged as master of ceremonies, and in another, the plea to have Rudy Vallée confine his efforts to the m. c. job. Deems Taylor seems to be gaining steadily in popularity in this rôle. The only real announcer enthusiast of the lot was the reader who included nine different ones in his hour on the air.

In an early letter received a reader insisted not only on no advertising talk, but on no station announcements during the entire hour. She wanted her program to be "soothing," and felt that such interruptions broke the spell. Having engaged (theoretically) Ozzie Nelson and his orchestra, Joe Penner, Will Rogers and Gracie Allen in "minute news flashes," and a master of ceremonies named "Blubber," this young woman comments that she would take any money left over and hand it to a nationally popular comedian whose name (with an eye to the laws of libel) we shall not mention, and tell him "to skip the country before it's too late." Apparently she doesn't care much for the man.

Not many of the contestants, thus far, included dramatic sketches in their hour's entertainment. Those who did were, in most cases, anxious to have stars of the motion pictures brought before the microphone. Helen Hayes was mentioned more often than anyone else, though the names of John Barrymore, George Arliss, Edward G. Robinson, Robert Montgomery and Warner Baxter appeared several times. The type of dramatic offering preferred was seldom specified.

The least popular types of radio entertainment, according to the letters received up to the present, are band music, organ music and talk. The United States Army Band and the Goldman ensemble each had one mention. Another contestant put organ solos on his program without specifying any particular organist. Edwin C. Hill wins the talk honors up till now; and Phillips Lord, Josephine Gibson, Boake Carter, Walter Winchell and Lowell Thomas come out with honorable mention. Those speakers who received only one vote apiece were (believe it or not) Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mae West and Charles Evans Hughes. Do you wonder that the program departments of the networks end up in State institutions after trying to determine What the Public Wants?

Not one reader who has written us to date has mentioned children's programs. In view of the great furor created by parent-teachers associations and women's clubs in recent months, about the vicious influence of mystery-adventure-blood-and-thunder entertainment offered to the youngest generation, this seems worth commenting upon. It seems odd that all the parents who have protested so vehemently against the radio entertainment now offered their children should remain silent when given an opportunity to voice their objections. . . .

The rest of the letters submitted in the Perfect Program Contest will be read and judged in time for the winners to be announced in the October issue of REDBOOK.



INSULT!

I HAVE this story from Penny herself; she told it to me one Sunday afternoon in her very charming apartment. A fire blazed on the hearth; dusk shadowed the world outside—and disquiet filled the room: what Penny feels generally fills that room. She sat gazing into the fire, looking white and delicate and hostile. I sat gazing at her, and wondering where she had known the correct Mr. Blakesmith, how well, and above all, why she had so brutally snubbed him half an hour ago.

We had been strolling in the fading winter sunshine. Penny had paused for a moment at a shop window—a tall and lovely young woman breathless before some lace and spangles or some such glittering what-not. Blakesmith, turning up the street, had seen only her back. "Ah," he had hailed me, pausing. Penny had turned as we shook hands. I had begun: "Miss Burke, may I introduce—"

"No!" Penny had interrupted. She had paled, and he had reddened. I'd had barely time to close my gaping mouth before I'd been walking on beside a Penny, who'd had nothing more to say, and nothing to see, other than some fixed point straight ahead of her.

She still had not spoken. Neither had I. The matter, I was certain, derived from no ordinary encounter in the past. I had seen Penny cruel before, because it was necessary or because she was weary. But the vengeful bite in that "No!" the savage thrust of her brief dark glance—that was unfamiliar. That, I found myself thinking, was the impotent cruelty of a woman who has once been—perhaps too kind? Impossible. Penny's fire, and this man's profound indolence! Penny's greed for life, and his polite evasion of it! I could picture them meeting at some smart function, dancing conspicuously together. Penny vivid and charming, Blakesmith very bony, very tall, groomed to the last hair. I could fancy him sending her flowers, taking her to smart crowded places after the theater, displaying her, as it were, reverently. He liked nothing better than to be seen with a pretty woman; Penny, a celebrated actress to boot, would have brought out the best in him. A chap harmless enough, smooth, not unamusing—the very last man, I should have sworn, to leave any mark whatever on a girl like Penny Burke.

"I met that man once before," said Penny, breaking the silence. "He insulted me. That was five years ago. Five years and five months." She passed her tongue along the edge of her teeth as though testing their sharpness. She looked for the moment all her thirty years, and more. "Do you know George and Cora



"I say," his voice boomed, "that the best way to identify one's self with a lovely

Daniels?" she said abruptly. "No," I replied. "Or a girl—by the name of Curtis? Rachel Curtis." "No," I said again. She frowned wickedly into the fire, then turned to me. An odd smile touched her lips; it seemed to mock at herself. "I must be getting old," she said, "or I shouldn't be telling you this story."

THIS happened in the spring of Penny's twenty-fifth year—long before I knew her, sometime before anyone had heard of her. She had by no means made her mark in the theater yet. And for the moment she was by no means sure she ever would. That was unlike Penny; it was due to the fact that she was tired, tired to her marrow. She had divorced Burke not long before; she had been unable to land a part for months; she was hard up, underweight, and fairly gasping with hate.

She hated principally the roar and crush of the city; she hated the young spring that was wasting itself on dusty brick; she hated the thought of putting foot into one more agent's or manager's office. Whereupon, as if she had prayed instead of hating, Cora Rutledge turned up out of the past, and asked her to spend the spring and summer at her country-house in Connecticut.

They had been at the same boarding-school, lost track of one another afterward, met this day by purest chance in the thick of a traffic tangle. Penny, haggard and fierce, was thrusting forward this way and that, and getting nowhere. Cora, small, plump

Another vivid short story by the gifted new writer who gave you "Celebrity's Wife."

by Leonora Kaghan



thing is to love and be loved by it. Yes, love and be damned by it, if need be!"

and amiable, drifted with the current and landed smack against Penny's ribs. They cried out; they embraced. They discovered before they got out of the jam that each had been married, and that Cora still was, to one George Daniels. The rest came out over the teacups in a quiet restaurant: Penny's divorce, her career, the sore throat she was just getting over, a dress she had got at an amazing bargain, a part she had just missed landing.

Cora, still the shy reserved creature she had been in her girlhood, beamed gently and stuck to essentials. Her husband was an engineer. They had an apartment on Sixtieth Street, and a rambling old house in the country. She was leaving the following week to spend the season there. She painted—she had always, Penny remembered, been sketching at school. She did nothing at Shady Hill (her country-house) but paint and loaf; there were no neighbors to speak of, no social life at all. And it would be nice, she observed in her charming hesitant way, if Penny were to spend a few months with her.

"I'd like to paint you if, it wouldn't bore you to sit." "Bore me to sit!" echoed Penny, as in a dream. "It might be lonely for you," went on Cora. "George comes up week-ends, but we probably sha'n't have other company. We'll be alone." "God!" was all Penny could say. She all but addressed Cora, who, as if she were asking her to an informal dinner, was thus inviting her to heaven.



Illustrated by M. L. Bower

She met George Daniels the following evening. He was a friendly chap, rather short and stocky, not unattractive despite moist begging eyes and a rather sullen mouth. He appeared to adore Cora; he appeared eager that Cora's friend should like him. He had perhaps a little too much to say.

A LITTLE too much to say! Cora left town as she'd planned; a week later her husband drove Penny up to join her. Shady Hill was seventy miles away—for seventy miles, the man's voice thrummed in Penny's ears. Now muted by the roar of the motor, now rising hotly above it—there was not a moment's rest from it. Penny let her face go blank; minor sighs and hostile glances escaped her. In vain. A talker, Cora's husband, a hardened talker. He talked to you, at you, through you—it was all the same to him. Tired eyes fixed on the flying road, he plowed on remorselessly—about his work, his Cora, his loneliness with Cora away, the people he saw whom he otherwise bothered little with. Dexter Blakesmith, for example.

"You don't know Dex? Lord, everybody knows him. Pokes a long nose into every set in town. Does nothing else. Loafs. Lives like a prince on Lord knows what. Sells somebody's painting, sells somebody's play, sells somebody's great-grandmother's lavalliere—" "He sounds," said Penny briefly, "like a very busy man." "Dex!" cried George, affronted at this defense of his friend. "Dex," he repeated, his tone dismissing Dex not only as a busy man but as any man at all.

Thus was Blakesmith first presented to Penny.

FINALLY they arrived, and she escaped, to a chintz-hung sunny room in a far wing of the house. The bay window framed a lovely and various world—hills rising in the distance, fields flowering, a winding path that slid into the dark shut woods. For as long as she wished, for as long as she needed it, this world was hers. Long days in the sun. Nights—all this beauty hushed and deepened. Solitude—not a soul to remind her of old heartaches, not a soul to offer her new ones. She drew in the pure air deeply, saw herself in a mellow vision, well and strong and sure again. . . .

She came down to the terrace presently, having had a bath and a nap and a change of costume. "Ah," George greeted her in high spirits, "that's a pippin of a dress you have on." "It's a sweater and skirt," Penny smiled. "It would look," said George simply and loudly, "wonderful on Cora." (Please turn to page 65)

by Virginia Dale

Illustrated by
Arthur William Brown

Men Not Working



"I'm so thrilled," Jean was reporting breathlessly.

"DON," Dorothy's voice rose brightly over the breakfast table to her son. "would you mind driving me over to the Palmers' this afternoon? About three-thirty, I think." She turned kindly to explain to her father-in-law: "We're going to have a little bridge."

Old man Griswold grunted behind his newspaper. Dorothy lifted an eyebrow in the direction of Don. The rising brow meant: "It's very hard for us to be here. If only Grandfather could be more sympathetic." Keeping the voice she had always been told was charming, on a light conversational tone, Dorothy went on determinedly: "Will half after three be all right for you, Donny dear?"

Don said: "Yes, of course, Mum."

Old Griswold lowered his paper and peered around the table.

"Is there something you want, Grandfather?" she asked.

"I'll trouble you for another cup of coffee, Dorothy."

She took the cup and lifted the heavy silver pot. "Oof!" she laughed. "That's a hot and heavy thing. You know, Grandfather, at home we always had a percolator on the table. You just had to turn the little thingabob, and—" She handed back the cup. "How about you, Don? Just a drop more?"

Don muttered, "No, thanks." His dark eyes stared moodily across the sunlit room, out through the long windows where the shining green of midsummer seemed to catch and hold the shifting breeze. His gaze rested on the smooth clipped lawn and then traveled back, unseeing, to the breakfast-room again. His slim, athletic young body was slightly slumped in his chair, as if he were very, very tired.

"Don dear, you don't eat a thing lately," Dorothy worried. "Breakfast always used to be your best meal!" She turned again to her father-in-law with a faint air of politely including him in the conversation because he was, in a manner of speaking, her host. "I remember before Donny went to college and before George passed on, how George always said that Don had the morning appetite of a stevedore. Oh, dear—"

For a moment the memory of her husband held her. But was it George, or merely all that had gone along with the time when George was there? "I think of him so often lately," she murmured, not remembering at all those first relieved, almost completely happy three years of her widowhood, those three years before, as everyone milestone time nowadays, the Depression. "If poor George could see us now!" Dorothy went on, pensively spreading marmalade. "He always thought he'd left Don and me so well provided for." She smiled bravely at her son. "Well, better people than we have had to suffer. And," she added with the least possible glance at old man Griswold, "through no fault of their own." After all, Grandfather had said some rather unnecessary things when he first had learned she had put all that George had left into some "perfectly sound stocks"—that weren't, it developed, perfectly sound.

Don struck a match for a cigarette, flicking it afterward carelessly into his saucer. Old Griswold put down his cup.

"And here we are, a burden on you, Grandfather," Dorothy said softly as one wishing to be gallantly contradicted.

"Not at all."

Dorothy pushed back her plate, leaning white elbows on the table. "Well, Donny, what are you doing today?"

There was a moment's silence in the little room. Finally: "Oh, nothing particular. Same old thing."

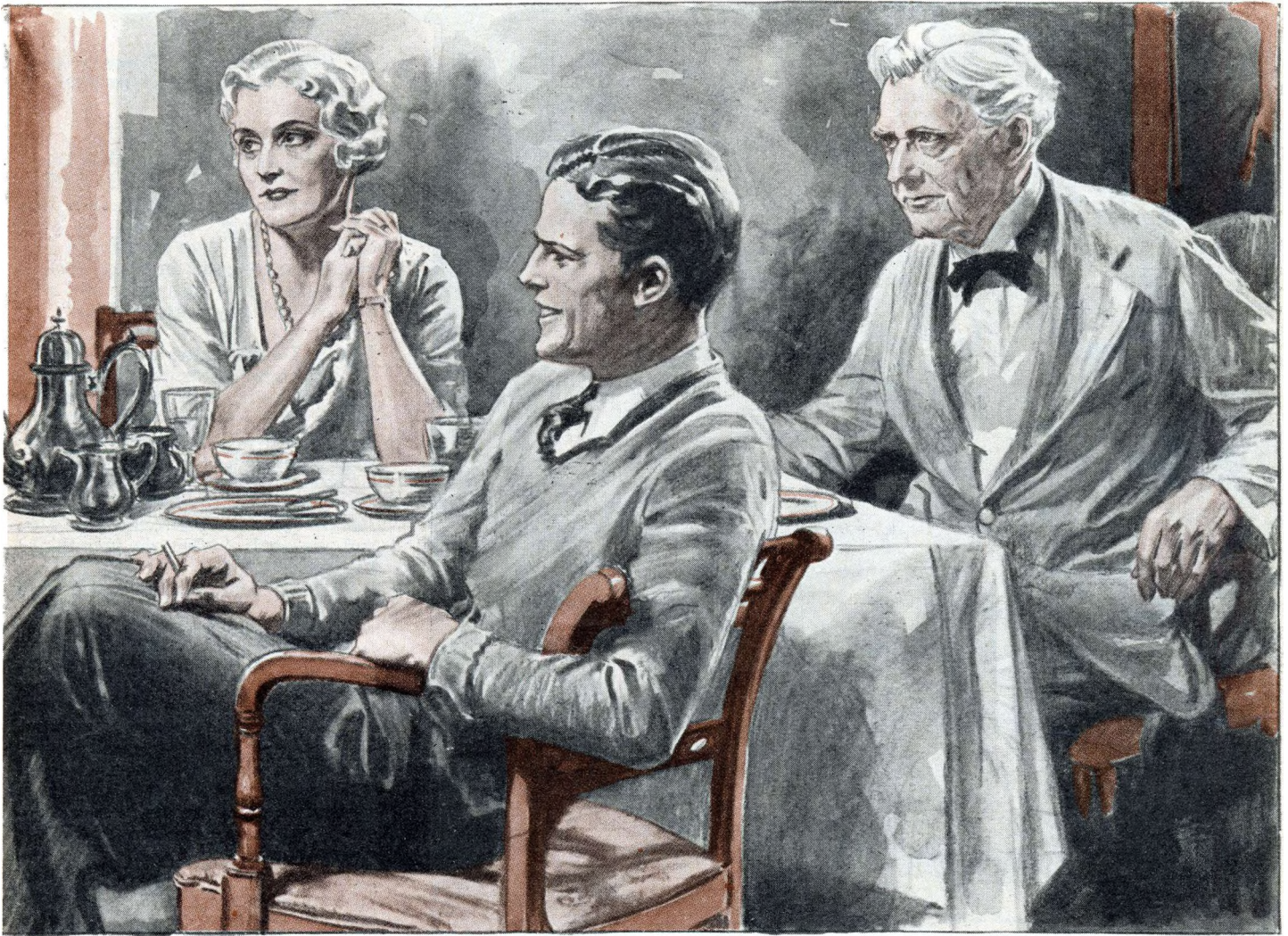
Something he had read somewhere popped into old Griswold's mind: most men lead lives of quiet desperation. He looked quickly at his grandson. Ah, but young Don wasn't desperate. That was the trouble! He looked—the old man fumbled in his brain for a word—futile. That was it. Futile and comfortably relaxed in his futility. He was accepting it without desperation. The old man's hands tightened on his serviette beneath the table. A sense of impending danger swept over him.

"I WANT to get the new curtains put up in my room right after breakfast," Dorothy was saying. She would find words, old Griswold thought, in the face of anything. "And Donny, it makes me so dizzy to stand on stepladders, I was wondering— Would you? I could tell you about getting the gathers straight—"

"All right, Mum."

Old man Griswold raised a leathery hand sharply. He felt a little sick. Driving his mother hither and yon, hanging curtains—what sort of life was that for a boy of twenty-five? "When

Most men lead lives of quiet desperation, but the trouble with young Don was that he was accepting his defeat without desperation. He looked futile, and comfortably relaxed in his futility.



"What do you think? I've got a job! . . . I don't get paid or anything. But oh, Lord, it's something to do!"

I was his age, I was hustling around John Mead's feed-store from dawn till sunset," Don's grandfather thought. "George was born. I did bookkeeping for the bank, nights, to eke things out. Maybe there wasn't any world depression, but this town was cram full o' boys who said there wasn't any opportunities."

"Oh, this recovery—" he heard Dorothy say as if she could read his thoughts, as if she were offering the now stale explanation for her son.

Old man Griswold did not answer. Even at the depths of things, he had felt, unreasonably, that his grandson should have wangled a job from somewhere, somehow. And now even more that sense of danger, danger for Don, overwhelmed him.

The boy took another cigarette from his little packet. He looked at it as if he wasn't sure of wanting it, and then, with an "Oh, well" expression, he put it between his lips. From outside there came the whirr of a lawn-mower.

"Who's doing that Dorothy?"

"Why, it's that little colored boy, Grandfather, who shoveled snow last winter. He came around yesterday and wanted to cut the lawn for fifty cents."

"Thought *you* were going to keep the grass in trim, Don."

Dorothy flushed. But old Griswold took time to notice that Don himself only shrugged briefly. It was his mother who bristled into an answer. "I don't think it's important, Grandfather. After all, fifty cents—" She began on a new angle. "In these difficult

times I think one has to think about helping others. That little negro probably needed the money."

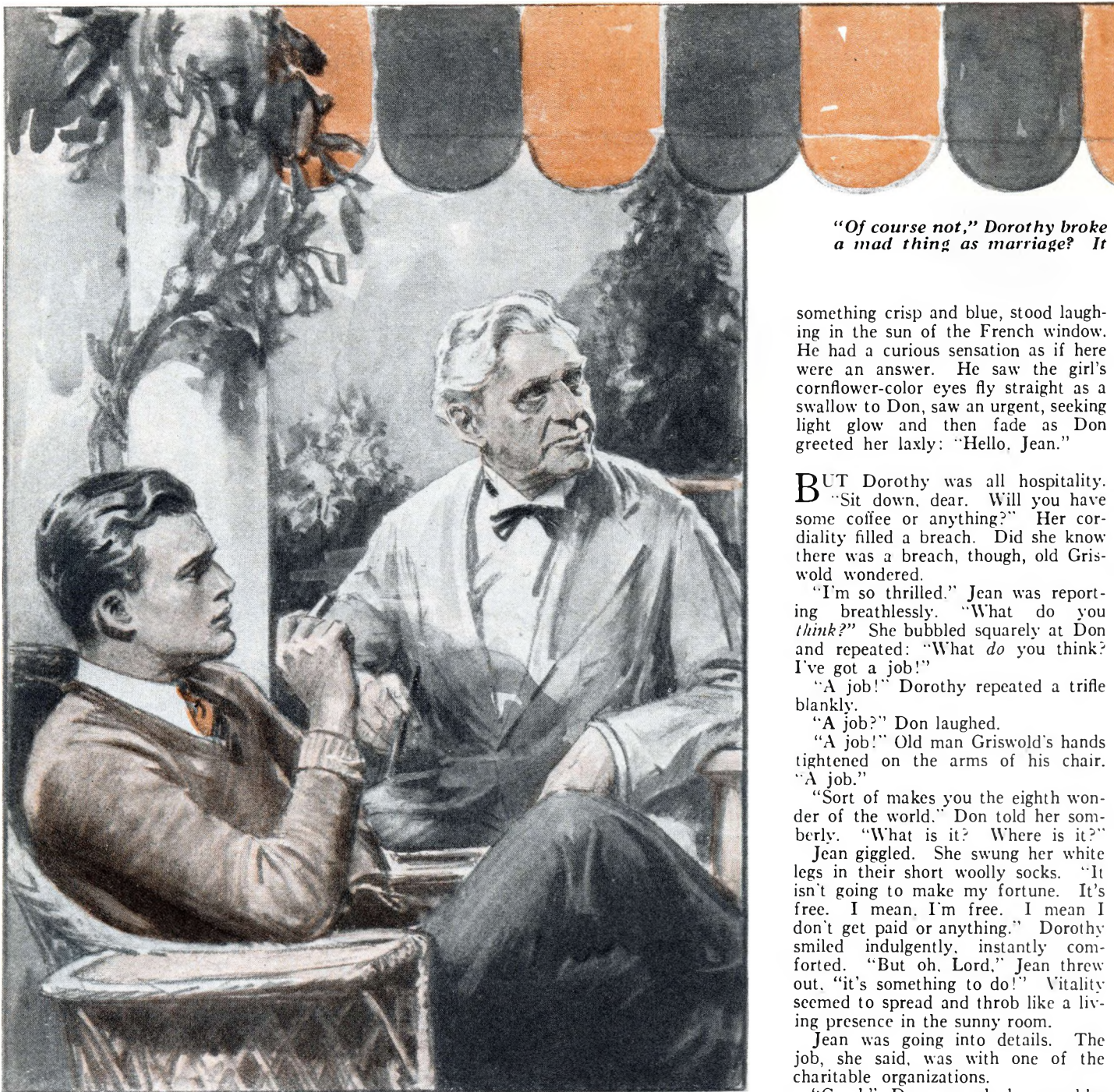
"I don't doubt it," her father-in-law replied grimly, "and furthermore and moreover he rustled around and found a way to earn it." He saw Don lazily flick the ash from his cigarette. "But since Don doesn't seem to have much to occupy him these days, I should think—"

"It isn't his fault! Why should you taunt him? You know perfectly well that no one who came out of college three years ago has had a chance to do anything but C. W. A. drudgery."

"A chance. A chance," the old man repeated. "Not ready-made ones, maybe, but—"

Dorothy interrupted: "If things had been normal, Don would have been doing splendidly by this time—wouldn't you, Donny?"

DON was only vaguely interested. It seemed as if he had forgotten even the stimulating tang of ambition. Old Griswold leaned forward. "I recognize it hasn't been an easy time, maybe," he said earnestly. "But now it's beginning to be over. Can't you understand that? It's high time he started doing something. Anything. He—" He saw his daughter-in-law's usual protective belligerence; he saw his grandson's usual passivity. He became inarticulate. He could not define that sense of danger he had for the young man. He could not put into words his hurt at Don's increasing softness, at his continued ease in the acceptance of a



"Of course not," Dorothy broke a mad thing as marriage? It

something crisp and blue, stood laughing in the sun of the French window. He had a curious sensation as if here were an answer. He saw the girl's cornflower-color eyes fly straight as a swallow to Don, saw an urgent, seeking light glow and then fade as Don greeted her laxly: "Hello, Jean."

BUT Dorothy was all hospitality. "Sit down, dear. Will you have some coffee or anything?" Her cordiality filled a breach. Did she know there was a breach, though, old Griswold wondered.

"I'm so thrilled." Jean was reporting breathlessly. "What do you think?" She bubbled squarely at Don and repeated: "What do you think? I've got a job!"

"A job!" Dorothy repeated a trifle blankly.

"A job?" Don laughed.

"A job!" Old man Griswold's hands tightened on the arms of his chair. "A job."

"Sort of makes you the eighth wonder of the world." Don told her somberly. "What is it? Where is it?"

Jean giggled. She swung her white legs in their short woolly socks. "It isn't going to make my fortune. It's free. I mean, I'm free. I mean I don't get paid or anything." Dorothy smiled indulgently, instantly comforted. "But oh, Lord," Jean threw out, "it's something to do!" Vitality seemed to spread and throb like a living presence in the sunny room.

Jean was going into details. The job, she said, was with one of the charitable organizations.

"Good," Don remarked agreeably.

"Now that I have a friend on the ground floor, perhaps I can get some

well-paying toil too. I'll split with you fifty-fifty."

How could he joke about it like that, old man Griswold asked himself unhappily. How could he bear to joke? For a second his look crossed the girl's. He knew suddenly that she was unhappy too. There was a light like the signal of danger in those cornflower eyes of hers. She knew then—ah, she knew too! He saw also that she was frightened, and he thought: "For a young female thing like that, it must be like waiting for her man to come back from war, knowing for a certainty he'll be maimed for the rest of his life." He got to his feet, a fine, sturdy old gentleman, so prime, seeming so ineradicable, it was as if he could transmit to youth the energy and experience and tonic hopes of living.

"Going, Grandfather?" Dorothy inquired politely.

"Yes. It's got to be a busy day. Can't stay loafing here."

Jean said admiringly: "I think you're wonderful, Mr. Griswold. My dad told me what a marvelous thing you did hanging onto your bank as you did."

The old man looked grateful. "Oh, I showed 'em," he chuckled.

"Of course you would." Dorothy fell obediently into the moment. She had a gift for pleasant sociabilities. "Of course one so firmly established as Grandfather couldn't—er—go under."

condition he should have found intolerable. Was an economic condition to make a lost generation?

Dorothy, stirring her coffee with a hand that trembled just a little, kept her voice steadily casual: "If Donny could have used this time for travel—" she began. It was like an old familiar tune that had been heard many times in that sunny room. "Even now it isn't too late," she went on softly. "If he could get away now for six months, say, things would be fully in their stride when he got back. He could find something worthy of him." Resolutely she went on: "For not much more than a thousand dollars he could see most of Europe—"

"I can't do it, Dorothy, as I've told you before. I did offer to send him back to New Haven for a year. I'd have stretched a point so's he could have got his Master's degree, or whatever—"

A first faint defense stirred in Don. "Had enough of grinding. I got my B.A., didn't I? What good's it done me?"

There was the sound of quick feet on the gravel outside. A girl's voice cried: "Where's everyone?"

"That's Jean," Dorothy reported in evident relief. She called through the long window: "Come in, dear. We're still at breakfast."

Old Griswold watched his grandson again as Jean, dressed in

in. "How can you suggest such would handicap Don for life."

"Oh, but they did," Jean told her. "By the scores—by the hundreds."

Old Griswold confirmed Jean, unsmilingly. "By the thousands. You don't s'pose, do you, Dorothy, it's any easier to hold onto a thing once you got it, then 'tis to get holt of it in the first place?" He remembered grimly those months of tormented nights when he had struggled with figures, with ways and means, seeing only blackness ahead—when, by the sheer force of his will he had penetrated into daylight again and something resembling security. He knew that if something—anything—didn't lift young Don at once out of his laxness, that his grandson would have lost for life any ability to fight like that. And men, he considered, must fight. They must, too, have something for which to fight. He looked again at the girl. He saw her reach her hand over to Don's for a cigarette, saw it linger for the briefest moment on the boy's; her white fingers curved as if to clasp. Then relaxed and removed swiftly. Don's hand had remained uneager, and lost forever a quick caress.

Something like actual pain swept over old man Griswold. Was the world so full of caresses that a boy could afford to lose even one? And they were for youth! Could an economic crisis destroy all natural impulses too?

"What are you doing today, Don?" the girl Jean asked softly.

Old man Griswold, near the door, waited. "Oh, nothing special—" he heard Don answer carelessly.

"He's going to hang curtains," the old man threw back testily as he left the room.

The stone pillars of his little bank loomed before him, satisfyingly Doric and immensely solid. Three years before, when Dorothy and Don had first come to him, old Griswold had suggested: "Probably isn't much you could do, Don, coming down to the bank, except to see how we do things. Been forced to cut to the bone, of course. Every boy I've kept's got a family and responsibilities, so naturally I can't go giving you a regular thing with pay and all. But—" He had waited expectantly.

DON had answered hesitatingly: "Well, I don't know, Grandfather. I—"

Dorothy had cut in. Old man Griswold stared at her. He had not then learned what even a year of idleness had already done to Don. But in those first days of their coming in on him, bag and baggage, Dorothy had had a sweet if painstaking air. In regard to the bank, she tried kindly to make it all clear: "I don't believe Donny's much interested in banking, Grandfather. It isn't his subject, you know. Nothing he'd ever care to go on with when things pick up. I really think it would be just a waste of time."

Surprised, the old man had turned impatiently to Don. It



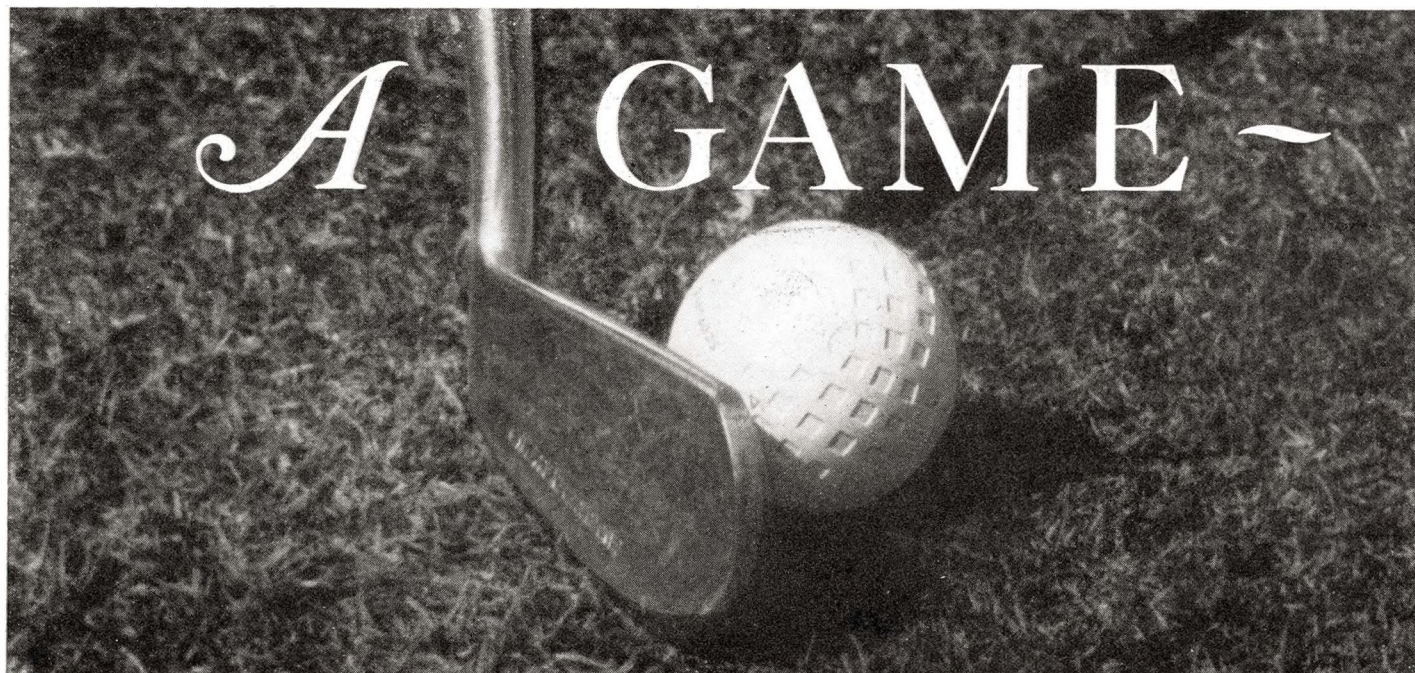
was his first intimation of how that first year of arrested hopes had already eaten into his grandson's energy and initiative. It had been directly after that that Dorothy had first broached the subject of travel for Don.

"No. Can't see my way to doing it," old man Griswold had brushed that aside, brusquely. He still saw himself going down the street to the bank with his grandson walking beside him. Nothing was ever said about the bank again, though. It was like a personal slight, and it hurt.

Griswold passed now through the public part of his bank, nodding to Hoskins, the cashier, to Redfield and Brackie. It stirred him proudly to see his "boys" bent over ledgers—their minds, he could see, even as they said, "Good morning," keeping straight on the track of their work.

He went into his own little private coop, shoved up the top of his ancient roll-top. It stuck, as always. As always, he added that last necessary spurt to his tug that folded the roll. "Dern the thing," he said, as always. But not for worlds would he have exchanged that desk for any other.

When his hat and coat were hanging on the peg back of the door, old man Griswold sat in his worn (Please turn to page 78)



GOLF is just a game. Play it simply as a game, and you'll have fun at every stroke. Make it a solemn task, a struggle for a perfect score, and your troubles will never end. And the score will be something awful. I've tried both methods, and I know. My disasters on the links have been due to trying too hard. Everyone who has hit a golf-ball can remember the sore muscles and sour temper that came from taking the sport too seriously—as well as the beautiful shots that followed a free, healthy swing without a trace of worry in it.

How does the golfer develop that happy frame of mind? How can he play with the ease that results from careful carelessness? That sounds like contradiction, but it isn't; for you have to take care to drive away dull care. How do you get that way? The best plan is to be born near the links and ease into golf about the time you begin to ride a kiddy car.

I was lucky enough to spend my childhood at Pinehurst, where you can't move a hundred yards in any direction without breaking into a golf-course. The landscape is a broad sweep of grassy fairways, dotted with bunkers and putting greens. Everybody plays the game, eats, drinks, wears and lives golf. I was so young when I began, that I can't remember my first stroke. When I was five, a lot of us infants used to play matches on putting clocks laid out in back yards. A golf-cup was dug in somewhere near the middle of a big circle of smooth, hard-rolled sand, with starting posts numbered from one to nine at intervals around the edge.

Each boy had a golf-ball and a little putter. When we aimed at the hole twenty feet away, we expected the ball to roll into it—and usually it did. We had none of the dread that hangs over the veteran who has seen his best putts kicked out of line by a tiny weed or a crooked blade of grass—the dread that breaks a golfer's nerve. We did not know what fear was. I look back and see our crowd, busy as kids in a kindergarten; the smile in Forbes Wilson's blue eyes as his ball rattles into the cup; little Walter Swope, strong as a pony, chuckling when his ball rolls too far, and the infant Gene Homans, his forehead wrinkled up to his fair hair as he concentrates on a putt.

Forbes won the amateur championship of Maine as a schoolboy, not so long afterward; Walter grew to be captain of the Yale team; Gene became the famous Princeton star, winner of many tournaments. None of us dreamed

of anything like that. Our back-yard putting matches were mere childish fun. We'd drop the putters any time to play marbles, or to pop at sparrows with our little air-guns. We were the exact opposite of the Oxford don who defined golf as playing little balls into little holes with implements very ill adapted to the purpose.

When we were a little bigger, we went out on the links with a few clubs, still playing without a serious thought. "Here's the way Hagen drives," Walter would say as he addressed the ball. And Gene would cry: "Look! Here's Jim Barnes sending it a mile!" Imitative little monkeys, we all mimicked the great champions who played at Pinehurst. With our minds untroubled, muscles soft and pliable, we soon acquired the true swing—loose but accurate, throwing in all the power at the moment the club-head hit the ball. We learned golf as naturally and easily as little Hawaiians learn to swim and ride the surfboards.

Forbes Wilson and I played about even; but one day he beat me so badly that I had to ask him how he did it.

"It's the overlapping grip," he said. "Father showed me that by placing the right little finger over the first two knuckles of the left hand as I grip the club—the two hands work together as one. You get more wrist-power into the ball that way, and a much longer shot."

Before that, all of us youngsters had simply grabbed our clubs with both hands and whaled away. I found the new style awkward at first, but Forbes coached me, and I began to get it, though weeks passed before I caught up with him. Whenever any of our crowd learned a new wrinkle, he gave it to the others; so we gradually improved our play without any of the fuss and feathers that bother grown men when they take lessons.

Forbes, Gene and the rest of us have played even ever since. I think there is no pleasanter friendship than that between golfers who have to fight it out to the last green every time. We have a lot of fun at it—and that's what golf is for. It's only a game, and the player who lets the efficiency idea ride him hard misses all the fun. In the right frame of mind a man can have as good a time in shooting 99 as in shooting 69—probably a better time.

Take your ease and a smooth swing, and it's dollars to doughnuts that your ball will go far and sure. Frown, grit your teeth, and hit for all you're worth—and you'll flub it. It will pay every golfer to keep in mind how Artemus Ward accounted for the downfall of Napoleon.



George Terry Dunlap, Jr.

Not A TASK

by **George Terry Dunlap, Jr.**
Amateur Champion of the United States

He said: "Napoleon tried to do too much—and did it." That is the hardest thing to remember when you're playing pretty well and want to do better. But you'd better remember—for the slugging jinx will get you if you don't watch out.

It nearly got me, a few months before the National tournament. I thought it would be good fun to start in it and see how far I could go.

Practicing at Pinehurst, I tried to get more distance with my irons; but the harder I hit, the worse I played. The shots sliced and pulled like balky horses.

"What's wrong with my irons?" I asked Tommy Armour, who was playing with me.

"You're pivoting too far on them," he answered. "Been lengthening out your drive lately, haven't you?"

"Yes," I admitted; and he said:

"That means a longer turn back of the hips, to bring more body-power into the swing; but you don't need so much pivot with the irons."

This, as *Holmes* would say, was elemental, my dear *Watson*. It was a fact I had learned as a child, and had remembered during sixteen years of play—yet in my eagerness for longer iron shots, I had forgotten all about it! Thanks to Tom Armour, I shortened the turn of the hips on iron shots, and once more the ball began to reach the green under full control. That is the way with the best teachers; they see at a glance the cause of a bad play, and show you how to correct it in a very few minutes.

The man who said that perfection is made up of trifles must have been thinking of golf—of little things that seem trivial until we study them and watch their effects. In one of the matches of the National championship, as Lister Hartley and I were walking up to the twelfth green, a wire-haired terrier ran through the legs of the crowd and pounced on my ball. Men and women who would not move or whisper while a shot was being made burst into gales of laughter, shouted "Drop it, you rascal!" and pelted him with programs, canes and umbrellas. More than a minute passed before his owner handed the ball to me.

Nothing could have been more provoking than all this racket. For the moment it threw concentration out of gear. To get fussed over it would have spoiled my first putt; for in putting, the nerves must be in such perfect balance that the touch of the club-face on the ball is delicate and exactly true. The best way out of the flurry was to regard the cute little dog's

stunt as a rub of the green, and let it go at that. I waited until I could smile and forget it—and I was lucky enough to sink the putt.

Yet I know a good player who lost the Harbor Hill championship because in the final round a lady with a fluffy red skirt would move half a step to get a better look whenever he was putting. After the first hole he kept watching the gallery for that disconcerting flutter of red every time he bent over a putt. He was man enough not to complain about it, but his putting flivvered.

What should he have done? He couldn't obey the natural impulse to quiet the lady with a tap of the niblick—too many witnesses. But if he had concentrated on each putt, or thought about the nice cool drink he was going to have at the nineteenth hole, or about anything in the world except that worrisome red flutter, he could have won his match. The way to forget your troubles is to think very earnestly about something pleasant.

It helps a lot if you look at a hard shot as a chance to do something worth while. In the semi-final round for the National championship at Kenwood, Lawson Little and I had good drives on the fourth hole. His ball carried over a puddle left by a shower, and rolled up in the middle of the fairway, easy to play to the green. Mine was out of sight. Everybody searched. A tiny white button caught my eye—the top of my ball peeping out from where it had buried itself on the edge of the puddle.

"Casual water?" I asked Secretary Archie Reid of the United States Golf Association. I hoped it was; for that would entitle me to a free lift. Mr. Reid patted the mud; no water showed. He shook his head. President Herbert Jacques patted the mud. No water. I must play the ball as it lay, or pay the penalty for lifting it out of the gooey earth that held it like a vise. To lift, would cost me the hole—which might put me out of the running. So what?

There are two ways to play out of a mess like that: use the heavy niblick and be sure to chop out of the mud a little way, with slim chance of even halving the hole; or gamble with a lighter club—and hope for the best. Luckily for me, I remembered having made a shot like this in an early round, when it didn't matter much. Why not do it again? As I reached for my Number Four iron, it never occurred to me that I might flub. I pictured the ball flying to the green in one fine swoop.

So I dug the hobnailed shoes solidly into the



Horton Smith

mud, the cheerful picture more vivid every moment, and took a nice, loose but careful swing at the buried ball. A yard of mud splashed up like a smoke-screen. Out of it the ball sailed in a long arc, dropped short of the green, and rolled up within seven feet of the cup! . . . They say there was some commotion among the spectators. Maybe so. I didn't notice it, for I was very busy drawing a deep breath.

But if I had fussed about the exact place to stand, the precise grip on the club, and had tried to recall a dozen important things to do, the shot would have fluffed. As it was, that mental picture I had of the ball flying home took it home, where the first putt hung on the lip of the cup, where Little's putt sank it for a birdie three, giving me the hole and a big boost toward victory. The incident shows the value of taking golf as a sport rather than a solemn task, as well as how good it is to keep the mind free from technical detail when the best thing to do is to forget the fuss and feathers and give the ball a ride.

IT pays to take time enough to think clearly just what you're going to do with each shot, and play at your own natural pace.

George Duncan, former British champion, golfs as fast as a hockey player slashing at the puck.

"Doesn't your high speed cramp your style?" an American friend asked him.

"I played slowly all of one year," said Duncan, "and I was never in the picture."

Perhaps the slowest player in the world is Sandy Herd, the wise old Scot, who waggles and waggles his club over the ball possibly a dozen times before he settles down to swing at it.

"Ye tak' a dom'd long time to hit the ball, Sandy," a Carnoustie critic observed.

"Ou, aye," said Sandy placidly; "but when I hit it, I hit dom'd well."

And that is what we all want to do—and can do, if we but stick to our normal pace, neither hurrying nor holding back to please anybody else.

I don't know whether or not the NRA has influenced golf, but I never saw so many high-class players as the five hundred and eighty who met at Kenwood for the National. Many of them were school-boys from Texas, California and other points West. There was never such a burst of brilliant scoring as in the qualifying rounds. Johnny Fischer's 141 strokes for thirty-six holes broke all records and won the gold medal. Perhaps that is what set us all pressing, so that ex-champion Max Marston and I were among the twelve who almost passed out with scores of 150, but were lucky enough to qualify among the last eight admitted to match play. Long experience in competition was the life-saver.

If you grow up on the links, you are bound to play good golf. The next best plan—whether you begin at sixteen or sixty—is to get a good teacher. Have him show you the why and the how of the golf-stroke, then practice steadily until the true swing becomes a habit. Half an hour's patient study at the beginning will save months of struggle after bad form becomes a fixed habit. A young Boston banker I know took three lessons a week and practiced strokes indoors all winter, so that his swing was "grooved,"

as they call it. And when he went out on the links in April, for the first time in his life—

He played the Brookline course in 87!

A beginner has only himself to blame if he does not learn good form that will last as long as he plays, for there are hundreds of fine teachers in all parts of the country. They are wise, too, and merciful to old faults. An elderly friend of mine asked one of the pros at Pinehurst to help him get rid of a wild loop at the top of his back-swing that made his drives uncertain.

"How long have you been doing that?" the pro asked, after watching the weird performance.

"Oh, ten years—maybe a dozen," said the amateur.

"How do you play with your friends?"

"About even."

"You can get rid of that whirl," said the teacher: "but straightening it out will ruin your game for a year. Won't you have more fun playing your regular matches with your friends as you are?"

"Right you are!" said the amateur. "I never thought of that. It's the best advice I ever had." Incidentally, he paid a full hour's fee for a lesson that lasted one minute. And he was right. Golf is only a game; they can't hang you for smothering a drive now and then, and a pleasant afternoon in good company is worth more than any amount of painful technique.

But even while having fun the golfer has to watch his step. On the last day at Kenwood I was pretty hungry at lunch-time—but I remembered the wonderful player from the Coast who ate himself out of the semi-final awhile ago. He won his morning round by something like 6 up and 5 to go, but he had a young and husky appetite, and at noon he let it run wild. He topped off a hearty luncheon with a thick wedge of hot and juicy apple pie smothered in ice-cream. It sank him in the afternoon match.

With his sad fate in mind, I nibbled a cheese sandwich and sipped one glass of mild beer, then stretched out and lounged at ease for nearly an hour. That helped a lot. Too much food or liquid—even water—will sink any player.

GOLF, like the envious lady's definition of Boston, is largely a frame of mind. It is good to think of almost anything else than details of technique or of what your opponent is doing. In the last half of the final match at Kenwood I concentrated on how to get a low score for the round, rather than worry over Marston's good shooting.

"You're going to get a nice 68."

a friend remarked to me as we moved along the seventeenth fairway.

"Sh-sh-sh!" I warned him. "I'm afraid the alarm clock'll go off, and I'll wake up."

The alarm did not go off, and the 68 came true. Ever since, at the age of twelve, I first shot 80, I had dreamed of winning the Havemeyer Cup, emblem of the amateur championship; but when President Jacques handed it to me, I did not believe such a thing possible—and it still seems like a dream.

But no one has a mortgage on the old cup, and I expect to start after it again, just to see how far I can go.

Win or lose, that will be the finest sport I know.

Beginning Next Issue



Said

President Hoover

to "Ted" Joslin:

"My men are dropping around me." (Spring, 1932.)

"All the money in the world could not induce me to live over the last nine months. This office is a compound hell." (Fall, 1932.)

"The Presidency is nothing but a twenty-ring circus—with a whole lot of bad actors." (January, 1933.)

These and thousands of other startling revelations, statements and facts, never published before, will be found in—

"HOOVER off the Record"

by Theodore G. Joslin

private secretary to President Hoover, 1931-1933.

It's just your idea of what
Chicken Soup *should be!*



21 kinds to
choose from...

Asparagus
Bean
Beef
Bouillon
Celery
Chicken
Chicken-Gumbo
Clam Chowder
Consommé
Julienne
Mock Turtle
Mulligatawny
Mushroom (Cream of)
Mutton
Noodle with chicken
Ox Tail
Pea
Pepper Pot
Printanier
Tomato
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Vegetable-Beef

LOOK FOR THE
RED-AND-WHITE LABEL

Good Chicken Soup—the kind with the flavor that instantly appeals to the appetite—can be made only with the finest chickens. We select and prepare them with all the care and skill that the most particular housewife could exercise.

All of the meat, both white and dark, from each chicken is used in making this enticing soup, and tender morsels from the choicest parts supply the toothsome garnish. There is rice in abundance.

Campbell's Chicken Soup is made to order for your appetite. Millions of homes proclaim it their favorite—serve

it often—keep it on hand always.

But that is natural. For everybody likes chicken soup—and here it is made just the way they like it. Gloriously rich in chicken—it's downright delicious. And, incidentally, every housewife knows that chicken soup made the way we make it is expensive to make—and a marvelous bargain at the regular Campbell's Soup price. Are you missing something?

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In any parade!

Campbell's Chicken Soup



For those who make living a fine art

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KING OF BOTTLED BEER



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The order of the day is to order a case of BUDWEISER for the home. With this world-famous lager beer in the refrigerator, you become a perfect host on a moment's notice. To offer your guests beer is hospitality, but to offer them BUDWEISER is a gracious compliment. Serve it at dinner, with light luncheons, at bridge or on any occasion that brings good friends together. One generation after another has recognized BUDWEISER as the symbol of good living.

A N H E U S E R - B U S C H , , , S A I N T L O U I S

INSULT!

(Continued from page 55)

After a split second Penny agreed that it would look wonderful on Cora. She took the drink George poured for her, and sank into a chair.

George, busily working with the cocktail-shaker, chattered on. And suddenly he began on the subject of Blakesmith; and some undertone in his voice reduced him at once to a mean little blustering man.

"Darling, I forgot to tell you. You know Dex—he's in love. He's been in love for weeks." He barked out a laugh, and looked triumphantly from his wife to Penny. It was the latter who felt obliged to ask: "With whom?" Cora merely smiled, her vague lovely smile that beamed impartially on all the world. George knitted his brow. "Curtis," he brought out. "A girl by the name of Curtis. Honestly, I get a kick seeing him knuckle down to a woman for once. He used to think he was so damn' invulnerable." He leaned forward, brimming to a point. "Listen to this: he thinks the way she eats spaghetti is adorable. *Dex!*"

"Dex," Cora was moved to repeat. She turned mildly astonished eyes on Penny, and shook her head. "He always said it made a woman look ugly. He wouldn't have let a duchess eat spaghetti with him in public, and he's awful; fond of duchesses—or would be if he knew any."

Penny laughed. "What a disagreeable man!" she said.

"But that girl must be quite a charmer," said Cora.

"Pooh," said George, and started his story from the beginning. Dex had met the girl not long ago. George, wandering into Antonio's for a drink one night, had run into them, been introduced, and noted at once that Dex had crashed.

"But crashed, darling! She had to leave early for another date, and was he cut up! He hates her being popular. Dex! Wants to marry her. He hasn't the ghost of a chance, of course. She likes him, but that's all. He's going to be one miserable chap."

"That suits you fine," thought Penny, observing the gleam in his eye. She disliked him: she disliked him more and more as he went on, interrupting himself once to kiss his wife's hand, and again to inquire solicitously if she were chilly.

AND that was the way it was, more or less, every week-end thereafter.

It did strange things to Penny. An exceptional girl in many ways, she is none the less very dependent for her happiness on her sense of power over people—over men, to be exact. She wants no other woman's man; she is not that sort. But she likes to know in her heart of hearts that if she wants him, he is hers. She is, alas, that sort, as what pretty woman is not? And there was George.

He liked her. She was "our Penny." "Pass our Penny the butter, darling." Or, "A little topper, our Penny—look at her down the stuff!" Or, "Our Penny is putting on weight—swell!" But he simply would not look at her and see, however dispassionately, a pretty girl in her own right. Every tribute he paid his wife had the effect of thrusting Penny aside; every

little attention he showed her bore somehow, elusively, a snub for his guest.

And as if that weren't enough, there were Blakesmith and the Curtis girl. Never a week-end passed but that George had them on the scene. They began to crowd her—a pair of names that tripped off George's tongue and came somehow to life. She had a vivid image of Blakesmith—tall, bony, foppish, stiff; he drawled his words, admired his own mustache deeply, was insufferably, affectingly correct. His passion for the Curtis girl was undoing him. He had passed up a fancy bid to Long Island somewhere in order to lose no time with her. He had left a very smart party early and in despair because the Curtis girl—in black, sweet peas and a welter of admirers—had frowned at him. Poor Dex—George felt sorry for him. (George felt sorry for him with a relish that infuriated Penny.) Poor Dex—particularly since the Curtis girl was far from ravishing.

Emphatically the Curtis girl was "not ravishing." Pooh! She was moreover "none too bright," and "no great shakes."

IMARVEL how Penny stood it, through a poignant spring. Perhaps the hushed beauty from Monday to Friday held her, for Cora, gently self-sufficient, left her guest in peace. Perhaps she might, vaguely, have been biding her time, waiting for an opportunity to wrest from George the innocent little that was her due—merely recognition of the fact that she was for him, as for any other man, a woman, and a pretty one. At any rate she stayed on—to see, one Friday evening, Blakesmith lift his bony height from out of George's car.

It was her own doing.

George had remarked, the week-end before, that Dex had been hinting at a visit. "Let's have him," Penny had said, and added wickedly: "I don't know why, but somehow I fancy him rather interesting." It was thus that she had her little revenges. George couldn't bear any praise of "Dex." Penny had only to express sympathy for the man, wish him well in his courtship—and George's eyes darkened, his sullen mouth pursed up as if he were grieved at some treachery on her part. He said now brusquely: "You wouldn't like him. He'd bore you. He'd bore us all. Wouldn't he, darling?"

But Cora supposed placidly that they could bear Dex for a week-end.

Next day, when George had left, Penny suggested to Cora that she drop Blakesmith a note inviting him to Shady Hill. She was aware of no desire to see the man. But she felt rather depressed, and it cheered her somewhat to fancy George's sullen mouth pursing up. There had been no reply to the note Cora amiably dispatched; they had concluded without regret that Blakesmith wasn't coming.

And there he was! Precisely as Penny had pictured him. Up the walk he strode, towering beside George, who, gaining the terrace, embraced Cora, put a fraternal hand on Penny and shouted:

"Here's Dex!"

Dex bowed over Cora's hand, repeated the performance over Penny's. There

were phrases, a polite exchange to which George lent the informal note by bouncing about, touching Cora, touching Penny, clapping Blakesmith on his rather forbidding back. He seemed entirely reconciled to his friend's visit. Good old Dex—he had popped up, with Cora's note in hand, just as George was leaving! "And since he is here," George's manner seemed to say, "I'll try to make the best of it—though you'll see the man's an ass!"

"Let's have a drink! Let's get started. Let's make it an occasion!" He brimmed over with high spirits.

"It's going to be," thought Penny, "as much of a bore as any other week-end." But when there had been a round of highballs, and another, her spirits rose.

"You've been here since May, I understand, Miss Burke," said Blakesmith, turning to her. He had just observed that while he didn't ordinarily like the country, a week-end, a day, indeed another hour at Shady Hill, might conceivably change his point of view.

"Since April," corrected Penny, and scarcely repressed a sigh. It seemed all at once a very long time since April.

"And we're going to keep her here the rest of the season," put in George. "We couldn't part with our Penny." He grinned at Blakesmith and recited jovially: "She's the cream in our coffee, the salt in our stew—a damn' charming girl!" He raised his glass to Penny, and then swung it around, laughing, in Cora's direction. "Darling," he said, and drank the toast to her.

Blakesmith smiled, a very little, a peculiar smile. "He hates George too," thought Penny suddenly, and warned to him.

"George tells me you're in the theater, Miss Burke." His disciplined drawl fell agreeably on the ear. "After a fashion," smiled Penny. "I spend most of my time hounding the managers." George gulped, and started to say something. But—

"It's an unfortunate thing," Blakesmith cut in on him, "to be not in the least creative. I refer to myself. For example, I see a lovely—thing. I find it insufficient merely to admire it. I have the impulse to identify myself with it by, let us say, putting it on canvas or—er—breathing it into a poem." He smiled, a somehow dramatic smile, at the distant hills. "I should like," he concluded gravely, "to write a play for Miss Burke. A play that would be Miss Burke."

THERE was a pause; Penny had an unaccountable sense of tension throbbing in it. She glanced at George. He was staring at Blakesmith, open-mouthed; he looked as if the gallant little speech had struck him a blow beneath the belt. "He's positively terrified that we'll like the man, after all he's said about him," she thought scornfully, and said at once: "I wish you would, Mr. Blakesmith. I'd love to be the whole show for once—from the lead to the sounds offstage." Cora laughed pleasantly at Penny's remark, then complimented Blakesmith on his. This appeared quite too much for George. He shot his friend an ugly look, drew a deep breath and said malevolently: "Ah!"

Perhaps his own remark amused him, for he burst then into a rather hysterical laugh. No one joined him in it, and it ended as abruptly as it had begun. He rose, smiled down at the two women, looking master of them and the situation, and said:

"He wants to write poems and paint pictures—that's a new one on me. However, I say," his voice boomed out, steady and somehow impressive. "I say, that the best way to identify oneself with a lovely thing is to love and be loved by it. Yes, love and be damned by it, if need be!"

He looked at Blakesmith as if to say, "Tie that if you can!" and then turned his gaze on Penny. She experienced a little shock. There was a light in his eyes—for the first time she felt that, looking at her, he was seeing her, not Cora.

Blakesmith on her other side was devotedly offering her a cigarette. She took it, tingling suddenly. The dullness of three long months rolled off her shoulders. She turned from one man to the other, gathering in their eager glances, smiling, discreetly a-bloom. George was at last reckoning with her; Blakesmith seemed smitten. They were contesting for her favor, for her smile. As the evening wore on, Penny lost her head. Her vanity had been starved so long that she was like a schoolgirl carried away by her first taste of power. . . . It makes her grimly ill to think of it.

In the morning Penny rode with Blakesmith before breakfast. They dismounted atop a little hill, and from a splendid rock viewed a vast stretch of valley. They talked; they touched hands; they exchanged charged and fleeting glances. It was delightful. When they returned, in very high spirits, they found George and Cora on the terrace finishing breakfast.

"I'm going to make Penny one of my omelettes," announced Blakesmith. "Dex says he's ravished a thousand households with his omelettes," laughed Penny. "Miss Burke," and "Mr. Blakesmith," had been dropped somewhere along the wayside. Cora smiled. George, sullen, suggested that this was no time to experiment—his Penny looked famished. But, "Omelette by Dex," insisted Penny gayly. "Nothing else will do this morning!"

Blakesmith, flashing a smile at her, departed to the kitchen. "You look," said George then, unpleasantly, "as if you've been places and done things." Penny measured him with a cold glance, offended by his tone. "The usual places and the usual things," she drawled deliberately, "with an unusually pleasant man."

George reddened, but his eyes went moist and humble. "You have the power," they said suddenly and passionately, "to make me very unhappy." It took Penny aback for a moment. She stared at him, moved, feeling, in her own well-being, sorry for him.

THEY lounged away the morning, played tennis after lunch, and ended the afternoon at the woodland pool behind the house. Blakesmith misquoted poetry to her, and George corrected him. But he only smiled and moved closer to Penny. "Magnolia," he murmured, "that's what you remind me of, Penny. When you get back to town, will you let me send you a magnolia bush every day?"

"By the time Penny gets back to town," said George, "she'll have forgotten you." "Nonsense," said Penny. "One couldn't forget a man who wants to send one flowers by the bush." Cora, smiling lazily, observed that Blakesmith's thought was impractical. "But beautiful. Extremely beautiful."

"I have a better," said he, looking at Penny through half-closed lids. "And a practical one. I shall send you sweet peas. For your charm. And orchids for your rarity. Alternately."

His voice, which had at first been light, had grown tense and vibrant. Penny thought the words rather silly, but the tone, the music as it were, suddenly got her. She looked into his eyes; they were wide open now, dry and burning. Her heart skipped a beat. She had a sense of undercurrents in the man, strange and dark and turbulent. She had a sense of a tremendous force gathering, reaching toward her. George had lied in making him out as ineffectual, absurd. George had lied, for all she knew, making out he adored some nebulous Curtis girl.

IT was evening, and they were on the terrace again. There had been cocktails before dinner; there were highballs now, tall glasses at their elbows, which George constantly refilled. Dance-music from the radio inside drifted softly to them through the French windows. The moon overhead was full; the deep blue was positively jammed with stars; the heavens, as Blakesmith remarked, had turned on all their brilliant force for them. He said this, dancing with Penny on the far end of the terrace, added, "How perfectly you dance!" and pressed her closer to him. She yielded herself to his clasp, trod air through the dance, and floated back to the others, breathless and palpitant. The music starting again caused a little scene. Blakesmith turned to her; but George, who had been watching her morosely, sprang between them. "This is my dance!" "I beg your pardon—Penny promised it to me!" There was the hint of a scuffle. Then George had her in his arms, and was charging violently down the length of the terrace.

She does not remember in any detail the hours that followed. She recalls that they drank a good deal, that she was very gay, and that an electric tension underlined every laugh, every word that was spoken. The conflict in her behalf grew more open and more heated; hatred and jealousy of one another smoldered and crackled in all the pretty nonsense the two men leveled at her. She had an impression that George made a fool of himself over her, that Blakesmith abandoned poise for bitter thrusts at his rival; that Cora sat a little apart, looking faintly bored—and that she herself enjoyed the evening thoroughly. At about midnight Cora rose. "I think I'll turn in, if nobody minds," she smiled, looking at her husband. He scrambled to his feet. "But it's early, darling," he protested, waving his glass vaguely at the moon. "Not for me," said Cora briefly, and started indoors. George hesitated an instant, mumbled something to Penny, then went after his wife, the half-empty glass in his hand. His dragging footsteps died away.

"We're alone," said Blakesmith expressionlessly.

"We're alone," repeated Penny, and knew she had been waiting for this moment all the evening long.

He made no move, staring before him as if he were suddenly tired. She sank back in her chair; the liquor she had drunk sang in her head; the warm lovely night throbbed in her veins. She may have held out her hand—at any rate he took it, and rose, lifting her gently to her feet. For a moment he looked at her in a very strange way, as if he were seeing her for the first time, and did not quite know what had brought them thus together. Then his arms went about her.

They heard George's footsteps; they had time to separate, sit down and unsteadily light cigarettes before he swaggered out of the house, to them. The glass he had carried away was in his hand, empty. "I want another drink," he said, and sat down. Having poured out what was left in the shaker, he leaned back and looked fondly at Penny. "You ought," he said, "to spend your life in the moonlight. You're always lovely, but in this light you look like—you tell her what she looks like, Dex. You're lousy with poetry this week-end."

"George," began Penny, "hadn't you better—"

He cut her short. "But let me tell you something, darling. He's cribbed it somewhere. He hasn't got an idea of his own in—"

"Look here, Daniels," interrupted Blakesmith grimly, "you'd better go to bed. You're drunk. And you're boring Penny."

"I boring Penny!" George's laugh rang out, sharp and ugly. "I don't bore women, Blakesmith. But if you want to know—you do! You damned fool! She—"

"Hush, George," implored Penny. "For heaven's sake—"

"She's not for you—do you understand?" His voice drowned hers. "Maybe she's not for me, either, because I've got Cora. But if I really wanted her—I don't care what she's told you, Blakesmith. It's me she wants. You can't compete with me. I've heard her laugh at you. I've made her laugh at you."

Both men were standing now. Penny, terrified and completely sobered, sprang to her feet. Cora would hear—surely Cora would hear! She saw Blakesmith's fist clench. Her heart in her throat, she took a step toward him; but his arm, outthrust, blocked her.

"Please, Miss B—," he said courteously; and then to George: "You damned little runt!"

Instantly and without a word, George sprang at him.

They went down. A glass splintered; a chair crashed; their bodies thudded on the stone floor. They rolled over and over in an intent and ferocious embrace. It seemed a long time that Penny watched them, her fist against her mouth, her heart beating as if it had caught the fury, the savage exultation of the pair at her feet. Then she heard, just behind her, Cora's voice. It said simply, "George!" And it transfixed the two combatants.

FOR an instant they lay motionless. George groaned, then sprang to his feet. Blakesmith rose more slowly. He towered above them all, bony, disheveled. . . . In that moment Penny wanted to run away, but was quite unable. In that

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moment, her eyes riveted on Blakesmith's face, she had some sick fantastic sense of what was coming.

"Your husband," he said to Cora—and Penny had never heard anything uglier than the sound of his voice, "your husband was trying to kill me over another woman."

George's anguished, "Don't listen to him!" and Cora's "Be quiet, George," didn't interrupt him. His voice simply

rose above theirs, suffering, infinitely malignant. "He's tagged me all spring because I had something he wanted. Because I had a girl he wanted. From the minute he saw her! Tried to cut me out! He's got a standing order at the florist's for her. Sweet peas and orchids. For her charm and her rarity. She told me that! He'd like to write poems and paint pictures—to identify himself with her: she told me that! He quotes—"

Cora stopped him with an imperative gesture. He drew a deep breath. The malignance went out of him. He looked at Penny, his face working. She knew that his tortured mind was groping for some word of apology, explanation. She put her hands over her ears and fled. But she heard him.

"In the moonlight, Miss Burke," he said, "you reminded—you reminded me of—of her."

THE GOLDEN RULE IS AMERICA'S "ISM"!

(Continued from page 29)

act became necessary, and of attempting to restore prices through a managed currency?"

I believe that the answer of these average citizens would be that the President, on the basis of his record, can be trusted to avoid the dangers of inflation. This record has been a stout resistance to unwise inflationary methods, and a willingness to recognize the need of curing the injustices occasioned by a rapid deflation in the circulating currency and credit of the country, by definite methods to check the deflation and restore monetary conditions in relation to the prices of commodities. Any one of these citizens who borrowed money from Mr. Warburg's bank ten years ago on the basis of currency which in relation to debts and purchasing power has since shrunk to one-half its value, and finds that it now takes nearly twice as much of his products and labor to pay such loans as it did when the loan was made, is hardly disposed to agree with Mr. Warburg's monetary ideas.

6: "Do you as citizens object to the stimulation of employment through public works to the limited extent that has been authorized, or to the relief of suffering, or to the Civil Works Administration, or to the Civilian Conservation Corps? Realizing, as you do, that the Federal Government was the only agency able to assume these burdens, do you think that our assumption of them involves any disposition, as Mr. Warburg says, 'to abandon our present order?'"

I think the average man of common sense would answer that this assumption of responsibilities by borrowing money from those willing to lend it, in order to carry other people through an emergency,

is no more than the average man does in his daily life over and over again. It has nothing to do with changing the present order, or any other order. In fact, if the word *order* would be used at all, it would be in the sense that we have spent money to maintain order, to protect human lives, and to guard against revolution. Mr. Warburg is forgetting that Americans are people who are disposed to help those in need even to the extent of using their resources to do it. Perhaps Mr. Warburg would call the Golden Rule an "ism."

7: "Do you average citizens feel that the people of the United States would have surrendered their independence and capacity of self-support and self-government by asking Mr. Warburg to do these various things?"

I BELIEVE the average man would answer that he knows as fact that for many generations certain business interests have been in the habit of coming to Washington very frequently for all sorts of reasons, and in most administrations they have not gone away empty-handed. These average citizens would be able to say further that they are glad to have an administration in Washington to which all sorts of people can look for sympathetic help and understanding; that they are glad to feel that such sympathetic help and understanding does not mean the end of personal initiative. I think that they would say further that there has been no disposition on the part of the Wall Street fraternity of which Mr. Warburg is a member, to lose any of its initiative or active individuality even after a hundred years of coming to Washington for help; and that the average man is

willing to take a chance with the theoretical considerations of his self-sufficiency if he knows that he has a people's government.

8: "Do you as average American citizens know of any reason to indicate that you are losing your power to govern yourself? Have you heard of any disposition to take away your power, your right to vote, your control over your public officials from high to low? Have you heard of any newspaper being suppressed by the Government, as in other countries? Have you heard of any suggestion to abolish Congress, State legislatures, courts, or any other fundamental parts of the Government? Have you heard of any suggestions to amend the Constitution?"

I believe that the average American would answer these questions in the negative except for the last one. He would perhaps answer: "Oh, yes, I have heard of two attempts that the Administration is making to change the Constitution, and I am mighty well pleased with them. The first has already been accomplished—the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment; the other—a constitutional amendment to abolish child labor. If you do that kind of changing of the Constitution, you can count us for it one hundred per cent." The citizens would probably further answer: "Well, Mr. Warburg, if there is any change in our system and form of government, then you and others like you who have been intrusted with great authority and power must bear the sole responsibility by reason of your failure to administer that trust fairly and efficiently. And now go away and let us watch the ball-game. . . . You know, we didn't have the price of admission a year ago."

MISS PEAKE

(Continued from page 33)

wedding so he'd have her all to himself. he told her to invite all of her friends to this farewell party at the Finks' the night before.

The party went on for hours and hours, and everyone had a grand time, what with roast pork and roast chicken and fancy dishes for supper, to say nothing of real wine that Miss Peake said was a present from the naval officer. While the ladies were looking at Miss Peake's wedding things, I peeked through the door. I could see the white wedding-gown and the long white veil. But it seemed like I was dreaming, and that I'd wake up any minute to find Miss Peake's shiny face looking at me through her gold-rimmed glasses again, or that I'd touch her thin hands as we fussed over

the double nasturtiums like we did in the old days.

Sam Bascomb brought a sack of rice from his store so we could pelt Miss Peake with it when we left there at two o'clock in the morning!

I'll never forget Miss Peake as she stood in the doorway waving good-by to us. "When Arthur and I come back from our honeymoon, we'll run over and see you all," she promised, and her voice was pitched so high I thought it was going to break. Before the whole crowd, she leaned over and kissed me good-by. It was a bold thing for a lady to do. Miss Peake would never have done it before she bought the gold party dress.

"Good-by, dear Mr. Tuttle," she said. "Your friendship has meant a great deal

to me, and I wish you all the happiness in the world. And please don't forget to water the nasturtiums."

THAT night Miss Peake, dressed in her new white wedding-dress, long veil and all, went out and drowned herself in Pope Creek.

Some of the Valley folks thought she'd drunk too much of that wine Arthur sent her for the party. Other folks said she'd made up the whole story about Arthur, the naval officer, and had even sent herself the letters and the presents, so they guessed she was a little bit cracked.

I blame it all on the double nasturtiums. But anyway, she loved them, so I took them out to her grave and left them there for God to take care of.

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Remarkable Change in Powder Shades



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Street

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NATURAL

ROSE CREAM

LIGHT CREAM

BRUNETTE

ROSE BRUNETTE

DARK BRUNETTE

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MURDER IN MOSCOW

(Continued from page 45)

right. . . . Djerjinski himself gave her the Order of Lenin; then they transferred her to M. O. O. R."

Then one day I met a young Russian who had a job in the cartographical department of the Commissariat of War, although he wasn't a party member, and his father had been a general in the Czar's army; but he'd thrown in his lot with the Revolution at the time of the Polish war because he said he was a Russian first, and the Poles were enemies of Russia. And anyway, he drew better maps than the rest of the Red army put together.

He looked very glum, and after a while he told me that his fiancée had been arrested by the Gay-pay-oo for killing a man named Shultz, who had been one of Bela Kun's henchmen in the Hungarian revolution in '19 and had escaped with Bela Kun to Russia, and gone down with him to the Crimea after Wrangel was beaten two years later, when Bela Kun "liquidated" what was left of the White movement in those parts. And mighty rough he was, by all accounts. They said that when he got back to Moscow, Lenin summoned him and said, "How dare you kill my people?" and sent him off to the sticks somewhere. But this Shultz stayed in Moscow and got a job with the Comintern. My friend's fiancée happened to hear that Shultz might know something about her father, who had been a colonel in Wrangel's army, but hadn't escaped with the rest to Constantinople and had been missing ever since; so she managed to make an appointment with Shultz, and went to see him one evening about nine. An hour later Shultz was found lying over his desk with a dagger deep in his heart and its hilt sticking out just under and behind his left shoulder, and two days afterward the Gay-pay-oo arrested the girl in Leningrad, and brought her back to Moscow, to the Lubianka; that was all my friend knew about it. But it seemed her case was hopeless, because Shultz was an important man in the Comintern, and the Gay-pay-oo said his killing was political, which meant a death-sentence for certain.

"Do you think she did it?" I asked. "I mean, after all, suppose this Shultz had had her father shot, and said so, and—"

"Of course not," said the boy. "She was far too afraid of him. Why, it took her a week to get up the nerve to make the date. Besides, she's not that sort; she's far too timid."

I DIDN'T know about that; you can't always tell, with girls—or men either, for that matter. But it was a good story, and I wanted to get more of it. Of course there was nothing doing with the Gay-pay-oo; a foreign reporter simply can't get at them, let alone persuade them to talk. So I went to see Hilda Petrovna.

I'd hardly begun my tale when she said she knew all about it, and that the girl, of course, was guilty; the Gay-pay-oo had a clear case.

"Shultz was stabbed in the back," she said, "while he was sitting at his desk, near an open window, at right angles to

it. His left side was toward the window, and there was no room for anyone to stand between it and him; therefore the crime must have been committed by a left-handed person, standing beside him on his right or behind him. This girl Lenskaya is left-handed. Secondly, there were no fingermarks on the dagger, and she had worn gloves, long black kid gloves; and you know as well as I do that no one, not even 'former' people, wear gloves in Moscow in the summer. Thirdly, she ran away to Leningrad the same night by the late train—"

"Yes," I said, "but—"

"And finally," Hilda Petrovna went on without notice of my interruption, "finally, Shultz had *shot* her father the colonel; that's to say, he'd signed the warrant for his execution, which was carried out. The Gay-pay-oo believe that she had learned this and determined upon revenge. Of course he admitted it; then she stabbed him."

"So there's no doubt about it, a cold-blooded deliberate assassination, which will bring the former Countess Lenskaya to the same end as her noble father; and all I can tell you is that the less you have to do with people like that, the better, if you wish to stay and work here." Her voice was low but very bitter; Bolshevik fanaticism is none the less real because it is cold and contained.

"I never met the girl," I stammered, "and I only know her fiancé slightly. . . . But did she confess or deny, or attempt to explain?"

"She denied everything, said she was only in the room five minutes, that the moment she told Shultz she'd come for news of her father, and who he was, he cut her short, said he'd nothing to say, and to get to hell out of there. She said she never knew he'd signed her father's death-warrant, hadn't known for sure that her father was dead. She wore gloves because she'd been acting as interpreter for some American tourists who were leaving that night for Leningrad, and asked her to go with them and had a ticket for her. One of the women had given her the gloves when she had dinner with them, and she put them on afterward because she hadn't got a handbag. She told them she couldn't go to Leningrad because she had an appointment, but when Shultz dismissed her so quickly, she had time to catch the train and did. Part of that is true, because she was, with these tourists when she was arrested, and it's quite possible they gave her the gloves, which doesn't affect the matter in the least. I tell you she's guilty, and that's the end of it. The other people in the apartment are certain that no one went into Shultz's room after the girl left it, until he was found dead an hour later."

"And they are above suspicion?"

"Absolutely—a member of the old Bolshevik league, and his wife—both over seventy, and feeble. There's nothing in that direction. No—the only thing I'm the least bit doubtful about, if any doubt is possible, is a question of psychology, feminine psychology. I'm a woman myself, you see; and when women work themselves up to commit political mur-

ders, for the sake of a cause or for revenge, they have sacrificed their lives beforehand, and they don't usually even attempt to escape; but if they do attempt it and are caught, they don't deny their act, but glory in it."

She frowned and added reflectively: "There was Charlotte Corday, and the woman who shot Lenin, and scores of others in our revolutionary history. . . . I must admit that's a curious feature; but the Gay-pay-oo is certain, and the Gay-pay-oo is seldom wrong."

"Did you see her yourself?" I asked.

Hilda Petrovna didn't answer for a moment. "No," she said slowly, "but I will, tomorrow. Galkin, who examined Lenskaya, is a friend of mine. And he was surprised by that too; he mentioned it himself, but he explained it by saying she'd nerved herself to the act, then collapsed when it was done. . . . That must be the right answer—yet I don't know: he's a man, and— Yes, I *will* see her—just to make sure."

NEXT evening I got a phone-call from Hilda Petrovna, telling me to come to her office. Her eyes were very bright, and there was more color than usual in her cheeks.

"I saw your friend Lenskaya today," she began impetuously, "and I'm prepared to swear—that is," she corrected herself, "I don't think the case is so clear as— Of course Galkin was cocksure, wouldn't listen for a moment—men always think they know better. . . . But I tell you the girl is a terrified little fool. This is no nervous collapse, it's just plain fright—the creature's a rabbit, and brainless. She *couldn't* have planned and executed a crime like that. . . . I mean, she's not the type. . . . I *can't* be mistaken. . . . Galkin may laugh as he pleases, but I know better. His case may *look* all right, but it simply doesn't rhyme—not with that little rabbit."

"What are you going to do?" I said. "Is there anything you can do?"

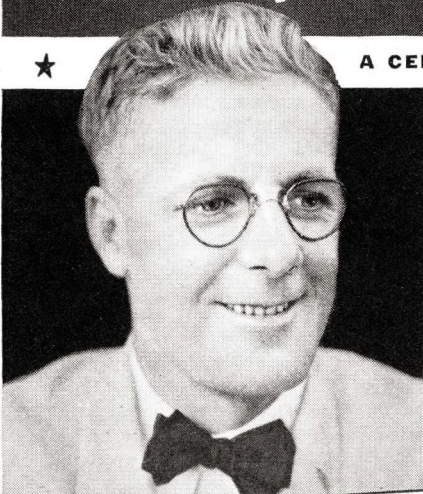
"I—and there's another queer point I didn't know before. Shultz wasn't found dead in his chair, but lying face downward over his desk. Galkin said he'd jumped up when she stabbed him, then fallen; but a man doesn't jump up with a knife deep in his heart, and it *was* deep. He admitted the force of the blow surprised him. That proved her desperation, he said, and she'd played a lot of tennis. The first thing he asked her was, 'Are you left-handed?' and she told him, 'Yes.' I don't know what I can do, but I'll tell you what I've already done: I investigated Shultz's room myself this afternoon."

"As you know," she continued, "everyone has his own method in finding things out; it must be the same even in your business. My method is elimination. For instance, if I lose something, I think of everywhere it might be, and look there, place after place, until at least there's only one place left, and there I find it. If you eliminate rightly, you *must* reach your end. Now in this case I begin by eliminating Lenskaya. I know that's arbitrary, but unless I start from there, my inquiry has no purpose—Galkin has taken care

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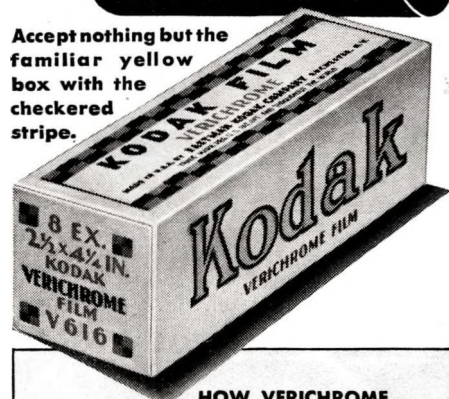
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of that. Next I eliminate any other visitors after her. I talked with the old man and his wife; there's no doubt possible. The old woman found the body—went in to borrow some matches to light her primus. She said the room was bare, no chance for anyone to hide—only an iron cot and the desk and a chair, not even a cupboard. They'd not heard anything, she said; they were sure the girl had done it.

"Remains the window. There is a balcony, two stories above the street, and two below the roof. Unfortunately some neighbors three doors down the corridor were sitting on their balcony, level with Shultz's. I talked to them too; they sat there from eight-thirty that night until they heard the old woman yell when she found the body. They heard Shultz talking with a woman, who must have been Lenskaya, about an hour before. It was dark, but there were lamps in the street below, and although they didn't watch Shultz's balcony particularly, no one could have got on to it from below or above, and *gone in and out* without their noticing. They saw no one; so I eliminate the balcony.

"**N**OW what's left? It seemed there was nothing, because across the street there's an open space, then a blank wall, the side of the Savoy Hotel. Only one window fifty yards away, at that; the street is fifteen yards wide, with the sidewalks and the open space at least twice as much again. No one could have thrown a knife that distance, so I eliminated that. Net result, the girl *was* guilty—unless my final elimination is not perfect." She rubbed her nose with the palm of her hand and continued: "Anyway, it's the only chance. I assume my first elimination, the second and third are water-tight, therefore it *must* be the last, or nothing."

"I've got friends at the Savoy," I said eagerly, "and the porter knows me quite well. I could ask—"

"You can and you may," she replied, "but I don't think you'll get much. If Lenskaya is innocent, this crime has been shrewdly planned."

I did ask, and Hilda Petrovna was right. The room in question had been occupied for a week before the murder by an American architect named Charles Stewart; in fact, I'd met him myself, and a mighty nice fellow he was, though he didn't think much of Soviet building, or their business methods. The porter said he left Moscow for Berlin the night of August tenth, the day Shultz was killed; but one of my friends was sure there'd been some delay about his Polish visa, and he'd stayed till the eleventh; it didn't seem to matter much either way. . . .

I told Hilda Petrovna about it and said: "We've got to eliminate him; he knew nothing about politics, wasn't even interested, like most American specialists." And she said: "We have, have we? Well, at all events they won't decide the case for a couple of weeks—I secured that much from Galkin, though he thinks I'm a fool for my pains; he said it would give her time to confess, and he was busy anyway, so the case could wait."

"It's a vicious system," I said. "It's unjust that the same power arrests, examines, tries, and executes. No American would stand it; the Gay-pay-oo is—"

"You're talking nonsense," she snapped. "The Gay-pay-oo was appointed to protect the Revolution against *counter-revolution*; it's not a question of your bourgeois justice, but war to the knife."

"And didn't we have a revolution," I asked, "to defend our rights against the British? And the British themselves, they had one too, and killed their king into the bargain, long before you did, precisely to protect the individual against the despotism of arbitrary courts and star chambers. They invented *habeas corpus* too, for the same purpose; and we've kept it in America."

Hilda Petrovna spoke patiently, in the Bolshevik manner of one dealing with a child. "You don't understand," she said. "The so-called American revolution and Cromwell's revolution were not revolutions at all, really, not class revolutions, but simply a transfer of power from one section of the bourgeoisie to another. All bourgeois 'justice' is class justice, money justice, property justice, which is *injustice*. Only one more trick to bamboozle the workers. You can't argue about it; it's no use."

She was quite right; you can't, not with Bolsheviks. I've tried it, and I know. They're impervious to any argument save their own.

"All right," I said, "I won't argue; but when can I, when do you expect—"

"Come back in a week—no, ten days; and don't bother me by telephoning in the meantime. If there's anything before, I'll let you know."

"Do you think there *will* be anything?"

"I don't know. I think there *should* be, but I'm not sure I can find it—though I would like to show those—"

She broke off sharply. "Get out," she said, smiling, "you damned bourgeois!"

A WEEK later my young Russian friend came in great distress. He'd heard, it seemed, that Lenskaya had been summoned to a final examination, which corresponds to a trial in the Gay-pay-oo prison of Lubianka, and that the examiner had dismissed without consideration her attempt at defense. No sentence is pronounced in Gay-pay-oo trials; the prisoner knows nothing definite until the last fatal summons, which might come any moment, he said despairingly.

I told him it was nonsense, that I'd received assurance that her case would be held over for two weeks, but he refused to be comforted. He knew better, he said; she was as good as dead.

The same evening Hilda Petrovna telephoned, confirming the grapevine report.

"Galkin did his best," she told me, "but there is a lot of excitement amongst the Comintern representatives here about Shultz's murder. They brought pressure to bear; they are sure that Lenskaya is guilty, and can't understand why she has not been punished. She will be shot within forty-eight hours."

"But have you found nothing?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, "I have found everything; but they won't believe it. They say my theory is fantastic, and you know what the Gay-pay-oo is: if they have an accused and a motive and a lot of circumstantial evidence, and the accused is a 'former' person, they won't look further. I have no proof, yet; but perhaps you can help me. Come at once to my office."

*I'm sending some of the latest
snapshots of Bill—he's swell, Sis,
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Captain

a hot

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so he

with

Sam



How much more one snapshot tells about the way he looks than a whole letter! One snapshot, and you almost know him. What a fascinating way to make letters clear and interesting. The friends—the places you go—the things you do—slip them into the envelope in the form of snapshots. They really tell the story. Snapshots are more truthful, more expressive than ever, when you use *Kodak Verichrome Film*. Make your next pictures with Verichrome and see the difference. Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.

Don't just write it — PICTURE IT — with snapshots

I went at once, of course.

"I don't blame the Gay-pay-oo," she began; "they are more conscientious than you foreigners believe, and their case looked strong enough. Everything seemed to tally, save the girl and her character; and that meant little to them. But I eliminated her, and Charles Stewart was the only line. A most interesting inquiry, building up step by step.

"I began by asking for reports about him from all sources. There aren't so many foreigners in Moscow; and—you know—there is a sort of check on their movements.

"THE first thing I got was that one of our Soviet architects had been to see him, and afterward had said he was puzzled. He admired American architects greatly, but Stewart didn't seem to know what he was talking about. Our comrade didn't understand it at all.

"That didn't mean much, but it was a start.

"Then came a report from our customs people at the frontier. Stewart had a round case for his plans, such as architects carry, about two and a half feet long and two inches in diameter, for his plans and papers. He had no permit to take it out, and when they told him a permit was necessary, he said he didn't know that, but it didn't matter; he would leave it there and arrange things with our embassy in Berlin, so that they could send it after him.

"Nothing unusual in that, but when they examined the case, they found that instead of opening in the middle, it unscrewed at one end, and that it was not leather or *papier-mâché*, but a metal tube wrapped around with a lot of straps! And there was something strange about the plans themselves; they were blue-prints of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, which didn't seem to have much to do with anything we need here.

"Then I talked to the porter at the Savoy, and he said there was nothing unusual about Stewart, but remembered, when I pressed him, that there had been one small incident: Some comrade had been talking to the porter when Stewart was getting the key of his room; and when he went upstairs, this comrade had said: 'Who is that? He looks exactly like the young Count Festalfy, who was one

of the White leaders in Budapest when they smashed our revolution in '18.' The porter said: 'Oh, no, he's an American architect named Stewart,' and the comrade said: 'Well, that shows how people look alike. I was in Budapest those days, and those damned Whites nearly shot me. I'd have sworn this fellow was one of the Festalfys.'

"Now, that was interesting; and I began to feel my case was taking shape. Finally I tackled the guide who interpreted for Stewart. She was an honest little thing, but inexperienced; and all she could remember at first was that he was a kind gentleman and never kept her working late or long.

"I took her through his whole trip, day by day; and all at once she told me what I needed.

"They had been out one afternoon at the Park of Culture and Rest, with another visitor, an Englishman, and at the handball court they found some youngsters who were playing a new game, which had been introduced by two Frenchmen of a workers' delegation from the south of France. They had a funny sort of basket shovel strapped onto their wrists, and with this they caught and threw a ball against the wall. 'Pelota Basque,' the Frenchmen called it, and they left two basket shovels in the Park of Culture and Rest, with instructions how to play the game. But it seemed very difficult. The Englishman tried it—and he was worse than the Russians—while Stewart watched.

"Then suddenly he said: 'It's easy enough; give it to me—I'll show you.' And he strapped the basket on his arm and began to throw the ball in the most wonderful way. 'Like this,' he said, 'you must do it.' And he threw it backhand with a downward sweep. 'It's easy enough,' he said. 'Put some chalk on the ball, and I'll show you.' So they chalked the ball, and he went far back, about forty yards from the wall, and said: 'Watch—I'll throw it the first time, and that will be the center of my circle; and then I'll make a ring round it.'

"And he went on throwing until there was a ring of chalk-marks round the first one, almost a perfect circle, hardly one shot an inch away from where he aimed."

"So there I had my case complete: A Hungarian nobleman, and a pelota cham-

pion, who could aim to an inch at forty yards, and a metal tube with which such a champion could sling a knife with equal accuracy. A complete case—but guess-work, as far as the Gay-pay-oo is concerned; and this is where you can help.

"There are plenty of Hungarian nobles, and without a doubt most of them have hated Shultz. There are also plenty of pelota-players who can aim accurately at forty yards; and without a doubt most of them never heard of Shultz.

"What I want now is a Hungarian noble who is also a champion pelota-player, and that combination *must* be unusual."

"All right," I said. "I'll cable our Budapest correspondent."

Next morning I got an answer:

COUNT IMRY FESTALFY REACHED SEMI-FINAL AMATEUR PELOTA CHAMPIONSHIP BIARRITZ LAST SUMMER JUST RETURNED BUDAPEST FROM HUNTING TRIP ABROAD ADDRESS HOTEL DUNAPALATA.

"Good enough for us," said Hilda Petrovna; "but is it good enough for the Gay-pay-oo? Send another message to Festalfy as follows: '*Former Countess Irina Lenskaya, whose father was shot by Shultz in Crimea is involved by circumstantial evidence in your killing Shultz from Hotel Savoy with thrown knife stop To save her life will you cable admission your act?*'"

"Do you think he'll answer?" I asked. "And can you hold up her execution?"

"Why not?" she said. "He doesn't risk anything; it's a political crime, and we have no relations with Hungary. Galkin will give me a day or two's grace on the case I present; but add to your telegram: '*Immediate reply essential.*'"

So I added it.

I KNEW Hilda Petrovna rather well by now; that was the only time I have seen her nervous. She rang me up half a dozen times the next day. Then about four o'clock I got the reply:

SHULTZ MURDERED MY FATHER AND BROTHER STOP I AVENGED THEM AND HIS OTHER VICTIMS BY KNIFE SLUNG FROM WINDOW HOTEL SAVOY, WHERE I LIVED UNDER ALIAS CHARLES STEWART STOP NO ONE HELPED ME STOP HOW DID YOU KNOW? IMRY FESTALFY.

Hilda Petrovna said Galkin wasn't pleased—but the Lenskaya girl was released.

TWO WOMEN TOO MANY

(Continued from page 43)

them was suddenly lighted by the flare from a Very pistol.

Petersen rasped out a curious Norwegian oath. Bates looked toward the light and saw a cruiser, a very small cruiser, bobbing on the swells. He said: "Fourth of July, Captain?"

"Vessel in distress, sir," said Petersen. "We should go halp."

Bates said: "Sure, go ahead and halp." He didn't like the captain. From the beginning of their acquaintance, he had had the feeling that this man was picking on him; and since this was his first yacht, he didn't know that yacht captains always pick on yacht owners. Petersen, in a really splendid voice, cried: "Iversen, Yonn, Yack—on deck!"

The sailors came racing aft from the

bow, where they'd been smoking their nightcap pipes.

"We got a wreck!" said Petersen. "On your yibb sheets, Iversen. You, Yonn an' Yack, stand by the fores'l an' main. Get dem runners free as we come 'bout."

"Sir," said the men. Petersen swung the wheel hard over to port; there was a slatting of rippling canvas as the *Annabelle Lee* pointed into the wind and her jibs banged over; and then, as she paid off on the new tack, an agreeable sound of ropes running through blocks, a pleasant creaking of the masts as they shifted their strain and the stays and runners caught it up, and then Petersen's picturesque voice singing: "Pay off on your main, tauten up on your yibbs."

"It's so *romantic*!" said Salty Mildred.

"Your idea's about as smart as mine was," said Maury Pell to his wife.

"I've got my fingers crossed," said Peggy Pell.

Bates, who had been thinking it was romantic, shuddered once again. The way Salty Mildred said it made it seem to him phony, a stage set. He unwrapped Salty Mildred from himself and stood up. Then he walked to the wheel and stood beside the captain.

"What do you think's the matter?" he said.

"Engine, probable," said Petersen. "You know what these boat engines are!"

"Oh, sure," said Bates.

"We got to take 'em aboard an' tow 'em," said Petersen. "We got to tow 'em to Montauk."

Sun and wind dry your Outer Skin



"Skin getting leathery last summer—like satin this year!"... Mrs. Anthony J. Drexel III

Mrs. Drexel says: "Last summer my skin was beginning to look positively leathery.

"A friend told me she never went out without a film of Pond's Vanishing Cream on. I got results with the very first application. My skin seemed

to lose all its little roughnesses at once.

"Then I tried the Cold Cream. What a rich cream—and a wonderful cleanser! Those Two Creams gave me a skin like satin. I have been using them ever since!"

lines start deep down...in your Under Skin

use a *different cream* for each of your Two Skins!



Mrs. Anthony J. Drexel III

THOSE GLORIOUS SKINS that stay satiny all summer... have two reasons behind them!

An Under Skin supplied deep down with oils that keep it full and luscious. And an Outer Skin kept soft and moist despite sun and wind.

It's extremely simple! A different kind of cream for each of your Two Skins!—and only two—are all you need.

Oil-rich Cream smooths out lines

The oil glands in your Under Skin actually pour out beauty oils in early youth. Soon they begin to fail. Lines appear—wrinkles. What then?

Before this happens, look to your face cream! Pond's Cold Cream is composed of very rich oils that penetrate deep and replenish the oils of the shrinking under skin. Use this rich cream to keep the Under Skin full and firm. This smooths

For your UNDER SKIN—
Pond's oil-rich Cold Cream.
Or Pond's new Liquefying
Cream that melts instantly.

For your OUTER SKIN—
Pond's Vanishing
Cream. Corrects dry-
ness. Holds powder.

the Surface Skin... keeps lines away!

As a cleanser, Pond's is without a peer! It goes down after every bit of dust and make-up, and brings them to the surface. After the cleansing, pat in a fresh application. It will help to keep your skin gloriously young!

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Bates looked at Petersen and wondered why it is that the face of any dumb seaman seen in the soft glow of light from a binnacle looks dramatic.

Petersen glanced at the sails. They were taut, and even though the *Annabelle Lee* was running now at an easy reach, she was heeling.

"It looks," he said, "as if we'd have a tough time towin' 'em there. The wind she's coming."

ANOTHER flare went up from the little cruiser. The Pells had risen now and were standing on the windward side of the deck, watching events. Even Salty Mildred seemed interested. Bates nudged the captain.

"I'll take the wheel," he said. "You go and get our flares, and signal back. They are probably panicky."

"You'll take the wheel?" said Petersen. "Vind's comin' up. You'd not better do that!"

"I'll take the wheel," said Bates. The captain moved aside. Bates spread his feet wide, set his hands on the spokes and gripped them. He'd never sailed anything larger than a star boat before, and he got a strange thrill out of it.

The captain, sadly shaking his head, went for'd. Bates moved the wheel right and left and was amazed at how easily and quickly the big schooner responded. He smiled. This was the stuff! He forgot about his broken engine and about Salty Mildred, and fell to wondering who might be aboard the little power-boat he was going to rescue. He thought idly that it might very easily be some one he knew. He hoped it was, because he thought it would be more fun to rescue some one you knew, unless, of course it was a strange girl. That would be still more fun.

Another flare went up from the little boat, and he saw they were quite near, a few hundred yards away. Then Petersen sent off a flare from the schooner's bow. It was a big one, and lighted the scene so brightly that it looked like a moving-picture set. He could now see two figures in the cockpit of the cruiser—a man and a girl. There was something familiar about the girl, even at that distance.

"Oh, pshaw," said Bates. "I know her."

Salty Mildred had stepped up onto the steering deck and was standing beside him.

"Know who?"

"That girl in the boat."

"Oh," said Salty Mildred. "I wish it were me you were rescuing. Who is she?"

"Can't make out from here," he said, "but I know her."

Peggy Pell looked at her husband and held up her crossed fingers.

The bright lights, hanging from the sky in their miniature parachutes, burned out. Bates steered for the pin-points of the power-boat's running-lights. A vague disquieting sensation was coming over him. He was trying to place the figure—the female figure—in the cockpit. There was something about it that stirred memories, disturbing memories. Then Petersen, knowing they were close enough to begin the maneuvering for passing the line, sent off two of his big flares at once, and again the sea and the two boats and the waves, which were much bigger now and beginning to have white crests here and there, passed from night into eerie day.

"Good Lord!" said Bates. "It's Trinket!"

Petersen came aft and took the wheel. Bates was scarcely aware of his doing it, because he was staring in a dazed sort of way at this girl who had climbed out of the cockpit now and was making her way along the slippery, pitching deck toward the bow. He had once known her so well, so very well and intimately, that they had quarreled the way only people who have been truly fond of each other can quarrel. They hadn't spoken for six months.

His daze was broken by Peggy Pell shouting in his ear.

"Trinket, isn't it?" she said.

He nodded, thinking of the portrait of this girl that hung in his New York apartment.

"A bit awkward. Lothario," said Peggy Pell. She laughed gayly, as though she were enjoying the situation thoroughly, and went on: "Still," she said, "I suppose we sailors must expect this sort of thing."

"What?" said Salty Mildred.

Before she could be answered, things began happening. They had passed the stern of the cruiser, and Petersen swung the wheel hard over to come into the wind. The same ringing orders to his men rang out. The great slatting of canvas boomed over their heads, and the *Annabelle Lee* came about and started to repass the cruiser, one of the sailors standing ready to heave the towline to the girl who was balancing precariously in the bow waiting to receive it. And then just as they crossed the little boat's bow, the girl slipped. There was a ghastly second while she tried to recover balance, and then she was gone.

THERE wasn't a sound aboard the schooner, except the noise of the wind and the water. There are some things so shocking that they stifle cries half born in the throat before they can be uttered. Then, before anyone had recovered enough to realize what he was doing, Radthorne Bates ripped the ring life-preserver from its fastenings on the mainmast shrouds, flung it astern and was overboard after it.

As soon as the life-preserver hit the water, the acetylene flare that was part of its construction lighted, so it wasn't too hard for Bates or the girl to swim to it. Since she was nearer and Bates was swimming with all his might, they reached it at the same instant, and for a second hung to it, panting for breath. Then the girl looked at him; and her eyes, which were very large and brown, widened in surprise. Then she laughed, being one of those rare girls who invariably laugh when faced with real danger, and said: "Fancy meeting you here."

Radthorne looked at her. She could scarcely have been called pretty, with her hair matted over her face and her store complexion roughly removed by the cold salt water, but he didn't see her the way she looked now. He saw her as she had looked that last night when they had quarreled: immaculate, beautiful, her eyes filled with tears. He had been thinking, as he swam, that he had been watching her die, and he was too deeply moved now to speak.

"Decent of you to take the Brodie and come in after me," she said. "Damn' sporting of you, Bates. Thanks."

Again he found it difficult to answer.

"Who owns the big thing you jumped off of?"

"I do, Trinket. Are you all right? I mean you're not hurt or anything?"

"Bruised," she said, "just bruised." She looked across the life-preserver at him, an odd expression in her eyes. "By the way, are we—still sore at each other?"

Radthorne Bates managed a grin.

"This is no place for a fight," he said.

"I thought not," said Trinket.

"Let's shake," said Bates.

But they didn't shake, because, without either of them really intending it to happen, they suddenly found themselves on the same side of the life-preserver, and an instant later there was no longer any need for such a formal gesture as shaking hands.

Trinket sighed. "Gosh," she said, "it's swell seeing you again."

"Swell seeing you," said Bates.

Then they both laughed.

"I was out swordfishing with one of the artists I pose for," said Trinket. "Never go swordfishing with an artist."

"I won't," said Bates.

"We sprung a leak and it killed the engine."

"Look," said Bates, and pointed to where the *Annabelle Lee*, having made a quick circle, was bearing down on them. As she came near, Petersen lighted things up again, swung into the wind a few yards away. A line came snaking out toward them and hit the water with a hissing slap, and they grabbed it. A moment later, very bedraggled and wet, they were hauled aboard. While they were still standing on the deck, dripping, Salty Mildred rushed up to Bates. Disregarding his wetness, she flung her arms about him.

"My man!" she said. "My poor, brave man!"

Pell gave his Peggy a brutal, unkind look.

Bates, in spite of the fact that he was frightfully cold, blushed and said: "Don't be an ass, Mildred."

Trinket Jones laughed a funny, catchy laugh and said: "Well, well, well!"

Radthorne thought he had never felt quite so uncomfortable in his life. He turned to Peggy Pell.

"Get Trinket dried out, Peg," he said. Then he told Petersen to pick up the man on the cruiser, let her drift and head back for Montauk Point. Then he went below to his stateroom.

HE had changed his clothes and was drinking a tremendous hooker of whisky when Maury Pell joined him a few minutes later.

"We just got that bird off in time," he said. "The squall's hit hard. He's got a bad leg, by the way. Bright idea, wasn't it, taking Mildred out here where it's rough?"

"Huh?" said Bates.

"She loves it," said Maury. "She thinks it's so romantic, and that you're such a brave, brave fiancé."


Bates cried out as though he'd been bitten.

"Fiancé?"

"Her words," said Maury Pell, bowing. "not mine."

Radthorne Bates took a great swallow of the whisky.

"I can't go through with it, Maury. I



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IF you really want whiter, more attractive-looking teeth, FIGHT FILM, say leading dental authorities. Film is that dull, dingy coating that constantly forms on teeth. It catches bits of food. Harbors stains from smoking. Combines with substances in the saliva to form irritating tartar. And, worse still, film is laden with millions of tiny germs that are often the forerunner of tooth decay. Film unremoved invites tender, spongy gums, pyorrhea. Thus film must be removed—kept off teeth.

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just simply can't. She gives me the creeps."

"Being a gentleman," said Pell, "I don't see as *you* have much choice." He sighed. "You can get divorced in a year or two, I suppose."

"Oh!" said Bates.

He finished off the rest of his drink, because the ship was heeled so far now that holding it in the glass without spilling it was too difficult.

"It's a wild night," said Maury by way of making conversation.

"It's hell," said Radthorne.

"I meant outside," said Pell. "She's a good ship, though; Petersen says she's perfectly safe, except that you may *yoost* as soon plan to buy a new set of sails."

"He would suggest that."

Bates opened the door. "I'm going to speak to Trinket," he said, "and see if she's all right."

HE headed for the Pells' stateroom, two doors forward of his own.

Maury Pell called after him.

"Be careful," he said. "Salty Mildred may be jealous. I think Peggy's in the saloon telling her about you and Trinket."

Bates gave him a look. Then he knocked on the door and went into the stateroom.

On the leeward berth Trinket Jones lay swathed from head to foot in blankets. Her complexion had been restored; her

hair was sleekly combed. She looked exceedingly pretty—so pretty that Radthorne was startled for a second, the way he always was startled when things struck him as beautiful. He went over and sat down on the edge of the berth and took her hand and smiled in friendly fashion down at her.

"Warm again?"

"Uh-huh. You?"

"Plenty. I had a big drink."

"By the way," said Trinket, "I want to thank you for—"

She broke off as the door was swung violently open, and Salty Mildred flung herself into the room.

When she saw Radthorne Bates sitting on the edge of the berth, her face quite suddenly ceased to have anything pretty about it. It grew homely with rage, as only pretty women's faces can.

"Then it's true! You planned to meet down here!" she said. "You and this strumpet!"

Trinket laughed merrily.

"You're a lecherous betraying libertine, and you've got a nasty little brat somewhere—*hers!*"—pointing at Trinket. "I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on the face of the earth!" And then for the next two minutes she amazed Trinket and shocked Radthorne with the things she said and the different ways she said them. It always amazed Trinket Jones when society girls showed such a

mastery of foul language. She wondered how they learn it.

Salty Mildred wound up with a splendid burst, gasped for breath, said: "You put me ashore at Montauk. I'm through!"—slapped Radthorne's face, and flounced out of the room.

TRINKET said: "I'm sorry about it, Bates."

Bates rubbed his cheek and heaved a long, satisfied sigh.

"By the way," he said, "what were you going to say just before the earthquake happened?"

"The earthquake? Oh, I was going to thank you pretty for saving my life."

Radthorne leaned forward, a thoroughly merry and wicked light in his eyes. It was perfectly obvious that he was going to kiss her; but Trinket, womanlike, pretended not to know it. She put up a protesting hand.

"Rad!" she said. "Stop it! What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to thank you pretty," he said, "for saving *my* life."

After he kissed her, because neither of them was really in love any more, he opened the door to call for the Pells to come and celebrate, and was a little annoyed with both of them when, as the door opened, they fell into the room for all the world as though they'd been listening at the keyhole.

MEN NOT WORKING

(Continued from page 59)

leather chair, the day's mail spread before him—memo's and notes in a neat little pile on the dusty oak surface of the desk. And he did not look at a thing. He could see nothing but his grandson. Was this devitalized young man the husky youngster who had, in sequence, yearned to be a fireman, an aviator, a strike-breaker, a mining engineer? Was it possible that the decline of the dollar could make such a decline in vitality? He remembered the girl who had happened in Don's second year at New Haven. Oh, they hadn't meant him to know about that! But he had found out. He was less shocked than any of them. It had, indeed, given him a queer feeling of something like satisfaction. "Natural," he had said at the time. "Most natural thing on earth. What else would you expect?" His son George had looked reproving. "It's broken his mother's heart," George had told his father stiffly. "It didn't, though," old Griswold thought now. "If she had a heart, it should ought to be broken right now." He took up a letter with a little sigh.

But when he walked back to the house for lunch through the hot streets, keeping as much in the shade of the spreading maples on Vine Avenue and Genessee as possible, he had made up his mind. He was quite proud and happy and enormously pleased with himself for thinking this all up. Don would be all right. He would see to it. It all boiled down reasonably to one thing, if you looked at it right: youth was the time for wanting things. Fair enough! The thing to do was to point out to Don what he wanted. "Wanting things. Wanting things," old man Griswold thought, plodding along. "When a fellow doesn't want things, he might's

well be dead." The young Jean girl knew what she wanted, all right. Old man Griswold chuckled happily.

"Don," he said after the floating island, which he hated, "come on out on the porch with me, will you?" He was aware of the swift look that passed between the boy and his mother. Well, that kind of thing was about ended! Once on the porch, he could see Dorothy hovering about just inside the long windows. He waited, ostentatiously, until she had removed herself.

"Your mother must think I'm bad for you," he grumped.

"Why, certainly not, Grandfather."

SLOWLY the old man puffed on the one stogie he permitted himself at noon. "Don," he asked at last, "you like this Jean girl?"

"Why, yes."

"Love her?"

"Well, I—"

"Well, do you? I sort of understood there was a kind of engagement in your senior year, wasn't there?"

"Oh, then! Maybe—in a way."

Old Griswold removed the stogie from between his lips. Unaccountably, his hands trembled a little. "Do you mean your feelings have changed? Found some one you care more for, or something?"

"No, I wouldn't say that." The boy's voice was emotionless. "No one I—I like more." He settled back and deeper in the wicker chair. His legs stretched comfortably. "But what's the use?" he added agreeably.

The words, the tone, sank like knives into old man Griswold. "What's the use?" He wanted to yell: "What's the

use of youth, if you don't make the most of it? What's the use of your young body and your young mind if they don't want mating and don't want to work for your woman? My God in heaven," the old man thought he must scream, "did an economic depression steal manhood away?"

But he said nothing. When the ash spilled from his stogie, he whipped it clumsily from the white of his linen coat and began: "Tell you what I'll do, Don: you marry your Jean; and I—well, I'll see things are all right till you get your start."

A small smile grooved Don's lips. "That's very kind, Grandfather. But I hardly think—"

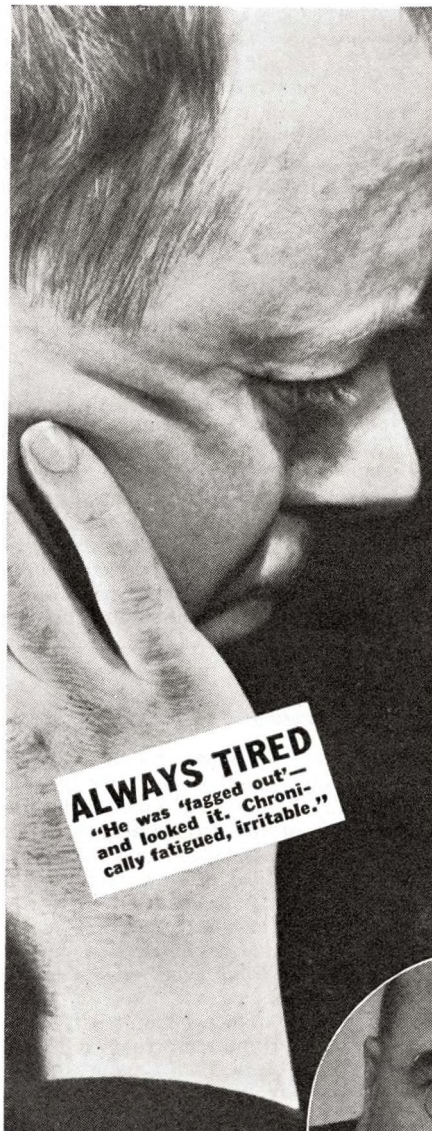
"Of course not!" Dorothy broke in from where she stood framed in the French window, indignation burning from her lips like a prairie fire. "How can you suggest such a mad thing? Of course not. What sort of a thing is that to propose to a young man at this time? It would handicap Don for life. It will be years, now, before he's on his feet. Marrying now would ruin him—" Sobs choked her. She faced her son, appeal, command, commingled in her. "Don, tell him you wouldn't dream of doing such a crazy thing. Tell him! Make him understand once and for all that you're simply waiting—you must simply wait—" She became incoherent.

For the first time old man Griswold understood the meaning of the depression. It didn't mean "financial crises" or "chaos" or "bad times." It meant "drugged." The boys and men who had not fought off the drug, imbibed it and became weaklings, forever ruined, forever lost.



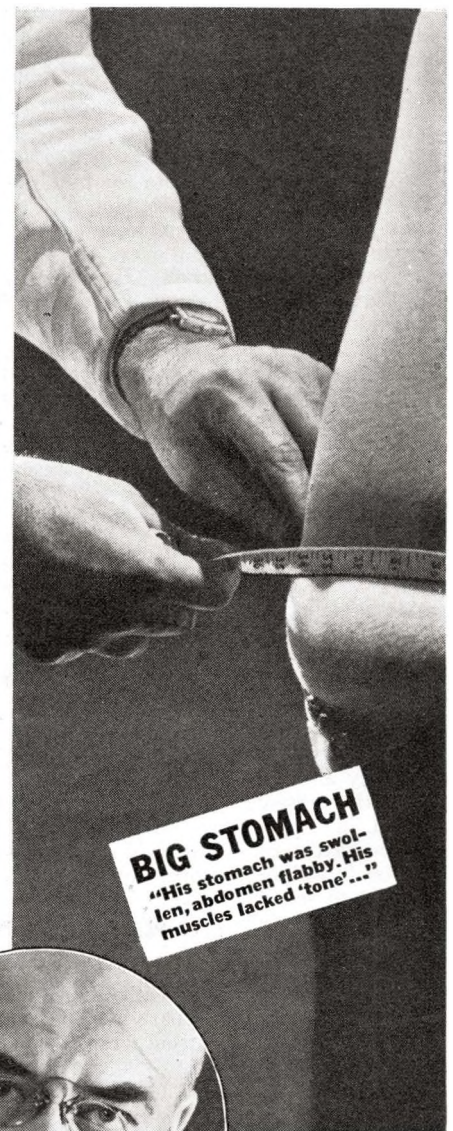
EYES BLEARY

"This man's eyes were yellowish, bloodshot," reports Dr. Ramond.



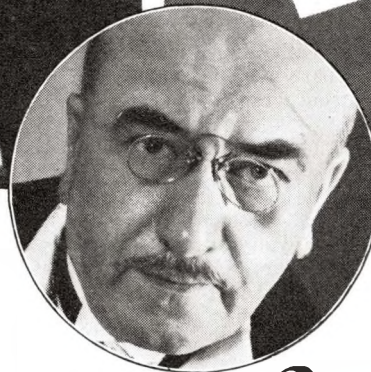
ALWAYS TIRED

"He was 'fagged out'—and looked it. Chronically fatigued, irritable."



BIG STOMACH

"His stomach was swollen, abdomen flabby. His muscles lacked 'tone'..."



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"His case showed amazing improvement...in 3 weeks"

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If you have any of the troubles shown above, this very typical "case history" can help you!

"MR. Z—," Dr. Ramond reports, "had been overworking, lacked exercise." In addition to dull eyes, tired body and swollen stomach, he "had bad headaches, couldn't sleep..."

"The X-ray," he adds, "showed his whole digestive system was 'lazy.' He was constipated—his digestion slow."

"My advice—yeast—proved just the treatment he needed. As his digestion and elimination improved, his headaches

stopped, he slept well—regained his former energy."

Perhaps *your* eyes are dull, bleary. Perhaps *you* lack "pep," have a big stomach... are constipated... unable to digest meals without distress.

As Dr. Ramond says, "Poisons formed when intestines do not function properly are absorbed by the tissues and affect health in *many* ways... To counteract this condition I recommend yeast as the best corrective."

Won't you give Fleischmann's Yeast a really thorough trial—for say 30 days, at least? You can get it at grocers, restaurants and soda fountains.

Just eat 3 cakes daily, following the directions on the label.

Each cake is very rich in vitamins B, D and C. Start to eat Fleischmann's Yeast now! You'll start to feel better... soon!



Fleischmann's Yeast does 3 Things

for You—(1) it stimulates the flow of your stomach juices (2) strengthens the muscles of your stomach and intestines (3) softens hardened waste so it can pass easily—and regularly—from the body.

Eat 3 Cakes a Day

He heard the boy pleading: "Mother, stop. Stop crying. Of course I'm not going to do any such fool thing."

"Fool—fool!" the old man echoed.

Tears were still streaming down Dorothy's cheeks. "If you really wanted to do something for Don—if you can afford to take care of a wife for him, you can afford—you could let him fill this time with travel. Oh, it wouldn't hurt you to let him have the money. A couple of thousand would do it. He could go to Europe. If you really cared, you'd send him away—"

"Yes," old man Griswold said slowly. "You're right, Dorothy. If I cared, I'd send him away." He turned to his grandson. "Call it settled," he told him. "Decide where you want to go. France or some place," he suggested vaguely. "Even China," he added.

"You mean it?" Dorothy cried.

"I mean it. Like to get him, started right smack away. You get busy seeing about passports and such. Make up your mind about a ship. But do it quick."

"Oh!" Fresh tears started in Dorothy's eyes. "Oh, Don, how can I bear it? But I will. I'm so glad for you."

Old man Griswold took up his "summer hat" and stalked down the garden path. He still heard Don's fumbled thanks humming in his ears. This time he knew that the two he had left behind were saying: "Grandfather isn't so bad after all. You just have to know how to handle him."

He pushed back his hat and chuckled. They didn't know the half of it! When they did—well, Don'd be too far off to have what he said matter; Dorothy would cry and say many, many words. "But I don't have to listen," old man Griswold reminded himself. He knew exactly what he was going to do: give the boy just enough for his passage; tell him that the letter of credit would be awaiting him at his destination—and it wouldn't be. It never would be! The skulduggery for such a good cause appealed to old man Griswold. Don might have quite a time without a nickel in France or China

or wherever it was. It would jerk him into wanting something—food and shelter and all normal things first. "When you want things enough, you get 'em," old Griswold knew. "Then he'll get to thinking of this Jean girl, and he'll want her." He thought on: "When he's busy wanting food, he's not going to remember that either he or the world's had a depression." He walked on contentedly. It occurred to him that in years to come, when Don and Jean were married, Don would still have something to talk about. "When I was in China without a cent," he would say. "Long after I'm dead and gone, he'll still be telling it," old man Griswold thought happily.

He turned into his bank. "The boy'll have a hard time—" The words hung in his mind, then snapped. It struck him that Don's hardships would be nothing to his own, once the boy began cabling his mother. "But I'll take care of her," old Griswold told himself. "I won't let her interfere with Don's chance—not if I have to hang her dang' curtains myself!"

STAR OF MIDNIGHT

(Continued from page 19)

And that will be our second meeting. But why anticipate? Why let a shadow cloud the present?"

"Oh, a smart guy, a wise-cracker! Maybe that second visit will be earlier. Maybe it will be me dropping in at the hospital to see you."

"I'm sure you're full of such kindly impulses," smiled Dalzell. "Am I in danger of an accident?"

"You ought to know. You've heard of me," said Kinland. "What's the idea of crashing in here and getting fresh? Talk quick."

"Direct and to the point. I like that," said Dalzell. "I'm that way, too. Nineteen twenty-nine: You made a total gross return of sixty-five thousand dollars. But one check alone was given you for one hundred twenty thousand dollars. Actual total gross income nine hundred and seventy thousand dollars. How many pennies off the exact figure am I?"

Kinland backed three steps to the wall; he pressed a button, and a man appeared in the doorway that opened on the hall; another slipped through the hangings at the other side of the room. Kinland spoke through his teeth.

"This guy knows too much, and is sucker enough to spill what he knows. Stick around." He spoke to Dalzell. "Looking for your slice?"

Dalzell smiled amiably. Used though he was to visitors whose violence was thinly concealed, Kinland could never have guessed that the man before him could have shot more quickly and accurately than any gunman in New York.

"Just some letters," said Dalzell.

"Where'd you pick up that dope about my 1929 taxes?" asked Kinland.

"Three years ago. I got it from the man who paid you that hundred twenty thousand—the check he gave you is in a very safe place."

"Three years ago? And you've never mentioned it before now?"

Dalzell shrugged.

"Why? I'm not a policeman. I never try to put people in jail. Unless they're

blackmailers, or men who bully women, or just general all-around rats like you, Kinland. Now chase your little playmates out of the room unless you want them to hear me talk to you. And don't make the mistake of starting something. I wouldn't even be arrested if I wiped out the three of you. I'd get a vote of thanks from the Police Department."

"And you think you could do it?" asked Kinland.

"If by any chance I didn't, Uncle Sam would be after you tomorrow. You don't think you're bigger than Capone, do you? Or let the boy friends stay, if you like."

KINLAND surveyed his visitor. He nodded, and the two men disappeared as suddenly as they had entered.

"What letters do you want?" he asked.

"Donna Mantin's," said Dalzell.

"She asked you to get them?"

Dalzell nodded.

Kinland's eyes flashed.

"By God, she can't have them! Why should I give them up? Why should I give her up? Does she think I'm the kind of a man she can run around?"

"It doesn't matter what she thinks. She wants the letters, and I'm here to get them. Now, if annoying a girl is worth ten years in Atlanta, keep the letters. And make up your mind in a hurry. I've no time to waste on you. And remember, when you give up the letters, you give her up. You're not to try to see her, or write or telephone, or speak to her. And you're not to boast that you know her."

Kinland sat down. He drew a carefully arranged handkerchief from his breast pocket and wiped his forehead. The fire had left his eyes; they were despairing as he stared at Dalzell.

"I didn't know it was as bad as that," he said. "I thought it was one of those lovers' quarrels that you read about—like the torch songs. Why, that dame—I'm nuts for her! I thought she was goofy for me. And then all of a sudden she airs me; and when I won't let

her go, when I tell her I'll use her letters to make her stay with me—"

"That's when you didn't play the game," said Dalzell. "When a lady chooses to end an affair, the man should accept her choice."

"Hell! You talk like a book, like there were rules for love. Why, damn it, I was going to marry that girl. Why, she was my girl! She came up here and stayed—"

"I don't want to hear about it," said Dalzell. "Get the letters that she was silly enough to write—"

"Silly enough! That's a laugh. Why, she loved me. And now because she's tired of me—why, I never met a girl like her. What right has a swell like that to play around with a lad like me unless she means business?"

"She hasn't any right. But that makes no difference. I'm almost sorry for you, Kinland, but—I want the letters."

Kinland rose abruptly and went through the hangings. Dalzell looked after him with something close to pity in his eyes. He was a gangster, and a murderous criminal, but Dalzell felt a wave of bitter anger toward Donna Mantin. He felt no censure because the girl was not as rigid as her mother and grandmother had been. This was a new generation, with laws unto itself. A girl's virtue was her own affair, exactly as a man's had always been. Women now were wont to have affairs with men whom they would not consider marrying, exactly as in the past men had made mistresses of women whom they would not take to wife. But as his grandfather might have felt angry toward a man who had betrayed a girl of a lower social order, so Dalzell felt anger at this modern girl who had deceived a man of a class beneath her. *Autres temps, autres mœurs*. Nevertheless he would talk like a Dutch uncle to Donna when he gave her the letters.

Kinland returned to the bizarre living-room. He handed a package to Dalzell.

"I didn't hold out. Do I get that canceled check?"

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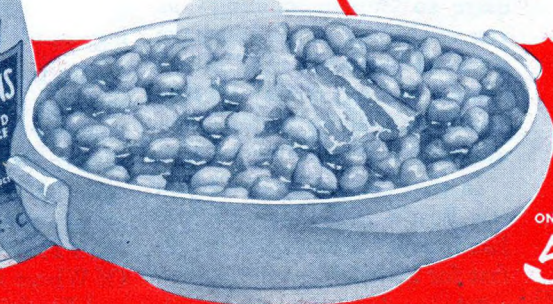
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Dalzell shook his head.

"But nobody else gets it. I've kept it three years. You can trust me."

"I guess I have to," said Kinland.

"Here's to a dark alley!"

"I'm like a cat, see anywhere," laughed Dalzell. "Good-by."

It was a dirty business, and he was glad that it was over. But he must warn Donna that she would have to extricate herself from her next entanglement. He wasn't going to bully and threaten even men like Kinland, to save a reckless girl from the consequences of her folly.

He waved aside the services of the doorman on the street. He wanted the clean night air to blow coldly upon him. Also, a winter night in New York was the pleasantest time of the year. He glanced at his wrist-watch. It was only nine-thirty, so he turned west and walked to Broadway. There he turned north and shortly passed the Prince Theater. The name of Mary Smith was electrically lettered over the marquee.

Mary Smith! So commonplace that it probably was assumed. Anyone actually christened Mary Smith would assuredly adopt a more flamboyant *nom du théâtre*. And inside the building, Donna Mantin was probably applauding the star, temporarily forgetful of her agony of an hour earlier. The younger generation stood up under blows that would have killed their mothers.

DALZELL loved the hurrying crowd on Broadway, the garish electric lights; its very vulgarities were so naturally part of the spectacle.

At Fifty-ninth Street he turned east; and here, because the wintry wind from the park was bitter, he hailed a taxi and drove to his apartment on East Sixty-third Street. He let himself into his penthouse shortly before ten. Swayne had taken advantage of his master's permission to go out, but Dalzell found drinks and a silver tub of ice on a table in the living-room.

He took off his outer clothing and went into his bedroom, where he exchanged his evening clothes for a comfortable house suit and slippers. A little later, highball in hand, he stood looking out upon his porch. The February winds whistled outside. It made him think of sunnier climes, where the wind was gentle and balmy.

Morty Craigson was leaving next Tuesday for Jamaica. The first two days on the fifteen-hundred-ton yacht might be unpleasant, but after that it would be blissful. No women. Just half a dozen good bridge-players. There'd be fishing, too. And the Winstons had been telephoning, imploring him to come down to Palm Beach. There'd be tennis every morning, a swim in the Winston pool, luncheon in a bathing-suit, golf and bridge in the afternoon, pleasant dinners and dancing at night. And there were the Woodwards, who had telegraphed that his room was waiting for him in their Santa Barbara villa. From there one could dash down to Hollywood in an hour and a half and have the gayest imaginable time. At Pebble Beach there would be good polo. For that matter, if he didn't want to accept hospitality, five days on one of the big liners, and he

would be in his little *pied à terre* in Paris, overnight from Monte or Cannes.

Why did he stay in New York? He turned back and sat down in an easy-chair. Why, with so many delightful things to do, did he remain here? Probably because he found here a kind of adventure not to be found anywhere else in the world, the adventure in character. Since he had left college a dozen years ago, he had had no profession. But an intense interest in people, a complete sympathy and understanding with their needs and aspirations, had found for him mental exercise more interesting than the practice of any career would have afforded. He had the strange gift of extracting unasked confidences. Not merely the people of his own *milieu*, but servants, detectives, night-club owners, chorus-girls—all sorts of people brought their troubles to him; and occasionally, as tonight, information that he had received in the past became a present weapon.

HE reached for a book and became engrossed in its contents, forgetful of the passage of time. The telephone jangled, and he glanced at his watch before taking the receiver from the adjacent stand. Eleven-fifteen. Tennant was to have been here an hour ago. Perhaps he was phoning to explain his delay. But it was Donna Mantin.

"Clay!" Her voice was excited. "You should have come to the theater. Mary Smith disappeared after the first act. They put an understudy on in her place. It couldn't have been more thrilling."

"She probably had a tummy-ache or sprained her ankle," said Dalzell.

"No, she didn't. You know the rush Tim Winthrop is giving her? Well, he came to our box in the middle of the second act, and said she'd disappeared. She just walked out of the theater without a word to anyone. She didn't go to her apartment, either. Tim's out of his mind. He's with us now, and she hasn't got home yet. Can you imagine anything more exciting?"

Dalzell's voice was dry as he replied:

"Yes, a visit to Jimmy Kinland has its moments. Or have you forgotten that you sent me on an errand to him?"

"Why, no, of course not." But Dalzell knew that her terror of the earlier evening had been obscured in the drama, slight as it was, of the disappearance of the leading lady of "Star of Midnight." He shook his head. Times had certainly changed when a young girl could forget in a minor incident her imminent disgrace.

"Don't think for a minute that I forgot," she went on. "But I felt safe with you, Dal," she said cajolingly.

"Oh, you did, did you? Well, for once your faith was justified. I have your letters. Kinland will not bother you again. But you listen to me: You're a nice girl, even if a lot of people wouldn't think so. You're too good to waste yourself on people like Kinland. I have your letters; and I'm going to keep them, darling. Just so you'll know that if you misbehave, in ways I don't approve of, I can blackmail you into good behavior. Mind that."

"You thrill me, Dal," she cooed. "Doing anything now?"

"I'm going to bed—alone," he said.

"Thanks...and
here's a tip on
flavor"



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"Thanks for the cordial invitation," she laughed. "But I feel it coming on, Dal. I think you're going to be my next victim."

"No gentleman could tell you that you're a bad-minded little wench," he said. "Good night."

He hung up the phone, and mirth struggled with anger in his features. Mirth won. The reckless little devil! He'd steer clear of her.

He returned to his book, and for another half-hour concentrated on its pages. Then, faint puzzlement in his eyes, he called Tom Tennant's office.

"Tennant there?"

"Who is this?" asked a voice.

"Clay Dalzell speaking. Tell Tennant that if he is coming to see me tonight, to come soon. I'm going to bed."

"Did he have an appointment with you, Mr. Dalzell? This is his secretary speaking."

"Why, yes. Did he forget?"

"He left the office at a quarter to ten, Mr. Dalzell. He didn't say where he was going. And he was killed about five minutes of ten, according to the police, at the corner of Sixty-third Street and Madison."

"Killed?" Dalzell's voice was shocked. "Automobile accident?"

"Shot. Murdered by some one in another car. Mr. Dalzell, he didn't say anything to you about going anywhere else first?"

"No," said Dalzell.

Chapter Two

SLOWLY, having put down the telephone, Dalzell mixed himself a drink. As he sipped it, he pondered the information given him by Tennant's secretary. She had not elaborated her brief statement; she knew no more than that Tennant had been murdered. Beyond the usual meaningless offer of assistance, Dalzell had said nothing.

He set his glass down on the table, then lifted it solemnly.

"Here's to you, Tennant," he said. "It's the way you'd want to go—in a blaze of headlines."

He drained the glass and put it down. So Tommy Tennant had got it, at last, eh? Well, Broadway had predicted such a finish for a long time. Over a thousand glasses, men were nodding sagely now. If all the I-told-you-so's uttered tonight were spoken simultaneously, they would sound like the roar of a mob.

And, as always, the mob would be unjust. Why censure Tennant alone because he wrote a column of gossip that sometimes verged on the scandalous? His editors, his publishers, the vast reading public that devoured his stuff, were as guilty as Tennant—if, indeed, there were any guilt involved in the publication of "Tennant Tells."

Personally, Dalzell felt regret. Not a great regret; he had not admired Tennant; occasionally he had disliked him. But he was a cheery and amusing little man, with a sprightly turn of wit, and Dalzell knew scores of kindnesses that the newspaper man had done.

But it was of course the manner—much more than the fact—of Tennant's taking off that interested Dalzell.

The columnist had been murdered in the fashionable manner of the era. Dalzell had read scores of descriptions of such killings in the newspapers, and had seen them enacted in the motion-picture theaters dozens of times.

It was not too difficult to visualize the circumstances of the murder. Tennant had not merely offended hundreds of individuals by his frank comments on their foibles or indiscretions, but there had been rumors that organizations had planned to stop his gossip. He had been too outspoken sometimes in his writings about the criminal element to please the overlords of the rackets.

Murder from an automobile was typically a gangster deed. No angry lover, chafing under derision, would be apt to use that method of blotting out the man he hated. But gangsters would.

Dalzell could picture in his mind the lurking men outside the *Star* office; he

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could see them piling into an automobile and following the taxi in which Tennant rode; he could see the murder-car crowding Tennant's machine to the curb and could almost hear the staccato bark of a revolver. A simple crime, with a simple solution which would commend itself to the police, the press and the public.

But there was in Dalzell's possession information that cast a slight shadow over the clarity of this reasoning. *Tennant had been on his way to see Dalzell.*

In itself this was not a matter to affect the obvious solution of the mystery, if mystery there was. Gangsters bent on murder might neither know nor care what was Tennant's destination.

But a third person had known of the engagement between Tennant and Dalzell. This was the trifle that cast the slight shadow. A woman had telephoned and asked Dalzell to stop Tennant from publishing a story. This woman, whoever she was, had known that Tennant was going to see Dalzell tonight; and she had known, further, that Tennant intended to consult with Dalzell about a story. She had been in some alarm. Suppose she had chosen not to rely upon Dalzell's promise to give her request very serious consideration? Suppose she had taken matters into her own hands?

Still, granting that the answer to this last question was in the affirmative, it might have been a gangster killing. But the introduction into the affair of the unknown woman of the telephone lifted the matter from the sordid plane of brutal slaying to the more intriguing level of murder done for a woman. To save a woman's honor, to prevent the possible disclosure of matters that wreck a home!

DALZELL pursed his full lips after the fashion of one who anticipates a savory tidbit. He was too realistic to grieve much over Tennant's demise. Death came to all, and Dalzell reserved his sorrow for his intimates. But an intellectual problem, one that taxed the imagination and the wit, was something for which to be grateful. There was, too, a little chivalry involved.

An unknown woman had appealed to him to save her. Certain appeals make demands that cannot be avoided. When a woman asks something, one feels an obligation, all other matters being equal. He had visualized her as terrified, harassed; but he had not pictured her as desperate to the point of murder. Her rich voice had not seemed that frightened. But perhaps he had been striving so desperately to recall the identity of the owner of that voice, that he had not gleaned the ultimate shade of emotion in her tones.

His black brows almost met in the intensity of his concentration as he tried to remember where he had heard that voice. He used a trick common to him when he was drawing upon the reservoir of memory. He shut his eyes, relaxed, and imagined himself in various places. He traveled to Paris and stood at the bar of the Ritz, listening to the voices of women. He sent his astral self to Cairo, to Singapore, to New Orleans, to the homes of his friends, to queer clubs whose meetings he had attended. And finally he gave it up.

He was carefully measuring the maximum amount of Scotch he would permit himself at midnight when Swayne entered the room.

"Inspector Loremus of the police wants to see you, Mr. Dalzell."

Dalzell nodded; this was not too unexpected. Tennant's secretary would of course have informed the police that Dalzell had told her of Tennant's appointment with him.

"Send him in," he said. "How long have you been home?"

"About twenty minutes, sir. I looked in on you, but you seemed to be thinking pretty hard and I didn't disturb you. I'll fetch the Inspector."

He returned in a moment, ushering Loremus into the room. Big, bluff and good-humored, the officer was more like a traveling salesman of the early nineteen hundreds than the most relentless man-hunter in the New York Police Department. He greeted Dalzell warmly, as though their slight acquaintance were intimate friendship.

"Some day, when the bribe runs to two million, I'm going to snatch it, and when I'm not on my yacht, I'll be high up in a penthouse like this, knocking over Scotch. I'm going to send for that lousy Doc that put me on the water-wagon four years ago, and give him a regular

salary. And every time I hist one, he'll have to look at me while I give him the bird."

"I didn't know you were on the wagon, Loremus," said Dalzell.

"Who said I was? I said the Doc put me there; but you didn't think he could keep me there, did you? And as the Governor of South Carolina *didn't* say to his pal from Raleigh, it's a long time between drinks."

"Help yourself," laughed Dalzell.

Loremus splashed Scotch into a tall glass, put ice and plain water with it, and drained the mixture without taking the tumbler from his lips. He wiped his mustache with the back of his hand and sat heavily down.

"Best medicine in the world," he said. "It may harden your arteries, but it softens your heart. Well, you knew Tennant was knocked off?"

"His secretary told me," replied Dalzell.

"He had a date with you? Looks like he was on his way to see you when they posted his number. What was on his mind?"

"Haven't an idea. Said he wanted to talk to me about a story."

"Pals?"

"Hardly that. I knew him, had known him for years. Occasionally when I wanted him to smother something I gave him another item for his column."

"He gave you a nice boost this afternoon," said Loremus.

Dalzell frowned.

"I called him up about that and told him not to mention me in his column. He didn't do it often, but I didn't want it done at all. It was then that he told me he wanted to discuss a story with me."

"Did he often do that?" asked Loremus.

"Usually it was when the items had to do with my friends. But this one apparently hadn't. He said it was about no one I knew, but that there was an angle to it on which he wanted my advice. I haven't the vaguest idea what it was all about. But he said it was a pretty hot story, or words to that effect."

Loremus nodded.

"Sounds almost as if some one didn't want him to tell you that story, doesn't it?"

It was a leap in the dark, but Loremus had a habit of jumping to conclusions that were not always unjustified. The Inspector's detractors were wont to speak of fool luck when his successes were discussed by them; but Dalzell knew that Loremus had an uncanny knack of putting two and two together when no one else would have thought of arithmetic.

FOR a moment Dalzell made no reply. It was unquestionably his duty to tell Loremus of the woman who had telephoned. But she had made an appeal to Dalzell. Of course, if she were a murderess, she deserved no shielding. But only far-fetched theory could consider her, on the slight evidence thus far available, as a criminal.

If Dalzell told the Inspector of her appeal, Loremus would give it to the papers, without any doubt. The woman would never make another telephone-call to Dalzell. Whereas, if she were innocent of complicity in Tennant's death, she



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would probably phone Dalzell to tell him of her innocence. He had no right to assume this probability, save his own analysis of the character behind that voice.

Rich and vibrant, it did not suggest murderous intrigue. It suggested emotion, but not mean emotion. Somehow, even through the terror that was in it, Dalzell had sensed honesty.

An honest woman, knowing that Dalzell had some reason for belief that she knew something about Tennant's death, would, he reasoned, telephone him shortly to assure him that she had no guilty knowledge. That is, if this honest woman had already appealed to the chivalry of an utter stranger. A woman who toyed with murder would not bother to explain anything to an utter stranger upon whose chivalry she had thrown herself. Such a woman, fearful lest any further communication be traced to her, would sink into a silence.

But if the papers mentioned that the police sought her for questioning, she would, even if utterly innocent, keep silent, lest questioning disclose the nature of the story which she had not wished Tennant to print. Whereas, if Dalzell did not tell Loremus of her telephoned request, she would—again granting her innocence—communicate with Dalzell very soon. Women with voices like hers were not devoid of gratitude.

Further, Dalzell could see nothing to be gained by giving information to Loremus now. If silence on the woman's part decided him to tell the Inspector, he could do it later as well as now.

"That might be so," he said thoughtfully. "But I can't quite see how some one would rather kill him than let him tell me something. I'm not married, so have no wife whose indiscretions might surprise me. Besides, Tennant said the story was about people I didn't know."

Loremus nodded.

"Well, I didn't expect to get anything much from you, Mr. Dalzell. But I can't overlook anything. Maybe you think the *Star* won't raise hell about their pet columnist being bumped off. It's no good business when a newspaper man gets his. The *Star* will give us hell if we haven't got the murderer in time for their first edition tomorrow, and that's on the street at eight o'clock."

"Haven't you anything to go on, the number of the car, or anything?" asked Dalzell.

Loremus shook his head.

"There were quite a few people on the streets, but nobody got the number. Just a closed car—that's all we know. Well, much obliged. I better get along."

Chapter Three

AFTER Loremus' departure, Dalzell made ready for bed, and settled himself therein, a reading-lamp nicely adjusted, and half a dozen books beside him.

But not even the novel that had interested him so much while he waited for Tennant's arrival could hold his fancy now.

An idea flashed across his mind. Tennant had not only mentioned the mysterious story whose nature he would not disclose over the telephone, but he had also referred to the romance between Donna

Martin and Jimmy Kinland. People in Tennant's office could have heard him mention those names. Tennant was notoriously indiscreet in his speech.

Suppose that Kinland had become aware that the columnist intended printing the hardly veiled statement that the gangster and the young girl of another social plane were having a rather torrid affair? Kinland was a man to whom murder was no strange and dreadful thing. He had not reached his high place in the rackets of New York by the practice of any squeamishness. Newspaper men, or police officials, or powerful politicians, or financiers—if any of these interfered with Kinland, he knew no argument save the bullet or the bomb.

At the very moment that Dalzell had been using a species of justifiable blackmail with Kinland, the gangster's henchmen might have been making their final preparations for the death of Tennant.

He shook his head dubiously. Would Kinland mind publication of the fact that he was the innamorato of a highly placed girl? On the contrary, wouldn't Kinland be delighted at such publication? He would feel that the linking of his name with that Donna Martin was proof that he was not merely a big shot in the racket, but was by way of attaining social prestige. Why, the chances were that Kinland himself was Tennant's informant regarding the affair with Donna.

No, Kinland wasn't guilty of Tennant's murder. At least, if he were, he had not committed the deed because of fear that his privacy might be intruded upon.

Dalzell tried to dismiss the whole matter from his mind. He turned out the light and stretched himself out, courting a sleep that was not responsive. He turned on the light again, but his eyes were tired, and the print blurred before him. So he reached over and turned on the little radio by the bed.

"—And if any further news comes in about the Tennant murder, we will give it to you. Meanwhile there is another item of news. Mary Smith, the lovely prima donna of 'Star of Midnight,' was to have sung from this studio during this program tonight. We have received word from the management that Miss Smith left the theater after the first act and has not yet been found. She has not returned to her home. The management has appealed to the police, fearing that some harm may have come to her. We all pray that the most charming voice that has been heard in musical comedy in a generation may not be lost to us. And because she was to have sung here tonight, we are giving you her phonograph record of the song she was to have sung, 'Star of Midnight,' from the play of that name."

Before the third word had been sung, Dalzell knew the identity of the woman who had telephoned him tonight. He wondered at the trick that memory had played on him, that he had not known at once that the woman who asked him to stop Tennant from printing the story was Mary Smith, the star of "Star of Midnight."

OF course, Dalzell had seen "Star of Midnight" only once. Nevertheless he should have remembered the voice of Mary Smith. It was as distinctive and

delightful as her face, her figure, her piquant personality.

Radio turned off, light out, eyes shut, he pictured the lovely brunette who had come from obscurity to capture the heart and imagination of the theater-loving public of New York. Black of hair, black of eye, she had a dazzlingly white skin, the sweetest mouth and the most seductive body in the world. At least, that had been Dalzell's belief at the opening of "Star of Midnight." He had said to himself then that she would be a dangerous person for him to know. She was a woman who, he instantly conceded, had within her the ability to disarrange the placidity of his life.

And no woman was going to do that to Dalzell. Fleeting affairs, yes. The penthouse high on East Sixty-third Street was no anchorite's refuge. . . . But a woman had hurt him once, when he was a boy just out of college. She had not turned him into a woman-hater, but she had made him resolve that he would never give more than passion. Love was something with which he would never meddle. And he had not taken advantage of the opportunity, which had presented itself at "Star of Midnight's" premiere, to meet the new star.

If only the girl of a dozen years ago had been different! Instead of being a dilettante, with no objective in life, he would by now have become prominent at the bar, an active figure in the life of the city instead of an amused looker-on. Instead of receiving confidences and locking them in his bosom, there would have been a loved and trusted one to whom he in turn could have confided.

He moved restlessly in the bed, muttering an impatient oath at his own self-pity. He turned his mind to contemplation of the present mystery. And shortly his mind grew cloudy, and he slept.

LAST night's wind had threatened storm; the threat had been fulfilled. As Swayne entered the bedroom in response to Dalzell's ring, he threw wide the curtains at the windows, and Dalzell saw a swirl of snow. He shivered as he swung his feet to the floor; the six-inch opening at the bottom of the window had made the room's temperature below freezing.

"Morning, Swayne. What's the hour?"

"Two-thirty, sir," said the man.

Dalzell attempted to whistle, through teeth that chattered.

"That one extra Scotch," he laughed.

"Yes sir," agreed Swayne. "Not many people find whisky a sedative. It keeps me awake. Now, ale is different. Ale, just a glass or two, makes me drowsy."

"Then you must have had a gallon last night," said Dalzell. "or you'd not stand there half asleep. You'd close that d-damned w-window before I perish."

He dashed into the bath as Swayne closed the window. He emerged in ten minutes, shaved and bathed and wrapped in a colorful robe that would have delighted the heart of a negro tap-dancer.

Beside his breakfast-table in the pleasant dining-room he found a pile of newspapers; and after one cup of coffee he picked them up. The morning edition he ignored, preferring the later news of the early afternoon journals.

As he had of course expected, Tennant's murder was spread across the tops

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"We'll call you every Wednesday evening!"



WHEN summer separates the family, keep in touch by telephone. Talking is next best to seeing. Regular voice-visits are a quick and easy cure for loneliness. They're inexpensive too. After 8:30 in the evening, for example, station-to-station calls cost as little as 35¢ for 75 miles, 50¢ for 150 miles, 75¢ for 275 miles. Why not have a family reunion tonight . . . by telephone?



"Hold the line, please!"

of the front pages. In much smaller type, but nevertheless on the first page, the disappearance of Mary Smith was featured. Dalzell read the Tennant stories first. Although they consumed columns of type they added nothing to the information that Dalzell had already gathered last night from Loremus. There were thousands of words of speculation and biographical data about the dead man, but not a single fact throwing light upon the mystery of his taking off. Dalzell turned to the Mary Smith articles.

ODDLY enough, the *Star* contained the poorest story about Tennant, and the most complete about Mary Smith. He read the paragraphs.

"Mary Smith, the star of 'Star of Midnight,' the sensational musical-comedy success that has been running three months at the Prince Theater, failed to answer the call for the second act last night. Frantic search failed to find her, and her understudy, Miss Myrtle Randolph, continued with the play. Miss Smith was last seen by the door-man of the theater as she went through the stage entrance into the little alley that runs to Forty-sixth Street. The door-man said that while he was somewhat surprised at Miss Smith's departure, he assumed that she was going out for a breath of air. It did not occur to him until later that it was strange she was not wearing her costume of either the first or second act, but was dressed in a plain gray suit trimmed with brown fur and wearing a small hat, also gray.

"Her maid, when questioned, said that there had been nothing unusual in the manner or appearance of the actress. The maid, whose name is Regina Watkins, colored, is employed by Miss Smith only in the theater, as the star's dresser. She said that on Miss Smith's arrival at her dressing-room after the finale of the first act, the actress professed to be hungry, and told her to go to Jenkle's restaurant on Broadway, half a dozen blocks away, and get a chicken sandwich. She said she would eat this after her first number in the second act. She told the maid that she would dress herself. The actress was gone when the maid returned.

"Up to a late hour this morning, the management had not got in touch with the missing star. At her apartment in the Hotel Warman it is stated that nothing has been heard from her. Her personal maid, Belinda Samson, also colored, has told the police that she can imagine no reason for the star's disappearance. The police and private detectives engaged by Abe Ohlmann, producer of 'Star of Midnight,' are making every effort to find the missing singer.

"Wise Broadway for once is not skeptical about a misadventure to an actress, for it is conceded along Times Square that 'Star of Midnight' and its lovely prima donna need no stunt publicity. The house has been sold out for six weeks in advance ever since its sensational opening. Ohlmann was so upset that last night he had to be treated by a physician and put to bed. If Miss Smith does not return to the cast, he stands to lose several hundred thousand dollars, for the shrewdest theatrical men on the Rialto believe that 'Star of Midnight' would not last a week without Mary Smith. The

triumph of the play, even the authors and composer admit, is really the triumph of the star. The packed houses have been a tribute to the young singer whose overnight success is one of the most surprising pages in that book of surprises, Broadway.

"Six months ago, almost to a day, a young woman entered the Ministry, the well-known night-club on Forty-seventh Street. Unescorted, she told the head-waiter that she was expecting friends who would join her shortly, and so she was shown a seat at a ringside table. Her friends had not arrived fifteen minutes later when the orchestra played the recent song hit 'Mountain Rose.'

"To the amazement of the orchestra and management, but to the delight of the patrons, who thought it was an unadvertised part of the show, the young woman rose and sang the number. The orchestra leader had presence of mind enough to continue playing, and after she had finished the song, the audience burst into an applause almost unequaled in night-club history. The young woman was forced to give half a dozen encores, and at the conclusion of her impromptu performance Abe Ohlmann, the veteran producer, forced his way through the still cheering audience, introduced himself and carried her off to the office of Paul Manders, the owner of the Ministry.

"Ohlmann had had the libretto and score of 'Star of Midnight' in his safe for a year. It was, he said at the time, and scores of times since, the kind of show that could not possibly succeed without a great leading woman. He had found his leading woman. Two weeks later 'Star of Midnight' was in rehearsal, to open six weeks after that at the Prince.

"Broadway is used to overnight triumphs, but this capped anything in the history of the theater. For if Mary Smith had ever sung in public in her life before she sang 'Mountain Rose' at the Ministry, no one on Broadway can name the date.

"Her past life, before she appeared at the Ministry, is a complete mystery. Even Ohlmann admits that he hasn't the vaguest idea of who she is or where she came from. He says that he doesn't even know that Mary Smith is her name. And she holds the all-time record for the avoidance of publicity by a successful actress. No picture of her has ever been printed in a newspaper or magazine, and there are no photographs of her in the lobby of the Prince. Ohlmann has since admitted that he had a bitter quarrel with his star about her refusal to be photographed, and only gave in when she convinced him that she would leave the cast rather than be photographed. Even when pictures of the company in various scenes were taken for publicity purposes, Mary Smith refused to pose.

"Since 'Star of Midnight's' opening, of course, the very fact that the sensational star has refused to be interviewed and refused to be pictured, has been in itself a greater source of publicity than had she followed the normal course of the theater. Her attitude, however, has possibly cost her a fortune, for at least two of the great motion-picture companies have been ready to offer an almost fabulous contract if tests proved that she

would be as good in the films as on the stage. But Miss Smith refused to make these tests.

"It is a strange coincidence that two of Broadway's most successful figures should be featured in the news on the same day. Broadway wonders if tragedy may have come to Mary Smith of 'Star of Midnight' as it came to Tennant of the *Star*."

MUCH of what was printed here was known to Dalzell, as it was known to everyone else who attended the theater in New York. He put the paper down and poured himself a fresh cup of coffee, which he was drinking when Swayne announced Mr. Winthrop.

Donna Mantin had mentioned, last night, the rush that Tim Winthrop had been giving Mary Smith. A young man devoted to a prominent actress might well be in a state of alarm at her unexplained disappearance, but Dalzell was prepared for no such shocked and beaten youth as presented himself now.

He had not taken off his overcoat, but it was unbuttoned, and Dalzell saw that the young man was still in the dinner clothes which he had doubtless worn last night. His blond hair was disheveled, and his blue eyes were sunken. His expression was that of a man whom tragedy had blasted.

"Dal," he cried, "you'll help me, won't you? You've got to find Mary for me."

Dalzell rose from the table and took off young Winthrop's overcoat. The youth seemed numbed; he submitted to Dalzell's ministrations like a bewildered child. Dalzell signaled Swayne, who brought Scotch.

"Drink it," ordered Dalzell, as Winthrop pushed away the drink. Obediently the young man swallowed, coughed, and almost fell into a chair that Swayne drew up for him.

"You will help me, Dal?" he pleaded.

Through the concern in Dalzell's eyes showed a gleam of amusement.

"In the name of heaven, Tim," he protested, "what makes you think I can find your actress friend? What made you come to me? I'm no detective."

"I've been to detectives. I've engaged the Greenings. But all they do is look wise. Donna told me to come to you. Donna's a peach; she stayed up all night with me. You know, running here and there, and holding my hand between-times. She told me this morning what you'd done for her last night. If you can go to a gangster like Kinland—"

"Donna is a little damn' fool and talks too much," said Dalzell exasperatedly.

"Just the same, Dal, you know everybody. You know everything. These detectives—why, the Greenings tried to tell me that she probably ran away with some man! How can I rely on jackasses who'd think anything like that?"

"Actresses have eloped," said Dalzell.

"But not a girl like Mary Smith! Do you think she'd treat me like that? That she'd run away without letting me know?"

Dalzell felt a twinge in the region of his heart. A dozen years ago another lovely brunette had run away without letting another man know. . . .

"Women have even done that," he replied. "Were you engaged to her, Tim?"

Winthrop shook his head.

"Not that. God, I'd asked her plenty of times to marry me, but she'd never said she would. She said she wanted time. I think that I could have persuaded her, that I can persuade her—if I ever find her," he ended despairingly. "But I must find her. Dal, you'll help?"

Dalzell stared at the young man. He noted the weak mouth and the irresolute nose. Could a girl like Mary Smith have learned to care for Tim Winthrop? Oh, a nice kid, but with no bite to his character. Excellent family, and quantities of money, but would the independent leading lady of "Star of Midnight" care about those things? Dalzell wondered. The woman who had spoken to him over the telephone last night could care for no weakling. Yet women were strange creatures. Usually, if they were strong, they mated with weaklings, perhaps in response to some biological law.

"My friends have the damndest ideas about me," he said. "Because I know the right person to ask the right person to ask the right person to ask another right person to return a painting or a ring, my friends seem to think that I am omniscient and omnipotent. I'm just a curious man who has sense enough to know that curiosity will always be rewarded if one shows no eagerness. But I can't reach out into the ether and put a lovely actress in your lap. You trust the Greenings; and if anything turns up, be sure I'll do the best I can."

"And now you run home and get about ten hours' sleep. . . . Wait a minute. You saw a lot of Mary Smith, of course. Is there anything you can tell me about her? This newspaper stuff about her blank past—do you know where she came from, anything about her?"

Tim Winthrop shook his head forlornly.

"Not a thing in the world, except that she was lovely and that I love her. She didn't want to talk about herself, and so I didn't try to force her confidence. Ohlmann introduced me on the night of the opening. She seemed to like me. I took her to supper. I've seen her every day since. The loveliest, sweetest—I've never even kissed her. She's not—damn it, she's swell."

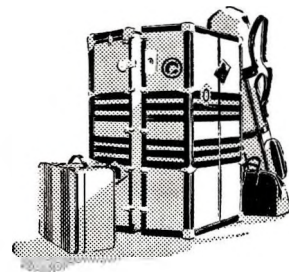
"I'm sure she is. And now you go home and rest. You'll hear from me if there's anything to hear."

He put the young man's coat about him, escorted him to the apartment door and to the elevator beyond. And as he turned back into his living-room, he heard the telephone ring. He picked up the receiver. And before his caller had spoken a word, he knew, with a queer uncanny prescience, who it was. And his foresight was correct: his reasoning had not been wrong. Across the wire came the vibrant voice of Mary Smith.

The whole affair, Dalzell told himself when Mary Smith had hung up, savored of madness. True, the bizarre was no stranger to him, for he had always had a happy attraction for strange events. But this transcended anything else in his experience. (The next installment of this engaging story appears, of course, in our forthcoming September issue.)

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in the most important
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THE vacation rush is on! Packing left for the last minute! When you check up, be sure that you've taken along one of the most important things of all—a good supply of Ex-Lax!

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THE WHALE, THE CLUCK AND THE DIVING VENUS

(Continued from page 27)

"Then you keep your mouth shut, and I'm going to find a lawyer. And don't make any mistakes. I mean business."

She went, and I changed my clothes and kind of took charge of things, and didn't say anything to Mort. But then I began to get worried. I wasn't so sure I wanted a piece of this whale. You see, he didn't seem to like herrings very well. By three o'clock he hadn't touched a one. Mort sent the truck down for a load of seaweed. Well, he didn't seem to like that either. So Mort sent to the packing-house for a side of beef, and dumped that in. He didn't seem to like that very well, either. So by sundown the pool was the worst mess of herrings, seaweed and beef you ever saw in your life, and had an aroma about like you would imagine. The crowd couldn't stand it. They had been fighting to get in, but little by little they melted away until there was nobody coming through at all. Even the whale couldn't stand it. At first he had nosed around in that stuff, looking for a clean place to blow, but now he didn't even do that. He just lay there, and it didn't take any fish doctor to see it was just a question of how long he could last.

About nine o'clock Mort came back to where I was, on the far end of the pool. "I think I'll take a little run out of the city tomorrow, Dave," he said. "I feel awful tired. You can keep things going."

"Out of town? The Fourth? And you with a whale?"

"He's run me ragged. I've got to rest."

"You mean he's run me ragged?"

"I mean he's broke my heart. I've give him fish, Dave. I've give him grass. I've give him beef. I've give him the best that money can buy, and still he won't eat. I don't know what else to do."

"And what do I give him?"

"Nothing. Just keep an eye on him. Of course, if anything happens, use your judgment. Just use your judgment."

"Oh. Now I get it. First I got to move a live whale, and then I got to move a dead whale. And you, you dirty double-crossing heel, you know if you've got a dead whale in that pool tomorrow, they'll Ku Klux you out of town, and that's why you're running away. Two hundred thousand people due here, worth a couple million dollars to the town, and watch them leave when the sun hits that thing. Well, I don't bite, see? You can find another fall guy."

"You got to do it for me, Dave. It's got me scared blue."

THEN I let him have it. I let him have it about everything, especially the ladder. "Think of that! She even catches your whale for you. You take in all this dough. And then you're too measly cheap even to pay for her ladder that you broke up."

He thought that over a long time. "Well, I don't pay for it, see? And it's not because I'm too cheap."

"And why is it?"

"Never mind. I got a reason."

"The reason is money, like it generally is, and it's all I want to know. Listen:

You made a mistake. It's not you that's taking a run-out tomorrow. It's me."

I went to where she was staying, and took her to a little restaurant, and told her everything that had happened. She listened, and when I got to the part where he had some reason for not coughing up, she looked at me kind of queer, but didn't say anything. "Oh, he's all right," I says. "He'll come through, after he's made everybody so sore they could kill him. That's how he is. The main thing is we're out from under the whale."

"I suppose so."

"Say, you didn't start anything, did you?" I asks.

"I got a lawyer, but he can't do anything until day after tomorrow. Judge Evarts went fishing over the Fourth. He's down on the Banks."

"Then that's all right. Day after tomorrow that whale will be history. If you really want to get even with that guy, you stick around till tomorrow and watch what happens. If that don't hand you a laugh, nothing will."

SHE walked back to the pool with me to get some things she left. When we got there, Mort was in the office with Mike Halligan, the Chief of Police, and Dr. Kruger, the Health Commissioner, and a guy named Ed Ayres, that's executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. When we opened the door, Ayres was pounding the desk with his fist, and we started to back out, but Mort grabbed us and pulled us in. "Just the ones I wanted to see," he says, and introduced us all around. "Miss Dixon is my diver," he says. "I wouldn't be keeping her if I was to have a whale in the pool tomorrow, would I?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Morton," she says. "I'll have to cancel the rest of my engagement. I'm afraid; my ladder got broken today, and I can't work without it."

"Oh, we can get you a new ladder."

"Keep talking, Morton," says Ayres. "We're listening."

Then Mort turned to me. "Dave, these guys don't seem to believe me when I tell them we're pulling the whale out tonight. Maybe if you'll tell them, they'll feel better. I guess you're about ready to start, aren't you?" And he kept giving me the wink.

He might just as well have winked at a stone. "I told you, Mort. I'm through with whales."

"Just what I thought," says Ayres. "You've been stringing us all the time—"

But Dr. Kruger shut him off. "Now get this, Morton," he says: "The minute that whale dies, I'm going to act, and I'm going to act quick. I could act now, on the basis of that mess you've got back there, but you say you're going to clean that up, so we'll give you a chance. But the minute he dies, I act, and my advice to you is: put him out of the way and get him out of there first."

"But how do I get him out of there? It took a whole ship's derrick to get him in, and I've got no derrick. I don't know how to move a whale."

"Neither do I. You should have thought of that when you brought him in there. But I know how to *bury* a whale, and if I have to put a steam shovel in and bury him right in your pool, that's just what I'm going to do. And how much you can collect from the city,—if anything,—I wouldn't like to say."

Mort turned to me once more, and he had tears in his eyes. "Dave! You're the only one can do it when nobody can do it."

"I told you, Mort."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" says the girl, so loud everybody jumped. "Isn't this charming!"

They all stood up. Then there came a knock on the door, and in stepped a young guy with a grin on his face. "Mr. William K. Morton?"

Nobody said anything.

"I found him," he says to the girl. "I had to run clear out to the Banks, but I found the Judge. Some speedboat I got."

Still nobody said anything. He seemed to think I was the one he was looking for, because he came over to me with a legal paper that had a dollar bill folded in it. I could see her name and mine at the top of it. Mort grabbed it. "So," he says, as soon as he saw what it was, "you stabbed me in the back, the both of you! I'm on the spot, and you stabbed me in the back."

I felt pretty bad. I knew Mort always gave himself the best of everything, and I hadn't meant to stab him in the back, but he was on the spot, all right, and I didn't like how I looked. But before I could say anything, he jumped up and began to wave the paper around. "*Nolo contendere!*" he yells at the top of his lungs. "*Nolo contendere!*"

"What?" says the boy.

"You're claiming a share of the whale for them, aren't you? I got to show cause in court, haven't I? Well, I don't do it, see? I don't defend this. It's their whale, and they can do what they please with it!"

"Oh, no, you don't!" says the girl, and grabs for the paper.

"Oh, yes, I do!"

HE ran over to the window-sill, wrote something on the paper, signed it, ran back to the boy and shoved it in his pocket. "There you are, Mr. Lawyer Man with the fast speedboat. There it is, in writing. The whale is all theirs."

He put on his hat and opened the door. "So long, everybody. So long, Mr. Commissioner. Dave'll move your whale for you. So long, Dave—hope you have a nice time over the Fourth."

He was almost out, but he turned and tipped his hat to her. "Har, har, har!" he says. "Isn't this charming!"

They pinned it on me, and after they all left, I tore into her so hard I almost socked her. I think I would have socked her, only she cracked up and burst out crying. And then, so dog-tired I could hardly lift one foot after the other, I started out on my heavy night's work. I heard of paying for a dead horse; but believe me, a dead horse is nothing compared with a dead whale. I had to find the roustabouts. I had to start them cleaning out that mess in the pool. I had to find my guy with the trailer. I had to get more rope, and more planks, to loll the trailer down in the pool with, so I could

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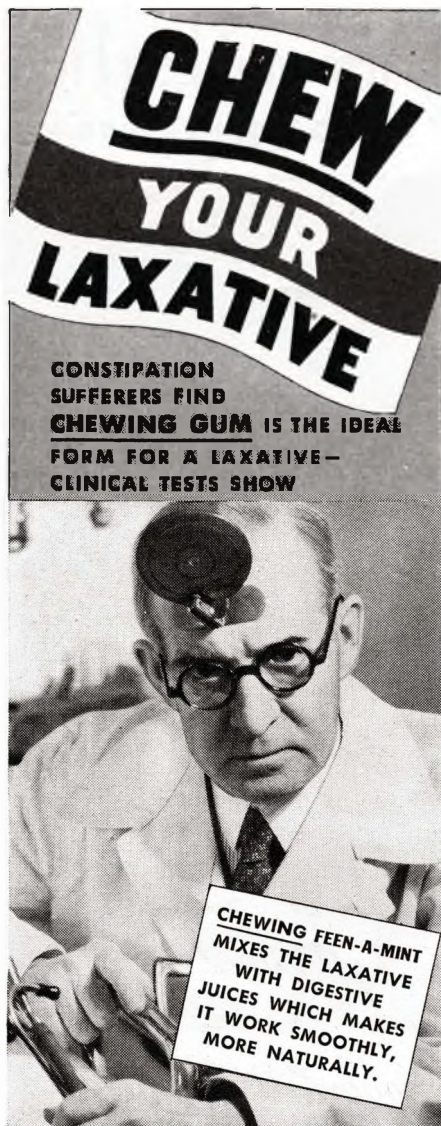
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float the whale on again. I had to get dynamite to kill the whale with. You can't get dynamite without a permit, and I had to go get a permit. I had to dig up six beer-kegs, to float the whale with when we started out to sea, because a whale don't float when he dies; he sinks. I had to find a guy with a power-boat, to tow him with. Every one of those people had to be routed out of bed, and the money they wanted was awful, and I was writing checks till it made me sick—and my money this time, not Mort's. It was a gray, gray dawn when I finally loaded my gang on the trailer, and started down to the pool with them.

When I got inside, the girl was lying on the side of the pool, in a bathing-suit, smoking a cigarette and watching the sun come up.

"Well," I says, "is he dead yet?"

"Oh, no. I fed him."

"You what?"

"I fed him."

I went over and looked in the pool, then, and it was only about a third full, but there was the whale, hanging over the intake, letting it tickle his belly where it was coming in, and showing more pep than he had since we got him.

"Are you trying to kid me?"

"No. I ran the water out, and then when he stranded down here under the springboard, I made a little dam of sand and canvas around him, and fed him."

"What did you feed him? If you don't mind my asking!"

"Milk."

She waved her hand, and I saw there were fifty or sixty milk-cans piled up at one side. "You mean to say that thing drinks milk?"

"Anybody but an ignoramus would know a baby whale drinks milk. It took all the money I had, and I had an awful time getting it, but he took it. He gurgled and made a lot of noise, and had a fine time."

"And you mean he's not going to die?"

"Of course not. Look at him. Isn't he cute? I just love him."

I went out, sent my gang home, came back, and sat down. I thought of Mort. I thought of all those thousands of people that were due that day. I thought of the paper that said he was all ours. I could feel the grin spreading all over my face. I went over and held out my hand.

"Mabel, I guess we got a whale."

"I guess we have—and a certain young man gets what's coming to him at last."

WELL, he was a wow. When Ayres got it through his head the whale wasn't going to die, he rushed posters to all Eastern cities by plane, and the morning papers were full of how we caught him; and by afternoon we had a mob. We had to rope off a place and run them through in batches. It was the only way we could clear the pool, else they would have stayed and looked at him all day. Then at night, she thought of a stunt that made him a bigger draw than ever. She cut the overhead lights, and turned on the underwater lights, and he was a sight to see. The only trouble was, the lights scared him to death, and he wore himself out running around the pool and bumping the sides, so the way we did was turn the lights on for one minute every fifteen minutes. That way we would clear

a batch out, give the whale a rest, and then turn on the lights when another batch was in.

Midnight we closed down, turned off all lights, and counted up. We had taken in \$48,384, and if there had been any way to handle the people, we would have taken in a lot more. About one o'clock, after we had shaken hands about twenty times, and started to run the water out to have him ready when the milk-train got in, we looked around, and there was Mort, standing there looking at him.

"He didn't die," I says. "Mabel fed him."

"So I see."

I WENT over and cut on the lights. All of a sudden that little gray lump out there in the water was a great blue shadow, and then it began to move. It would flit this way and that way, not like anything swimming, but like some big bat that was flying. Pretty soon it went up to the far end, turned, and came straight down the pool. And boy, if you ever saw a man's eyes pop out, Mort's did when that big train came at him, hit the end of the pool so hard you could feel the ground shake, washed a big wave of water over the gutter, then turned and began to flit around again.

I cut the lights. "Funny thing about that whale," I says, and sat down beside her on one of the benches and nudged her. "He was a gift. We got a paper that says he's all ours. We sure do appreciate that."

He sat down on another bench, and I kept it up. I harpooned him with some of the best cracks I ever thought up. If I do say it myself. "Yeah," he said after a while, "he's all yours, and I wish you both good luck. I hope you're happy, and get all the breaks."

"Would you mind telling me what you mean by that?" she says in a strained kind of voice.

"Oh, it's easy enough to see what's been going on. I didn't get it at first, but I do now. You and Dave, you make a team. You get along all right. Well, you got my whale. You got each other. It's all right. I wish you luck."

"Oh."

"A shill in an amusement park! A bally for a swimming-pool. A diving Venus." He stood up so he was sneering down at her. "And then that wasn't enough for you. You had to get yourself a whale. Believe me, if you weren't plenty low before, you're plenty low now."

"I think you better take your whale back." She stood up and tried to go past him. He wouldn't let her.

"Oh, no. I don't take him back."

"Let me go. You've been nagging me all week because I wasn't a trouser—because I was a punk amateur. And then, when I try to be a trouser, when I save your whale for you—*Let me go!*"

"Yeah? Well, now you're going to hear some more. I had them break that guy for you. I smashed your ladder on purpose. If I had a whale in my pool, you weren't going to dive in any other pool, see? Well, that was yesterday. Now you can dive in any pool you want. You and Dave, you can go get yourself a flea circus. Or maybe a boxing kangaroo—"

I clipped him on the jaw then, and that stopped it. But before he could even

pick himself up, where he went down, she ran to the pool. "Something's wrong," she says. "He hasn't been up!"

I jumped for the lights. The whale was down there with one fluke over the outlet, where it was running out, held there by suction, and fighting like mad to get clear.

"Quick, close it!"

I screwed down the valve, but it didn't clear him. There was a vacuum there, and it held him like he was riveted. "Oh, he's drowning," she says, and grabbed the bar we used to turn the valves with. She went right overboard in her white dress, and let the bar pull her down, head-first. She stuck it under his fluke, gave a kick with her feet to drive it in, then pulled her feet down and lifted. Up he came, and began to blow like a drowning man would.

She let the bar go, came up, and began to talk to him. "Poor little thing," she says. "Away from his mamma, and nobody to play with, and in a terrible place where awful things happen to him. I wish we could take him back where he came from, so he could be happy once more."

"Let's do it," I says to her. "I believe I can do it."

"Would you, Dave?" she says.

AND then it happened, like a slow movie. The whale was in the corner all the time, watching her in the middle of the pool. He didn't seem to mind her much, but then he dived and started to go past her. She opened her legs for a scissors kick that would take her out of the way. He changed his mind and turned back, and his tail came up slow. She kicked slow. And she kicked right into this piece of net that was still hanging to his tail. She screamed, and he went wild. She was flung up in the air, and whirled down under, and it made you sick to think what she would look like she got slammed against the side.

Mort started to run almost before it happened. He grabbed a fire-ax. He smashed the underwater lights in one corner, and about ten of them went out. The whale made for the dark place, and he and the ax hit at the same time. Mort drove the spike into his head up to the wood, and he never even moved. I went overboard and pulled her clear, and Mort lifted her out.

"I didn't mean it," he says. "I didn't mean any of it. If only you're not killed!"

"I'm all right," she says. "Did you kill him?"

"I had to."

She pulled him down and kissed him, and then looked in the pool. We all looked. And then, brother, we saw death. The big blue shadow was there, perfectly still. Then it began to tip. One fluke went down. It began to sink, in a kind of a slow circle. And then, when it got below the lights, it turned from blue to gray, and settled, awfully small, on the bottom. It was like we had seen his soul pass out of him. . . .

The sun was coming up when we got the kegs loose and watched the waves close over him.

"Some whale," says Mort.

"Yeah," I says, "some whale."

She just put her head on Mort's shoulder and began to cry.



*Could she wait for him
to grow up*

AND TAKE CARE OF THE FAMILY?

No! If anything should happen to Daddy—

She could try to find a job—and let somebody else be their mother.

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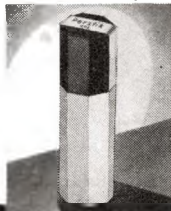
AGE

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PERSTIK
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Perstik
THE ORIGINAL "LIPSTICK" DEODORANT

THIS WOMAN AND THIS MAN

(Continued from page 37)

about sheep grazing on their range. Which leaves us—dudes.

"Eastern tourists—we got what they want. At least, we got it if we combine. You have the Eastern connection. And now you have the ranch I had my eye on. I figured Virgilia would be forced to sell, finding herself alone. That has the situation: fishing, riding, scenery, locations for as many cabins as you need, set apart in the trees: a falls that can, if we ever choose, give us electricity and motor power. But if I go into the thing, I aim to keep it all sort of primitive. What you got to do, Glenn, is to make these folks feel like they are getting back to Nature and experiencing the pioneer frontier life, and all the while you got to make them safe and reasonably comfortable. Not so easy as it sounds."

"It doesn't sound easy," said Oliver. "And first you've got to get your dudes."

"You've said it," Ben looked pleased. "Yes sir. And they got to be picked dudes. Friends—and friends of friends—and exclusive. And that's where you come in. . . . Wait a moment, Glenn. I'll show you what I've worked out. Got it down on paper. Plans for main- and sleeping-cabins, prices, horses, help, guides, pack-trips—there's a lot to it. And I want to get started this year."

WHILE Ben went out to get his data, Oliver shook his head at the fire. "Can't be done this year," he told it. "Positively—not!"

A door opened. Cold air touched him, and he turned. Pony stood on the threshold.

"I don't wonder you look at me like that," said Oliver, advancing with what ease he could assume, and holding out his hand.

Pony looked down at it, then up. He did not take it.

"What are you here for, Glenn?"

Oliver let fall the hand. "I came out here three weeks ago, as a matter of fact—to ask Virgilia Diccon to be my wife. We had an understanding last October, Krane. We were, in a way, engaged all winter."

"I read in a New York paper," said Pony, speaking very slowly, his colorless lips almost invisible in his pale face, "this spring where you were supposed to be engaged to a young New York lady. And I remember her name: Miss Kay Winter."

Glenn with a slight contemptuous smile and lifted eyebrows returned to his position by the fire. Pony went through the room, carrying his suitcase, out by another door, which he closed carefully.

"That's *that*," said Oliver, surprised to find that his pulse had quickened.

When Ben reappeared, "Your son has arrived," said Oliver quickly, "and I'm pretty late. Virgilia will be worried. May I take your papers and study them out at home?"

"Just a moment. I won't keep you long. Just want to lay down the foundations of my proposition, Glenn. You can take them home with you too, and think 'em over."

"Now, if you can contribute the Diccon ranch,—and that may take doing!—and

capital to the amount of one thousand dollars down, I can throw in my hay and range, horse- and cattle-grazing area, and a further capital of five thousand. That, for a dude ranch, is a mighty big layout."

While Oliver considered this, he faced a large picture elaborately framed and covered in glass which made a mirror. In it he saw the door of Pony's exit open, and Pony's vague outline just beyond its threshold. The outline, short, square, featureless and watchful, was familiar in an unusual sense; though he could not think where and when he had seen Pony Krane before, standing in just that dimness and that pose.

On his way home through the black woods, a difficult and oft-stumbling way, Oliver turned the small problem over idly, though he wanted to be thinking of more important things. . . . Finally recognition brought a quick light chill along his skin.

It was a dream, a nightmare he'd suffered when sleeping in Lady's bedroom that first night last autumn at the Krane's. Behind the shaky little ghost of Krane's first wife, the figure of Pony had been standing, or a figure with just its outline, watching, with a featureless gray face. And the door had been open. Oliver remembered that he had closed it just before he got into his bed.

Glenn was no believer either in ghosts or dreams. His nightmare had been suggested by the actual opening of that door, by the draft that came from its opening, and by a stealthy and uneven step. Pony may have wanted something in that room, or he had been walking in his sleep. Whatever its explanation, the small fact was somehow not a comfortable one.

There were, however, other facts even less comfortable to be considered. That evening at supper and thereafter Glenn, like the typical American business man or any other man who is considering a deal of which he knows his wife will disapprove, held his peace about the interview with Benjamin.

She said, "The Krane's are back," to which he nodded.

After supper he went to the table that he called his desk, and sat there to study Ben's tidy and legible notes. Virgilia lay at her long round length on the bear-skin near the stove, studying her cook-book with small inaudible motions of her lovely and illiterate lips. In a long blue negligee of Oliver's gift, she looked a splendid unrepentant Magdalen, deep-bosomed and gold-haired.

"What," she asked him, "rightly is a *pure-éc*, Oliver?"

So, having won his look and laughter, she had him, and there was no more studying that June evening for either one of them.

NEXT morning, however, Oliver commandeered her presence.

"Quit your dishes, Jill, and sit with me while I chop wood. I get lonely, and I want to discuss something important with you."

She came out at once, looking discreet and proud.

He chopped for fifteen minutes, then struck his ax into the block and came to

sit beside her on her log. She had the greatest possible gift for sitting still. Time could flow over her at its own leisure. Virgilia became a tree, the wind lifting her russet golden crown.

"You're the hardest woman in the world to talk sense to, Jill—you're so darned beautiful."

"I'm glad you went on to say I am beautiful, because I was just fixing to be mad."

"I want you to be everything else *but!* . . . I need your patience and good temper, Mrs. Glenn."

"God Almighty, aint that my name! I'd clean forgot." She looked startled, though laughing at her own surprise.

"That's your name—and your business. I suppose now and then you've considered the situation from my angle."

Virgilia said this sentence over to herself, in a low tone, audibly—"considered the sit-u-ation from my an-gle."

HE laughed, and put his hand over hers tenderly.

"Lamb! You are a sweet child. Begin over again. I've got to make a living."

"You got one."

"A living?"

She made a gesture including the whole earth.

"This ranch, Jill? Don't you *know* how poor you are?"

She gave him a troubled look.

"You're darned near destitute. You've been living all your life on the ragged edge of starvation. You've eaten just about enough to keep you moving, covered your beautiful little sweet body with shoddy trash—worn shoes that make me sick, lived in a bare, uncomfortable barn, slept on a mattress full of sticks and pebbles,—well, it feels that way.—under covers fit only for a clean tramp. You eat terrible food off battered tin plates, with crippled tin spoons and forks. You haven't bath-linen, bed-linen, table-linen. You wash in cheap soap. You have no books, no rugs, no window curtains. You never saw cold cream or face-powder, or sniffed French perfume. . . . You don't know what it is to wear a real hat. You use bandana cotton handkerchiefs for your most adorable nose, and I hate to think how long you've had that tooth-brush. You wouldn't know a bath sponge if you saw one—"

"You! Oliver—hush!"

He hushed—being breathless, though far from the end of inspiration.

"You want," said Virgilia, rather painfully, and sitting straight, "you want for us to have such."

"I do surely want just that—and plenty more. I want to take you to South America, Asia, Africa, the Pacific Isles—all round the world. I want to show you to the kings and queens of Europe—while there are a few left to show you to! I want to parade you up and down the highways of the world—merry minstrels nodding their heads before you. You never heard any music, never saw a picture. . . . Jill, what *are* you looking at?"

"Your hands. They're so sort of like a little boy's hands—I want to kiss them."

"You may."

She did, and held one to her cheek.

"All of which means that I've made up my mind to go into a real business here in Jackson's Hole."



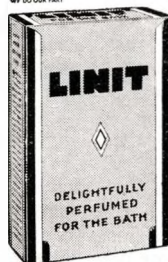
Why the Writer of this ad suddenly took a New Interest in his wife!

BEING MARRIED to an ad-writer sometimes makes a woman skeptical about certain advertised products and their merits. I found this to be true in my case for my wife did not usually believe in the things I advocated.

But, she DID try the famous LINIT Beauty Bath, and she DID send in the LINIT package top (and 10¢) for an attractive lipstick, 50¢ value.

I know she enjoyed the LINIT Baths because her skin is more soft and smooth than ever before. I also know she was delighted with the lipstick because of my comments on how it improved her appearance. And naturally, she is pleased at the new interest and attention I have shown in her *since* then.

Signed *Eus H. Guinter*



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FREE HANDSOME GIFTS...



Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., Louisville, Ky.

"There aint no money in cattle, and less'n anywheres on this here ranch."

"You're right. There are only two ways to make money in here. Sheep—"

She dropped his hand. "God Almighty, Oliver!"

"Dudes."

Virgilia studied him, and began to laugh. "But that's what you are your own self, Noll!"

"No sir. From now on, I'm a dude-wrangler."

"You mean, like Benny Sheffield, or them dude-ranchers down in the Hole?"

"Not so many 'drop-ins' as Ben Sheffield caters to, but more 'lay overs'. I'm going to send forth booklets and letters to my Eastern friends. The K-G is open to summer visitors, rates ten dollars a day, including use of individual horse and all other expenses."

"The K-G?" asked Virgilia. "I can't figure what that stands for."

"I've got to take a partner, Jill." Oliver spoke fast, looking down at his locked hands, which were not in the least like a little boy's to any eye but a wife's, being dark, clever, very sensitive. "This ranch of ours hasn't sufficient range—and I've got to have more capital than I can supply or borrow. Besides, as you so justly reminded me, I am a dude. I have to take me a very wise, experienced, older Western partner."

"Ed Carter," Virgilia murmured, "spells his name with a C—not with a K, Noll; and there aint anyone in here who's got five thousand dollars."

"Benjamin Krane," said Oliver.

Virgilia stood straight up.

"Darling! What's wrong? You and Pony buried the hatchet—didn't you? I went over yesterday afternoon to see Ben. He wrote me a letter proposing this partnership. I couldn't have come out here to marry you if I hadn't some place to make a living! It's a very extraordinary chance for me. I talked it over with him at length and in detail. I've been turning it over in my own mind—thoroughly. I lay awake most of last night—thinking. I won't, of course, darling, do anything without your consent—"

SHE went down before him as though she had cut her down, and laid her head and hands upon him.

"I knowed that you must love me!"

"Jill, dearest—are you going to be sensible? Why in thunder would you doubt my love for you? It's just because I love you, that I want to make my own way. I can't live here and be your husband unless I can do this—"

"You would see me—dead—or kill—ing?"

"What can I do with this girl? Sit up, Virgilia. Stop being a savage. I want you to tell me in just so many words what Krane has ever done that you should feel justified in hating him. You think he is a thief—and a murderer. But what's your evidence? I ought to have the facts—if they are going to be allowed to spoil my prospects here in Jackson Hole."

"I will tell you." Virgilia composed herself. She sat still, and spoke in a level tone, its resonance muted to the dull dissonance of hate.

She had neither the temperament nor the vocabulary for any embroidery of

fact. She told the story of Diccon's tragedy starkly and briefly, her mouth and eyes contributing eloquence. To Oliver, it seemed a vivid narrative.

"BEN KRANE, he is a talker. He talked my father into partnership. When he was good and ready, and my father trustin', he talked him out of his best land. He done that through my mother. He talked her into thinkin' that she had got to have this cañon and them falls. My mother was a school-marm and plumb ignorant. She had got my father roped and whip-broke; he was in her hands, just like one of these here, now, little Indian ponies. He would do what she wanted, sense or no. And Ben, he would get my father to set things down in handwriting, without he ever done the same himself. So there was law on his side."

"After Ben Krane's own woman begun to lose her wits, he was most always at our ranch. Pony, he was about ten years old when I was born. By the time I was five, Ben had talked my mother most as crazy as Pony's mother. He talked my father out of his happiness. My mother, she went away and lived with Ben. I don't savvy how he done that to her, but I know he done it. Talkin'—and promis-in'. Likely," said Virgilia, turning the stormy gray of her eyes for an instant from the pictures of her tale upon Oliver, as though in accusation, "likely he telled her about Asia and Africa and kings and queens and bath-sponges and what-not! My mother, she was right pretty, and right spoiled, I figure. I never did see her but once more after that, except a ways off—through the trees—and heard her singing or calling to Pony or to Ben."

"Then, in winter, when I was ten years old, and Pony near about a full-growed man, one morning one of our horses come into the corral with a paper tied to him. It was a letter, like, from Mother. I can recollect that letter. Father, he read it out aloud. My mother said that Ben was cruel to her, that she loved her Virgil and was sick for missing him, and her little Jill, that she wanted to come on back to her home, but she was watched—that Pony was watchdog for Ben Krane, that she was scared of the crazy woman who wanted to be always with her close; but she was most scared of Ben. She would try to make a get-away to Virgil next noon."

"My father, he sent me on up to Krane's cabin yonder. He telled me he had to make ready for my mother to come back. I was to give my mother his answer. I can recollect how cold it was—sort of dark cold, like the inside of rough ice. No snow on the ground. Awful still, and the smoke pouring up out of that big chimney of his'n yonder. And Pony coming to the door. I would not give him my paper, though I was scared of him—so growed and staring under his forelock. My mother come out quick, short breathing. And she went down onto her knees and held me so hard, Oliver—I can feel her arms this minute! Not crying—just looking at me so hard and so close. That was the first time I had the feeling of a mother since I was a baby. I can't never forget. Nor her face. I dropped my paper while she was holding me. I figure Pony took and read it

then, and told his father. I know what it was. 'You don't need to run away. Wait for me. I will be coming to fetch you home. And I will pack my gun.'

"I don't rightly remember how it was about leaving my mother there; but Pony, he come a-running after me in them dark woods, and he was all out of his breath, and he says: 'Tell your pa, Jill Diccon, that there aint no use him comin' with his gun. There won't be nothing here he would be caring to carry back.'

"When I come into the cabin, saying them words over and over, my father was not anywheres about. He did not come in until near daybreak. He had to go out after some stock, and he got set afoot a ways out on the range. He come into my room where I was sleeping, and waked me. It was near morning, and still awful cold. I give him Pony's words. I was in my bed. It was dawn. There was a thin sort of light in the room. We heard a sudden crying. It wasn't a coyote—both of us knowed that. It come from beyond the ridge, and stopped quick and sharp. It had been awful sudden and high and loud. A scream, like. We was as still. There wasn't a voice then, nor anything that moved. I never did hear the stillness so clost to me as that. My father said: 'You lay down, Jill, and get your sleep. I am going up yonder to fetch your mother home.'

"He took his gun and went.

"Up there a light was burning—he telled me, a long whiles afterwards; and Ben Krane, he met him as he come in at the door. He didn't say nothing. He was all dressed. He took my father in to see my mother. She was dead in her room, laying on her bed with her eyes all wide open. The crazy woman had gone in there and killed her. My father lifted her up in his arms and carried her out, and over to his own land and buried her. I don't know rightly where her grave lies. The ground was hard, he telled me. It was like burying her in ice—or stone."

VIRGILIA stopped. Oliver heard himself swallow as though his throat had been contracted. The crazy woman had come into Lady's bedroom and killed her—at dawn. . . . He lifted his face from his cold hands, and steadied his voice.

"The crazy woman killed your mother!"

"It was Ben Krane's doing. Ben Krane's talking, that set her on. Ben Krane talking danger or salvation, God knows what."

Oliver let out a breath he had not known that he was holding.

He put his arms around Virgilia, and she sat within them, still, remote—as she had never before sat under his touch.

"Sweetheart, it is such a horrible story. I wish you had never heard it—never lived through it. Please be patient with me, if you can, and reasonable, even if what I say hurts you or makes you angry. Your story proves nothing against Ben."

"Pony's message proved something, Oliver. He warned my father that there would be nothing he would be caring to carry back."

"A message by word of mouth, that the boy might have made up out of his own head? A message that might mean anything at all? No man planning a murder would be fool enough to send a message

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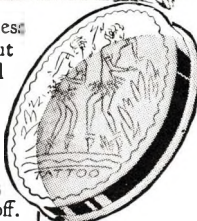
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4 STARTLING SHADES

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TATTOO

foretelling it. Virgilia, my sweetest darling girl, you have plenty of brains there in that beautiful little dear head of yours: just use them, won't you? For my sake and for the sake of your own peace. Don't you see that it is perfectly possible, even probable, that Ben is just as innocent as you are of any intention to cheat or rob or kill? Let's say that your mother of her own prompting talked your father, who always gave her her own way, out of his holdings, lost her head and her heart to Ben, and ran away to him. Ben was not so used to the love of women that he'd be likely to keep his head under such strong temptation. His own wife was no good to him. Your mother was pretty and exciting and young, and—had fallen in love with him. You know nothing really about their life together. You know only that when she was on the eve of going back to her husband, she was killed by a lunatic."

"And that crazy woman died during the blizzard that followed on my mother's death, and walled us in, like, until spring thawing."

"Yes, she died; and no one can ever know the truth of what she did, nor her reason for doing it—if a lunatic can have a reason. Maybe she loved your mother. Maybe she knew that she was planning to go away. Maybe she killed her out of anger, or a sort of jealousy of your father and of you. . . . She may have thought it was to save her from something terrible. You can't know what goes on in those brains. It was more than likely her message that Pony brought to you. Or something he made up himself. Perhaps Pony could tell us. Darling, has there ever been an investigation? Has any lawyer, I mean, ever looked into the death of Mrs. Diccon—or of the other woman?"

"Lawyer? Oh, no. My father wouldn't ever have been letting a stranger know about Lady and him!"

"Exactly. You have no evidence. You have no case. You and your father naturally preferred to blame Ben, rather than the woman you both loved. And yet—I don't want to hurt you, darling—but it looks to me as if your mother brought about her own tragedy—and his."

"It's a ghastly story. I wish I could cure your dear sweet memory. You hate this man. You've been brought up to hate him. But it is all, Virgilia, something in the past—long ago. Pony has been able to forget it—and you have been able to reconcile yourself to him. It isn't—the way you tell the story, dearest—a convincing one. If your father had been certain in his own heart that Krane had killed the woman he loved, your father, I am sure, would have shot him down that morning up there—when he had his gun, and it was so still and cold, and he saw her lying dead there where she had been killed. Are you sure that your father believed that Ben Krane was responsible?"

VIRGILIA sat and looked at Oliver. Slowly she lowered her lids across that look, until her lashes swept her cheeks. Her brows drew themselves darkly together.

"It aint what he believed. Nor what he telled me. It's me, Oliver. Someways, I—*know*."

She rose and walked away from him, across the clearing and into the house. And she closed the door.

After staring for a time at that closed door, Oliver returned to his chopping.

AT the interview in which Oliver Glenn finally signed a partnership agreement with Benjamin Krane, Pony was present. He kept at a distance at the end of the long room, his back to a window, against the sill of which he leaned on two tight hands, listening, his head bent.

"I'm sorry," Ben was saying, "that you can't persuade that wife of yours to come into our scheme more free-heartedly."

"She's not to come in at all," Oliver's voice had an iron ring, and it was the new note in it that brought up Pony's chin. "You've got to understand that completely, Mr. Krane. It's hard enough on Virgilia as it is. And though I don't always agree with her ideas nor share her prejudices, I am emphatically on the side of her happiness, her peace of mind. She has given in to my wish. She sees that this business is my only prospect out here in the Hole. But I've had to do her a certain violence, and she made just one condition. It's unalterable: She is to live with me in her own cabin—I mean to make it livable too!—and we are not to be disturbed there. I do my business elsewhere. None of these new buildings we've planned is to be placed so that she can see it from our cabin. She is never to be required to play hostess to our guests; and—you and she are not to meet."

Ben clicked his tongue. "Too bad! You'll find she'll be lonely. You will surely have to eat the most of your meals in our main cabin. And then, a hostess is what a dude ranch needs. And a good doctor too." He half turned to indicate his silent son. "I'll have to bulldoze Pony. Sooner or later he's got to come in. I figure we have a couple of broncs on our hands, Glenn. Well, sir, a beautiful Western girl like Mrs. Jill—it surely would be an asset, Glenn."

"I'd rather not talk about it, please."

Ben made one of his fluent and courteous gestures.

Through all the further talk, gracefully conciliatory on Ben's tongue, eagerly trenchant on Oliver's, Glenn was uncomfortably aware of that silent figure in the window. When the time for leaving came, he had to go over toward it for his hat. Ben had left the room a moment earlier. Pony, without moving otherwise, looked up hard into Glenn's face, and spoke.

"She's been crying on her father's grave. Every day she's been lying there crying, with her face to the ground. What did you do to her to break her will?"

Color rushed to Oliver's winged brows.

"You must have half broke her heart. By God," said Pony, and although his words increased in violence, his voice and manner kept their evenness, "anyone knows the sort of man you are! You have got no roots; you won't ever strike down into a soil. And such as you'll never understand Virgilia—not until you've killed her dead."

"Thanks very much, Krane. Such delicate suggestions from a stranger to a man about his wife are always welcome."

He gave Pony a look that was the fore-runner and the promise of a blow, took

The genuine bears this seal



up his hat and strode away. His pulses pounded. He had discovered that anger had a sudden murderous power.

As he rode, half blinded by a red and dancing mist, along his home trail, he was remembering the hour of Jill's surrender to his wish concerning Ben. Had she been crying that afternoon too, with her face on her father's grave? Watched by Pony, who drew his conclusions of a thwarted lover? She had, that day, run away from him. The cabin, when he had come in from chopping wood, had been empty. He had hunted for her vainly in a growing panic all the afternoon. . . . Not up the cañon; not down the valley; not standing on her rock—until he had come home again sick with terror. For what, after all, did he know about the wild heart of this loving, hating girl? And there, with a gasping rapture of relief, he had found her, sitting on the floor by an unlighted hearth. She had, his untiring Jill, the pose and the pallor of exhaustion. Her hands had lain relaxed, palms upward on her lap. She had lifted to him enormous shadowed eyes.

OLIVER caught her close, kissed her with violence, hair, hands, cheeks and mouth. "You got me scared, Jill. You were damn' thoughtless to run off from me like that. . . . I was thinking"—his voice shook—"horrors!"

"If you are angry against me in your heart," she said in a broken voice but without tears, "it is like as if you was the one that had went away—no matter if your body and your hands is clost. That is dying, to me. Your heart is me—just me, my own live self!"

"Dear heart, you exaggerate—you dramatize things so."

She swept aside these large half-comprehended words.

"The day we were married, Nolly, you read out to me what the woman in the prayerbook says. She will have this man for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health; she will love, honor and obey him, and forsaking all others cleave only unto him as long as they both shall live!"

Virgilia's pure accent on these words made of them a poem, and Oliver thought: "If she had only been taught how to speak always like that—so beautifully!" And he kissed her hair in a tender regret. "And thereto," Virgilia continued, "she plights him her troth. That means a promise. I did say that to you in the presence of God. We said those promises one to the other; even though we had no clergyman, we knowed we was speaking in the presence of Almighty God. That was awful real to me, and solemn."

Her broken voice in the twilight had a touching power.

"And Nolly, I knowed, too, that you had forsooked all others, coming away out here from all your folks and your own life, to live, now, *you* know, this here life with the pebbles and sticks in our mattress, and the battered old tin forks and spoons and all such. . . . And you told me today that you would not have come lest you had this—here, now—partnership in your mind. . . . Is that the truth?"

"Yes, darling."

She drew from the depth of her tired lungs a breath, a sigh, and then bent

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Straight as a string



down low and soft over her hands, his folded into them.

"I must do what you want," she said; he could feel the gentle motions of those exquisite plastic lips against his palm. "And I savvy now that you can't believe the things I know, and that I can't plan for you to act according to my feelings. But"—she threw back her head so suddenly that he started—"you won't let me—meet—*him*, Oliver? You won't? He won't come near, nor speak to me, nor come in at my door nor try to touch my hand?"

"I do promise you that, Jill. You shall have your home to yourself. You need never to see him."

She sat brooding, the grave shadow of pain seeming to lie across her mouth.

"You will be in danger," she said.

He laughed softly, kissing her hair.

"And then,"—here she turned her eyes upon him with more life and more sorrow,—"those folks will come. They will come up Deep Crystal; they will be riding up Moon Cañon to our falls. They will be talking, talking and calling—everywhere in the woods. They will be climbing up and looking at Ghost Mountain from our rock. And you will be taking money from them—money for Ghost Mountain!"

To this he could say nothing. He tried to laugh at her, but his laughter ended. They sat together, she in his arms, her tired weight against his shoulder, and the dusk, which was the shadow of their mountain, had come down upon them.

SO now, already as he rode back after his recent sharp exchange of enmity with Pony Krane, men were at work with axes.

Using a portion of his capital, Glenn had sent out telegrams, to be followed by booklets, to a brief list of acquaintances and friends: to Will Mordaunt, to Lewis Farrant, to Ed Gloster and to others:

AM STARTING DUDE-RANCH IN BEAUTIFUL MOON MOUNTAIN COUNTRY. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR A SELECT NUMBER PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCES WILL BE AVAILABLE AUG. 15. IF YOU LIKE WESTERN LIFE UNDER NEARLY IDEAL CONDITIONS, MAKE RESERVATIONS AT ONCE. RIDING, FISHING, HUNTING, HEALTH AND REST.

The response had surprised Oliver.

Ed Gloster had a "boy who was mad about the West," and Ed and his wife made reservations. "Gosh, how he'll hate it! And how I shall hate him—out here," thought Oliver, trouble across his brows.

Will Mordaunt had spoken to Kay, and she wanted Sue to go out with another girl and her chaperon—"if Oliver didn't mind." Oliver did mind, but he did not dare turn down any possible dudes this season. Besides, what reason could he give?

Two young men he'd shot with one winter on a Southern plantation made reservations immediately by wire. Almost at once—for these were the years before depression—he had ten guests; twelve was the limit for this opening.

Ben went down to Jackson and engaged carpenters, builders, furniture-makers—all the same artisan, in the far West. He hired two handsome young cowboys for horse- and dude-wranglers. He engaged Ed Carter's services as guide; he lent his own Chinese cook to the K-G, and got a

small Oriental for second man. A pretty Western girl would do the cabins and help at table; an old fellow named Tom Toggin would roustabout. And Ma Jamison would "wash for all."

Workmen made camp among the willows at the cañon entrance and lit cookfires and mosquito-smudges and drew water. Far up the cañon all day their axes and their hammers rang. The great pines fell, were lopped and trimmed and shaped and peeled. New windowpanes caught flashes of the sun. Sue and her friend would sleep here on the bank of Moon Creek, close to the single cabin of their chaperon. The Glosters would have the handsome double cabin down the cañon against the firs; Rufe Dixon and Teddy Neal could share the bachelor house, amongst aspen, where in the tumbling channel of Moon Creek there was an excellent bathing-hole. Farrant and his sister, who had had a nervous illness, were to be at the end of the main building in an attached double room beside Oliver Glenn's office. It had been difficult enough certainly to place all the ranch buildings out of the range of Virgilia's windows and immediate ways, but it had been done. Nevertheless her lonely cañon had been desecrated. Despite all Glenn's pains, its beauty of wilderness and silence had been crucified.

The country had surrendered to his will, the country and the woman. But it was not only Virgilia who was suffering. Her young husband, who was her very lover, felt pain, watching her face. He knew that the first wild ecstasy of his marriage was over, and that it had been too brief. It was his own will that had cut it short, as if with an ax, an ax like those he heard now as he rode down that trail, already deeply marked and visible, between Krane's cabin and Virgilia's.

As he came round the corner of his cabin, he heard laughter.

Virgilia sat on the step of her kitchen porch, flooded with noonday sun, peeling potatoes in a wooden bowl. The two young wranglers lounged, one against her post, tall, slim and handsome in Western gear, the other squatted on his bright heels before her, telling a story, his fine long rider's hands spread out as though there had been a campfire under their palms. And Virgilia, shy, candid, friendly, had just thrown back her head to ring her bells of laughter. She looked so young—a girl with boys, free and happy among her own kind.

AS they saw Glenn, the squatting boy rippled up, the other straightened, and Virgilia's laughter stopped. Her eyes were glad to see him, and the color of happiness ran up the snow-white rose-red skin; but—the laughter stopped.

Virgilia said eagerly:

"The boys brought us down some dandy hides. Oliver, for our new bench. You must come and look at them. They're just dandy!"

"There's one Westernism I can't swallow, Jill," said Oliver as, a little later they went into the house. "Just dandy! Can't you cut that one out—only just that one, please?"

"Surely. Come and see the hides. They're just dand—" She put a hand across her mouth and made enormous eyes. "They're—I mean, they're—what in

hell is it, Noll, that they are, if they're not just dandy?"

Then he laughed, for she was, after all irresistible: sweet, funny, dear—with her rueful eyes and that quaint drawl of amusement along her shocking syllables.

THE first K-G dudes were Rufus Dixon and Ted Neal. The next were Susan Winter, Amy Westcott and Mrs. Leonard Sharpe. The Glosters would not be coming in until September. Oliver thanked the Lord! Dixon and Neal, serious outdoor young men who wanted to avoid girls, faced the appearance of Sue and Amy, pretty and very 'teenish, with considerable dismay. But Sue and Amy were practically outdoors-men when they got into chambray shirts, cow boots and overalls, and seemed to be just as anxious to avoid flirtation as were the mighty hunters and fishermen before the Lord. The chaperon, of course—but that was another story, to reach its climax later. The horse- and dude-wranglers, Slim Vernon and Dick Reed, however, were nothing if not romantically inclined. They were delighted with Sue and Amy and with Mrs. Sharpe. They dressed for Sundays and holidays, every day of the week, and their beauty in and out of a Western saddle caught at an inexperienced female breath. Oliver began to have a glimmering notion of a dude-wrangler's responsibilities. It seemed that the chaperon thought Mr. Glenn "perfectly fascinating." In fact, the K-G opened in a haze of good feeling and tender mutual admiration. Ben, dressed as a prosperous rancher, very smart and neat in a soft black shirt with string tie, a silver-studded belt below his jaunty forward-going paunch, tweed coat, woolen Pendleton pants, polished cow boots and a small black sombrero, was astonishing to Glenn. He had had no idea of the man's versatility and social gifts. Night after night, in the main cabin, still not completely furnished, before a splendid fire, Ben held the group of visitors and his young partner enthralled. He knew not only the tales of Jackson's Hole—that gruesome story of murder at Dead Man's Bar; the saga of the Sheep Mountain Slide and the Grosventre flood; the horse-thieves that were shot over across Snake River; the life, the uncanny marriages and suicidal death of crazy Serjeant who filled a wagon with wild roses for his starving family—but a hundred other stories and legends of the far West. . . .

Said Dixon, coming in late one night to the long dining-table: "Gosh, but Ted and I have had an adventure!"

"I knew we oughtn't to have let them get away without us, Susy!" Amy wailed. "Tell—please."

"Well, we were fishing down Buffalo Fork, and our horses got away."

"Won't you ever learn that hitch?" groaned Oliver.

"It takes a Westerner to teach it," twinkled Ben.

"We were set afoot, and I guess we walked ten miles, when down from a lot of timber came riding, with both our ponies on the lead—and could she ride!—the most beautiful, the most absolutely gor-gee-ous girl ever our eyes did see."

"Girl?" Sue was disappointed, and Amy returned with nonchalance to her bowl of canned soup.

"You wouldn't hardly believe it, how beautiful she was. How about it, Teddy?"

Teddy was loyal, with an expressive rolling up and casting about of roguish eyes.

"And she had a line! Different. Sort of shy, but all-there way with her. And she lives 'hereabouts' she told us. We 'sure aim' to find her. She made her get-away on a beautiful gray horse—rode like an Indian, up some rocks."

"What did she look like? Maybe I know her," suggested Ben, not meeting Oliver's eyes, which were cold, steely.

"Gray eyes, gold hair—oh, there's no use trying to tell about a girl like that. Young—eighteen. Just take our word for her. Beautiful! Where does she live, Mr. Krane? You'd know. There's nothing you don't know about the Hole."

"Umhum—but likely," said Ben. "I wouldn't be telling. Ask Glenn. An Easterner is always more ready to tell what he knows."

But Mr. Glenn was not ready to tell, nor even to smile.

"You great boobs," Sue confided in a grim whisper later before their living-room fire, "that was Nolly's wife—the one he's so cagey about. The girl we are not to bother and not supposed to visit. . . . Get me? She's our ranch mystery."

Rufus and Ted were immediately downcast. That evening they neither spoke nor sang, except to join in a wailing chorus of "*Oh, buree me not on the lo-one prair-ieee.*"

IMMEDIATELY after dinner Oliver had gone back to his Virgilia.

He found Ed Carter and the two Western boys in possession of his hearth.

Things had gone wrong with Oliver that day. The Glosters were due tomorrow. Some very urgent supplies had not been sent for; the meat and eggs were giving out, and Mrs. Sharpe had given him a difficult afternoon. The Westerners sensed his mood at once, and after a decent and courteous interval withdrew.

"Oh, boys," said Oliver, following them out a few steps, "I wish you could see your way to hanging round the main cabin sometimes, evenings. You could give those girls a better time. You might start dancing. . . . Tom can play the mouth organ. . . . That's all part of the wrangling job, savvy?"

"Yes, Mr. Glenn."

"We sure will do that." Softly they spoke; softly they swung to saddle and softly jogged into the starry luminous night, riding down to the corrals and the bunkhouses, maybe—riding out, perhaps, with Elise Sharpe. . . .

Ed Carter, as Oliver came back into the house, was saying to Virgilia: "I aim to tell him, myself, but if you see fit, Miss Jill, it's O. K. with me."

"Good night, Ed," said Oliver.

"Good night, Nolly. I got one of these here, now, you know, little spotted pigs, like, down to Moran from a feller, and brung him up for Miss Jill. She likes to keep her a little pig. I can fix up, now, a sure-enough little house for him Sunday. That will be, *you* know, tomorrow." He went out softly. Carter trod forever as one who walks the wilderness for game.

Virgilia, in one of the new deep elk-hide chairs that Oliver had had made,

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YOU'D never suspect by looking at her, how uncomfortable she is, how utterly ashamed at the very thought of having Athlete's Foot.

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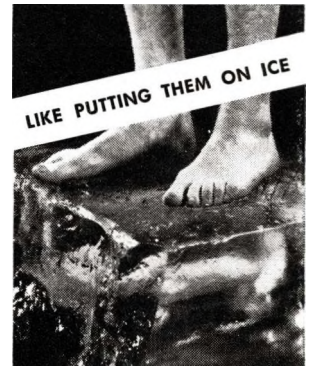
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feel tired, sore,
swollen

Ladies and gentlemen—golfers, salesmen, postmen, policemen, everybody! Here's the finest thing in the world for folks whose feet suffer like blazes from summer's high heat. Pull off those clammy damp socks, and douse on cooling, soothing Absorbine Jr. Thousands say it's like putting those sweltering feet on ice. Absorbine Jr. is also wonderful for sunburn; an excellent antiseptic for insect bites.



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sat with one leg under her. The deep rose-color of the fire was rich in her face.

"I don't like what Ed's been telling me," she said.

"Well, for God's sake, don't repeat it, then. I'm fed up with things I don't like. And one of them—is being so much away from you. Oh, Jill, Jill, Jilly, why aren't there only just two people in the world—this man and this woman? *Everyone* would be so happy then." He knelt before her, laid his head upon her, put his arms about her.

"Who would give this woman to be married to this man?" asked Virgilia.

"We didn't need anyone to give us to each other, did we, Jill?"

"Jest it might have been—God."

"God, if anyone, it was! All right, tell me Ed's trouble. I feel a whole lot better now. You are so sweet to the touch, Jill—I almost said, to the taste. You're made of fiery, fountainy things, warm and cool, wine and running water. I'd like to write poems about you."

"Ed told me this. He says whatever don't get done right, whatever goes so

that there's a trouble or complaint, that's on your—bill. An ignorant Eastern kid! But what works right and goes smooth—that goes to the experienced Westerner, to the credit of Ben Krane."

Oliver sat in silence, leaning against her knee, now, and staring at the fire. Her hand on his head lay still—caressing only by its weight. After a while he pulled a big breath, sat up, got out his "makings"—and began to smoke.

He had noticed this very thing himself.

But now, perversely, it made him angry to hear Ed and Virgilia's comment, to listen to their spoken certainty.

He said, slowly and coldly: "I object very much to Carter coming down here and talking over me and my business with you. You are altogether too apt to put your own construction on Ben's acts and words. Ed is very likely to get under your influence—and I don't like it. I want you to keep that savage hatred and suspicion out of it. Understand me, Jill?"

Jill seemed to take this calmly.

"He is *talking*," she said. "Ben Krane is talking."

"What does that mean, Wild West?" "He is talking like he talked before, talked land away—a woman—and happiness."

"Rot!" said Oliver. "I'd like to see any man talk my woman—and my happiness away. You're more apt to do that with your own barbarous nonsense, Jill."

Virgilia said: "You will see, Oliver."

He muttered a short sharp word and turned to look up at her, frowning.

Her changed young face had its look of cold and heavy stone.

"There are just two people in the world that understand Benjamin Krane," said Pony. "Those two are you and me, Virgilia. We know that he can be dangerous. What makes him dangerous is—fear. He's afraid of Oliver Glenn, and he is packing a gun." (Be sure to read the ensuing chapters, in the next—the September—issue of Redbook.)

ANYTHING BUT BUSINESS

(Continued from page 39)

that didnt go long of the rails was missing the chance of a century. Remembering what the elevator boy told me I went out an woke up one of the boarders after the meeting. I told him I had some inside dope. If he wanted to make money he should sell the rails quick. He was cranky about being waked up though. He says if he was going to be disturbed like this, hed move to a quieter brokerage house.

He remembered just the same. That afternoon I heard him telling one of the other boarders that the new fellow certainly had hit the rails on the head. Right after Id told him to sell them, theyd gone right down. I dont know what theyd gone down. Those are things I can learn later. The main thing now is to give the customers good advice.

Today the boarders all woke up when I came in the room. They asked what to do with the rails. Mr. Buntz was home with a cold. I told them not worry. This was the time for them to catch up on their sleep. Id call them if anything happened.

But I didnt mean to talk your ear off about business. Thats the trouble with us N. Y. fellows. Everythings business an hurry. We get so we have no time for the softer things of life.

aff'c'ly y'rs

Sam

Hotel Biltmore
New York N. Y.

Dear Bibo,

Things have certainly been comin my way. All a guy needs to do to succeed is to keep his eyes open an his mouth shut. This Mr. Buntz I was telling you about in my last letter is a wonder. Im only scared to death theyll hear about his wiggeley lines in Washington an take him away.

That mans never wrong. If he says to go long on copper stocks, sure enough copper stocks go down. If he says to go short on oil stocks, the oil stocks bounce

right up. All I have to do is to remember what the elevator boy told me. Then I pass the word along to the customers. Their all crazy about me.

Its really gettin embaressing around the office. The customers are beginning to come to me instead of the partners. Sometimes I think maybe the partners dont understand what Mr. Buntz is talking about. Their not bright, between you an me. If they was, of course theyd be getting paid for working like me an Mr. Buntz.

Mr. Enos an Mr. Quigley called me into the partners room the other day. They said they couldnt understand what was going on. Everybody was telling them I was the only fellow in the office that knew anything. How did I get that way? I told them it wasnt up to me to say cause it was just a matter of using the old bean. Naturally I wasnt going to tell them how not to be dumb.

Mr. Quigley thought maybe it was just a gift like playing the mouth organ. He said to keep it up. If I didnt make any mistakes maybe theyd raise my salary some day. If I did theyd fire me. Mr. Quigley said that if the firm could pick up a second hand desk they might even make me a customers man.

A customers man, Bibo, is a fellow without any money that tells other people what to do with theirs. Youd think people would know but they dont. They spend all their lives working for it, an when they get it they run all around asking people what to do with it.

Well Im not going to bore you any more about myself. Sometimes I think I talk too much about myself. Lets talk about you for a while. How are you anyway?

Well there doesnt seem to be much more news so Ill close. Hoping that things arnt too stupid in Elba now that so many people are leaving these small places an coming to N. Y.

y'rs Aff'ly

Sam

Biltmore Hotel
New York N. Y.

Dear Bibo,

Ive given up my box stall at Mrs. Rosenkranzes. Im livin here now. Here! Right in the old Hotel Biltmore. Never in my life did I expect to have so much money at one time. Or at any number of times as far as that goes. If a fellow has a bean it just wont stay down an I guess thats all there is to it.

But youll be wanting to know what all the shoutings about. You remember I told you in my last letter what a nice team me an Mr. Buntz was making. Well that kept right on. He read the charts. I told the customers what to do. They liked it so they even got to bringin their friends in. The partners had to buy new leather chairs for the board room.

It didnt do me much good though. All I got was glory. An you cant pay anybody by the name of Rosenkranz with glory. Then along came a customer with some real money. It seems in 1929 he was a big trader an made a lot. Then he got into a auto accident just before the break. It mixed his brain up an he sold everything he had. He put the money in the bank.

About a year later he realized what hed done an went to get his money sos he could buy stocks with it again. Just then the bank went boom. He hasnt been able to get a nickle out till a few months ago. Then they settled with him for fifty cents on the dollar.

As he says now its the greatest luck he ever had. Imagine what would have happened to him if hed had his money in sound investments all that time. Hes so grateful hes been supportin the bank president ever since.

An now since hes run into me hes makin real money again. He thinks Im the smartest fellow he ever saw. After Id been advisin him for a couple of weeks he started taking on a few shares for me when I told him what to do. In

no time at all—now hang on to your old arm chair. Bibb—in no time at all I had almost \$4000 in the little old bank. Think of it. I keep myself awake nights so I can. If Mr. Buntz will only stay healthy for a while.

Im going to quit now. I got to look at some autos. A fellow has to hold up his end in this financial business.

y'rs af'ly

Sam

Hotel Biltmore
New York N. Y.

Dear Bibb,

Im writing this from my room in the Biltmore. I havnt been out of it for ten days. An the funny part of it is Im not sick. Im a prisoner. Mr. Buntzes prisoner. Two weeks ago Mr. Buntz got taken with the mumps. I stuck it out for a day or two at the office tryin to pick up some dope from the partners but I was beginning to slip. So I phoned them I had the mumps to. Now theres nothing to do but sit in my bedroom an look out at the Gran Central station till Mr. Buntz gets well again.

Suppose he should die. Bibb. Just as I was gettin started in life. An I had such a great chance. Ask some of your doctor friends if mumps is ever fatal. If hes not going to die I wish hed hurry up an get well. You dont mind payin \$5 a day for a room if you dont have to stay in it. Its awful when you do though.

It certainly is a stupid life. I think of you all the time.

a'ly y's

Sam

THE FOIBLES OF THE GREAT

(Continued from page 47)

luck in his next fight. I liked him. He was a good kid, always clowning. He was like me. He had a sense of humor.

"I wanted to shake his hand. So I dressed quickly. Then I walked out. I saw a crowd standing over a body that was covered with a blanket. They didn't have to tell me. I knew."

There was a silent second. Max Baer stretched the giant fingers of one hand.

He continued: "Ever since that night I took to smoking. I don't think it hurts a fighter. You can overdo anything, even training. But even if it does hurt, the temptation beats me. . . . Just those two puffs—I've got to have them!"

Business men are no exception to the temptation rule.

William S. Paley, the youthful but astute president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, squirmed in his chair. He stared as if I were a school-teacher about to pester a reluctant pupil. Finally, after a few questions, he began:

"I suppose the movies would call me a picture-snatcher. Until two years ago I can truthfully say I was minus a temptation. Then one day it happened. Somebody walked me into a camera store. At first I had no intention of buying. Presently I decided upon a small camera. I was about to purchase it, when on the neighboring counter I saw a larger and better one. Pretty soon I discovered that every counter attracted me. Four hours later I emerged. I had bought camera,



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films, tripod, lights and, what intrigued me most, an entire developing apparatus.

"Now I'm tempted to snap pictures wherever I go. I lug my camera to prize-fights. I can ruin any party. My best studies are those of my wife. And I got the biggest kick out of photographing Cecil Beaton, the photographer. I had gone to his studio to have my picture taken, but wound up by taking his!"

"My wife will tell you that the worst is the developing habit. I often stay up until five in the morning developing the pictures I took during the day and evening. I never can wait to see how they will turn out. This temptation not only robs me of my right amount of sleep, but it also succeeds in ruining the furniture as I enthusiastically wave the wet plates, spattering the corroding solution about the room!"

Walt Disney bears out Irvin Cobb's theory about temptations being a throw-back to childhood days. Because he would draw cartoons over the pages of his schoolbooks, he was usually kept after hours while the other boys were free to pitch baseballs. And now the executives at United Artists will tell you that Disney, industrious worker that he is, will never toss away the opportunity of deserting *Minnie, Mickey and The Three Little Pigs*, if he can find a sufficient number of idle studio hands to join him in a game of baseball.

Eddie Cantor, nervous, energetic, alert, instantly assured me that he is a show "kibitzer."

"I can't watch an act without running backstage and telling them how I think they can improve it. I'm always telling Georgie White how to fix his revues, and when the Marx Brothers were shooting their last picture, I had to put my two cents in. I can't even see a movie presentation without suggesting an immediate change in the sequence of its acts. It's like being a back-seat driver. This may be okay now; on the grounds that once in a while I'm a help, my friends make allowances for the insidious habit. Maybe they figure that after twenty-five years in show business I should have learned a little something. But years ago, when I was a beginner and people didn't know me, and I ran backstage and said to a strange actor: 'Why don't you sing the second chorus first?'—well, I was in line for a poke in the eye!"

ROSA PONSELLE is enticed by food.

It is her misfortune not to have been born fifty years ago when a prima donna was judged by her weight. Ponselle, born in Connecticut, of Italian parents, constantly had to face the fattening dishes her mother loved to prepare. Thus, when fifteen years ago she made her debut at the Metropolitan, she weighed two hundred and five pounds. Now she weighs one hundred and sixty-five.

"I suffer tortures," she says. "When I sing *Violetta* in *Traviata*, I cannot be plump; *Violetta* is dying of consumption! In *L'Africana*, I'm carried into court on a throne balanced upon the shoulders of four husky men; yet I'm afraid an extra pound will make me too heavy for them! And in *The Love of the Three Kings*, when at the climax of Act Two, I am murdered by a jealous father-in-law who carries me off-stage, what about an additional

pound there? So I worry, and I school myself to diet, but I'm tempted by one dish. Pound or no pound, I must eat it!"

The dish is spaghetti with clams, and here is the recipe that has such a fatal attraction:

- 1 pound spaghetti
- 2 pounds of very small clams
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 clove garlic
- 4 tablespoons pure olive oil
- 1 cup of strained tomatoes

First steam the clams for five minutes, using one cup of water. When steamed, take the clams out of shells and strain water used through cloth. Brown garlic in four spoonfuls of olive oil, adding the cup of strained tomatoes. After cooking ten minutes, add water from clams, again letting it cook ten minutes. Five minutes before serving add chopped parsley.

FOOD is also George M. Cohan's lode-stone.

Standing on the empty stage, where a few moments before he had superbly played his gentle part in Eugene O'Neill's "Ah, Wilderness!" Cohan, dapper, rosy-cheeked and with that engaging grin of his, shocked me. He said emphatically:

"Rice pudding at Dinty Moore's, darling, that's my greatest temptation! I never know when I've had enough!"

There is something so regular about Cohan that such an anemic-sounding dish seemed absurd. I investigated. I paid a call on Mr. Dinty Moore. There I discovered the solution.

George M. Cohan, who does not go in for golf or tennis, may be found any day studying the baseball news. He is a rabid fan. And Dinty Moore is an ex-baseball-player. Not only that, but the Moore rice pudding is said to possess a special he-man quality.

"As a boy on Tenth Avenue we had it for Sunday desserts. It's got character. Georgie told you the truth; he never misses a chance to eat more of my rice pudding than is good for him!"

Thereupon the genial Mr. Moore furnished me with the following recipe which he claims will make an ample amount, sufficient to fill a large pan.

- 1 pound rice
- 1 quart and 1 cup of milk
- 1 dozen eggs
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 pound muscatel raisins
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon salt

Wash the rice and raisins. Cook rice slowly for ten minutes. Take chill off the milk. Then beat eggs and mix them with the milk, adding the rest of the ingredients. Place in oven that is not too hot, and cook for twenty minutes.

"But don't forget to pay attention to it!" bellows Mr. Moore.

Kate Smith acknowledges that no persuasion can keep her from "vanilla ice cream buried under a mountain of whipped cream and pecan nuts; the whole flooded with chocolate fudge sauce."

Miss Smith is not the only one whose uncontrollable desire smacks of the small child. There is George Gershwin.

With the exception of ice-cream, which he devours, Gershwin cares little for food. His is the nervous temperament that lies awake nights and loses its appetite. Like most composers, he has a decided ability

for mechanics; he loves to use his hands. Although he continually works his two grand pianos, he finds additional outlets in painting and tinkering with machinery. He will gladly forgo a meal to indulge his whim, that of playing with children's toys.

"Especially the kind with cranes. I like to take them apart. Last Christmas I visited some people in Florida. They have three children, and I did nothing but make a pest of myself by monkeying with their toys. I'm afraid the children took an active dislike to me. But if you pick a brand-new Christmas fire engine to pieces, and ignominiously fail to put it together again, I don't suppose you can really expect to win its owner's affection!"

When it comes to overpowering temptations, Sinclair Lewis is on a par with his own *Babbitt*. The Lewis tendency is to play practical jokes; and he has remarkable histrionic talents. His are no simple sit-on-a-tack affairs. Rather does he specialize in mental tortures, and he lays his plans with care.

A typical Lewis prank is that which he recently played on one of the executives of his publishing firm. They had made a sole request of their prized author, and that was not to lend his voice to the radio. Therefore when the publisher paid a friendly call, he was ushered into an antechamber while the door to the living-room was ostentatiously closed. Lewis, who had spent some time rehearsing his secretary, apologized for this.

"That man from N.B.C. is in there," he glibly lied.

And throughout their talk he kept his secretary running with messages to the supposed radio official.

"Show him the new script. . . . Tell him I don't think an hour is too long. . . . Read him the second part, you know, where I say people who foolishly squander their money on novels are wasters and idiots!"

It is hardly necessary to add that the visitor writhed, and a good time was had by Mr. Lewis.

AND at first, in her pleasant Westchester home set high on a hill, Carrie Chapman Catt, just turned seventy-five, but with the vigorous light of battle in her eyes, claimed she had no temptation.

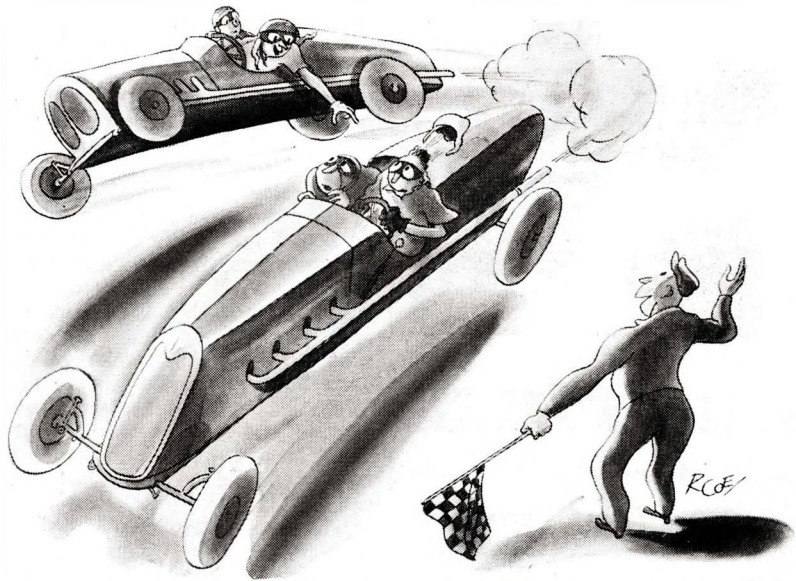
"We who live our lives in service cannot find time for personal desires. I did not think Suffrage was the only cause worth sacrifice, but I knew that if I were to accomplish even a little work, I had to champion one particular belief, and so I chose that. It is never finished. Any function dealing with humans cannot be completed; it must go on and on."

But presently she did admit to a temptation—"If you call never being able to pass a flower-shop, a temptation. It's made me late to many a meeting."

Reverend S. Parkes Cadman was very serious about his reply. This may have been due to the depressing atmosphere, to the woodwork stained a shiny brown, to the greenish carpeting, the dull globes, and the bare settlement-house aspect of the place.

There were the people who came to him for help as he sat at a long library table, patiently listening to their troubles. There was the thin man who wanted a divorce. And the man with a bad cough, the one who hadn't eaten for two days.

"Pardon me, but a dash of Wildroot will clean up that dandruff!"



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To the thin man he said: "Keep away from lawyers. Whether you win or lose, they cost you money. Go to the police head at this court; tell him I sent you."

To the other he gave a dollar, and turned him over to his assistant with: "See that this man gets something to eat, and find him a job."

Then he spoke to me: "Temptations of the flesh such as food never have interested me. It is the temptations relative to our spiritual side, the temptations of pride, jealousy, envy and ambition, that are far more serious than offenses against the health laws. We are all susceptible to temptations. The Bible tells you that."

"My own will be difficult for people to believe, because they know what a prodigious worker I am; but I'm a loafer at heart. If it weren't from necessity, if I didn't have to work, if in the mornings I were not obliged to accomplish so much by noon, and if at eleven years of age I hadn't been literally pushed into a coalmine—well, I'd be the most confirmed loafer in the ministry. As it is, a comfortable corner and a good book invariably take me from my duties."

Despite Dr. Cadman's advice concerning lawyers, I went to see Max Steuer in his old-fashioned office with its wide windows that overlook the harbor and the ships steaming past the Statue of Liberty.

While his right hand toyed with tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles, and a sly smile wrinkled his face, Mr. Steuer disclosed his temptation.

"Telling stories. I'll tell one on any occasion. I won't hesitate to switch an incident if doing so makes a better story. Nobody has to give me an opportunity. They say something; instantly I think of a story, and I'm at it!"

Then, in his low-pitched voice that has the trick of slowly and effectively presenting drama, in that voice which quietly carries the listener until it reaches a crescendo, he related his favorite story:

"It belonged to Abraham Lincoln. It was his favorite too. He had just been

elected to office; and like many before and after him, he discovered that the majority of his friends wanted jobs. Most officials have assistants who handle this unpleasant work, but Lincoln decided to carry it off himself. And when the first job-seeker approached him, he told this tale.

"Once there was a king who ruled a country said to have the most perfect cabinet in the world. One day this king asked his pampered prophet what the weather would be like, as he wished to go hunting. The prophet swore the day would be bright and the sun shine. So the king with his men started on their hunt. They rode through the forest, and had occasion to pass a small clearing where a man stood chopping wood. Next to the man waited the jackass he used for carrying lumber. As the king's party approached, the man rushed forward and knelt. The king commanded him to rise and speak. The man warned him not to continue the hunt, 'because my jackass just brayed, and whenever he does so, that means there will be a storm!'

"The king was a good-natured soul. 'Don't be silly,' he laughed; 'my prophet said the weather would be fine!'

"And he went on with his men. Shortly afterward there arose a terrific thunder-shower. Drenched to the skin, the king was obliged to return home. There he sent for his prophet and discharged him. Next he ordered a servant to search the forest for the man with the jackass.

"Bring the jackass back to the palace. I will make him court prophet!"

"And," concluded Max Steuer, "Mr. Lincoln claimed that from that day on, there has always been a jackass trying to get a job in public service!"

While he talked, I had taken a pencil from my purse and jotted down his words. After he finished, I closed my notebook, neatly folding it over the pencil. As I did this, I laughed to myself, for I noticed that on the pencil was engraved the name of Warden Lawes!

LAST NIGHT OF THE OLD WORLD

(Continued from page 23)

what she was to do two and a half years later! How many millions of men who molder on the battlefields of Europe would be alive today—how many tyrannies sprouted from the rank field of war would never have seen the light of day!

It all had to be done in the end. But alas, too late!

When one wondered about the length of the war, it did not seem that it could last long. The feeling in instructed circles was that there would be two great collisions of the armies, in the West and in the East, and that thereafter one side or the other would make peace. We could not know how tough the nations were. But now that the British fleets were at sea, there was an enormously restful assurance that whatever happened on land, we could still continue the war if necessary alone.

But would there be a great sea battle at the very outset? There was the point that touched us most. It was certainly to the interest of the German navy, if they were ever to fight, to fight at the earliest moment. With every month the great new

ships we were finishing would join the fleet. And surely now, in the fortnight when the army would be crossing to the Continent, was the moment for the supreme trial of strength. For this also we thought we were ready, and I never had a doubt that a trial of strength between the two main battle fleets could have had but one result—the destruction of the weaker. Brave and efficient as was the German Navy, it was far the weaker. . .

But now the fateful hour is about to strike. High above the tumultuous crowds which fill the streets the long hand of Big Ben is on the stroke of eleven. I rise from my chair and go into the adjoining room, where forty or more officers and clerks are waiting to dispatch the signal of war to our ships all over the world. The clock strikes. There is a ruffle of papers—a stir and a buzzing which dies away. We are at war with the greatest of all military powers, and with the naval power second only to ourselves. That is where we were then.

But what I am asking myself twenty years after is: "Where are we now?"

SIRE UNKNOWN

(Continued from page 51)

stomach was slightly aglow with some very excellent sherry. He looked back at the house.

"Doesn't know a thing about it? Doesn't know she's supposed to be a—"

"Lord, no," said Richard. "She'd leave me in a minute if she did."

"Dare say she would. A girl of spirit, if I ever saw one. And very lovely, young Fayne, very lovely. It'd be a shame to make her unhappy. See here, supposing you and Mrs. Fayne come up to Heather Hill for dinner next week. I'll see that your wife has a note from Mrs. Winslow. At that time, you and I might compose a, shall we say, suitable reply to your uncle's letter. Nothing deliberately deceiving, you understand. Just a few lines couched in phrases which would indicate that I approve of you—of the—"

"Yes sir," said Richard in vast relief. "I know just what you mean. I can suggest certain terms, sir. I've had plenty of practice in the last few weeks."

Heather Hill, the large and horsy estate of Norman Winslow, was delightful; so too, Fannybelle and Richard found, were their host and hostess. Things progressed famously until Fannybelle, during coffee, said:

"Oh, Mrs. Winslow, have you ever met Richard's Uncle William?"

"Indeed I have, my dear. We're always running across him at Millbrook or Aiken. A delightful gentleman. My husband tells me you've never met him. By the way, a week from Saturday there's the Manchester Steeplechase. Why don't you ask him up? He'd come, I'm sure."

Richard passed through a minor crisis in his chair; Mr. Winslow coughed, and finished the last of his coffee.

"Shall we stroll through the stables?" he asked.

"By all means," Richard concurred hastily; enthusiasm for stable-inspection was a new development for him.

MR. WINSLOW called his horses and mares all by name.

"This," he announced, stopping by a stall, "is April Alice. A grand filly. She can do a three-furlong finish that will bring your hair up standing. Here, Mrs. Fayne, step closer. She's really awfully affectionate."

Fannybelle extended a timid, lovely hand.

"And here," said Mr. Winslow, as they moved on to the next stall, "is Suicide Susan. Don't step too close, please."

Richard saw a huge black mare with the devil in her eyes, who looked at them and pulled her lips back wickedly.

"A mean mare, I'm sorry to say; but she's unbeatable. Full of running, but a chancy jumper—and a killer. She dived through the boards once in training and killed one of the boys. I've never dared enter her. For that matter, she isn't even registered. But I'm working her hard all the time, in hopes that she may come around to a sweeter temper. I expect, though, I'll have to retire her. It looks rather hopeless."

Suicide Susan lifted her head again; once more Richard caught the demonia-

cal glitter of her eye; he stepped back a pace; so did Fannybelle, and pressed against him.

Later, as Richard and Fannybelle drove down the road toward home, he said:

"Look here, darling. Pay no attention to Mrs. Winslow's suggestion about having Uncle William up for the Manchester. I'm frightfully busy at the plant, and I should have to spend hours tramping the course with him."

Fannybelle patted his arm fondly.

"As you say, dear."

JUNE days and nights, Fannybelle to love, good friends up the road; such should be paradise—and was, until the night that Richard arrived home to find Fannybelle, suitcase in hand, leaving, so she said, forever! This shocking statement was followed by an outburst of tears; and then she collapsed on the bottom step.

"Oh, Richard," she wailed, "how could you?"

"How could I what, darling?" These were the first words that Richard had been able to utter.

"Represent me as a horse. That telegram there on the table from your Uncle. Oh, dear! Oh, dear—"

Richard, swallowing, picked it up to read:

ENTHUSIASTIC REPORT OF NORMAN WINSLOW ON FANNYBELLE PLUS YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC LETTERS CONVINCES ME SHE IS READY TO GO STOP ACCOMPANYING MONEY ORDER COVERS EXPENSE REGISTERING HER STOP ENTER HER IN THE MANCHESTER STOP WILL BE THERE SEE YOU RIDE VICTORY WILL BE YOURS LOVE.

UNCLE WILLIAM

Richard's first remark was entirely involuntary.

He said: "Good Lord! You shouldn't have opened it."

Fannybelle stood up; fury fairly shot forth from her eyes; she gathered her suitcase and strode out the door. A taxi, Richard noticed,—one that she had no doubt ordered,—waited at the gate.

"Fannybelle," said Richard in vast misery, "I can explain."

Fannybelle really achieved a rare bit of sarcasm in voice and manner.

"Ha!" she said. "Victory will be yours." And she jumped into the cab.

"Fannybelle!" His only answer was the purr of an accelerating motor. For a long time he lingered by the door peering out hopefully. Then, resignedly, he turned and went to the telephone in the hall; he put in Norman Winslow's number.

"Mr. Winslow," he said, when at last he had him, "I'm in a terrible mess."

"What? Again?"

"Yes sir. You see, it's that letter we wrote to Uncle William. He wired me to enter Fannybelle in the Manchester."

"Good heavens! What did she say to that?"

"She left me."

"Should think she might."

"And Uncle William is coming up to see me ride."

(Please turn to page 117)



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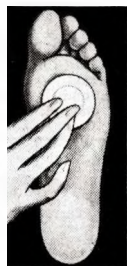
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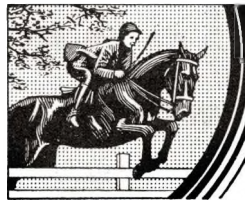
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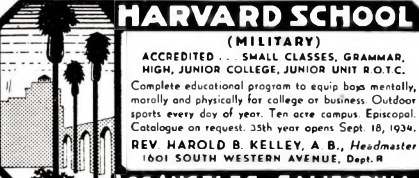
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SIRE UNKNOWN

(Continued from page 107)

"Oh, Lord! There's the end of an old friendship."

"Not necessarily, sir. I can at least fulfill the technicalities of the situation. I'm going to ride a mare named Fannybelle."

"You are! I say, have you unearthed such a creature?"

"Yes. She's in your stable."

"My stable!"

"Yes—that unregistered mare you call Suicide Susan. She's going in as Fannybelle. And I'll be up—although it won't be for long, I imagine. I'll send you a check to cover her registration. You can get me an amateur rider's license, too. I know the time's short, but you're probably intimate with the racing secretary, and I'm a member in good standing of the Glywyn Hunt."

"Oh, no," protested Mr. Winslow. "Oh, no, my boy—no, no, no!"

"Why not?"

"She's vicious. You know she is."

"Put yourself in my place," pleaded Richard. "What am I supposed to do? Meet Uncle William with a small-boy attitude? Say I'm sorry? I'd rather give the old boy a show for his money. Mr. Winslow,"—here entreaty crept into Richard's voice,—"as one sportsman to another, I ask you: will you do this for me?" He waited; there was no reply. "Think of your friendship for Uncle William," he added cannily.

"All right, young Fayne, I'll do it."

DURING the ensuing days, Richard did not think; he only felt. And lack of success in discovering Fannybelle's whereabouts didn't make him feel any better. Saturday morning he walked the course with Mike Bogardus, Mr. Winslow's trainer. Mike, it seemed, had a piquant sense of humor. He had just pointed out the hazards of the fifth jump, when he said, laconically:

"No need of going any farther, I guess, sir."

"Why not?" asked Richard with a vacant stare.

"Well, I'll be a— Come ahead, sir. Now, up this rise is where you cross a gravel road. It's deep laid in tanbark, and shouldn't bother you. On your second time around—"

At two, in Winslow silks, Richard met Mike at the paddock.

Mike said: "I've got special permission from the steward to saddle Susan away from the paddock, sir. We had a bit of a go with her, getting her over here. You might say she's highly excited. Come along, sir."

Richard trailed him out to a clump of trees away from the course, and behind which he discovered Susan with two men at her head. She was plunging and rearing, and gave evidence of being in a hell of a rage. He leaned back against the tree and closed his eyes. He wished he could close his ears to the fury and the thunder before him.

"Here you are, sir," he heard Mike Bogardus say.

Richard opened his eyes again. Suicide Susan was saddled, but by no means passive. He approached gingerly and took a leg-up from Mike. Susan lunged; but Richard had found his seat and held it. A swipe handed a bat up to him. From the other side of the trees a bugle

sounded, resembling faintly the call of Boots and Saddles.

"You've a nice pair of hands, sir," Mike observed. "Just remember the old saying: the horse is eighty per cent of the race. And don't come unstuck. Good luck, sir."

"Thank you very much," said Richard, and departed the spot on the turbulent Susan, whose head was still held in iron grasp.

At the post Susan was turned over to an assistant starter, who valiantly, and at no little peril, endeavored to hold her steady.

"Walk up! Walk up!" said the starter.

The moment seemed an hour; then, suddenly, down went the flag, and the field was away, with Suicide Susan breaking on top. What was it that saved Richard when she broke the top rail at the first jump, tried to run out at the second, and drove into a jam at the third? Was it spirit inherited from a long-dead Fayne, who once rode into a savage clearing, said, "Here I make my home!" and stayed there?

"Rate her." That was what Mike had said. "Hold her back. Let her coast with the second flight. She's tough. She can give you speed in the last half-mile—if you get there."

But Suicide Susan's mouth was hard. They were over the tenth before Richard could rate her at all.

"Yah!" he yelled in her ear when she faltered at the thirteenth. "Yah! You big black witch! Try and throw me!"

She did throw him at the seventeenth, which was a water jump; but Richard held grimly onto the reins and mounted again before she could get up and away. Susan, as if in wrath that he was once more up, began to pass the field in the second flight. Richard, catching some of the wild spirit that possessed his mount, began to use generalship. He steered her through the top-rail gaps left by those up ahead who had broken them down.

At the nineteenth the first flight came in sight. Three horses. At twenty-one she overtook Number Three. Between the next two jumps where the course turned sharply and went uphill, she swerved, cut in like a polo pony and passed the second horse. Out beyond lay the twenty-fourth and -fifth jumps, the last ones, and then the stretch. It was here that Richard insulted Susan. He had the temerity to use the bat on her, and Susan didn't like it a bit. She began to dig in with a will. Here was a mare with plenty of bottom. Over the last jump she was two lengths behind. Richard laid on the bat again. Susan let go with everything she had and flew down the stretch, to pass, in the last hundred yards, and with tail flying to come home a winner.

RICHARD relaxed. It was unfortunate he did so. Susan cut for a fence bordering the highway, much as if her long-awaited chance had come. He tried to hold her. Suddenly she allowed her head to come back much further than any rider could have pulled it; then as sud-

denly wrung out her neck. It pulled Richard out of the saddle. One of his feet left a stirrup. For a few awful paces he rode her neck, struggling to regain his seat. It was no good. When she struck the top rail they parted company—she to race away riderless and free, he to describe a spectacular solitary arc and to land on the back of his handsome Fayne noggin.

WHAT a finish you rode! My boy, you were magnificent! Maag-nificent!"

"Now, Uncle William," said another voice, "don't get excited. I should not like to pound your back again."

Richard opened his eyes.

"Fannybelle!" he said in great surprise.

"Darling!" She leaned down and kissed him. "Oh, darling, I nearly died when I saw you go down. But you *were* magnificent, as Uncle William said."

Richard looked at the large and florid face of his uncle, then back at Fannybelle.

"Where did you two meet?" he asked.

"At our house, dear. I read about you in this morning's paper. So I came back. And there was Uncle William pacing around and peering in the windows."

"And she cried," said Uncle William, and added proudly: "I comforted her, too. A bit of comforting was what she needed, poor thing. See here, you young idiot: Why didn't you say you were married? Damned charming choice, I call it. The idea, my referring to this poor child as a horse—I mean a filly. It's positively embarrassing."

Fannybelle smiled sweetly, and from the look of avuncular tenderness which appeared on his uncle's face, Richard knew the flag was down for her.

"Poor Uncle William!" she said. "You didn't know." She knelt and cradled Richard's aching head in her arms. "And we decided to forgive Richard. Don't you remember?"

"So we did," said Uncle William, and dropped his large hand on Richard's shoulder. "My boy, will you ride again, do you think?" The question was pridefully anxious.

"Well," said Richard, "it was fun—in a way. Yes, perhaps I will."

Uncle William's face beamed.

"Splendid! And you children will come home with me? Fayne's Acres needs a mistress. Matter of fact, I need the protection of Fannybelle. Those Bartholomew women—taken to running across me in obscure spots. 'Specially that aunt."

"Poor Uncle William!" said Fannybelle in quick sympathy.

"Then you *will* come?"

"Poor, dear Uncle William," said Fannybelle, smiling up at him tenderly from where she knelt at Richard's side. "We'd love to—but there's our sweet little house, you see."

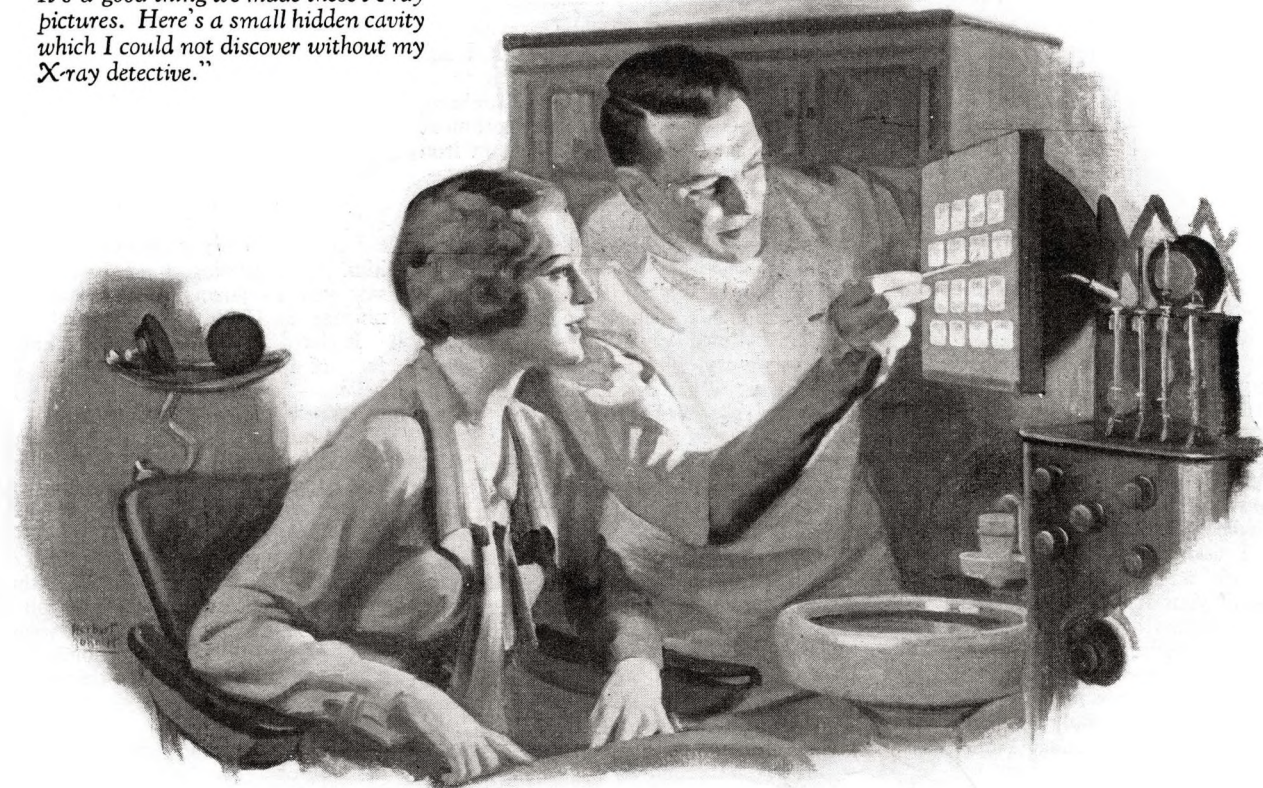
"Tosh!" said Uncle William. "Why, I'll buy you a Colonial in Glywyn that you could tuck that absurd little New England thing away in."

"Oh!" said Fannybelle. "You dear, sweet, generous Uncle William, you! Of course we'll come. You come here and let your niece give you a great big whicker."

Richard, his head held gently in Fannybelle's soft arms, smiled happily and closed his eyes in great content.

Your Dentist's Detective

"It's a good thing we made these X-ray pictures. Here's a small hidden cavity which I could not discover without my X-ray detective."



POSTPONING a visit to your dentist is not postponing trouble. It is bringing it closer. Time and money will be saved by a visit to your dentist every six months. It is impossible to have good health if the teeth, gums and soft tissues of your mouth are not kept in good condition.

If your dentist advises X-ray pictures of your teeth, take his advice. With the X-ray to inform him, he knows the condition of the deeper structures, the roots and the tooth sockets. In many cases early cavities can be found only by X-rays. If you have pyorrhea he may discover it at a stage in which it can be successfully treated.

Because an aching tooth demands prompt attention it is usually far less dangerous to health than the undiscovered trouble-maker. A tooth may seem to be sound and healthy and yet hidden trouble may be brewing. Infection may exist at the root of a guilty tooth long before it is suspected that anything is wrong. Meanwhile, the surround-

ing bony structure is being broken down and destroyed, while infection may be absorbed into the system through the blood stream. Such infection may damage the heart and other vital organs, may cause eye, ear, sinus, nerve, joint or digestive trouble.

When a firmly rooted tooth is to be extracted an X-ray picture may be needed to assist the dentist. Sometimes the roots are hooked or teeth may have failed to come through the gums. In such cases damage to the jaw-bone may result from a "blind" extraction.

If you have sound teeth and gums, then a correct diet, including some hard and "crunchy" food, will help to keep them healthy. Teeth, living parts of the body, are built by food. They need the minerals contained in eggs, milk, vegetables, fruits and cereals.

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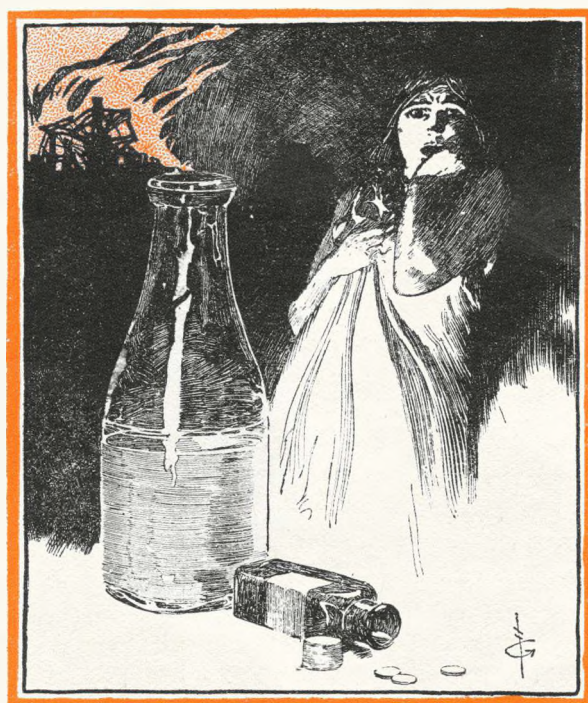
R E D B O O K ' S N O V E L O F T H E M O N T H

THREE SHUTTERED HOUSES

by BEN AMES WILLIAMS

Who wrote "All the Brothers Were Valiant"

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN



GREED AND LOVE, ARSON
AND LOYALTY, FRATRICIDE AND
SELF-SACRIFICE—A BATTLE ROYAL
ON THE FLAT TOP OF KENESAW
HILL, BEHIND THE SHUTTERED
WINDOWS OF THREE GRIM HOUSES.

This novel, like all other novels printed in Redbook, is purely fiction and intended as such. It does not refer to real characters or to actual events.

A COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL- OVER 50,000 WORDS



The murderer—June still could not believe that it was he who had committed all those frightful crimes—was unconscious, and there was something mysteriously terrifying in his posture. His hands hung down, lying limply by his sides. Cricked to one side, his head rested against the frame of the door. "You think he—did it all?" whispered Clint, his arm around June's shoulder. Inspector Tope assented gravely.

THREE SHUTTERED HOUSES

by BEN AMES WILLIAMS

OBJECTS at rest have inertia; they are hard to move. But objects in motion may by the least force be diverted, and their whole future course thus changed. It is so with lives; for life is motion, and this is particularly true in youth. A young man's most casual encounter may modify his whole life thereafter, in splendid or in dreadful ways.

It was Mabel Gaye who performed this function for Clint Jervies. Mabel was of no least importance in Clint's eyes. He had never met her till Enid Mason's dance at the Somerset, and he saw with some distaste upon their first encounter that Mabel had had a little too much to drink. But the youngster who was her escort for the evening was in worse case than she, and in no condition to drive a car; so a little before midnight Clint, who had on this occasion no feminine responsibilities of his own, volunteered to take Mabel safely home and had Enid's thanks for that consideration.

When he and Mabel emerged from the hotel, it was raining, gusty squalls with an occasional roll of thunder; and Mabel lived a dozen or fifteen miles out of Boston along the Providence road, so that the drive was a long one. As soon as they were in the car, she went to sleep and stayed asleep till Clint roused her to direct him through the last stages of the journey. When they reached her door, she urged him to come in, and when he declined this invitation, she insisted on being kissed good night.

Clint thus far obliged her; but he said at once afterward: "I'll have to run along now. There's some construction on the road. I had to detour, coming out. It will take me an hour to get back to town."

"Oh, you don't have to hurry," she pleaded. "You can dodge all that by going over Kenesaw Hill."

And to his questions, she gave him directions how to find this byway. At a certain traffic-light he must turn to the right. . . . He nodded his understanding, but good-humoredly insisted on departing. She stood in the open doorway still pleading, while he got into the car at the foot of the steps; but when she saw that he was bound to go, she called softly:

"Well, good night! And thanks a lot! You were a peach to bring me home. Telephone me tomorrow."

"Sure will," Clint promised. "I'll be seeing you."

He was perfectly sincere in this promise; but as a matter of fact it was more than two years before he saw her again, and he had by that time completely forgotten their former encounter. Yet if he had not taken Mabel home, and returned to town by way of Kenesaw Hill, there is no reason to think he would ever have seen June Leaford, and Kitty Leaford's death must have gone unremarked, and those three shuttered houses on the Hill might well have hid their dark secret to the end. . . .

Clint left Mabel Gaye standing in her own door and drove away. He chuckled and rubbed his lips with the back of his hand where she had kissed him; and he thought soberly that some one ought to tell her a few things, and was amused at his own puritanic mind. He had not always been so austere, and he forgot Mabel now to think about himself, as a young man is apt to do.

Before Clint's father died, the older man must have suspected that Clint and his sister Clara were not ready for self-management; for he created the Jervies Trust; and Miss Moss, an angular middle-aged woman with a surprising tenderness beneath her iron exterior, who had been

Mr. Jervies' secretary, became the actual if not the titular head of that Trust. She had been almost like a foster-mother to these children since their own mother died, and continued in that rôle. Clint, reflecting tonight in a mild amusement on his own virtuous disapproval of Mabel Gaye, thought Miss Moss would likewise be amused at his attitude. She had used to be so deeply distressed by Clint's own recklessness, and Clara's too.

But that was better than a year ago, and times were changed. Clint himself now administered the Jervies Trust, and shrewdly too; he was become a sober-minded young man of affairs. He thought tonight that sobriety and virtue might sometimes mean a certain loneliness. When she could trust Clint to stand on his own feet, Miss Moss had married Inspector Tope; and Clara, long before that, was married to young Mat Hews, whose new play would open in Chicago in a day or two.

Considering these things tonight, Clint decided it must be fun to be married, if you found the right girl. Then he came to the traffic light Mabel Gaye had described to him, and turned off the main highway, up Kenesaw Hill.

It was near one o'clock in the morning; and the shower was on in full force—a drenching rain, flares of lightning. He passed for a while no residences at all; but as he crossed the flat top of Kenesaw Hill he saw, dimly through the rain, some houses set absurdly close together, to one side of the road. Clint thought it was as though they huddled near one another in this solitude for the sake of company. The front door of the middle one of these houses was open, with a light burning in the hall, and he decided that the door had blown open, that some one would presently come down and shut it. Then the houses fell behind him as he drove on.

IN the illumination of an especially bright flash of lightning, he had an impression of something white, moving, beside the road ahead of him, and just beyond the range of his headlights. You often saw creatures along the road at night, saw them usually as two red spots that were eyes, saw them later as dark shadows where a cat or a dog squatted to watch you pass.

But this thing was not two red spots; it was a white bulk. His headlights caught it now. Moving—yes, running.

He leaned forward more intently. This was a person, running ahead of him along the road. It was a woman, running ahead of him through the rain. There was a curious shapelessness about her; and he recognized the reason for this: her dark hair was streaming over her shoulders, so that she seemed to have no head. Her feet, he thought, were bare. A woman in a nightgown.

He was within fifty yards of her now, overtaking her. The nightgown, he saw, was not of silk or satin or any soft material; it appeared to be a sober garment, entirely lacking in frivolity; yet it was indubitably a nightgown, and by the same token there could be no doubt that it was the only garment this woman wore.

Clint was driving slowly, and the woman ran swiftly, so that she kept for an instant this distance ahead of him. Then, like a wild animal which perceives the hopelessness of straightaway flight, she suddenly turned aside off the road, and she tripped and fell headlong, and swung around in one swift motion and came to her feet again. Like a creature at bay she faced him, her back set against the trunk of a great tree.

He would remember the picture she made. He saw her face, a white oval framed in the dark shadows of her hair. One strand of hair was plastered across her brow and cheek by the rain, like a black band across her countenance. She brushed this desperately aside.

That nightgown, for all its severe simplicity, was pressed close to her body by the wind; it was glued to her by the rain. Clint saw that this was, incredibly, a girl, not a woman at all. A rather tall girl, slender without being thin. She had run gracefully, he remembered.

His heart was pounding, shaking him. He pulled up the car and opened the door on the side toward her.

"What's the matter?" he asked. He spoke carefully, in a gentle tone, so that he might not frighten her further. "What's the matter? Anything I can do?"

"No, no," she stammered. She was breathless, panting. "I can give you a lift," he urged. "This is no night—"

She appeared to change her mind. She came toward him, and he swung the door wide. "Yes, take me on," she bade him. "Straight on." And she climbed into the car and sat down beside him in the wide seat here.

She was, of course, drenched. "Put on my coat," he urged, and started to strip it off.

"No, no," she repeated. "It's not far." And she urged: "Go on. Quickly, please!"

He set the car in motion; and he looked at her sidewise in an incredulous and delighted wonder. Her hair, heavy with water, lay across her shoulders in dark ribbons; her single garment was so much a part of her that she seemed like wet marble. He thought of sculptured nymphs under a fountain's arching screen. In one swift glance he saw her entire, and unforgetably.

She did not return his glance; but neither did she seek to cover herself from his eyes. Her own were fixed straight ahead; yet by something in her very posture, in the rigidity which she maintained, he knew she was conscious of his scrutiny, fighting to ignore it, choked and stifled by her own sudden realization of how she must appear to him.

Clint, in a swift sympathy and tenderness, switched off the dash-light, so that she sat in a cloaking darkness. He kept his eyes thereafter upon the road and did not look at her again. So presently he felt her relax a little, beside him; and he was conscious that she studied him for a long moment, with a deep attention.

Suddenly she said: "Thank you!"

"No trouble," Clint assured her. "I'll take you anywhere—"

"I didn't mean that," she said honestly. "But—it's not far."

He felt, rather than saw, that she was breathing with long careful inhalations, as though she had to be on guard lest she shudder or sob. He asked slowly:

"Something—frighten you? Can't I help?"

"No, no, no," she told him, her voice trembling. "I'm not afraid. I'm not." She whispered with a sudden passion: "I'm not! I won't be afraid!"

Yet he saw that she was desperate with terror.

"Listen," he urged. "I don't want to butt in. But—don't you need some one to stand by?"

"I'm all right," she insisted.

He nodded; but he said gently: "I'm Clint Jervies. I'm—respectable. If you ever want help, I'd like to—"

She said: "Let me out, please."

Clint protested: "I don't mean to bother you. You needn't run away from me."

"This is where I want to go," she insisted. "Quick. Stop."

Clint obeyed her. The car had scarce ceased moving before she slipped to the ground. She closed the door behind her. She called: "Thank you." Then she was gone, vanishing into the wood beside the road.

He hesitated, all reluctance. The rain still pelted; lightning flickered remotely, or crashed close at hand. He saw something like a path where she had disappeared.

But she was gone, and Clint ruefully drove on. He passed a crossroad; and presently the way he followed joined the main thoroughfare into Boston.

Before he came home he had decided what to do. Inspector Tope had proved long ago his capacity for finding an answer to the most obscure conundrums; the old man might be able to read the answer to this riddle of a lovely girl, scantily clad, running so desperately along a lonely country road in the night and in the rain.

It was too late to seek out the Inspector and Miss Moss tonight; but tomorrow, Clint decided, he would go to them with this fantastic tale.

Chapter Two

ON the flat crest of Kenesaw Hill, backed against the woods and looking down an open slope toward the marshes and the river, there were three houses, dissimilar and yet alike. Dissimilar in their outward aspect, yet alike in that to the most casual passer-by it must have seemed that fear dwelt in them all, and secrecy, and other things besides. Heavy shutters were at every window, even though those shutters were not always closed; heavy hangings behind the lace curtains next the glass; closed doors, chimneys that seldom wore a friendly plume of smoke, a lawn never sufficiently clipped and tended, and lacking ameliorating shrubs or flowers.

One of these houses was a square box almost exactly as high as it was wide, of dull brown brick, with a dull slate roof that was so flat it threatened to crack under the winter's weight of snow: a square box of a brick house, with a wing like the tail of a dog that is sitting down, extending for a short distance behind. Grass grew tall

in the fishbone pattern of the brick walk that led from the road to the front door.

And one of these houses was a sprawling thing of wood, painted that frugal brown which thrifty New England folk so often and so unfortunately prefer. Yet whoever first designed this wooden house must have groped toward beauty, even toward the pleasant ways of living; because there were broad verandas, there were peaks and valleys in the roof. There were even a few remaining traces of an ornamental border still discernible under the overhang at the gable ends.

The third house was of stone. This was the smallest of the three; and its height was greater than either its front or breadth. It had almost the appearance of a tower of stone; and the stone-work extended upward to the window-sills of the second floor. Above that there was stucco; and above the stucco and the low attic windows, there was a steep-pitched roof from which the snow would slide of itself. But this house, even though it was the smallest of the three, was distinguished by one circumstance. There was behind the house a portable garage of sheet metal; and from this garage a drive led around one side of the house, making a sharp angle at the rear corner to pass between the house and a tall pine tree there, making another angle so as to pass the front steps, and thus to the road. And the garage gave evidence of being used; the drive was free of grass, and there were some oil-spots by the kitchen door as though a car often stopped there.

YOU might have thought these houses, from their aspect, empty, abandoned; yet people lived in them, and by an unchanging routine. Each Saturday night, as a part of this routine, they all forgathered in the sitting-room of the big frame house between the other two, where old Denman Hurder lived with his wife who had been Ella Kenesaw, and with his daughter Kitty Leaford, and her daughter June.

June Leaford sometimes wondered whether other people existed as monotonously as these folk she knew best: her mother, and Grandpa and Grandma Hurder; old Matthew Bowdon and his wife next door in one direction; Aunt Evie Taine, and Uncle Justus, and Rab and Asa in the other. This was the only world she knew; a world a mile square, with the three houses as the focus. And these were the only folk she knew—these kinfolk and one other, the man who lived in the cabin by the pond which was hidden in the sunlit woods behind the house, and who liked to have her call him Uncle Jim.



She had first met this man one day a good many years ago. As she grew from babyhood to childhood, Grandpa Hurder used to take her for long walks about this mile-square tract of land that was the Kenesaw domain; and later, when she was old enough to adventure abroad alone, she explored in all directions. She liked to slip down toward the river, moving secretly among the young growth which was recapturing the old pasture there; and she discovered a screened knoll above the stream where she could sit unseen and watch the bright-hued canoes slip softly by.

At other times she went to roam fearlessly in the woods behind the house. Half a mile below the crest of Kenesaw Hill, the woods ended at a broad highway along which cars passed all day long in a weaving pattern to and fro. She knew the spring-fed pond deep in the woods, and sometimes she took off her shoes and stockings to wade in the clear water there; or she would sit very still on the rocky summit of the knoll above the pond to watch through the intervening branches of the trees the cars go by.

Uncle Jim found her there one day. She was at the time but ten years old. He spoke to her, smilingly, and asked her name; and she told him what it was, and watched with interest how the blood drained out of his lips. Later she saw him more than once again, and one day she told her mother of these encounters.

Kitty Leaford was a soft, querulous woman, who lived resentfully but not rebelliously, complaining without struggle. She heard June's report in an unaccustomed silence, and without comment; but she must have reported the matter to Aunt Evie, because later Aunt Evie told June, in her soft, implacable tones, not to walk in the woods again for a while, and she bade the girl forget this man she had seen.

Kitty Leaford herself would have submitted—though rebelliously—to this prohibition; but June was of a stronger fiber than her mother. She disobeyed Aunt Evie once, and met Uncle Jim and told him what had happened. He came to the house that afternoon. June saw him meet Aunt Evie. She did not hear what passed between them; but after that Uncle Jim built a cabin on the rocky knoll above the pond, and dwelt there sometimes for weeks on end; and June often went that way.

These hours when after her lessons under Aunt Evie's tutelage were done June could slip away to the river, or to see Uncle Jim, made life endurable for the child. As she grew into a young woman, they were a part of the routine of her days. Her days all were routine; just as it was a part of the routine which held them all, that every Saturday night after supper they came together in the big sitting-room in the Hurder house. They did not meet for supper, because that meant extra work and even a certain additional expense. But after supper they all met and were determinedly festive.

"It is a duty we owe the children," Aunt Evie used to say. "To make home pleasant and attractive for them in whatever ways we can."

June and Rab and Asa were the children. When June was eighteen, Rab was twenty-six, and Asa seven years older; children no longer. But the routine bound them still. . . .

When this particular evening began—though June would remember its every detail all her life—there was nothing to make it seem any different from others that had gone before. The day had been warm and sullen, and there was promise of a thunder-shower to relieve the heat; but Kitty Leaford hated thunder-showers, so that June did not welcome the prospect of this relief. She was always apt to suffer when her mother did.

The girl did the supper dishes tonight as her regular duty was; and while she was thus engaged, Uncle Justus and Aunt Evie came in through the kitchen from their house next door. There was a half-bottle of milk on the table, and Uncle Justus, as he passed where it stood, knocked it off with his elbow, so that it spilled across the floor. June had to mop it up, while Aunt Evie thrust Uncle Justus on toward the sitting-room. She did not scold him, because she always spoke in low, gentle tones; and Uncle Justus was stone deaf and never heard anything she said. June sometimes thought his deafness was an armor that served him well.

After she had finished her tasks, she went upstairs to her bare, high-ceiled room to wash her hands and smooth her hair, and when she reluctantly came down again, the

others were already gathered in the sitting-room. Uncle Justus sat in the shabby old chair by the piano reading his paper. He would go presently to sleep, his chin on his chest, his glasses on his nose, his paper on his knees.

June's mother and young Rab Taine and Asa were playing three-handed contract bridge at a card-table at one side. Rab had a friendly eye, a light and amiable tongue. When June now came to the door and hesitated for a moment here, he called to her:

"Come along and play with us tonight, June. You belong with us young fry, not with the patriarchs!"

Mr. and Mrs. Bowdon, Grandma and Grandpa Hurder, and Aunt Evie were playing anagrams at another table; and a chair waited there for June. June hesitated, but Mrs. Bowdon interfered. Mrs. Bowdon—she insisted that June call her Grandma, although she was in fact June's great-aunt—was a ponderous white lump of a woman, white hair, white cheeks, small tight lips. June thought of her as a crushing weight. Grandma Bowdon said now to Rab, in her slow, heavy fashion:

"Rab, June's place is here with us. June, here is your chair."

June had no thought of exercising any choice in the matter. She might have a choice; but if she had, she kept her wishes to herself. She had found by experience that nothing but bruised knuckles could result from battering a stone wall. She sat down where she was bidden, and she began to play with them the game called anagrams.

Uncle Justus went to sleep in his chair and began to snore, and Aunt Evie made him move into the hall, into the straight, heavily-carved chair by the table there. The sound of his snores still reached them, but no longer so disturbingly. That he should thus move into the hall was a usual occurrence and June scarce noticed it at the time. Later she would be puzzled by the fact that Inspector Tope attached to it so much importance, as he did to every movement of the others here this evening.

SHORTLY after ten o'clock, a mild argument developed. The discussion went on and on, till Kitty Leaford rose with a sudden angry movement and said fretfully:

"I must go to bed! I've a headache. This heat torments me beyond enduring."

Grandma Bowdon protested: "Why, you can't go yet, Kitty. It's not half-past ten. We never stop till eleven."

"I must," said Kitty Leaford. "I must get to sleep before the storm."

Aunt Evie Taine remarked in her calm, gentle tones: "Of course, Kitty, you ought to go to bed, if you feel tired. I'll bring some milk up to you. I always say when I'm tired, a glass of warm milk makes me feel better than anything else. Where is it, in the ice-chest?"

June confessed: "I'm afraid there isn't any." Uncle Justus had spilled the last of the day's supply.

But Aunt Evie ignored her. "We've none over at our house," she reflected. "Nothing but the top milk that I saved for the coffee. Mother, have you any?" Grandma Bowdon nodded; and Aunt Evie said: "I'll run across and get some."

"It doesn't matter, really," Kitty Leaford repeated. "Good night." She went out into the hall and they heard her speak, loudly, to Uncle Justus. He answered her, his voice sounding from halfway upstairs.

Aunt Evie followed her. "Justus, where are you going?" she demanded. "Come here!" He must have obeyed her, for when June reached the door, he was just sitting down in the hall chair again. Aunt Evie told her: "I'll bring the milk right away, June. From Grandma Bowdon's."

She hurried away, and June started to go upstairs, to be with her mother. Sometimes Kitty Leaford wanted her help in preparing for the night; for there was a considerable ritual involved in this procedure. But Rab Taine called her.

"June," he urged cheerfully, "come back here. It's not bed-time, yet. Stay awhile."

She stood uncertainly in the doorway, a tall, dark-haired girl, slender and strong, but clad in a shapeless and unbecoming gown.

"You know," Rab told her smilingly, crossing to speak to her in a lower tone, "you need to learn to play, June. This tomb is no place for you. It's time you were meeting some young fellows."

June nodded.

"I'm not going to stay here always," she told him. "I'm going away some day. Mother has promised me."

"Any time you want to step out," Rab invited, chuckling, "I'll give you a hand. I like you, June. And I can show you around."

Asa passed them on his way to the kitchen. "Glass of water," he said, by way of explanation. June heard Aunt Evie come in to the kitchen, from out of doors, heard them talking together there.

The girl went along the hall to join them, to see if she could be of help. Aunt Evie had poured a little milk out of a bottle into a stew-pan and set it on the gas-stove. The bottle was empty. Asa was standing by the stove, a glass of water in his hand, while Aunt Evie looked for matches. But she did not readily find any; and June confessed:

"I think they're all gone. We meant to order some."

"I'll get some from Justus," Aunt Evie decided. She went into the hall to rouse Uncle Justus, and June picked up the pan of milk.

"Mother has a gas-plate in her bathroom," she told Asa. "I can warm it there."

He nodded without speaking. Asa was always a dour, silent man. He went ahead of her through the hall and back to the sitting-room, and June followed him as far as the hall. Uncle Justus was awake, fumbling in his pockets for the matches Aunt Evie demanded; and June set the milk down on the table beside him.

"I'll warm it upstairs," she told Aunt Evie, and went into the sitting-room to say good night to Grandpa and Grandma Hurder. Rab came out with her, when this duty was done, and picked up the milk; and June took the matches from Aunt Evie.

"I'll carry this upstairs," Rab told June, smiling. "I want to say good night to Aunt Kitty. Besides, it's to much of a load for you!" His eyes were twinkling.

June was not particularly attentive; yet later, under Inspector Tope's gentle inquiries, she would remember and relate every detail of this evening. That stew-pan with a little milk in the bottom was to assume a dark and dreadful significance in her eyes.

BUT just now, she followed Rab upstairs. He knocked on her mother's door, and June was at his elbow. "It's Rab," he called. "June and I have come to tuck you in."

Kitty bade them enter. She was in her dressing-gown, brushing her hair. Her hair was a flaxen yellow. June thought it looked younger than her mother's face looked; but she knew why this was so. These two, mother and daughter, were close in many ways.

Rab set the pan of milk on the bedside table. He said: "I've been telling June she ought to get out of this mausoleum once in a while. Kitty, why don't you let me show her around? Why don't we three go on a party some night? I'll get theater-tickets, and we'll have dinner in town."

Kitty said without turning her head: "Good night, Rab. I'm dead tired. June's all right. I'll take care of her."

"Think it over," Rab urged. "Everyone here is old, except June and me and you. And maybe Asa. And we're all old compared with June."

Kitty swung around. "Don't worry, Rab," she said, a slow passion in her tones. "I'm going to get June out of this. She sha'n't live as I've lived. Good night."

Rab made an amused grimace at June and went away.

June came behind her mother's chair. "Let me brush it," she offered softly. "Is your head bad?"

"I've got to sleep tonight," Kitty Leaford whispered. "Or go mad! This is one of my bad days. Warm the milk for me."

June took the milk into the bathroom, lighted the gas on the small burner there and stirred the milk so that it should not burn. By the time it was lukewarm, Kitty Leaford was in bed. June poured the milk into a glass, and brought it to her mother's bedside. The glass was not quite full.

"I can feel thunder in the air," said Kitty Leaford, and shuddered. She had prepared for the night, as she always did, with an elaborate care. June knew the ritual: massage—unguents—waving-irons in her hair—gloves saturated with an emollient to keep soft her hands. Kitty Leaford still served a beauty that had vanished long ago.

"I'll come in to you if it storms," June promised.

"Bring me a tablet," the older woman directed.

June hesitated. "Won't you be able to sleep without, Mother? With just the milk?" she pleaded.

Kitty said petulantly: "Don't argue with me tonight, June. I'm not fit to bear it. They're in the bathroom cabinet!"

June went back into the bathroom. She rinsed the pan under the faucet, delaying, trying to find some argument. She noticed that the milky water was slow to drain out of the basin. The trap must have become plugged.

Her mother called: "Hurry, June!"

THE girl opened the cabinet and took out a familiar bottle. The bottle had no label. She removed the cork and let one tablet roll into her palm. She set the bottle down on the edge of the basin, and was about to replace the cork when Kitty Leaford called:

"June, I'll take two tonight. I want to go to sleep quickly, sleep sound."

June made an unhappy gesture, and her hand touched the uncorked bottle. It fell into the basin, spilling tablets. She rescued it hastily. There was still a little water in the basin, and the spilled tablets were already half-dissolved. There were only three remaining in the bottle.

June stood in some consternation, and her mother called:

"What was that? June, did you spill them?"

"I tipped over the bottle," June confessed. "I spilled one or two."

"For heaven's sake, be careful," Kitty Leaford cried fretfully. "Doctor Cabler always cross-examines me when they go faster than he thinks they should. Bring me two."

June took one more tablet out of the bottle, so that she had two in her hand, while two remained. She put the bottle in its place and went back into the other room. She said:

"Mother, I wish you wouldn't take them both. You remember what happened that other time?"

"I took three that time," her mother retorted. "Two won't hurt me."

"You were awfully sick!"

"I must get to sleep," Kitty Leaford insisted. She picked up the tablets from her daughter's palm and dropped them in the warm milk. She waited a moment to give them time to dissolve. "These are harmless, June," she urged. "Practically! And they do make me sleep." She laughed feverishly. "Twice this many wouldn't really hurt me, June." Her eyes were haggard. "And I can't help it. If I don't sleep, I go mad."

She drained the draft. "That does taste strong," she said with a faint grimace. "Now run, baby. Kiss me, and go. I'll be asleep in a minute."

June kissed her, made her lie down, covered her over. She opened one window a crack. Kitty Leaford was not a fresh-air addict. June looked at her and saw that she was already half asleep. The girl turned off the light and slipped away.

At the head of the stairs she paused long enough to be sure the others were leaving. She heard some one slide the bolt on the front door, heard Uncle Justus say:

"I've fastened it, Denman."

Then murmuring voices toward the kitchen. They all went out that way; and after a moment Grandpa and Grandma Hurder returned to go into their own room, on the ground floor, in the east wing. Her mother's room and her own were in the west wing, over the big sitting-room.

A deep uneasiness possessed June. When her own door was closed and she was alone, she stood still, even her eyes unmoving. It might be, she thought, the sullen electric air which made her thus restless and full of a vague foreboding.

Chapter Three

JUNE undressed slowly, listlessly. There was nothing in life as she knew it which could provoke her to eagerness. Her movements were automatic, her thoughts went round and round a familiar circle.

This was her world. These folk who had been here tonight, and Uncle Jim, who lived in the hut by the pond. She thought of him now with a faint smile. There was sound mirth in him. He used to laugh at these people

here; contrived nicknames for them all to make June smile. Grandma Bowdon was the Iron Hand, Aunt Evie the Velvet Glove. Grandma and Grandpa Hurder were the Conquered Provinces.

He never sought to make June laugh at her mother, she remembered now. Once or twice she had tried to persuade Kitty Leaford to go with her to meet Uncle Jim. "You'd like him, Mother," she had urged. "I know you would."

But her mother would never go.

The girl went mechanically about the business of preparing for the night. Her eyes drifted half-resentfully around the ugly room. She loosed her hair and brushed it slowly for a while, watching her reflection in the mirror above the marble slab. The house long since was still. When at last she turned out her own light and opened one of the tall windows, she saw Aunt Evie's house next door was dark and silent too.

Also she saw, far off, a flicker in the sky; she even heard the rumble of thunder. Yet the storm might not come this way, or if it did, her mother might not waken. She got into the big bed and lay without drawing any covering over her, for the night was hot, and the air was lifeless and still. The old house creaked all around her; mice scurried in the walls.

She must have slept at last, and for an indeterminate time. It was a gust of wind which woke her, a sudden quickening in the tempo of the night. Then lightning etched a net of flame across the sky, and the crashing thunderstroke burst in her ears.

June was not afraid of thunder-showers; but her mother, despite the drug she had taken, might have waked; June decided to go in and see. She knew the older woman would be, if she were awake, cowering now, and crying out as though from an actual physical pain. The girl got out of bed and crossed the hall to her mother's door.

Without opening the door, she listened, but she heard no sound from within. Yet still June hesitated, uncertain, uneasy for no reason. In the end she opened the door and spoke softly into the darkness.

"Mother, are you all right?"

But there was no reply, and June was reassured. She was about to return to her own room, when lightning flashed again, close by, and the glare of it was bright in the window by Kitty Leaford's bed. So June saw her mother for this instant, clearly.

And when the lightning passed, the girl stood still, her eyes dilated. There had been something alarming in her mother's posture, in the way she lay along the bed.

With an abrupt movement June turned on the light. An air-current coming from the open window in her own room blew her door shut with a reverberating crash; and she leaped with dismay at the sudden sound. But her mother had not roused—did not move as June bent over the bed.

Mrs. Leaford lay on her side, her head pillowed on her left arm; her right arm limp along the coverlets. June had seen her in a drugged sleep before, and there was nothing patently alarming in her appearance now. But though her mother lay on her side, her head was turned so that her face was upward. The posture looked uncomfortable; and June very gently tried to move her mother's head to the left so that it might be at ease.

But when June touched Kitty Leaford's cheek smeared with unguents, her heart turned cold.

June caught her mother's shoulders. She shook them; she cried:

"Mother! Mother!"

But Kitty Leaford made no response. June might as well have shaken a bolster loosely stuffed with sand.

The girl backed away from the bed, her hands pressed to her lips. She turned and ran down the stairs to the telephone in the hall.

The instrument was dead. She snapped on the hall light—an electric bulb hanging by one wire in the midst of the gas chandelier—and in that naked illumination she tried the telephone again, without response.

Terror was clamoring in her; she tried to fight it down, to think what she should do.

Grandpa and Grandma Hurder were asleep at the end of the hall, but she knew there was no help in them. Even if there were help anywhere.

Then the electric light faded and died, and June stood in the dark hall like a tomb. She was stifled by the blackness; she gasped for breath; and the front door blew open, banging against the wall, and the girl choked back a scream.

She was swept by desperate and nameless terror; a gust of rain came sweeping in, and June ran blindly to meet it, out through the door, into the full beat of the rain. The touch of it was sweet and cool.

Then she remembered that the front door was always locked and bolted. Uncle Justus had bolted it tonight. Why had it opened of itself?

Blind panic possessed her utterly; yet she clung to one thought: she must fetch Doctor Cabler.

She might have roused Rab or Asa, asleep next door. Rab had even a car. But she took no time to think of these things. She was already racing across the lawn; she found the gate in the hedge, and felt the smooth hard macadam under her feet, and ran swiftly. Occasional lightning flashes illumined her way, kept her in the road.

She had gone halfway to Doctor Cabler's house when a car came down the hill behind her. She tried to run faster, to escape this pursuer; but this was vain, and she turned off the road, and fell, and scrambled to her feet and stood like a wild creature brought to bay.

The car stopped beside her, and some one asked a question.

She stammered something, for this was a man's voice, and June was not habituated to encounter strange men. But instantly, while he used some persuasion, she found courage. She spoke, and found herself in

the seat beside him.

He offered her his coat, but she refused it. Then this young man beside her turned out the dash-light so that darkness drew a protective garment over her, and she was warm with gratitude to him. She said: "Thank you—" She watched him covertly, controlling her breath.

He asked some question, suggesting that she was afraid, and she told him that she was not afraid. Yet her knees were trembling and her fingers pressed her palms.

He spoke again, but she did not hear him. She watched the road, and at the beginning of the path through the wood to Doctor Cabler's house, she bade this young man stop the car. He did so, and she alighted, and ran away along the path.

But hidden in the wood, she stopped to look back; and she stayed there till he drove on, watching the headlights of his car till their gleam was lost behind a screen of trees.

WHEN he was gone, she stood like one bereft, as though with him a part of herself had departed too.

But then, in the darkness and the rain, terror returned to spur her on. She ran up the path and so came pounding on the Doctor's door.

At length a flashlight's beam came down the stairs; she could see it through the panel of the door. It struck her in the eyes through the glass; and at the same time the door opened. The light was in her eyes, and Doctor Cabler exclaimed:

"June! God bless me!"

She whispered:

"Come quick, Doctor Cabler!"

"Come in, June," he commanded, and led her into the hall and shut the door. "You're drenched. What is it?"

"Oh, hurry, hurry!" she cried. "It's Mother. She's dead!"

The word on her own lips struck her like a blow. She had not till this moment shaped this word even in her thoughts. "Oh, hurry," she repeated; and thought in a dispassionate apathy that the injunction was absurd. If her mother was dead, there could be no reason for haste. This had not occurred to her before.

"Eh?" the Doctor exclaimed. "Dead?"

"Yes," said June, in an empty tone. Even though the admission convicted her of folly, convicted her of having lost her wits, of having run without the slightest occasion half a mile through drenching rain, yet she had no doubt that what she said was true.

Kitty Leaford was dead. Of this, now, June was sure.



Chapter Four

INSPECTOR TOPE and Miss Moss had found in marriage the calm happiness of middle age. The Inspector had looked all his life on violence, yet with gentle, comprehending eyes. For a score of years or more he was at the head of the Homicide Bureau at Police Headquarters, and won for himself there a reputation not soon to be forgotten. Miss Moss was in a different fashion as shrewd as he.

While they were away on their leisurely honeymoon, Clint had planned a surprise for them: There was among the properties of the Jervies Trust a one-story, six-room house sandwiched on a narrow lot in Longwood, hidden in a backwater away from the traffic arteries, with four trees on this lot, and room for a flower-garden. Dana Jervies, Clint's father, had taken his bride there thirty years ago; and he had kept it afterward for the sake of sentiment. Clara and Mat lodged in this house for a while after their marriage; and when Inspector Tope and Miss Moss came home from their honeymoon, Clint met them at the station and drove them to this familiar door.

Miss Moss, with tears of pleasure in her eyes, protested; but Clint said strongly:

"Why, of course you'll come here. This is where all the Jervies family starts house-keeping, you know. Can't go against tradition." And when she argued she was not of the Jervies family, he insisted gently:

"You're the only mother I can remember, you know."

She yielded at last, said they would stay a little while; but Clint said they should lodge here till he wanted the house for his own bride. "And that will be a long time, by all the signs," he promised.

On the morning after Clint's ride over Kenesaw Hill, he rang the bell as they were about to sit down to the breakfast Miss Moss had prepared; and Tope, in an old blue dressing-gown and slippers, the morning paper crumpled in his hand, opened the door for him.

He greeted Clint; and he called over his shoulder:

"Mrs. Tope, here's Clint for breakfast."

She appeared for a moment in the dining-room door to smile a welcome, and bade them both sit down at the table.

"Almost ready," she promised. She watched these two for a second, a deep fondness in her eyes, before she disappeared into the kitchen again. When she presently returned, with the coffee in one hand and a platter of eggs and bacon in the other, Tope said:

"Wait, Clint. Start over now." And he said to Miss Moss: "Mrs. Tope, Clint's had a curious adventure. See how it sounds to you."

AND Clint told them how, driving back to town, he had overtaken a girl in her nightgown, running through the rain upon that lonely road. "Now what do you make of that?" he asked, challenging them.

Miss Moss reflected. "I know a little about that place!" she told them. "I know there are three houses, side by side. Matthew Bowdon lives in one. He's a lawyer, trust law mostly. The firm is Bowdon and Taine. Mr. Bowdon must be an old man now. Two of his grandsons are in the firm with him, and Justus Taine, his son-in-law."

She hesitated, considering. "I've had some contact with young Robert Taine, in connection with trust business," she went on. "I think Mr. Bowdon leaves a lot of responsibility on his shoulders. Justus Taine is his father. Justus Taine used to do trial work, but he lost his hearing. I haven't heard anything of him for a long time. And the other grandson, Asa, is a trial lawyer too."

Inspector Tope said thoughtfully: "I think Justus Taine defended a man on trial for murder, that I was concerned with, twenty years ago. A poisoning case."

"The Taines live in one of these three houses," Miss Moss explained. "And Denman Hurder in another. They're all related. Mrs. Hurder and Mrs. Bowdon are sisters. Their name was Kenesaw."

"Denman Hurder?" Tope echoed. "He's head of a chain-store company, isn't he?"

She nodded. "Yes. He began as an office-boy, too. He must be a very wealthy man."

Tope lighted his pipe, and puffed quietly; and Clint asked Miss Moss:

"You think this girl lived there?" Miss Moss smiled at his eager tone. "Because I want to see her again," Clint insisted. "I've a notion she may be in trouble, may need some help. And—I liked her, anyway."

Miss Moss did not answer him. She said reminiscently: "I think there is a good deal of land that was a part of the old Kenesaw place." She moved suddenly, as though enlightened. "I remember now," she said quickly. "Mr. Jervies got in touch with them once. He thought the land might be worth developing for residential purposes, tried to make an arrangement with them, years ago. But they wouldn't sell, wouldn't agree to anything."

Clint exclaimed: "Well, what I want to know is, who was this girl? What had frightened her?"

The Inspector got up and crossed to the telephone. "I wonder if Charley Harquail is downtown," he said. "He might know if anything has happened out there." Charley was a reporter, and he and the Inspector were old friends. Tope called the newspaper office, and Miss Moss and Clint listened to the one-sided conversation.

When the old man turned back to them again, there was a quickening interest in his eyes; and Clint caught him by the arm, demanding:

"What is it, Inspector? What did Harquail say?"

Tope sat down at the breakfast-table again. "I need another cup of coffee, Mrs. Tope," he said. "To think this over." And while she poured it, he began to explain:

"You heard me ask Charley if Denman Hurder had any children," he reminded them; and he chuckled. "That surprised Charley," he said, with a certain gratified vanity in his tones. "Charley wanted to know how I got onto it, and I asked him what he was talking about."

He hesitated, said soberly: "This is what he told me: Mr. Hurder had a daughter named Katherine. She eloped, twenty-odd years ago, with a man named Jerry Leaford. Leaford didn't amount to much, Charley said. He said there was a row at the time, and finally she and Leaford went home to live with her folks; and then Leaford left her, and disappeared for good and all."

He added, and his tones were sadder now: "The reason Charley had all this stuff so pat, Mrs. Leaford died last night, and he'd been getting up an obit for her."

"Died?" Clint cried. "She was alive—"

"It wasn't her you saw," Tope reminded him. "She must have been past forty now."

"You asked something about children?" Miss Moss prompted.

"I asked Charley if she had any children," Tope explained. "He didn't know. They just got a flash about her death, from the district man out there; and they wanted to give her a good obit, because of course Hurder is a big advertiser. Charley said the district man was going to get all the dope, children and so on."

The others sat thoughtful, watching him; and the Inspector was silent for a moment. He said at last with an apologetic glance at Miss Moss:

"You'll think I'm seeing things at night, but—there's something wrong out there!"

Miss Moss urged slowly: "Why do you think so? Mrs. Leaford was sick, and the telephone was out of order, and they sent some one for a doctor. Isn't that all?"

Tope shook his head.

"No one runs for a doctor, no matter how big the hurry is, without putting some clothes on."

"What was the matter with Mrs. Leaford?"

"Charley said heart trouble," Tope explained. "But that covers a lot of ground. If a man gets shot, or stabbed, he dies of heart-trouble, as far as that goes. Heart failure will kill a person; yes. But it takes something to make a heart fail. Takes quite a lot, too. These hearts of ours go on pumping pretty steadily, unless something happens to them. I'd like to know what made her heart fail."

He took up the telephone, and Miss Moss moved to his side. "Inspector," she urged, "it isn't our business."

He smiled at her. "Let me poke my nose in," he begged. "I can't keep out of a thing till I know."



He used the phone for a while, turned back to them again.

"That was Inspector Heale," he said. "At Headquarters out there. He hadn't even heard about Mrs. Leaford being dead. I guess it's nothing." He grinned at Clint. "Son," he demanded, "what do you mean, coming in here and stirring us up this way? Can't a girl go for a walk in her nightie along a country road in the rain without starting so much talk? I don't believe there was any girl, anyway. How much did you drink last night, young fellow?"

Clint chuckled. "Had one highball," he confessed. "It bores me to see these kids lushing it up the way they do." He spoke to Miss Moss. "This girl I took home, Mabel Gaye—she was tight. Bound she'd kiss me good night. Wanted me to stay—"

Miss Moss smiled at the austerity behind his words. "She'll be grateful to you today," she suggested.

Tope said in a mirthful tone: "And you no sooner get rid of her, than another one comes out in her nightgown to waylay you, Clint. What is this strange power of yours?"

Clint laughed, and then the telephone rang. Tope went briskly across the room. He said:

"Hello! . . . Yes, speaking. . . . Oh, yes, Inspector."

A silence, while he listened. Then: "Yes, thanks."

Another silence; and then Tope said: "Why, I'll come out and see you, and bring him along. Sure."

He put up the receiver and turned back to them; and Miss Moss saw that his eyes shone.

"What is it?" Clint demanded.

"Inspector Heale tells me he called up the Medical Examiner," Tope explained. "Doctor Derrie had had no report on the death, so Heale called the family doctor. Doctor named Cabler. He says Mrs. Leaford died from an overdose of some sleeping-powder." He added, after a moment: "Accidental."

"Accidental?" Miss Moss repeated, in a flat tone.

There was a moment's silence, and then he added:

"Inspector Heale wants to know how I knew about it. And he wants to talk to you, Clint. I think you'd better drive us out there."

Chapter Five

CLINT swung the car off the main thoroughfare. "This is the road," he said. "I'll show you."

And he drove more slowly, studying the way. Woodlands shut them in on either side before he stopped at last, where there was a path, and a house among the trees.

"This is where I let her out," he explained.

Tope nodded, looking toward the house. "Probably Doctor Cabler lives there," he suggested. "How far had she ridden with you?"

"I was coming down this hill," Clint explained, and he drove on, said presently: "It must have been along here somewhere, that I overtook her."

Tope commented: "No houses anywhere near."

"They're on top of the hill," Clint replied. He put the car swiftly up the grade and the three houses came into view.

Tope said, in a low tone as though he might be overheard: "Drive slowly, Clint."

"I'll stop," Clint amended. He pulled up the car beside the road, and got out, under pretext of inspecting the tires; but at the same time, under the brim of his hat, he looked attentively at these three houses by the road. So did Tope and Miss Moss too.

There was an undertaker's garland attached to the door of the house in the middle; and a car with a doctor's tag stood beside the road. The day was warm and fine after the shower; yet nowhere did Clint see a window open. Some of the shutters were closed and at other windows thick curtains hung. Behind the houses, the woods were dark and still.

When Clint presently drove on, he looked at Tope to see what impression the older man had received. "Well, there they are," he said. "What do you think?"

Tope answered with a slow smile: "Why, I get notions. Fool notions, maybe, Clint; but I've got in the habit of believing them. It feels to me as if the people that lived in those houses were afraid."

"The girl was afraid," Clint agreed. "But what would they be afraid of?"

"Well," Tope reminded him, his tone suddenly grim, "a woman died of poison in there last night. If she'd known it was going to happen, she'd have had a right to be afraid."

So Clint was silenced; and they came on into the suburban town that was their destination, and found Police Headquarters. Miss Moss elected to stay in the car while they went inside.

Inspector Heale came to meet them. He was lean and gray, and his brows were extravagantly bushy. He shook Tope's hand, and spoke some hearty word.

"MIGHT have known you'd be around," he said humorously. "You old buzzard! How do you hear about these things so soon? I didn't even know Mrs. Leaford was dead till you called me up."

"Done anything?" Tope asked seriously.

Inspector Heale bade them come into his office and closed the door, and he shook his head. "No," he confessed. "Doctor Derrie's gone to look her over, of course. Doctor Cabler hadn't notified him. Cabler was called in late last night, slept late this morning. That's why he hadn't phoned Doc Derrie. He said there wasn't any hurry."

And he explained: "Mrs. Leaford had been taking this dope for years. She took an overdose once before, and came near passing out. This time it was nearer than that."

"Dead when Doctor Cabler got there?" Tope inquired.

"Before that, I guess," Heale explained; and he looked at Tope and then at Clint inquiringly. "But I want to know how you heard about it," he reminded them, and Tope bade Clint tell the tale of his adventure the night before.

So Clint repeated his story; and Inspector Heale listened without interruption till he was done.

"The girl was Miss Leaford," he explained then, "Mrs. Leaford's daughter. She found her mother dead, and the telephone was out of order on account of the shower, so she ran to get the doctor." He grinned. "I didn't know she made the trip in her nightie," he admitted. "They're a queer lot up there, and she's as queer as the rest of them."

"How?" Clint asked, his tone defensive.

"Well, for one thing, the clothes she wears," the Inspector explained. "Black, or brown, half the time; and home-made by the looks of them. And she never goes anywhere. Never even went to school. Studied at home—"

And he continued almost irritably: "Oh, I know 'em, know 'em all up there. Young Rab Taine is all right. Rab's been in for speeding or something, once or twice. He'll talk an hour to get out of a five-dollar fine. And Asa, that's his brother, tries a case out here once in a while. But they're a cranky lot. And tight! They're loaded with money, of course; but do they spend it? I should say not."

He produced cigars from his desk; but Tope preferred his pipe, and Clint a cigarette.

"They're that way about everything," Inspector Heale insisted. "You take electric lights. Hurder put them in his house, here a few years back; and then the others hooked up to his meter, to save meter deposits. The light company kicked, but those folks on the Hill, they mostly get their own way when they want it. Old Mrs. Bowdon,—she's seventy if she's a day,—you can argue with her till you're blind and she don't give an inch."

"And Mrs. Taine's as bad," Heale continued. "She's one of these thin, stringy women in a black dress; and she talks in a kind of whisper as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. She can strip the hide off you and never raise her voice. She's a worker, too. She'll put on overalls and go right at it. Do anything. For instance, she wired her own house and Bowdon's, and hooked up the wires in Hurder's cellar. If I didn't know they had money, I'd think they didn't have a cent, the way she works all the time."

Clint began: "Miss Leaford—"

The Inspector said guardedly: "Why, she might be all right, for all I know. She's always slipping around through the woods, alone, like a wild animal; and she never speaks to you. Passes you right by—"

Some one knocked on the door, and he called an invitation. "Hello, Doc!" he exclaimed then, rising to make introductions. "Tope, this is Doctor Derrie, our medical examiner out here. And this is Mr. Jervies, Doc. He gave

Miss Leaford a lift, on her way to get Doctor Cabler, last night."

Doctor Derrie looked at Clint with a sidelong eye. "I've just been talking to Miss Leaford," he remarked. He was not much older than Clint.

"Where?" Clint asked, on his feet instantly.

"At the house," the Medical Examiner explained. "I went up with Doctor Cabler. She was the last one to see her mother alive, and she was the one to find Mrs. Leaford dead. So I had to talk to her."

The others nodded, and Inspector Heale asked: "Find out anything, Doc? What do you think?"

Doctor Derrie replied, a little pompously. "Mrs. Leaford had a headache when she went to bed, and took some tablets," he explained. "One of the barbituric acids," he added, like one who must be discreet to protect his hearers. "Doctor Cabler had furnished them to her for a number of years. Once before she took three, and was very ill. Last night she took two. Miss Leaford prepared them for her. Mrs. Leaford was afraid of thunder, and Doctor Cabler thinks that when she didn't go to sleep as quickly as she expected, even with a double dose, she got up and took the rest of her store of the tablets. Certainly the bottle they were in is gone."

They listened soberly; and Inspector Heale asked: "Then you say it was an accident; her own doing?"

Doctor Derrie hesitated, and he lowered his eyelid wisely. "Accident, yes," he said then. "I shall agree with Doctor Cabler that it was an accidental overdose." He added: "She had been dead for some time before her daughter found her."

"Miss Leaford?" Clint prompted; and Doctor Derrie explained:

"Yes." He smiled condescendingly. "When the storm broke, she went in to make sure her mother was asleep, and found her dead. She tried to telephone and couldn't raise anyone, and then the lights went off and she lost her head, ran down the road to get Cabler. That was foolish, and unnecessary, of course, as long as her mother was already dead, but she claims she didn't stop to think of that."

"Maybe she didn't know Mrs. Leaford was dead," Tope suggested; but Derrie confidently shook his head.

"She knew, all right," he explained. "That was the first thing she said to Doctor Cabler, that her mother was dead. He and Mrs. Cabler got some clothes on her, gave her some whisky, took her home in the car." He snapped his fingers in a sort of amazement. "Mr. and Mrs. Hurder hadn't even waked up," he explained. "When Cabler got there, the front door was open, the hall flooded with rain."

"I saw the light in the hall as I passed," Clint remembered.

Doctor Derrie assented. "Miss Leaford said the front door blew open, and the light went out, while she was trying to telephone. The light must have come on again after she left the house." He rose. "I'll give them an accident verdict," he said, a little complacently. "Even if she meant it, an accident verdict will be easier on Mr. and Mrs. Hurder."

Clint came to his feet impatiently.

"I'd like to see Miss Leaford," he said. "Is she up there now?"

Doctor Derrie shook his head. "She went out before I left," he told them. "Not a bad-looking girl. I saw her walking off through the woods behind the house, as I came away."

INSPECTOR HEALE volunteered: "She does a lot of that, walking around alone. Then there's a man lives in there by the pond, and she's pretty friendly with him."

Tope asked quickly: "Where? By what pond? Who is this man?"

"Why, there's a good-sized pond on the Kenesaw land," Heale explained. "It's pretty, in there. There was some talk awhile back of opening it up for house lots, but they won't sell the land. This fellow—name's Glover—has built himself a cabin in there."

"How do we get to his place?" Tope asked.

Heale explained: "You go back toward town till you come to Thayer's garage, about two miles from here. There's a path just this side of the garage goes right in to the pond. Thayer will show it to you." He moved with them toward the door: and he asked uneasily: "What are you after, Tope? It all looks plain enough to me."

Tope answered mildly: "Well, I don't like questions unless I know the answers to them. For instance, did something happen to the telephone circuit over the hill last night? Did something happen to the electric current? Did the Hurders most generally bolt their front door when they went to bed? And why do folks like those people on the hill let some one squat on their land the way you say this Glover does? And how does it happen he's so friendly with Miss Leaford when she hasn't got any other friends? And where did that bottle go?"

Heale grinned and scratched his head; and Doctor Derrie said, in a sardonic anger:

"If you're trying to make a murder out of this, I can tell you where to start. Miss Leaford put her mother to bed, gave her the dose. She was the last one to see Mrs. Leaford alive and the first to see her dead. Begin with the girl! That's the place to begin!"

Clint made an angry movement; but Tope touched his arm. "Why, I aim to," the old man assented gently. "Miss Leaford's the one I want to see first of all."

On the steps outside, Clint cried furiously: "Inspector, that girl didn't—"

But Inspector Tope, as though he wished to avoid replying only called some word to Miss Moss and hurried toward where she waited in the car.

Chapter Six

JUNE LEAFORD loved her mother, patiently and tenderly; but there was something more, an intangible.

Kitty Leaford, whose latter days were such sad and dreary ones, had once been gay; once she had known romance; once for the sake of love she had dared greatly. Even June had seen sometimes the glint of shining armor in her eyes. A single valorous action, though it may fail, and be punished endlessly, does nevertheless in degree enoble the soul; and Kitty Leaford had once done valiantly.

She had never told June more than the vaguest things about her father; but the very mystery in her tones and in her words enchanted June with wonder. She thought of this father of hers—lost long ago, in the great limbo of things outside the narrow world in which she herself was bound—as a laughing youth with a song on his lips and sweet words on his tongue and ardors in his eyes. He must have been so, to be able to persuade her mother to flout these others here and go away with him. June herself, bound to the same wheel, could guess better than another, how much courage on Kitty Leaford's part that runaway marriage had required.

But now Kitty Leaford was dead, and June moved like a person in a nightmare. Doctor Cabler had brought her home, wrapped in his greatcoat but drenched and shivering still; and they found the door open, the hall half-flooded. They crept up the stairs like conspirators, and so came into the room where the pitiless illumination of an unshaded electric bulb revealed this upon the bed. Dr. Cabler made his brief examination.

"She is dead, yes," he said. "But I don't think we'll wake the old people just now. The middle of the night is a cruel time for bad news. I'll go next door and get Rab or Asa to help me—"

But June said in a cool voice: "Mother wouldn't like that."

And without weakness or wavering, she helped Doctor Cabler do what was required; not till this was done would she permit him to summon anyone.

She did not know how long it was before Asa came to her.

"Go to bed, June," he said. "There's nothing to do here. I can do that nothing as well as you."

"I won't sleep," she told him.

"Go along," he insisted. "To bed."

And she obeyed in a silent submission. In her own room she realized that she was still drenched, wet, cold. She changed into a dry nightgown and lay down. She expected to stay sleepless till dawn; and in fact she did lie long enough awake to hear the Doctor return, and hear Aunt Evie in the hall.

Then she fell asleep; and when she woke, the sun was shining. She opened her door and saw a strange man in a black coat go quietly into her mother's room and shut the door behind him.

Below-stairs, when she descended, all these kin of hers

were gathered together. Grandma Hurder was crying quietly, tears glistening on her gray cheeks. She sat erectly in her chair. June as she came downstairs heard Grandma Bowdon say in a heavy anger: "Utterly inconsiderate. No other word describes it." And as June entered the room, Aunt Evie remarked, in her gentle, whispering voice:

"I was concerned about Kitty last night. You remember, she had a headache. I know what it is to have headaches. I have suffered myself; and Kitty was sick with them, really sick sometimes."

She continued, in her pitiless soft tones: "Kitty resented life so deeply. And there was always a rebel in her. She would never be happy. I am not surprised."

June stopped in the doorway, incredulous and bewildered, trying to understand the implication in their words. Rab and Asa were in the room, but they did not see June. Grandpa Hurder was here in the hall, walking ceaselessly up and down. Then Uncle Justus came in through the kitchen, and said something about breakfast, in the hollow voice of the deaf; and Grandpa Hurder shouted into his ear:

"Kitty's dead!"

"Eh?" said Uncle Justus.

Aunt Evie came swiftly past June and went to silence him; and Grandma Bowdon repeated in a grim anger:

"She was always selfish. No consideration."

June cried in passionate stifled anger: "Oh!" she strode swiftly into the room.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"What do you mean?"

"June," said Grandma Bowdon severely.

"Mind how you speak to me."

But Grandpa Hurder said sternly in the doorway: "Kitty was crucified!" There was the dignity of anger in him in this moment. "Crucified," he said. "Long ago."

June pressed her hands to her lips, understanding what it was they thought. "She didn't! She didn't!" she cried. She turned to escape; she went out through the front door.

But there was a garland of ribbons on the doorknob, so she returned indoors again. Later she slipped out of the house, this time by the side door so as not to see that garland; she moved directly away from the house, into the tract of wooded land behind. Here she could be alone.

There was a sound at some distance; and she raised her head, without other movement, to see what it was. She saw Asa go quietly past, a little way off among the trees, and without seeing her, along a path that led to the bluff above the pond, where Uncle Jim Glover had his cabin; it passed beyond, down to the highway near Thayer's filling-station. And of course this was the way she took when she went to see Uncle Jim.

At the thought of him now she rose and descended to the faint trail, and followed it. It did not occur to her as strange that Asa should thus go secretly through the wood. Let him go where he chose. She wished to see Uncle Jim, and she made haste.

He would know how to comfort her. She was deeply fond of Uncle Jim. He was a big, chuckling man, with an amusing eye. He lived alone in the cabin by the pond, stayed there sometimes for months on end, disappeared sometimes for as long. He wrote, absurdly, poems.

WHEN she came to the top of the knoll, he was still asleep. His cabin door was open; and he woke when she darkened the doorway—woke and looked up and said:

"Hullo, there, youngster!"

"Hello, Uncle Jim," she said.

He sat up, in yellow pajamas, and rubbed his eyes. "You caught me napping," he chuckled. "I was awake till dawn. Writing a poem about a thunder-storm."

She stood beside the cabin door, her back against the logs, looking down toward the pond while he dressed hurriedly in the cabin behind her. He talked steadily, cheerfully; but she spoke not at all, until Uncle Jim, remarking her long silence, said behind her:

"Tongue-tied this morning, June. What's the matter?"

"Mother's dead," she said simply.

Something dropped to the floor, in the cabin, and silence trembled there. Then Uncle Jim cleared his throat.

"Dead?" he whispered.

"Yes," she told him.

He came close to her shoulder. "Kitty Leaford dead?" he repeated, in an incredulous tone.

She turned her head alertly. There was a sound in the wood; the sound of voices, then footsteps.

"Some one's coming," she said.

He started to speak, then stood silently beside her in the doorway; and thus they faced the two men who climbed the trail.

A young man came in front; and now the color flowed across June's cheek and burned there, for she knew him. She looked past him quickly, at his companion. This was a plump, white-haired old man who walked with a surprisingly alert step, his hands swinging at his sides. Uncle Jim passed her and interposed himself between her and these newcomers; and he said casually:

"Hullo!"

The young man extended his hand. "I'm Clint Jervies," he explained. "This is Mr. Tope." He turned to the girl. "You're Miss Leaford, aren't you?"

She nodded slowly, without words. She was trembling.

Uncle Jim asked with narrowing eyes: "All right. What of it?"

And Clint said, in swift, friendly fashion: "Why, you see, I happened to be passing, last night, in time to give Miss Leaford a lift. And I wanted to—to make sure she was all right this morning. . . . I heard about your mother," he added, turning toward June. "I'm awfully sorry."

June felt the strength go out of her. There was a bench built against the cabin front, and she sat down as though her knees gave way.

Uncle Jim turned to her with a quick solicitude. "June! Are you ill?" he whispered. "Are you all right?"

"Quite," she said, and tried to smile. "Let me rest a minute."

Her cheeks were drained white; she seemed to droop forward. He held her; and Tope said:

"She's fainting, Mr. Glover. Put her head down—"

But the girl recovered, straightened up again; and Glover said: "Wait a minute. I can do better." He disappeared, came out with a flask and tumbler. She choked and gasped and sputtered, but her color did return.

Glover explained then, watching these newcomers: "I don't know anything about—last night. Miss Leaford had just told me that her mother was dead." His eyes flickered from one of them to the other; and when no one spoke, he said in a sort of swift passion: "Some one tell me what has happened. Why did you come here?"

"They said Miss Leaford might be here," Clint answered. "I was driving past, last night, overtook her on the road. She was running, through all that rain. I gave her a lift as far as Doctor Cabler's house."

June was afraid he would say more than this; she hurried to explain:

"You see, Uncle Jim, Mother hated thunder and lightning. So when the storm came near, I went in to see if she was all right. And when I saw her, I knew she was—dead. But I lost my head, I guess. Calling the Doctor was the only thing I could think of."

"What happened?" Uncle Jim insisted.

"She took too many sleeping-tablets," June told him, in a low tone. "You know, she was sick from doing that, once before." Her face suddenly was stony calm. "I gave them to her," she whispered. "I gave them to her, and she died."

Clint caught her hand. "Now listen," he protested. "You—"

Her head leaned back against the cabin wall. "She insisted on taking two," the girl said. "I couldn't persuade her not to. I was afraid." She whispered: "Oh, I wish I'd spilled them all!" And then she explained:

"You see, she couldn't get to sleep, so she got up and went to the bathroom and took the rest of them."

Tope asked thoughtfully: "You spilled some of them, you say?"

"While I was getting one for her," June answered. "I set the bottle down on the basin, and it fell and tipped over. They spilled out, and there was water in the basin, a little. The tablets in the water dissolved. There weren't



but three left in the bottle. And I took one of them to her, one besides the one I already had. Then she must have heard the thunder coming, and she was afraid of lightning. So she got up and took the other two. Oh, I wish I'd spilled them all."

"How do you know all this?" Uncle Jim asked. There was a rasp in his tones; something challenging and angry. "How does anyone know what she did?"

"Why, the other tablets were gone," said June.

"Bottle empty?" Uncle Jim insisted.

The girl hesitated. "I don't know," she said. "We didn't find the bottle. It's probably under the bed, or in the bed or something. We didn't look there. She was there." Her tone wavered.

Clint held her hand hard.

He said: "Now you forget it, Miss Leaford! Don't worry."

"She was afraid of lightning," the girl whispered. Her hand clenched into a fist on her knee. "Oh, they're all afraid," she cried. "Afraid of nothing. Whispering and trembling and watching, watching every word." Her eyes were wide, her lips white. "I won't be afraid!" she exclaimed.

"There's nothing to be afraid of," Clint insisted. "You weren't afraid last night."

"I wasn't afraid—of you," she confessed, and saw the leap of pleasure in his eyes, and was happy that she had pleased him. But suddenly she was uneasy; she had stayed too long. "I must go back," she said.

Clint rose. "I'll go with you."

"Will you?" she asked gratefully.

They went past the others. "Miss Leaford is going home," Clint explained. "I'll come back here."

She walked silently, Clint close beside her. He talked to her, of the future. He meant to come again, he said. Soon. "I'll call you up," he promised. She wondered what Aunt Evie would say when he telephoned.

They came within sight of the houses; and Clint paused. "I won't go in," he said. "Remember, though, I'm coming again. Soon."

He caught her hand and held it. Incredibly, he kissed her hand, the backs of her fingers. She saw his eyes shine.

"Good-by," he said.

She loosed her hand and went on alone, and she held one hand over the other, to protect and treasure the spot his lips had touched.

She went on toward the house. When she had gone in, Asa came after her, quietly, out of the wood.

Chapter Seven

IT was to be Miss Moss who perceived beyond dispute that Kitty Leaford had been murdered. She had stayed behind, in the car, when the garage man Thayer, in response to Tope's inquiry went to point out the path that led to Jim Glover's cabin. Thayer returned, and a girl came out of the office of the garage to join him. Thayer called her Lissa; she was, Miss Moss perceived, his daughter; and Miss Moss had some casual talk with them.

After a time she saw Lissa's eyes suddenly fix on something toward the house, in an expression of concern; and Miss Moss looked that way to see a man moving secretly among the trees. Then Lissa without a word went toward the house and disappeared indoors. She did not reappear, but neither did the secret man. Miss Moss thought she would know his form again. She fell to talking with Thayer, and when by and by the Inspector and Clint returned, she thought her time here had not been misspent.

Clint said eagerly: "I've seen her. Talked with her. She's a wonder!"

Miss Moss said: "Is she, Clint? That's fine." But she looked expectantly at the older man.

Inspector Tope without a word got into the car, and Clint took the wheel. They started back toward Boston.

"Accident?" Miss Moss asked presently.

Tope answered in an abstracted tone: "Doctor Derrie says so! He will call it accident, yes." He sighed, as though he were tired. "The trouble with me," he confessed, "I'm a meddling fool."

"What is it?" she asked. "What disturbs you?"

He wagged his head doubtfully. "I don't know," he admitted. "Here's a woman dead, and as far as you can see, there's no mystery about it. But there are a lot of little things, strange, unusual—"

Miss Moss asked: "What are they? That Miss Leaford should run for a doctor, without stopping to dress, for instance?"

The old man made a gesture as though to brush away an annoying swarm of mosquitoes. "Why, that, yes," he agreed. "Then the telephone was out of order, and the electric light went out at the wrong time, and the front door of the house blew open in spite of the fact it was always bolted at night. And then this man that lives up here in the woods—"

Miss Moss broke in with a question: "What is he like? What did you think of him?"

"He's a strong man," answered Tope, "doing nothing. Lives up there alone, writes poetry for fun, tramps around the woods, and looks at Miss Leaford as though she meant a lot to him. He told me that now that her mother is dead, he had a mind to take June away from here."

Clint cried angrily: "He did? That—tramp! I'll—"

Miss Moss asked acutely: "If he's so fond of Miss Leaford, what does he think of the rest of the Kenesaw connection?"

Tope chuckled. "He talked quite a lot about them," he admitted. "He seemed to know them pretty well, know a lot about them. He says old Mrs. Bowdon and her daughter, Mrs. Taine, have things their own way up there. He said they were like people living in the valley below a big dam.

Bowdon is a wealthy man, and Hurder too; and their money is like the water behind the dam, waiting to flow down the valley when they die, flow into new channels. The others all sit there waiting for the dam to break, with their buckets ready to catch the overflow, afraid they'll let a few drops get away."

Miss Moss said softly: "That's why they're afraid!"

Tope looked at her in quick attention. "Eh?" he exclaimed. "Why should they be afraid? After all, the money can't get out of the family."

"Having things makes people afraid," she reminded him. "A man with nothing to lose has nothing to fear."

Tope shook his head. "I don't know," he demurred. "It's mighty easy to be afraid. . . . There's one other thing—probably no connection. But when Clint and I were on our way in to Glover's cabin, we saw a man in the woods. He was coming down the path toward us; but he spotted us, about as soon as we saw him, a hundred yards away or so. And he ducked to one side, out of the way, and kept out of sight while we went by."

"Why didn't you speak to him?"

"Clint here was in a hurry to go on," the Inspector chuckled.

"I didn't even see this man," Clint explained. "I think the Inspector imagined him. He's seeing things today, anyway."

Miss Moss sat thoughtful for a while; but she said at last, smiling: "He didn't imagine this. I saw your man come out of the woods. The garage-proprietor has a daughter. He calls her Lissa. I think that was her young man. She was with me when he came in sight, but she left me then, and neither of them reappeared."

Tope chuckled. "Trust you to dig up any romance that's lying around!" he exclaimed. "Don't know who it was, do you?"

"No, but I know Lissa Thayer was troubled by his coming," Miss Moss declared. "That was plain, in her eyes." And she asked: "This Mr. Glover—how old did you think he was?"

THE Inspector watched her. "Forty-five and up," he said. "Maybe ten years more."

"Old enough to be Miss Leaford's father," Miss Moss reflected. And she added, still smiling: "You see, I begin to wonder about things too, Inspector. I've caught the habit from you." She ceased to smile. "I'm wondering now," she said gravely, "how many of these tablets it would take, to kill a person so quickly."



The Inspector looked at Miss Moss with a sort of wonder. He said at last:

"Mrs. Tope, you make me feel like a man on crutches. You can jump farther, and straighter, than anyone I ever saw."

"I was just wondering," she protested, her cheek bright with pleasure in his praise.

"I think you've hit it," he said. "Derrie missed it, and Heale, and so did I. But I think you've hit it on the nose. We'll see." He looked ahead. "Clint, pull in at the first drug-store," he said. "I want to telephone."

Clint nodded his assent; and they drove two or three blocks in silence. Then he swung the car to the curb. The Inspector without a word alighted and disappeared indoors.

WHEN he came out to them again, Clint asked quickly: "Did you call Doctor Derrie?"

"I called Doc Gero," Tope explained. This was the Medical Examiner with whom the old man had worked for so many years. "Doctor Gero thinks that it would need eight or ten tablets, maybe more, to have killed Mrs. Leaford so soon. He said if one was a dose, and three made her pretty sick, four or five might put her into a coma so that she would die in twenty-four hours or so. Specially if she had a weak heart."

"But to be dead in three hours, that would need eight or ten tablets, and maybe more."

His tone had the finality of doom. "And there weren't that many tablets left in the bottle!" he concluded.

Miss Moss said in a low tone: "I was afraid so. Then it was murder. What will you do?"

Tope shook his head. "Why," he said, "I guess we'll have to go back." He chuckled in a dry mirth. "It looks like I'd have to annoy young Doc Derrie again."

When they came back to Police Headquarters, Inspector Heale was still there; and this time Inspector Tope introduced Miss Moss. "This is Mrs. Tope," he said; and he explained proudly: "She's got a level head, Inspector. We've come back because Mrs. Tope spotted something I had missed that makes this look bad. Probably you've already seen it."

Heale looked at him for a moment; then he closed the office door.

"Now what is it, Tope?" he asked patiently.

Tope hesitated; he said then: "Here's the sticker, Heale. Miss Leaford gave her mother two tablets. There were two more left, in the bottle in the bathroom cabinet. And Doctor Derrie figures the dead woman got up and took those two. That's right, isn't it?"

Heale nodded. "Yes," he said.

"Now then," Tope explained, "two and two make four. If Doctor Derrie's right, she took four tablets. And two or three hours later she was dead."

"Sure," Heale repeated.

Tope leaned back in his chair. "Then here's the rest of it," he said. "You know Doctor Gero, the Medical Examiner in town?"

"Of course."

"Well, Doctor Gero says it would take at least six, and more likely eight or ten tablets to kill this woman dead in three hours."

Inspector Heale looked at Tope, frowning a little, for a long time. He started to shake his head; then abruptly he lifted the telephone beside him.

"Get me Doctor Cabler," he directed; and presently: "Doctor Cabler? Inspector Heale speaking. I'd like to consult you on this Leaford case. Can you come down? . . . Thanks." He returned the receiver to its hook again. "Doctor Cabler will know," he told them.

Tope nodded. "The bottle's missing," he reminded Inspector Heale. "That may have significance or not. Have you been in the house, searched the bedroom?"

Heale shook his head. "No excuse to do that," he protested. "So far as we knew officially, it was an accident. I don't want to antagonize those people unnecessarily, Tope. You can see that."

"I'd like to look around in there," Tope confessed. "Unofficially. Without their knowing."

Inspector Heale grinned. "Not much chance," he said.

Miss Moss spoke for the first time. "When is the funeral?" she inquired.

"It might be managed then," Inspector Heale agreed. "If they all go. Of course, they'll lock the house. They

have no servants. We'll have to get some one to arrange it so we can get in."

"Miss Leaford will do that," Clint proposed.

"I'd rather try Asa Taine," Inspector Heale decided. "He might be reasonable. I know him better than I know any of the others." He lifted the telephone. "I'll send one of the boys to ask him to come down," he said.

He had no more than finished giving these instructions when Doctor Cabler arrived. The physician was a small man, grizzled, a little bent, his shoulders surprisingly heavy, with a steady, severe eye. After the introductions, Inspector Heale put the case to him.

Tope, watching the Doctor, thought his lips stiffened and grew pale as he listened; and after Inspector Heale had finished, the physician was silent for a while.

"Her heart was not strong," he said at last reflectively. No one commented on this; and in the end he nodded, surrendering.

"I had overlooked that point," he confessed. "Yes, gentlemen, it must be true!"

"You mean she must have had more than four tablets?" Heale asked.

"Unquestionably," Doctor Cabler agreed. "To die so quickly."

Inspector Heale said seriously: "You understand, Doctor Cabler, this gives her death the look of murder."

Doctor Cabler nodded slowly. "It seems incredible," he declared. "And yet—there is something terrible in those houses up there. Mrs. Bowdon rules them all. She has something massive in her, something like a crushing weight. Mr. and Mrs. Hurder are sweet, timorous people, governed absolutely, doing what she wishes. Mrs. Taine and young Rab are the only ones who ever oppose her, who ever dissent from her judgments. The others submit. Mrs. Leaford was always rebellious, but she did submit. Asa Taine goes his own gait, but he does not openly oppose his grandmother. Miss Leaford will break, some day." He wiped his brow. "There is an abnormality in their lives that must destroy them all, in time."

"How about Mr. Bowdon?" Inspector Tope asked; and Doctor Cabler said guardedly:

"He surrendered years ago. He is not at all well. His heart plays ugly tricks, and his blood-pressure is very high. He has not long to live." And he added: "I have sometimes thought it was his imminent death which oppressed them all."

The Inspector nodded. "I don't want to come right out and say 'murder,' Doctor Cabler," he explained. "But we want to look around inside the house. Mrs. Tope here suggested that they would all go to the funeral. If they do, the house would be empty then."

"That is tomorrow," Doctor Cabler told them. "In the afternoon."

"I thought Asa Taine might fix it for us," Heale explained. "I've sent for him. I can talk to him, perhaps get a key, get his permission to go in, without saying anything to the others."

"I still find it hard to believe," the Doctor insisted.

SUDDENLY, then, Tope asked:

"Doctor, can this drug be bought by anyone, without prescription?"

"From a friendly pharmacist, perhaps. By some subterfuge."

"Mrs. Leaford had used it long?"

"Four or five years. I supplied it to her myself. She did not even know the name. I gave it to her in plain bottles, without a label, so that she would not know what it was. This was for her own protection. She could not secure it except through me."

"If some one wished to poison her," Tope suggested steadily, "that person might have stolen tablets out of her bottle, one at a time, over a period of weeks, without the theft being noticed. So he would have them when the time came."

"Readily," the Doctor agreed. "I urged Mrs. Leaford to keep a count of the tablets she took; but she was careless and impetuous. She took an overdose once before. Three tablets. It made her very ill."

"I'm trying to understand," Tope explained, "how she was persuaded or compelled to take the extra dose. Were there any bruises on her lips, Doctor?"

Doctor Cabler shook his head. "No, none."

"Was there any other medicine she was accustomed to

take? In capsules, for instance? So that some one could have crushed some pills into powder and filled a capsule and put it with the others she had?"

The Doctor said again: "No. I know of nothing of the kind." He rose, and he repeated: "No, nothing. I can't help you there." And he asked in a hushed voice: "Inspector, what will you do?"

Inspector Heale hesitated. "I don't yet know," he confessed. "I may even do nothing for a while. If there is a murder, whoever is responsible may think himself safe. Betray himself." He asked acutely: "Doctor Cabler, which one of them up there is capable of such a thing? Or has a reason for it?"

But Doctor Cabler shook his head. "I don't know," he confessed. "They're a strange, repressed, abnormal lot. I tell you, gentlemen, those are terrible houses, terrible people. Capable of any dreadful thing."

He checked himself. "I've said too much," he exclaimed. "Without facts to back my fancies. Forgive me; and forget I spoke. I bid you good day."

INSPECTOR HEALE went with him to the door. And a few moments afterward Asa Taine was announced.

Tope watched Asa with a deep attention, from the young man's first appearance. This Asa Taine—he may have been no more than thirty, but he looked older, and there was the shadow of dissipation on his countenance—acknowledged the introductions quietly, but with a quick, appraising glance for Tope and for Miss Moss. He spoke in a slow, sardonic tone, facing them fairly.

"I'm told you want to see me," he said. "Why?"

And before Inspector Heale could speak, he added in a grim drawl: "To save lying, I might say that I can guess you think Kitty Leaford's death was murder, so you can begin your explanations there."

"Well, there are certain circumstances—" Heale began. "Some one was in Mrs. Leaford's room after she went to sleep."

"How do you know?"

"Because Miss Leaford put a certain bottle in the medicine cabinet in her mother's bathroom, and it is gone."

Asa Taine smiled without mirth, and drew from his pocket a small square bottle. "Here it is!" he said.

There was a moment's incredulous hush; then Inspector Heale asked sharply: "How do you know this is it?"

"I've seen it often enough," Asa declared.

"Where? When?"

"Kitty liked to play *grande dame*," Asa explained. "She used to hold receptions in bed. She'd stay in bed half the day, sometimes. Rab and I liked her; and we used to go up and visit with her there. June and Grandma Bowdon did too. We're a clannish family, you see." His tone was almost derisive. "We like to keep an eye on one another."

"Where did you find it?" Heale demanded. "This bottle."

"In the cellar," said Asa. "Under the laundry-chute."

"How'd you happen to look down there?"

"Second sight, maybe," Asa suggested. "Viewing the scene of the crime!"

"What made you think it was a crime?" Inspector Heale snapped.

They were all watching him acutely; but Asa Taine said simply: "Kit wouldn't kill herself. And an ordinary overdose wouldn't kill her so quickly. I've handled criminal law, you know."

"Oh, you knew that, did you?" Heale exclaimed in angry accusation. "It strikes me you know a lot."

"You'd be surprised," Asa assured him.

"Why didn't you come forward to tell us so?"

"I waited to see how long you'd stay dumb," Asa answered. "Looked around, myself, in the meantime."

Inspector Tope asked mildly: "Who do you think it was? Some one in the family, or a stranger?"

"You know, I'm wondering," Asa told him. He hesitated. "My reflections thus far," he confessed in an amused tone, "stick on the point that June put her mother to bed and gave her the dose that killed her." He made a casual gesture. "Though of course she may not have known she was doing that," he conceded.

Tope saw Miss Moss give an abrupt movement as though of horror or of anger; but he felt neither the one emotion nor the other. He asked:

"See any strangers around?"

"Why?" Asa countered warily; and Tope said:

"I heard there was a man in the woods back of the house this morning."

"Oh, that was I," Asa assured him casually. "I saw you. I was afraid you'd spotted me, at the time."

Tope for once in his life was pink with embarrassment; and Miss Moss smiled faintly. But Tope asked: "What were you doing? Why did you hide?"

"Private business," said Asa gently.

Heale protested harshly: "Come, man. You can't refuse to talk. We'll have to know."

"Then you'll have to find out for yourself, Inspector," Asa told him mockingly; and Heale was red with anger.

Miss Moss asked: "Mr. Taine, did Mrs. Leaford leave a will?"

He looked at her approvingly. "Now that's an intelligent question," he told her. "It suggests a line of thought." He shook his head. "No, madam," he said. "I answer you explicitly: She died intestate, and insolvent too, for the matter of that."

They were for a moment silent, and he turned toward the door; but Inspector Heale said abruptly: "Wait a minute."

"Taine," Inspector Tope explained, "Inspector Heale doesn't want to make too much trouble; but he must look into this. Can you arrange to give him access to the house during the funeral tomorrow afternoon?"

The young man hesitated. He said at last: "Yes, I should say so. You can prowl all you want, but it's too late now. There's nothing left to find." And he exclaimed in a sudden deep passion: "If she was killed, it was some one outside! They might torture her, but they'd never kill her. None of them up there."

Then the door shut resoundingly behind him, and he was gone. Inspector Tope wiped his brow, and Inspector Heale muttered angrily: "That fellow knows something. Maybe I ought to hold on to him, make him talk."

But Tope shook his head. "If you set out to arrest anyone right now," he pointed out, "you'd have to start with Miss Leaford."

And Miss Moss suggested softly: "There might be another possibility. I wonder if Mrs. Leaford's husband is still alive? And how he felt toward her?"

The two men stared at her with wide astonished eyes.

Chapter Eight

THE fortnight after Kitty Leaford's death was for Inspector Tope a long and tormenting time; for a search of the Hurder house while it stood empty revealed exactly nothing at all. And his utmost urgencies failed to drive Inspector Heale to any vigorous action. And Dr. Derrie abetted him by sticking to the accident theory.

The day after the funeral Tope and Clint talked with Heale in his office, and Tope said to Heale sternly:

"Here's my notion, Inspector. Mrs. Leaford was about the most harmless person on Kenesaw Hill. She hadn't hurt anyone; she didn't want her own way about anything; she didn't have any money; she didn't have a thing that would make anyone want to kill her. But some one did kill her; and whoever did it had a deep, hidden reason for doing it. And we don't know what that reason was."

"All right. Now if we—if you, Inspector—pretend you don't suspect anything, whoever did it will get bold. He or she will do something else. That's what you're waiting for, isn't it?" Inspector Heale nodded an emphatic agreement, and Tope said flatly: "You know what that something will be? Some one else will be killed, up there!"

Inspector Heale stared at him. "Why?" he demanded. "What makes you figure that?"

"Because there wasn't any reason for killing Mrs. Leaford alone," Tope insisted. "Killing her is bound to have been a part of a bigger scheme. If you let things slide, you'll have another murder on your hands."

Clint, listening to the old man whose wisdom he knew, felt himself cold with fear for June, who dwelt in that shuttered house where death had been a visitor. But Inspector Heale said with a slow, fretful violence: "Well, Inspector, I'm glad to have your advice, any time, of course. But I have to make the decisions. You'll have to let me work this out my own way."

And they could not move him. On the way back to town, Clint saw Inspector Tope irritated for the first time in his experience. "I hate a fool," the old man said

fretfully. "And Heale's a fool. I tell you, Clint, there's death loose in those old houses."

For the rest of the drive the old man sat silent, absorbed in his own reflections, till they came home to the little house in Longwood, where Miss Moss had dinner waiting. They sat long at table, going over and over the things they knew, seeking to read their implications. And Miss Moss was a guess ahead of the Inspector tonight. Tope had reported that Heale was trying to locate Jim Glover.

"He's gone," the Inspector pointed out. "So Heale thinks he's run away. Heale's like one of these whippets. He'll chase anything that runs."

Miss Moss smiled faintly. "I may be responsible for that," she confessed. "You remember I suggested to Heale that he try to find Kitty Leaford's husband."

And the two men stared at her; and Clint, whose thoughts now turned always in one direction, cried: "You think this man is June's father?"

Miss Moss nodded.

"What makes you think that?"

"Why else did he live so near, except to see June?" Miss Moss suggested. "And—why did they let him live there, unless he had some such hold on them?"

Tope smiled. "It takes a woman to look for such a thing," he suggested; added: "But it might be so. It might be." He said, half to himself: "I liked that man."

Clint asked: "Do you think June knows who he is?"

Miss Moss shook her head; and Tope said reflectively: "If it's true, if that's who Glover is, and Heale finds it out, he'll figure that Leaford wanted to marry some one else, and poisoned Mrs. Leaford to be free. That's the way his mind works. If he gets Leaford, he'll think he's got the case in his hands."

"I haven't seen the man," Miss Moss confessed. "Do you think he might have done it? Remember, the front door of the house was open. Some one went in from outside."

Tope sat very still. "No, Glover, or Leaford, or whatever his name is, didn't do it," he decided. "But Mrs. Tope, if Mrs. Leaford's glass of milk that night was poisoned, why would anyone have to go into the house from outside? She'd drunk the milk and gone to sleep before the door downstairs was ever locked."

"Some one might have stayed in the house, left the door unbolted when he went out."

"But why?" Tope insisted. "If Kitty Leaford was already as good as dead, why?" He said half to himself: "Maybe they forgot to lock the door, that night. I'm going to see Mr. Hurder myself. See what he has to say."

And he added: "I want to figure some way to meet Justus Taine too, and his sons. See what they're like. I've met Asa, but not the other one."

Miss Moss suggested an expedient to this end; so during the next few days Clint, in his capacity as head of the Jervies Trust, pretended to revive that old project of buying some of the woodlands belonging to the Kenesaw farm and cutting them up into house lots. The office of Bowdon and Taine controlled the land; and Clint made an appointment to see Rab, and took Tope with him.

Rab met them in friendly fashion, discussed the project and made shrewd comments; at Tope's suggestion he led them into his father's office, and he and Clint shouted the details of Clint's proposal into the ears of Justus Taine, and that man sat stolid and silent, his eyes blank, watching Tope while he heard, or did not hear, what they had to say. Himself spoke at last half a dozen words of dissent, and so dismissed them.

ON the way home, Clint asked the Inspector: "Well, what do you think of them?"

"Guess Rab's got a good business head," Tope admitted. "Right about this proposition, wasn't he?"

"Yes," Clint agreed. "But I mean, do you think he or Mr. Taine had anything to do with killing Mrs. Leaford?"

Tope, however, did not commit himself on this point. But one day he said in a dry tone: "Clint, did you ever see Miss Leaford again? Ever see anything of her?"

Clint stared at him; and he laughed happily. "Why, it

seems to me I did run into her the other day," he replied elaborately. "Yes, I think I did. I'm almost sure I did."

"I'd like to see her some day," Tope confessed. "I'd like to talk to her. You any idea where I might just happen to run into her, tomorrow, say?"

Clint said, seriously now: "Yes, I'm going to see her tomorrow afternoon. You come out with me."

AFTER Kitty Leaford's death, Grandpa and Grandma Hurder moved dumbly about the house, crushed and broken with grief. June tried to comfort and to reassure them; but once when she sought to beguile Grandpa Hurder into some peace of mind he said in slow tones:

"Your mother was crucified, June. For twenty years! And I was to blame."

"No, no," she insisted. "You were always so sweet to her. You and Grandma both."

"It was not what we did to her," the old man said. "It was what we permitted to be done." And he asked after a moment, astonishingly: "June, will you take me some day to see the man who lives in the cabin by the pond?"

"Uncle Jim?" she exclaimed, surprised and puzzled.

"You call him that?" the old man asked.

"He likes me to," she confessed.

"I think he is a good man," said Grandpa Hurder slowly. "I have been wrong. I mean to tell him so."

June hesitated, deeply puzzled; but she only said slowly: "I don't know where he is now. He's gone."

The old man looked at her, she thought, in something like dismay at this intelligence, while she explained.

She had seen Uncle Jim at her mother's funeral, in the undertaker's little chapel where frugally the services were held, and again later in the cemetery. He was decently dressed, so that she hardly recognized him in this unaccustomed sobriety of garb. She saw him watching her, and wished to smile, but that would not under the circumstances have been seemly.

She had gone next day to his cabin in the wood, only to find it closed, secured; but there was a note on the door addressed to her. It promised that he would come back soon; but he had not yet returned. . . .

During the fortnight after her mother died, and for the first time in her life, June began to be happy. The girl thought this was a strange thing, a shameful thing; yet it was true. For the world began to smile, and in surprising ways.

Clint was tender to her, but so were others too. The world, after her mother's death, turned in so many ways a new countenance toward June. Mrs. Bowdon gave her a heavy sympathy; Aunt Evie told her that she was a brave fine girl. Rab made her smile sometimes with a jesting word; and her cousin Asa began to pay her, with a quizzical light in his eye, certain mysterious attentions. He brought home one day, smuggling it into the house at dusk, a flat parcel.

"Don't open it here," he warned her. "And don't let anyone see it. Take it up to your room. Try it on. I think it will fit all right. Try it in front of your mirror. Try doing your hair some other way."

The parcel, she discovered, contained a gown different from any she had ever worn before, the skirt dismayingly shorter than the ankle-length Mrs. Bowdon's strict command had long since imposed. June was a little terrified at her own aspect in the mirror; but by and by interest banished terror. There were unseemly lumps which marred her contours here and there, but when, valorously experimenting, she removed her underclothing and put on the new dress again, these lumps had disappeared and left smooth and gracious lines.

June hugged this secret happiness till Asa found a chance to ask her whether the gown fitted. She told him then:

"Yes, perfectly. I don't see how you knew the size."

"I've an accurate eye," he assured her.

She almost laughed under her breath. "I can't imagine you going into a store and buying things like that."

He said with an amused promise in his tones: "I'll surprise you again." And he was as good as his word,



bringing her one day another parcel. When she opened this one, she was enraptured; but it was hours before she ventured to try on, even behind the bolted door of her room, the astonishing garments therein contained; and it was days before she risked wearing some of them, soberly concealed beneath the fusty dark dress which was her usual garb in the house.

She asked Asa one day why he had fetched her these secret lovely things; and he said with a smile in his eyes:

"A girl has a right to them, June. If you ever want to impress some young man, just wear that dress."

She colored richly, and wondered whether he knew about Clint, and dared not ask for fear of his reply.

Yet this was a delicious fear; she hugged it rapturously.

She could not wear the new dress. It would be seen. But she wore the undergarments Asa had given her, under her accustomed garb. And she saw Clint more and more often.

One day they had appointed to meet by the river, and June was waiting by the knoll above the stream when the canoe appeared. She saw in a faint dismay that Clint was not alone, and thought of flight; then she recognized in Clint's passenger the kindly old man who had come with Clint to Uncle Jim's cabin that first day.

Clint, when they landed, made good-humored apologies: "Mr. Tope was bound to come along, June," he said. "I told him three's a crowd; but I couldn't get rid of him. We'll maroon him here and go on upstream, you and I."

But the Inspector said, smiling at the girl on the bank above him: "I suspected that Clint was up to something, coming out here so much. How are you? I met you one day, remember?"

She did remember, and she said so, conscious already of that feeling of liking and trust which Tope could when he chose inspire. But she said to Clint: "I can't go up the river today. I have to be back soon. Grandpa Bowdon isn't well today. They might need me. But we can sit here for a while."

She tried to recall, afterward, whether Tope had asked her any questions that day; but she could not be sure of a single direct inquiry. Yet she had found herself telling him about the night her mother died; about the anagrams, and her mother's headache, and the fact that there was no milk in the ice-chest, so that Aunt Evie had to go next door—everything.

She saw that Clint sat silent and attentive; and after a long time the girl began to be a little uneasy under Tope's skillful questioning. But before he was done he had the whole story, beginning with the fact that Uncle Justus had knocked over a bottle of milk in the kitchen, and ending with the moment when her mother drank the milk, and said it tasted strong, and lay down and fell into the sleep which she was never to awaken.

When June told him her mother's remark, the old man nodded faintly, with a sort of satisfaction, and looked at Clint. Conscious of something hidden and disturbing here, June rose uneasily. "I must go back," she said. "Grandpa Bowdon—"

Tope nodded, and Clint came to her side. "I'll walk a little way with you," he said. So she bade Tope good-by, uncertainly, and she and Clint went up the slope together. When they were out of hearing, she said with something like a shudder:

"I'd almost forgotten about that night." She looked at Clint squarely. "Clint, what is it? What did he want? Who is he?"

But Clint told her reassuringly: "He's all right. A fine old fellow." The young man chuckled. "You see, he married Miss Moss, and I guess she sent him out to look you over, June. She's almost like my own mother, you know."

He was able in the end to reassure her. Before they parted, still out of sight of the houses on the hill, they planned to meet next morning at Uncle Jim's cabin in the wood. Then she told him good-by, and saw something in his eyes, and guessed what was in his mind; and she waited, gracious and consenting. But in the end he only clasped her hand and said:

"In the morning, then!"

She went away from him up the slope, smiling to herself. It had been easy to read the impulse in his eyes; she had seen and welcomed it. She had belonged to him in her thoughts long ago. Yet she could smile now at his restraint, sure of him as she was of herself. Their hour would come.

When she reached the house, it was to learn that Grandpa Bowdon had died half an hour before.

Chapter Nine

JUNE, to her own astonishment, wept for Grandpa Bowdon as she had not wept for her mother. His going touched her deeply; and she went to her room and stayed there for a while alone. Then Asa knocked at her door, and when she opened, he knew how to comfort her.

"He was ready to go, June," he said. "Don't feel badly. And—it was just like snapping a string. No hurt, no pain."

And he bade her come downstairs. "The old folks need you," he urged. "You and Rab and I, we've got to carry them over the hump, you know."

She wished suddenly, desperately, to see Clint, to be with him now; but since she could not, she smiled at Asa, and dried her tears, and went down with him, her head high and steady. Through the rest of that afternoon and evening, she carried her share of the burden here. . . . The appointed hour was not yet come next morning, when June slipped away to the woods to meet Clint; but he would have seen the

report of Mr. Bowdon's death, would know she needed him.

When she came through the sunlit woods, up the path to the cabin on the knoll, he was there as she expected. He saw her approaching and was swift to meet her.

June stood still as he drew near, and she was trembling and shaken. He came toward her, his hands outstretched; and without knowing how, or caring, she was in his arms—and happy there.

"I shouldn't have stayed with you, yesterday," she said, after a long time. "I might have seen him again, if I'd come home."

He urged: "June, June, you couldn't have helped. And you liked being with me, were happy. That's what he'd have wanted for you."

"Grandma Bowdon is pitiful," she whispered. "She's so—big and heavy, and massive; and she just sits with her hands in her lap. She doesn't cry, but she can't talk. Clint, Clint, I never thought she loved him so."

"Folks get that way about each other," he assured her. "Living with one person long. You'll see. . . . Some day when we're old and gray, limping around—"

"I won't mind growing old," she whispered. "With you. But Clint, Clint, don't ever die and leave me!"

So these two, in this moment of springing rapture, glimpsed for an instant the autumn of old age and were sobered together; but then Clint cried laughingly: "I won't. Promise, cross my heart, word of honor, hope to die!"

And they laughed together, and June dried her tears. But she had hushed him, her fingers on his lips, at that word.

"I never was really afraid before," she whispered. "Not for myself. But I am now, Clint. Oh, I am now. Afraid for me and you."

"I'm going to take you away," he cried. "Away from all this here!"

"You can't," she protested. "Grandpa and Grandma Hurder—they just have to have me there."

Yet she agreed by and by to meet him that night, after the others should all be abed.

THEY had supper before dark, in June's kitchen. Rab had stayed with Grandma Bowdon while Aunt Evie ate her supper; but when his mother relieved him, he came back, and June served him, and he said approvingly:

"You're carrying a load, June. Good lass. I wish I could give you a hand."



"It's a woman's business," she told him. "You do more with them, keep them going."

"I've got to leave them tonight," he confessed. "I'm due in court in Providence in the morning. It's just an appearance, but the judge down there is a crank. And I have to see my client tonight."

When he had finished, he went home with Uncle Justus; but half an hour later he stopped in again. June was washing the last dishes.

"Father's gone to sleep in his chair," he told her, smiling. "He'll wake up and put himself to bed by and by. I'm going over to say good night to Mother and Grandma."

June nodded, intent upon the dishes, intent upon her own thoughts. It was half after seven. Clint had said he would be waiting, a little distance down the road, at eight; but she had no hope of coming to him so soon. Grandpa and Grandma Hurder were in the sitting-room; and once she looked in on them. They had not heard her approach; and Grandpa Hurder was just leaning over to pat Grandma's hand where it lay on the arm of the chair; June watched and her throat swelled with tears unshed. And then Asa came in. "Any water hot, June?" he asked. "I've got to have a cup of tea." He sat down while she put the kettle on the stove, talked to her casually till it boiled. She found a tea-ball, and he brought a milk-bottle half empty from the ice-chest, and poured a little milk into the cup.

"There isn't any cream," she said. "I'm sorry."

"Milk's all right if you use enough of it," he assured her, smiling in that dry way he had. "That's the way with most things, June. Too little's starvation; too much is as bad. But enough's all right." He drank in little sips, watching her. "You've grown these last weeks, June," he said. "You're like a rosebud, swelling as it gets ready to bloom."

And he declared: "Hey, you're blushing, child. High time you heard some pretty things about yourself, if your own cousin can make you blush with a compliment." He put his arm around her, kissed her cheek. "How about this Jervies fellow?"

He saw her start with dismay, and laughed, and promised: "I won't say a word." He disappeared.

She had half-guessed once before that Asa knew. She wondered how he knew; and she was afraid, trembling with a delicious terror in the knowledge that her secret thus was shared. Then she heard Aunt Evie in the bedroom, talking to Grandma Hurder, literally talking the passive old woman to bed. Grandpa Hurder came to the kitchen door to say:

"Good night, June!"

She went to kiss him; and this was a strange thing, for she was not used to do so. He beamed with pleasure; and June would be glad all her life that she had kissed him tonight. Then he went along to the room he and Grandma Hurder shared.

LATER Aunt Evie came into the kitchen. "Those old folks won't sleep a wink," she said gently. "I'm going to give them some milk." She saw the bottle where Asa had left it, and poured the milk into a stew-pan, scratched a match.

June was suddenly cold with remembered terror. She told herself she was a fool, a fool, a fool. People had drunk warm milk before!

Rab came in from out of doors, wet with the increasing rain; he crossed to where Aunt Evie stood by the stove and embraced her. "Night, Mother," he said. "I'll be back by noon tomorrow."

"The funeral is at four," she told him evenly.

"I know," he assented. "I'll be here." He grinned at June. "Good night, kid."

Aunt Evie poured the milk into two glasses, and June went with her into the other room.

The girl was full of a great tenderness for these old folk. Under Aunt Evie's calm insistence they sipped their milk obediently; they set the empty glasses by; they lay down to sleep like children, side by side.

June took the glasses, started toward the kitchen to wash them. Behind her she heard Aunt Evie say:

"No. I'll leave the windows closed. It might rain in. And you don't need any air. You'll be asleep so soon."

She was always thus calmly bent upon having her own way; when she came back into the kitchen, she looked at the girl keenly. "You all right, June?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," June told her guardedly.

"You must go to bed," Aunt Evie directed. "As soon as you are done here. Good night, child."

When the door closed behind her, June had an instinct to poise on tiptoe, listening, alert for any sound, ready for flight. She was free! There was a great exhilaration in her at the thought. Free! She looked at the clock. It was half-past eight. Clint must be out there now, so near, in the rain.

Her hands flying, she slipped out of her clothes, changed swiftly into the dress Asa secretly had given her. She stood for a few minutes before the mirror, busy with her hair. At last she was satisfied. Some one radiant and lovely looked back at her from the mirror there.

She turned out the light at last, and in the darkness descended to the lower hall. She found a heavy coat and drew it on, then opened the front door.

A gust of rain wet her cheek, and she remembered another night when she had thus gone running to meet Clint. But then she did not know he was waiting. It was deeply contenting to be sure tonight that he would meet her here.

"DARLING! You're shaking all over!"

"I'm excited," she confessed, laughing softly. "I—never did this before, and I've got a new dress on." He kissed her again, and she confessed: "And I thought of the night Mother died. It rained then too, remember. So I was scared."

"Not scared now," he urged, and held her close.

"Never with you," she promised him.

So presently he put the car in motion, allowing it to coast silently down the hill. Another car overtook them from behind and passed at speed. Clint, warned by its headlights, swerved to give it room; and after it was gone he turned on his own lights again and went more swiftly.

Neither Clint nor June would remember, afterward, much about the motion-picture they saw that evening. In the dim obscurity of the theater, their eyes were much more often turned toward each other than toward the screen. And after a time Clint whispered: "Are you liking this? I think it's dull."

She smiled at him. "I don't think it's dull," she said. "You see, it's almost the first one I ever saw."

"You'll see lots more with me," he promised. "This is a bum one, really." And he urged: "Let's start home. We can drive slowly and—be together without so many people round. Unless you want to see the rest of this?"

June—a little reluctantly—professed a complete lack of interest in the film; yet she looked back wistfully as they went up the aisle. Upon their arrival, she had not removed her coat till they reached their seats; but now in the lobby she expected some word from him about her new gown. When he said nothing, merely offered to help her into her coat, she protested:

"You haven't noticed my dress. Don't you think it's nice?"

Clint stood back to survey her, chuckling. "Sure, grand!" he declared. He came close to her again. "But what you wear doesn't make any difference to me, June."

She was almost piqued by this. A woman is more flattered by a tribute to her gown, her hat, her coiffure or the scent she uses than by an appreciation of the color of her eyes, the smoothness of her skin, the richness of her hair. She takes pride not in her natural gifts, but in those adornments which she has added unto them. June said now, insisting that he fix his attention where she desired:

"Asa gave it to me!"

"Asa?" Clint echoed, frowning faintly. "Why?"

She slipped her arms into the sleeves of the coat he held. "He told me to wear it to catch a young man!" she confessed, laughing up at him over her shoulder. "He knows about you and me."

Clint chuckled with pleasure. "It will be my turn to buy pretty things for you soon," he said happily; and her hand tightened on his arm as they went out to the car.

They drove slowly, Clint clinging to this hour; and when they came in front of the great sprawling house at last, he stopped and turned off the lights, and said urgently:

"Let's sit here a few minutes. You don't have to go right in."

"I must, soon," she urged, yet made no move to leave.

They found no great need of words. They were snug in the car, the windows raised against the rain. There was a light in the rear part of the Taine house; and June said, with a ripple of mirth in her tones:

"Uncle Justus is still asleep in his chair. If no one wakes him up, he may sleep there all night."

"Is that his room?" Clint asked, surprised.

"No, he's in the kitchen." Her tone was mirthful. "He likes to warm his feet in the oven door."

"Who's sitting up over there?" he asked, nodding in the other direction.

"Aunt Evie and Asa are staying with Grandma Bowdon," she explained. "Rab had to go to Providence."

They felt, rather than heard, a low rumble of sound; and Clint said: "Hullo, that was thunder. I didn't see a flash."

"I did, out of the corner of my eye," she told him. "Off through the woods that way." She pointed past the houses; and she said, and he heard her voice shake: "We had a thunder-shower the night Mother died. A terrible one. And she added:

"Uncle Justus has turned out his light. The thunder must have wakened him." Clint saw that the Taine house was indeed dark now; and then June cried, a sudden tension in her tones: "Clint, look!"

"What?" he asked, surprised; and he stared past her.

There was a faint brightness, in the shape of a rectangle, against the front of the Hurder house. The brightness assumed color; and Clint reached across the girl to lower the window so that he might see more clearly. That rectangle identified itself as the open front door of the house, outlined in red.

And suddenly this dull red became bright; they saw the flicker of a flame.

They scrambled out together; they started to race across the lawn. As they did so, a car passed along the road behind them, and Clint turned back and shouted:

"Hey, fire! Ring in an alarm!"

He saw the driver dimly, saw the man's head nod. Then he ran after June toward the house, toward that front door through which billows of smoke began to pour. He caught her on the steps, caught her fast; for she would have gone headlong in. And she was crying:

"Grandpa! Grandma!"

When Clint held her, she swung to him in terror, beseeching him. "They're in there, Clint. Oh, quick, dear!"

Chapter Ten

MISS MOSS had never seen June Leaford, and as she watched Clint's increasing devotion to the girl, during the fortnight after Mrs. Leaford died, this fact sometimes disturbed her.

She said to Tope one evening: "I've been—asking about her, here and there. You know Lissa Thayer. I've spoken to you about her."

"I know her, yes," Tope assented.

"Lissa and I have become almost friends," Miss Moss explained. "She knows about Clint and June. He often leaves his car there when he goes in to the cabin. And Asa and Rab buy gas there for their car. She says Rab is—unpleasantly familiar sometimes, too friendly, offensive. She doesn't say much about Asa, but I think she knows him rather well."

Tope reminded her: "Asa went to see her, the morning after Mrs. Leaford died. Remember? We met him in the woods, and you saw him down there."

"I remember," Miss Moss agreed. "It didn't seem to me she was glad to see him, that day. . . . You know—I've been trying to guess who will inherit the Bowdon fortune, now that Mr. Bowdon is dead. And Mr. Hurder's money, when he dies. Mrs. Leaford would have been Mr. Hurder's heir, you know."

Inspector Tope stared at her.

"You could outjump a kangaroo, Mrs. Tope," he said, in a deep admiration. "You're three jumps ahead of me." He rose. "You've given me enough to think about to keep me awake," he said. "And I had as much as I could stand already. Let's go to bed."

HOURS later, however, something disturbed Miss Moss. Her eyes opened and she lay listening. Inspector Tope here in the bed beside her was sleeping. Then she

heard again the sound which had roused her a moment ago.

It was the doorbell, ringing in a long peal, shrill and imperious.

In a swift haste she snapped on the shaded light beside her bed and found dressing-gown and slippers. Then the doorbell rang again, and Inspector Tope woke and asked:

"What's the matter?"

"Some one at the door," she said softly. She went out along the hall to the living-room, and heard the Inspector bestir himself behind her, but she did not wait for him. She came to the front door and opened it; and she uttered a low ejaculation of surprise and of dismay.

FOR Clint stood there, with a girl in the circle of his arm; and they were both smoke-begrimed, their faces sooted and dirty and streaked with water. Also, Clint's forehead was red and inflamed in a streak across above his eyes, and his eyebrows were singed, and she saw in that first glance an angry blister on the back of his right hand.

He said grimly: "Miss Moss, here's my June. I've brought her home!"

"You're hurt!" Miss Moss cried. She remembered to welcome the girl too. "Come in, both of you. Miss Leaford—"

June whispered: "His hands are burned! I wanted him to stop and get them fixed, but he wouldn't. Oh, take care of him."

Clint grinned in a wry fashion. "Nothing but blisters," he said. "They don't amount to anything." He saw Inspector Tope, in a faded bathrobe, behind Miss Moss; and he said briefly: "Inspector, the Hurder house burned down tonight."

Tope uttered a low ejaculation; he stood blinking in the light. There was a moment's silence; and then Clint, his arm still encircling June, added slowly:

"Mr. and Mrs. Hurder—we got them out; but—"

Miss Moss saw June shudder and tremble, and she spoke commandingly.

"Come in," she directed; and as they obeyed, she shut the door behind them. "Miss Leaford, are you hurt too?" she asked.

"No, no," June told her. "You must fix Clint. I'm all right."

Miss Moss nodded. "Don't try to talk," she insisted. "Clint, sit down. Miss Leaford, come help me. Soda, I think, is as good as anything. He needs to be cleaned up, too. And you'll want to wash your face, I expect."

"I don't matter," June said. "But Clint's burned terribly."

Clint protested with a wry smile: "Now, sweet, it's just this blister on my hand. That's nothing at all."

They found in the end that he had in fact suffered no more than minor burns on his hands and wrists, and that flame-stroke on his brow.

"I wrapped a wet handkerchief across my mouth," he explained. "To keep the smoke out. Had my hat on, and that helped too."

Miss Moss said cheerfully: "You've no more eyebrows now than a baby, Clint; and not much in the way of eyelashes." She was busy tending him.

Clint whispered, through set teeth: "That's a lot more comfortable." Miss Moss ached for him. He grinned at June, said then to the older woman: "This sweet kid has come to live with you for a while, Miss Moss. It won't be long. Just till she comes to live with me."

Miss Moss looked at June, and saw in the girl's eyes something like a plea for forgiveness; and June said softly: "He's talked so much about you. I know you must be hating me."

Miss Moss smiled fondly. "No, dear," she said gently. "No, I'm glad for both of you."

Inspector Tope chuckled. "Well, now that's all settled, to the satisfaction of the womenfolks," he suggested. "How about me? Miss Leaford, do you mind if I ask what happened? You mind telling me?"

June shook her head. "No," she said in a dull tone. "No. I'd rather talk, I think, than not." She made an uncertain gesture. "I'm—I feel as though I were walking in my sleep," she confessed. "It doesn't seem real to me."

Miss Moss said briskly: "We'll have a cup of chocolate; all feel better. June, come help me, will you?" She led the girl toward the kitchen, called over her shoulder

"Inspector Tope, let Clint rest till we come back. I want to hear."

But Clint said: "I don't want to rest." His tone suddenly was grim. "Let's go with them, Inspector," he suggested; and Miss Moss saw them come on her heels. In the little kitchen, while she was busy about the electric stove, Clint sat on the sink and drew June close beside him; and these two told what there was to tell.

"I'd taken June to see a picture," Clint explained. "But the picture didn't seem to mean much to us, so we left early, drove back to her house. And—parked outside for a little while.

"We sat there talking awhile, and then she saw that the house was on fire."

Tope nodded; and June explained:

"I must have left the front door open when I came out, or else I didn't latch it and it blew open; because we saw the flames in the front hall." And Clint continued:

"So we started to run toward the house. A car passed, and I shouted to the driver to ring in an alarm. By that time June was on the front steps. I caught her just in time. She was going in. The smoke was pouring out of the door, and there were flames inside; but she told me Mr. and Mrs. Hurder were in there."

He held June closer, and she watched him with wide eyes.

"It was raining," he explained. "I wet my handkerchief in the rain, and wrapped it over my mouth and started to crawl in the hall. But the smoke drove me back, and then June said they slept in the wing, on the ground floor; so we ran around the house to the windows of their room."

He hesitated, then went on: "The windows were shut, and the curtains were drawn, but some of the curtains were on fire. The windows were all shut tight. I managed to climb up and break the glass, with my pocket-knife for a hammer. I reached in and sprung the catch and pushed the window open. I guess that's when I burned this hand; because when I opened the window a gush of flame came out in my face, and I let go all holds and fell."

He looked at June.

"I fell on her," he said. "She was right under me. I fell on top of her."

"It didn't hurt," June insisted.

"So we tried to get in through the bathroom," Clint explained. "There wasn't any fire in there, so I got that window up and climbed in; but when I opened the door into their room, it was all on fire inside. Fire was spouting out of the wall right beside the bathroom door."

"The laundry-chute is there," June interrupted.

"And it was roaring in the cellar," Clint confessed. "I could feel it hot under my feet. The smoke was pretty bad. Then a piece of the floor in front of me burned through; and then the flames licked up at me, and I had to back out and shut the bathroom door."

INTERRUPTING, Miss Moss said: "Here, drink this chocolate!" She poured cups of it for them all. Clint tasted his, shook his head.

"Gosh, that's hot," he said. "I've had enough hot things to last me awhile."

"But you said you got them out," Tope reminded him. "Mr. and Mrs. Hurder."

"I'm coming to that," Clint explained. "We tried another window, right beside their beds. I smashed it open, and smoke poured out, but no flames. So I straddled the sill and my foot hit their bed inside." He spoke rapidly, his eyes fixed straight ahead. "I felt some one, and I dragged Mrs. Hurder up and lowered her out of the window to June, and then him. The bed was all afire, little flames."

And he said, looking at the girl beside him: "They weren't burned much, I don't think. We were just in time. The fire spread awfully fast."

Inspector Tope suggested: "Fire department must have been there by then!"

Clint shook his head. "No, they weren't! They didn't get there till after Mrs. Taine did. Not till after Asa did, as a matter of fact. June and I had been pretty busy, but it must have been quite a while."

Miss Moss echoed: "Mrs. Taine?"

"You see," Clint explained, "Mrs. Taine and Asa were staying with Mrs. Bowdon last night. Mrs. Taine said they didn't hear anything till their lights went out, and she went to look at the fuses, and saw the fire through the pantry window. She came running over, just about the time we got the old people out; and then Asa came. He and I carried them into the Bowdon house, out of the rain. And Mrs. Taine and June started taking care of them. But June came out again when I did."

"Were they dressed?" Tope asked. "Mrs. Taine and Asa?"

"Oh, yes," Clint said casually; and he went on: "By the time the fire engines came, one wing was all afire, and the other was well started; and they couldn't get the plug off the hydrant right away. There's only one hydrant, and that was three or four hundred yards down the hill. The whole thing went, before they got it checked at all."

"Burn to the ground?"

"The floors fell in," Clint assented. "And part of the roof. I don't know; maybe the walls wouldn't go."

June's eyes were closed, and Miss Moss tried to sign to Inspector Tope to be still; but he asked insistently: "What about the others? Mr. Taine, and Rab? Where were they?"

It was June who answered: "Rab had gone to Providence right after supper," she said. "He had a case in court there tomorrow morning. And Uncle Justus is deaf. He wouldn't hear anything." She remembered: "We saw him turn out his light to go to bed, just before we saw the fire."

"Saw him?" Tope echoed.

"Saw his light go out," June amended. "In the kitchen. He liked to go to sleep in his chair after supper, and sometimes he didn't wake up at all. But we saw his light go out."

Miss Moss asked: "Why didn't Mr. and Mrs. Hurder wake up, I wonder?"

Clint suggested: "Smoke got them, maybe."

But June said: "They slept pretty soundly, usually. And Aunt Evie gave them some warm milk when she put them to bed." Her voice for a moment was dry, as though it might crack. She repeated: "They slept soundly."

Tope looked at Miss Moss; and then he asked awkwardly: "About Mr. and Mrs. Hurder. How—what do you think?"

"They were unconscious," Clint explained. "The firemen got a pulmotor. Doctor Cabler was there. I didn't wait to hear. I brought June away."

Miss Moss said: "I'm glad you did, Clint. Miss Leaford, I'm going to put you to bed in our spare room. Clint, you will stay here tonight?"

June protested: "Oh, I don't want to go to bed."

And Tope reflected: "Funny that the fire department took so long to answer." He asked Clint: "Mrs. Taine or any of them surprised to see you there? Surprised to see June up and dressed?"

Clint nodded, with a smile at June. "Matter of fact, we had quite a row," he admitted. "June and I had Mr. and Mrs. Hurder out of the house when Mrs. Taine got there. She asked if they were dead, and I didn't know. So she knelt down to feel them, and then Asa came along, and she told us to carry them into the Bowdon house. We did, and about that time the firemen got there, and I went outside again and took June with me."

The others were listening intently, and Miss Moss watched the girl and liked her. "But Mrs. Taine came out after us," he explained. "June had on a new dress that Asa had given her, and Mrs. Taine didn't approve of that. She wanted to know why June wasn't in bed and asleep, and who I was, and about this dress. . . . She had burned her hand, and maybe that upset her, but she was pretty unpleasant, and I got good and mad."

"Finally she told June to go into the Bowdon house and take off that dress and go to bed, and I got up on my ear. I told her June was coming home with me."

June lifted her head; and Clint held her close. "Mrs. Taine thought I was crazy," he said. "But June stood up for herself."



CLINTON JERVIES

"I told her I never would live there again," the girl cried, in a sudden passion of grief and woe. "Oh, I can't go back. Ever! It was terrible, always, there."

Miss Moss came quickly to her side. "Now that's enough for tonight," she decided. "I'm going to put you to bed, child. Come."

"No, no," June protested. "I can't. I don't want to be alone."

But Clint said: "Hush, darling. You're all right now." So she submitted, trusting him; and they led her between them through the hall to the room Miss Moss designed for her; and at the door the older woman sent Clint back.

She ministered to June with an infinite gentleness. Miss Moss could be efficient without being brisk. A warm tub, fresh night-garments, smooth sheets. "I'll let you see Clint for one minute," she said, "if you promise to go to sleep afterward." The girl's head on the pillow nodded submissively; and Miss Moss called Clint. She left him with the girl, and found the Inspector in the living-room.

"Asleep, is she?" the old man asked.

"Almost," she assented. "So dreadfully tired. She'll sleep for hours."

He nodded toward the telephone. "Heale called me up," he said briefly. "Mrs. Hurder is dead. Mr. Hurder may get better. Heale heard Clint was out there, and he wants to see the boy. And me. We'll have to go right out."

"Why?" Miss Moss asked.

The Inspector said soberly: "The fire chief figures the fire was set. Gas exploded in the cellar." Miss Moss nodded; and Tope exploded in a grim wrath: "I told Heale, days ago, that when a man starts killing, he may go on."

She touched his hand, comforting him; and he asked: "What do you think?"

She hesitated. "If Rab Taine was in Providence, and Asa and Mrs. Taine and Mrs. Bowdon were together, then only Mr. Taine was alone."

"They found Taine asleep in a chair in the kitchen of his house," he said. "I asked Heale. But Glover's still missing."

She looked at him curiously. "Asleep?" she repeated. "But Miss Leaford said they saw Mr. Taine turn out the light!"

"She said they saw the light go out," Tope corrected. "Mrs. Taine said the lights went out in the Bowdon house, too. But anyway, Taine was asleep in the chair when they found him. Or pretended to be."

Miss Moss considered. "I should like to know," she reflected, "why his light went out?"

"Heale told me once that the three houses were all on one meter," Tope recalled. "Wired from the Hurder cellar. The fire might have shorted the wires, or melted them."

"Then why did the current go off in the Taine house before the fire started?" she insisted. "And what started the fire? And why did it spread so fast? And why was the department so slow in answering the alarm? And how did Mrs. Taine burn her hand?"

Inspector Tope made a gesture of amused surrender. "I don't know, Mrs. Tope," he protested. "Wish I did."

She nodded, smiling faintly. "I'll take care of Miss Leaford," she promised. "While you find out the answers!"

Chapter Eleven

TOPE and Clint arrived at Kenesaw Hill toward four in the morning, to find the house all collapsed into a mass of timbers through which like rats the little flames still played. And all about, in a thin circle, curious folk were standing by. Clint pulled up beside the road, and Inspector Heale saw their arrival and came across to meet them.

"That you, Tope?" he asked. "Young Jervies with you? Where's the girl?" He was peering into the car.

Inspector Tope said: "Mrs. Tope put her to bed. She was tired out. Clint here can tell you all there is to tell."

Heale nodded. "You spotted the fire, didn't you, Jervies?" he asked.

So Clint told his story, briefly, the Inspector listening

without interruption till the young man was done. Then Inspector Heale began to question him; and Tope left them together and walked over toward the fire. There were two or three scores of people here, roused by the alarm or awakened by the glare of the flames against the rainy sky, and come to watch the conflagration to its end. Tope moved among them quietly, listening to the fragmentary conversations here and there.

Then he saw Asa Taine, in the shadows by the old barn, talking to some one—Lissa Thayer.

Her countenance was in darkness, since Asa stood between her and the fire, so Tope could not see her expression; but he saw Asa bend nearer her, his arms encircling her in a swift embrace, his face close to hers.

Then some one called Tope's name, and the old man saw Lissa slip away into the darkness as Heale and Clint came to his side. At the same time Asa recognized Clint, and he approached them.

"Hullo, Jervies," he said, in a friendly tone. "What have you done with June?" Heale and Tope were a little to one side.

"I took her home," Clint explained. "I thought she ought to get away from here."

Asa nodded approvingly. "It's been hard on her here, even before tonight," he assented. "But if you don't bring her back, you'll have a hornets' nest around your head. They won't let her get away." He grinned encouragingly. "Stick to her, Jervies. Hang on to her. Don't let them scare you."

"I'm keeping June," Clint told him stoutly. He spoke to Tope, uneasily. "I'm pretty tired," he said. "I'll go home, if you don't mind. Be with them there."

Tope nodded; and Asa turned and saw the Inspector. "Hullo!" he exclaimed in surprise. "Inspector Tope, eh?" He looked past Tope at Heale, a swift conjecture in his eyes.

Clint departed, and a fireman joined them. Water dripped from the rim of his white helmet, and his rubber coat was glistening. He said to Inspector Heale: "We can't do a thing for hours yet. Too hot."

Asa demanded: "Do what? What do you mean?"

Inspector Heale hesitated. "This is Chief Mason, Tope," he explained; and then to Asa: "Why, Mr. Taine, we think this fire was set."

"Set?" Asa was rigid. Tope, watching him, thought the man used an effort to control his voice. "Why?"

"To kill Mr. and Mrs. Hurder," said Inspector Heale harshly.

For a long moment there was silence. Chief Mason moved away, back to the fire. Asa stood thoughtful, with bowed head. Then his eyes shifted, and he looked past Inspector Heale, and called in a low tone: "Rab!"

Inspector Tope swung around in time to see Rab Taine coming toward them from the direction of the old barn.

"Hullo," he said in a level monotone. "What's the matter, Asa?"

And Asa told his brother: "This is Inspector Heale. He thinks the fire was set, to kill Grandma and Grandpa Hurder."

Tope watched Rab intently. "Set?" the young man exclaimed. "Kill? For heaven's sake, why should anyone—" He stared from one to another. "Why should anyone do that?" he demanded.

"Same reason some one killed Mrs. Leaford," said Heale implacably; and Rab cried:

"Aunt Kitty? Why, she took an overdose—"

But Heale said grimly: "Oh, she was killed, all right." There was something like a harsh triumphant relish in his words. "Murdered, Taine! And so were these old folks tonight. Or Mrs. Hurder, anyway. Mr. Hurder may get well."

"For heaven's sake," Rab protested, "if you thought that about Aunt Kitty, why haven't you done something before now? Why haven't you said so before? You might have prevented this tonight!"

Inspector Heale confessed: "I figured there'd be a better chance of finding out—"

"Blast it!" Rab cried. "You've fiddled around with your figuring; and now— You're as bad as—"

But Asa interposed reasonably: "Steady, Rab. I guess Inspector Heale used his best judgment. After all, he



GRANDMA HURDER

couldn't be sure Kitty was poisoned. Maybe her heart cracked, let go."

He added: "And this tonight may have been an accident. You can't tell."

Inspector Heale asked Asa: "Where were you, tonight?"

Asa looked at him slowly, then grinned. "You cross-examined me once before, Inspector," he remarked, in a dry amusement. "Tonight? I was asleep on the couch in the dining-room next door." He nodded toward the Bowdon house.

"Asleep, eh?"

"Till Mother woke me, yes."

"Where was she?"

"With Grandma Bowdon."

"Funny you didn't wake up, or hear anything."

"I don't think it's so very funny," Asa assured him calmly. "I sleep soundly."

"Dressed, were you?"

"Shoes off, and coat," Asa answered.

Rab interrupted: "Asa, you said they questioned you before? You knew what they thought about Aunt Kitty?"

"They told me, yes," Asa explained.

Rab cried: "Then why didn't you tell us?"

But Tope, in the background, suggested mildly:

"I hear you were in Providence tonight, Mr. Taine."

Rab stared at him almost truculently. "What of it?" he demanded. "If you're so confident—"

But Asa interrupted. "Oh, Rab, don't be high hat," he protested. He said to the inspectors: "He was in Providence at the Grand Hotel. Went down early in the evening. Had to make an appearance in court in the morning. Mother telephoned him what had happened, and he came home."

Rab made a gesture of impatience. "Why humor them, Asa?" he asked angrily. "I don't intend to." He turned away.

Inspector Tope watched him go, and then he spoke to Asa in a courteous tone. "Taine," he said, "I used to be a policeman. Got in the habit of asking questions. Mind my asking you one?"

"No," Asa assured him. "Anything you like."

"Mrs. Leaford leave a will?"

"No."

"Mr. Bowdon? Mr. Hurder?"

"Yes, of course."

"What were the terms?"

Asa looked at him thoughtfully; and he glanced at Inspector Heale. He said: "I'll tell you anything I can, but I can't help you on that. My father drew the wills. You'll have to ask him."

"Where is he?" Inspector Heale demanded. "Where was he tonight?"

Asa smiled faintly. "He went to sleep in a kitchen chair after supper," he explained. "Mother found him still asleep there when she went to telephone Rab."

"Asleep through all this hullabaloo?"

"He's stone deaf, you know."

Tope asked gently: "Taine, if one of the connections didn't do this, who did? Anyone live around here who might? Jim Glovere, or the Thayers?"

He saw Asa taut and stiff, like a fencer on guard; but before he could reply, Rab spoke at Tope's elbow. The young man had returned unseen, and he said in the tone of one conveying an order that must be obeyed:

"My mother wants a word with you gentlemen. Please follow me."

Without the slightest hesitation, Tope moved briskly after Rab. Heale almost reluctantly followed him, but Asa stayed behind.

WHEN Tope and Inspector Heale followed Rab into the house where lamps were burning to replace the now useless electric lights, there was stir and movement behind the closed doors of the dining-room in which Denman Hurder still lay unconscious and near death; and the parlor doors likewise were closed. But Mrs. Bowdon and Mrs. Taine waited for them in the sitting-room; and Mrs. Bowdon was in a chair that faced the door by which they entered. Tope had an impression of mass, of a white mass that would not easily be moved. Her hair was white; so was her cheek; so was the shapeless dressing gown she wore. She sat in a ponderous immobility which had nevertheless a suggestion of power held in restraint; and her eyes were alive and hard and cold.

Mrs. Taine, on the other hand, met them at the door. This was a spare, thin woman; her thin hair was black; her cheek was sallow; her lips were thin. She spoke in a soft sibilance, in keen syllables that suggested the slicing stroke of razor-blades.

"I sent for you gentlemen," she told them simply. "My son tells me you are circulating the suggestion that Mrs. Leaford's death, and the tragedy tonight, were not accident but design. I will not permit such nonsense. If such rumors become current, I shall know whom to blame, and I will hold you both responsible. Let the talk end here and now. I bid you good day."

Inspector Tope waited for Inspector Heale to speak. Rab exclaimed, in a restrained anger: "You heard her, gentlemen. That is all."

And when Heale still was silent, Mrs. Bowdon said, without moving her lips: "Outrageous. Impudent audacity. Clowns."

"One thing more," Mrs. Taine remembered. "Mr. Clinton Jervies took June Leaford away with him, against my express wish. She must be back here in the morning. We take care of our own, we Kenesaws; we ask no favors anywhere. See to it that this is done, or I shall know what steps to take."

Heale remained mute; but Tope suggested gently: "How old is Miss Leaford, ma'am?"

Mrs. Taine looked at him. Most people were somewhat melted by Tope's mild kindness, but she was not. "She is of age, yes," she said calmly. "But that is immaterial. She is an inexperienced child, quite incompetent to decide things for herself. Kitty Leaford was no fit mother for her, but I have done my duty by June, and will continue to. I expect her here in the morning."

"I don't know as she'll want to come," Tope replied. "You see, ma'am, there are unhappy memories here for her."

"What she wants and what she remembers are of no importance," Mrs. Taine assured him; and Mrs. Bowdon said in the heavy tone of one accustomed to be obeyed:

"Tell June I said to come home."

BUT Inspector Heale found his tongue at last, forgetting his awe of these two women in remembrance of his duty and his rights. "Now, wait a minute," he insisted. "You folks on the Hill have gone your own gait in a lot of things; but this looks like murder to me, and it's my duty to check up on it. Some questions I want to ask you. I know you're feeling pretty bad right now, so if you want to wait till morning—"

Mrs. Bowdon said heavily: "There is nothing I can tell you. My husband lies dead in the house. I wish to be alone."

And Mrs. Taine added, in her slow, precise fashion: "We have no information to give you. My mother was in bed and asleep. I was with her. My son Asa was asleep in the dining-room. My husband was at home. My son Rab was in Providence. Miss Leaford was—I don't know where. I knew nothing till the electric lights went out, and I started to look at the fuse-box, and saw the flames from the pantry window."

Rab insisted: "Gentlemen, you can't annoy these ladies! They have suffered—"

But Mrs. Taine said quietly: "Nonsense, Rab. It is not a question of annoyance, or of endurance. I do not choose to be questioned; that is all." She repeated: "And I wish this dangerous gossip stopped, now." She nodded toward the door in a gesture of dismissal.

Tope said gently: "I see you burned your hand!"

Mrs. Taine eyed him steadily. "Yes, when I lighted one of the lamps," she said. "The match-head—"

But Rab cried bitterly: "Gentlemen, I won't permit this! You must go."

Tope looked to Inspector Heale for guidance; and the other yielded. So the two men came out together; and out of doors, in the lee of the house, sheltered from the rain, Heale mopped his brow.

"I never could handle a woman," he said helplessly. "One reason I never married."

"The thing that saves us," Tope commented, "is that women mostly want the right things. If they ever all got started on the wrong track at once, it might be bad. They're most generally right." He added, half to himself: "But that isn't always so."

And as they walked from the house, Tope suggested:

"You'll want to check up on Rab Taine at the Grand in Providence, Inspector. And on that phone-call from Mrs. Taine. It will help to fix the time things happened. Clint figured the fire started about eleven or a little past."

Heale nodded. "I'll get after it in the morning," he agreed. Then a figure passed them, and Tope recognized the white helmet. He called:

"Oh, Chief!"

CHIEF MASON stopped, and turned; and Tope with a nod toward the ruins of the burned houses asked:

"You think you can find anything in there?"

"It will be a piece of luck if we do," the Chief confessed. "Arson's always hard to prove." He added: "There was a gas-explosion, sure. And by the way the fire ripped up through that laundry-chute, I should think oil had been poured down the chute, or gasoline. It's not likely we'll find anything, but we might."

And he said grimly: "But I'll go through the ashes with a sifter. If there's anything there, I mean to get it. Old Denman Hurder was a gentleman. He always had a word for any man on the street. I liked him."

"He's still alive," Tope pointed out.

"He's full of smoke, and gas too," Mason replied. "Must have had enough gas to kill him."

"No chance it was accident?" Tope asked soberly.

"Might have been," the Chief grudgingly assented. "There was a gas-leak somewhere. The cellar and their room must have been full of it. And crossed wires sputtering might have set it off. The place was a fire-trap. Mr. Hurder had had electric lights put in, with a decent installation, but then the others connected up to his line, and did the work themselves. Poor job, probably. It's a wonder they hadn't had trouble before."

Tope nodded, and he asked: "Then how do you know it wasn't just crossed wires, and a leaky union in the gas-line?"

The Chief said honestly: "I don't know how I know. But when you've been in this business as long as I have, there are some fires that don't smell right; that's all. You get a hunch they're wrong, without knowing why."

The Inspector looked at him approvingly. He had observed something of the sort himself, so many times. He inquired:

"Chief, were you slow in answering the alarm tonight?"

"Don't think so," the Chief assured him. "I wasn't there, but nobody said anything about a delay."

"I'd like to know what time the alarm came in," Tope told him. "And what time the first apparatus got here."

"I'll get it for you," the Chief promised. He turned back to the dying fire.

Tope and Inspector Heale went on to the police car beside the road; and Heale confessed in an irascible tone: "We've got almighty little to go on, Tope. No place to begin."

"I like to find out as much about the time things happened as I can," Tope suggested. "Let's drive down right now and check up on that telephone-call. Nothing to do here till daylight, anyway."

Heale agreed; so they departed on this mission. Heale phoned to ask the Providence police to make inquiries about Rab Taine; and they got from Fire Headquarters a record of the alarm. Then Providence called back; Heale answered, and reported to Tope, with a dry amusement:

"Here's something! Rab Taine was there, all right; but he wasn't alone. 'Mr. and Mrs.' Registered in, under his own name, late last night, checked out about midnight, after he got a phone-call."

Tope felt his pulses quicken; and Heale commented: "Pretty cool proposition, going off on a spree, with his grandpa dead at home."

He seemed to see no more in the incident than an ugly intrigue, and Tope offered no comment. So presently they drove back up Kenesaw Hill. There they could only wait, while the embers of the Hurder house still smoked and steamed. Inspector Heale went presently to sleep, here beside Tope in the car.

A gray and miserable dawn came at last, through the drenched and sodden trees to reveal the desolation here. Where the Hurder house had stood was a black pit now, with embers and half-burned timbers scattered all around. Firemen were busy; and steam still rose from the embers. Dawn became day, and Inspector Heale woke, and took Tope away to breakfast and brought him back again.

They could only wait; and it was near noon when the Chief at last came swiftly toward them, with something in his hand. He extended it triumphantly. "There, look at that!" he cried.

Tope saw what it was: a large fuse of the sort used in electric circuits designed to carry a considerable current. It was a cylinder some three inches long, with brass or copper ends, of heavy waxed cardboard composition.

At one place this tough composition, harder than wood, had been whittled with a knife till the soft metal conveyer within was exposed. This metal now was fused. The composition was smutted all around the opening. The whole was set as though it had lain in water.

And Chief Mason cried triumphantly: "There you are! That's how it was done."

Tope turned the thing in his hand. "Just how do you mean?" he asked. And the Chief explained:

"Some one turned on the gas in the cellar, let it run for a while; then he short-circuited the light wires, somehow, and blew this fuse. The flash would set off the gas." And he added: "It was a piece of luck we got this. The explosion must have blown it off the wall, and it fell in a drain-ditch full of water, didn't burn."

Inspector Tope felt a quick premonition of success. It was such accidents as this which had betrayed murderers before, and would again. He looked at Inspector Heale wondering whether the other had the same thought; but Heale's eyes were fixed on some one a little distance off, and when Tope swung that way, he saw the man whom June had called Uncle Jim approaching them at swift long strides.

He came near, and he cried: "Where's—Miss Leaford?"

Heale said harshly: "Where've you been? I've been looking for you."

Glover made an impatient gesture. "Is she all right?" he insisted.

Tope said gently: "Yes, she's all right, Mr. Leaford."

And at that word Heale swung toward him, then back to the other man. "You Mr. Leaford?" he demanded in a quick astonishment.

There was a long silence; the other at last lifted his hand helplessly. "Yes. Yes. When Kitty died, I went away . . . Came back yesterday. But I didn't know about this till just now."

"Where were you last night?" Heale demanded.

"In my cabin down there."

"Didn't wake up?"

"No. I'd lost sleep lately."

Heale made a gesture of satisfaction. "I guess you're the man I want," he said.

June's father stared at him with narrowing eyes. "What are you talking about?" he demanded.

It was Tope who answered. "We think Mrs. Leaford was murdered, think this last night was murder too," he said.

And Heale added in a complacent tone: "So that's why I want you, Mr. Leaford. You're going for a little ride with me."

Chapter Twelve

JUNE woke to strange surroundings; to a room she had never seen before, a bed she did not know. She woke, and lay with wide eyes, remembering; and for a while she was content to stay abed, putting her thoughts in order, assorting all her horrified impressions of the night before. . . . At last she heard some one stop outside her door and stand still there as though listening; for a moment she shuddered with vague terrors, then decided this must be a friendly step, and called:

"Come in."

So Miss Moss opened the door; and June saw kindness in her, and strength and affection. The older woman came gently to her bedside; she said quietly:

"Good morning, Miss Leaford. Did you sleep well?"

"I must have, I think," June confessed. "What time is it?"

"Past eleven," Miss Moss told her gently. "Stay in bed. I'll bring you some coffee."

But June sat up quickly. "Oh, no. So late!" And she asked: "Where's Clint?"

"Sound asleep."

"Is he all right?"

"Yes; yes, my dear. Perfectly. Just a few burns and blisters."

"He was so brave," June whispered proudly; and Miss Moss said smilingly:

"He's sleeping like a child. He took Inspector Tope out there last night, after you went to bed; but he came back soon himself, and I took care of him."

June nodded. "You've always taken care of him, haven't you?"

"Since his mother died, yes. —Of him and of Clara."

The girl insisted on arising; and she and Miss Moss had a long hour together before Clint woke at all, moving quietly, speaking in half-whispers so that he might not be disturbed. Once the telephone rang, and Miss Moss answered it. June heard her speak in a steady negation to some insistent one, and guessed the truth before Miss Moss confessed to her.

"That was your cousin," the older woman explained. "Mr. Taine—wanting you to come home. He said he would come fetch you."

"Rab or Asa?" June asked, almost fearfully.

"I don't know."

"Oh, I don't want to go," the girl declared. "I can't bear to go back there."

"You need not," Miss Moss assured her calmly. "You will stay here as long as you choose, my dear." She smiled and lifted the receiver off the hook. "We'll not even answer the telephone," she declared. "Besides, it might wake Clint. He needs sleep."

"I want to see him," June admitted, her cheeks bright; Miss Moss smiled, and on a sudden impulse put her arm around the girl.

Later Miss Moss heard a buzzing in the telephone, and it continued so persistently that she lifted the receiver. This was Aunt Evie, insisting in her even, pitiless tones that June come home. But Miss Moss yielded not an inch; and June, when she heard who it was, cried:

"I can't, Miss Moss. Mother's dead, and now Grandma. Oh, I can't go back to them."

Her voice was raised; it may have roused Clint, asleep in Inspector Tope's own bed. He came in pajamas to the door, his hair rumpled, his eyes drowsy, still not fully waked. But when June saw him there, she ran into his arms, and he held her close; and Miss Moss said in a deep and tender mirth:

"She wouldn't be happy till you did wake up, Clint. I couldn't please her."

June looked back over her shoulder and said gratefully: "You were sweet to me. But—I did want Clint too."

And Clint said heartily: "Quite right too, young lady. You show good judgment. Wait till I jump into a shower, and I'll—" He disappeared, and June looked reluctantly at the door he closed between them. Miss Moss laughed.

"You can't be with him all the time, dear," she reminded the girl. "He'll be out soon." They heard the shower going, heard Clint's voice uplifted in tuneless song. Later, while he was dressing, she talked with him through the door; and when he came out again she linked her arm in his. Miss Moss, watching them, said in amusement:

"You belong to her now, Clint. One of her possessions. See the child!"

June colored deeply; but she said in grave tones: "It's I who belong to him, if he wants me." Her eyes rose to Clint's. "I'll have to hold fast to you now, Clint," she whispered. "May I, please?"

And Miss Moss turned toward the kitchen, calling back to them: "When you begin to think of things like breakfast, come out here."

So June was able to forget for a while those horrors of last night; she and Clint and Miss Moss laughed together over the breakfast-table, and while they washed dishes afterward. But early in the afternoon Inspector Tope came home. The old man was tired and worn and haggard, and his clothes were sodden. Miss Moss seized on him and hustled him, protesting, away to change; she would have put him to bed, but the Inspector balked.

June asked Clint desperately:

"What is it, dear? What has happened? Why is he—that way?" And suddenly: "Why do you call him 'Inspector'? Is he a policeman?"

"He used to be," Clint told her. "For years." He thought uncertainly to distract her attention; and he said almost eagerly: "He can tell you the greatest stories, about the cases he had, the things he did. I guess he's the greatest detective they ever had around here."

She stared at him with narrowed eyes. "Detective?" she whispered. "But why—" And suddenly Clint saw the blood drain out of her lips and leave them white as marble; but her eyes were steady. "Clint," she demanded, "does he think—"

But he was saved the necessity of answering, for Inspector Tope and Miss Moss came out to them again; and June turned to the older man. "You think some one killed my mother?" she said swiftly.

Clint protested something, and Inspector Tope stood uncertain; but June turned to Miss Moss. "Tell me," she insisted. "Is it true?"

Miss Moss answered her. "Yes, June," she said. "I think it is true." Her voice was infinitely kind.

June's eyes closed; she seemed to grow tall, she stood so straight and still. She looked at them all again, and said slowly: "You must tell me. Oh, tell me what to do."

Miss Moss and Clint were silent, full of tenderness; but Inspector Tope spoke in a deep approval. "You're fine, Miss Leaford," he said. "This is hard for you, and I know it, and understand. I would like to talk to you," he explained gravely. "If you can stand talk, questions."

Tope began with Mrs. Leaford; he came at last to the tragedy of the night before. "Your grandmother died," he said. "Mr.

Hurder is still alive. He ought to be in a hospital, to have every chance; but Mrs. Taine insists on keeping him there. Attending him herself—"

He was silent for a moment, frowning, foreboding in his eyes. Then he went on:

"Now you've already told me about your mother and the night she died. You remember, when I came out with Clint. But Miss Leaford, I want to ask you about last night—about everything that happened before you left the house to meet Clint: who you saw, what you did, what other people did."

So June, picking her words with care, arranging her memories in order, began to tell him; and while she talked, he made an occasional note, on a pad of paper, till she concluded at last:

"And then Clint brought me away, brought me in here."

Inspector Tope nodded with a deep approval. "That's fine," he said; and he explained: "I've been trying to figure out the times when some of these things happened. I've made a schedule. Some of this you don't know about; but you and Clint look at it and see if it's about right, as far as you know."

He handed her the pad on which he had been writing, and Clint stood at her shoulder so that they read it together.

Miss Leaford began getting supper before dark.

Everyone came to supper except Mrs. Bowdon. They came in relays.

About 7:50 Mrs. Taine came to put Mr. and Mrs. Hurder to bed.

About eight, Asa Taine came for a cup of tea, used milk out of the bottle.

After he left, Mrs. Taine heated milk for Mr. and Mrs. Hurder. Rab Taine came in to say good night. The milk was on the stove. He stood near the stove. Then he left for Providence.

About 8:25 Mrs. Taine left, Mr. and Mrs. Hurder in bed.

About 8:30 Miss Leaford turned out downstairs lights and went to her room. About 8:45 she met Clint outside.

About 11:05 Clint and Miss Leaford returned and stopped in front of the house.

About 11:10 they saw the fire.

At 11:19 exactly, the alarm was rung in. The apparatus arrived at exactly 11:23. Mrs. Taine and Asa arrived at the fire about 11:21.

At exactly 11:51 Mrs. Taine put in a call for Providence to her son.



JUSTUS T. TAINE

While June and Clint studied this schedule in silence, Tope explained:

"You know when you went upstairs, and when you went out to meet Clint; and I've guessed at the times before that. I know when the alarm was rung in, and when the apparatus arrived; and by allowing for all you and Clint did after you saw the fire and before the apparatus arrived, I can figure out about the time you saw the fire."

"Yes," June said. "This seems about right."

"I've a record of the call to Providence," Tope added. "How bad was the fire then—when your aunt went to phone?"

"The whole house was burning," June decided.

Tope nodded. "There's one other question I've got to ask you," he said gravely. "Do you think any one of—your relatives might have given your mother poison? Or set the house on fire?"

"No, no," June whispered. "They were hard and stubborn; but— No. No."

"Did any of them except your mother ever take a sleeping-powder?" he insisted.

She hesitated. "Why, yes," she said doubtfully. "Uncle Justus did." And she explained in a faint amusement: "He really had insomnia, sometimes. It seems odd, because he could always sleep in a chair; but sometimes he couldn't sleep in bed. Doctor Cabler gave him some tablets once; but Aunt Evie took them away from him, wouldn't let him use them. So poor Uncle Justus used to ask me to give him a tablet out of Mother's bottle, now and then; and I know Rab took some for him once."

"When was that?" Tope asked gravely.

"About a month ago," June reflected. "I found Rab in the bathroom; he told me."

Tope wagged his head; but he did not push this matter further. "Did you know Miss Thayer?" he asked. "Her name's Lissa."

"Yes," June assented. "That is, I saw her sometimes, when I was walking in the woods."

"Did you ever see your cousin Asa with her?" Tope asked. The girl shook her head; and Tope explained:

"I saw them kiss each other tonight, at the fire. They were back in the shadows, but I saw."

"Asa?" June cried incredulously.

"You never knew anything about that?"

"Oh, no," she declared. "But if Asa loved her, he wouldn't have dared tell anyone. They'd have been furious. Aunt Evie, and Grandma Bowdon, I mean."

"You think so?" Tope prompted her.

"Yes! Mother used to tell me—" She hesitated, went bravely on: "Mother used to tell me that if I married without their consent, they would crush me. They did crush her, you know."

INSPECTOR TOPE nodded; and he picked his words with care. "You remember Mr. Glover, who lived in the cabin in the woods—the man you called Uncle Jim. You liked him, didn't you?"

"Yes," she said. "So much. He went away, after Mother died."

"He's come back," the Inspector said.

"Where is he?" she cried eagerly.

Tope hesitated, he confessed at last: "Inspector Heale is holding him."

"You mean—arrested him?" Her cheek was pale.

"Heale thought he might have had something to do—"

"Oh," she protested in loyal pride, "Uncle Jim wouldn't. No, no."

"He came back at noon today," Tope explained. "Came back asking for you. . . . Miss Leaford, I used to be a policeman. I'm trying to find out what happened out there. You understand that we are sure your mother, somehow, was poisoned. Some one put some extra tablets in that glass of milk she drank. It might have been done while the milk was still in the bottle, in Mrs. Bowdon's refrigerator. Or afterward in your grandmother's kitchen, or on the way upstairs, or after it was taken upstairs. And anyone might have done it. Anyone at all."

The girl was trembling, but her eyes were steady.

"We haven't much to go on, in that," he admitted. "And this thing last night is about as hard to see through. We know how the fire was started. Some one fixed a fuse so

that when it blew out, it would make a spark or a flame. And some one turned on gas in the cellar, so it would explode. Any short-circuit would make that fuse blow out. Some one made a short-circuit, somewhere. It could be done by taking out a bulb and putting a penny in the socket, and screwing the bulb in again, if the current was on."

He added: "I think I know where it was done. There's an electric light outside the Taines' kitchen door. The bulb is broken, the screw end of it still in the socket, bits of glass on the steps. I guess it was broken last night. Some one could have made a short-circuit there."

He hesitated, said half to himself: "And that was done while you and Clint were sitting out front, in the car."

June beat softly on her knee with her fist. "I think I heard it," she said. "A sort of pop. Remember, Clint?"

But Clint shook his head; and Tope said: "You couldn't have heard it that far, in the rain."

And he went on: "It might have been an outsider, or it might have been—your Uncle Jim. Or it might have been Justus Taine. He's supposed to have been asleep in his own kitchen, but he was alone. Or it might have been your cousin Rab, but I don't see how." He looked at Miss Moss, explaining to her. "He was in Providence," he said. "Got there at nine-thirty, or a little after, and put his car in a garage. Went right to bed. Answered the telephone at eleven fifty-three. Got his car a little after twelve and came right home."

And he went on, facing June again: "Or it might have been your cousin Asa. He was alone, in the Bowdon house, downstairs. He could have short-circuited the lights right there. Or Mrs. Taine. She could have done it. Or Mrs. Bowdon—any of them. It might not have been done at the Taines'. All it needed was to put a penny in a light-socket and screw in the bulb, and the fuse would go."

June said wearily: "Oh, I'm sure, I'm sure it wasn't any of them. It couldn't be."

And when he did not speak, she cried: "Why should they do a thing like that?"

He said slowly: "They might have been afraid—afraid of something we don't know about. Or wanting something." And he spoke to Miss Moss. "Justus Taine has all the wills, Bowdon's and Hurder's. He wouldn't tell me what's in them. They'll be public by and by, but—there may not be time." His tone was deeply troubled. He spoke to June. "You and your cousins would inherit all the money, I expect," he said. "All the money in the family."

"I don't know," she confessed. "Was there much?" But before he could answer, she cried: "That doesn't matter now, though." Rising anger steadied her. "I want to know who killed my mother," she said.

Tope looked at her appraisingly. "Mean that, do you?"

"Of course."

"Because," he said, "you can help find out! This is ugly business to talk about, hard to believe. But Miss Leaford, your grandpa, Mr. Hurder, is out there, in that house, near dying. It wouldn't take much to make him die. Whoever set fire to the house last night wants him dead." And after a moment Tope added soberly: "They refuse to have a nurse for him."

He shook his head; he said in a grim and stricken tone: "I think there's an insane murderer loose out there—insane, and clever as a cat. He's managed to get by so far without leaving a trace. It's the first time in forty years that I've seen a case without one single lead."

Clint cried: "What are you getting at, Inspector?"

Tope hesitated for a moment. He ignored Clint, said slowly then: "There's one more thing you ought to know, Miss Leaford: Inspector Heale has arrested this man you call Uncle Jim. Heale thinks he did it."

"But why should he?" she protested. "What reason had he?"

And Tope said briefly, kindly: "He's your father, June."

For a long moment then, silence held them all. June sat still, and the color drained out of her cheeks till she was white as snow. Clint caught her, and she clung to him; yet she did not hide her face from them. She stared at Inspector Tope, and her eyes were streaming, and her lips worked as though she would speak, but no words



GRANDMA BOWDON

came. She watched him, and tears streamed down her cheeks, and she began to hiccough with smothered sobs.

Tope spoke slowly, in explicit terms. "Your mother ran away with him when she was a girl," he said. "By and by they came home to live; and after two years there, the old folks broke it up. Mrs. Bowdon and Mrs. Taine, he told me, turned your mother against him. He said Mr. and Mrs. Hurder were on his side, but the others broke them down. Finally he left. He wanted your mother to go with him, but she was afraid, so he went away alone."

And he explained: "He didn't know about you till afterward, years afterward. When you were about ten years old, he came back and met you in the woods, and you told him who you were. So he stayed, to be near you, lived in the cabin there. They wanted to put him off the land; but there wasn't any divorce, and he threatened to make trouble unless they let him stay. He didn't ask anything of them except to be near you, to see you sometimes."

He looked at Miss Moss, sure she would understand. "I guess he still loved Kitty Leaford," he said. "When she died, it hit him hard. He went away; but he came back yesterday, says he was asleep in his cabin all last night. So Heale has locked him up."

"It would seem simple enough to Heale," she pointed out. "Heale will say that Mr. Leaford killed Mrs. Leaford and then the Hurders, so that June would inherit their money. Then he could claim June as his daughter, and get her and the money too."

June moved, about to speak; and Clint held her close, protectingly. She said faintly:

"I can remember once, when I was a little girl, Aunt Evie tried to make me stay away from him, and I told him, and he came to the house to see her, and after that she never bothered me. . . .

"But he didn't do this!" She rubbed her eyes with her hands like one just waking; she stood up, supporting herself by Clint's arm. "Oh, I want to do something!" she cried. "What can I do?"

The Inspector said soberly: "This, if you want to," he said. "I know it's not safe for you—"

"Safe!" she exclaimed almost scornfully. "I don't want to be safe, with my mother dead, and my father—"

"Mr. Hurder's in the Bowdon house," Tope explained. "They aim to keep him there. They won't have a nurse in to take care of him. But Miss Leaford, they'd have you. They want you home, and if you went, and insisted on nursing him—"

Clint made a swift indignant protest; but June hushed him.

"Yes, I understand," she told the old man steadily. "I'll go. But why? What am I to do?"

"To watch," he said. "To be ready."

"Ready for what?" she insisted.

So, reluctantly, he put the thing in words. "Whoever did this wants Mr. Hurder dead," he pointed out. "I think there'll be another try at killing him."

And he said gravely: "There might be more than that. There might be a try at killing you."

Chapter Thirteen

CLINT had listened to Inspector Tope's suggestion that June return to Kenesaw Hill with an incredulous and angry horror. Now he cried in a bitter wrath:

"No! I won't stand for that. June's been through enough—"

"We'll be there to take care of her," Tope urged. "You and I, Clint. We'll be on the job. It's only for tonight. I've a notion tonight will tell the tale."

"No," Clint insisted. "She's through with them out there, all those people. I'm going to be all her family from now on. If you think I'm going to let her go out there for bait, to bait a trap—" And he cried: "Why do you have to mix in, Inspector? Let them wash their own dirty linen."

Tope urged gravely: "It's any citizen's duty to do what he can, Clint." His tone was grim. "And son, there's a murderer loose out there. Maybe a maniac. I think he is. There's a terrible, mad persistence in him. Or her."

"Her?" Clint echoed, startled by that pronoun.

Tope hesitated. "Him or her, whoever it is," he repeated. "Clint, whoever did this is a monster, not human. No telling what will come next."

"And you want to risk June's life?"

"I don't aim to," Tope argued. "She'll have her eyes open. I'll tell her what to watch for. She'll have a pistol, to use if she has to. We'll be right outside." He spoke to June herself. "You won't go into it blindly," he said. "Nor at all, unless you want."

"Let Heale work it out," Clint cried. "It's his job."

June was a long time in taking any part in this discussion between them: But when she spoke at last, it was decisively.

"I don't trust Inspector Heale, Clint," she said. "If he thinks Uncle Jim—my father—did this, he must be a dull, witless man."

Clint, protesting, held her fast. But she said steadily:

"I'm not afraid—not if I know what to watch for." She shuddered in a slow spasm of memory. "Oh, I was afraid, before. You could feel hideous things in the air, without being able to guess what they were." And she said in a swift passion of anger: "They weren't harming anyone—Mother and Grandma. They just did what they were told."

THEY watched her; she seemed to think aloud. "It was money, the money always," she cried, half to herself. "I can see that now. Everything had to be done to keep the money in the family. That was why they were so furious when Mother married Uncle Jim—for fear some of the money would get away from them. Oh, I've heard them talk, and plan!"

Clint said warmly: "Sweet, hush! You're never going back there again."

But June smiled at him, and she said: "Yes, I am, Clint. I can go back and watch and see things now that I couldn't see before. I can understand."

Inspector Tope said slowly: "Heale is afraid of your people. He won't go after them hard, the way he would after other folk. And I never saw an uglier business. This senseless, pitiless butchering! There's a maniac loose out there; and Heale won't act. I've got to find some way."

"I'll do whatever you say," June insisted; and Clint knew at last that he could not dissuade the girl. He said slowly:

"I wish you wouldn't, June. But—I can see, can feel the same way. Inspector, what do you mean to do?"

Tope considered, his eyes on the floor, his head wagging. "I think the thing will ripen tonight," he confessed. "If it seems sure that Mr. Hurder will live, the murderer will try to end him tonight."

He watched June intently. "And maybe you too! I'm guessing at this; but I'm a good guesser. Some one out there is money-crazy. Mr. Hurder is a rich man; and some one out there wants that money. Maybe wants it quick. Maybe has to have it quick."

"I'm guessing," he repeated. "Justus Taine wouldn't tell me what was in the will. But my guess is that the Hurder money is in a trust agreement for Mrs. Leaford—but she's dead—and then for you, Miss Leaford. With trustees. Maybe Taine himself. Maybe his sons. It doesn't matter—wouldn't help us any if we knew, because they're all in the same pot together. But it comes down to it that you're the only one left in the way, Miss Leaford. With you dead, the Hurder money's bound to stay in the Taine family."

June nodded. "Yes," she said. "Yes, they could make Grandpa Hurder write his will the way they wanted it. They'd leave him no peace till he did."

"So there it is," Tope agreed, with a grim simplicity. "The money waiting, ready to run into their pockets as soon as Mr. Hurder dies. You're the last dam in the way, the last thing that holds it back. They'll be after you."

"I'm not afraid!" said June.

Tope nodded, and he asked after a moment: "Do you know whether the front door was bolted or locked, the night your mother died, before you went to bed?"

"Yes," she said. "Uncle Justus bolted it. That's why, when the door blew open, it scared me. I knew it had been fastened, and I thought there must be some one in the house. But I didn't wait to—find out. I just ran."

"Mr. Taine bolted it, did he?" Tope repeated thoughtfully.

She said: "Yes, after Mother was in bed, I came to the head of the stairs, and I heard him tell Grandpa Hurder the door was fast." She remembered suddenly:

"And he tried to slip upstairs during the evening before Mother died. Aunt Evie saw him, called him back."

Tope was silent for a moment, and he asked then a new question:

"If you went back, where would they likely have you stay?"

"There isn't any room at Aunt Evie's," June explained. "It's just a small house, you know. I'd have to stay at Grandma Bowdon's."

"They've put Mr. Hurder upstairs, in the Bowdon house," Tope reported. "The back room on the west side."

"That's a spare room," June assented. "Grandpa and Grandma Bowdon used the east rooms."

"If you go out there, then, you'd probably have the front room on the west side."

"I suppose so."

"I'd want you to try to arrange to take care of him," Tope told her. "To sit up with him tonight—in the room with him." He considered. "They may not let you; but if you're in the next room, you can hear, listen."

"The stairs are between," she said. "But the doors are just across the hall, opposite one another."

"Are there locks on the doors in that house?" Tope asked gravely.

"Locks, yes," June said. "There are locks everywhere. Even the closets are locked. Grandma Bowdon always carries a bunch of keys on her belt."

"Could you lock the door of your room? Would the key be in the lock?"

"I don't know."

Inspector Tope got up. He said: "Here's what you must do, whether you stay with him, or have the other room:" He braced a chair under the knob of the door by way of illustration. "Put a chair like this. That will hold your door shut, if anyone tries to get in."

"I know," June agreed. "Rab used to come upstairs sometimes to see Mother after she was in bed; and when he went along the hall, he'd stop at my door and pretend he was coming in to kiss me good night. He just did it to tease me, but I used to brace a chair under the knob sometimes, to keep him out."

Clint said urgently: "Inspector, I'm going to have a ladder ready, so I can get up to her room, get in the window if I have to."

"Yes," Tope said seriously. "That's good. Or so she can get out and down to us, quickly, if anyone tries to get at her. And I'll give her a revolver, show her how—"

The telephone interrupted him, and Miss Moss went to answer it. She turned to say softly, her hand over the receiver: "It's for June."

So June crossed to the older woman's side; she took the telephone in her hand. They heard her say:

"Hello. Yes. . . . Yes, Grandma."

And after a long time: "Yes. . . . Yes, I'm coming."

And then: "Yes. . . . They will bring me out, in a little while."

Clint felt his pulses pound with a deep terror; but he could not check her now. A moment later she said, "Yes," again, and put the instrument down and faced them all.

"That was Grandma Bowdon," she explained. "Grandpa Bowdon's funeral is this afternoon, late. She wants me to be there, and to go home with them afterward." She added slowly: "That's what I will do."

IN the preparations that followed, Clint's hopeless protests were all overborne. June's dress, that new dress Asa had given her, was sooted and soiled. Miss Moss made Clint drive her to the nearest shop, and they brought home two or three dresses for trial, found one that would serve. When they thus returned, Inspector Tope had rummaged out his old revolver and was explaining to June its simple mechanism.

It was Clint, they decided, who should take her home. Inspector Tope had other arrangements to conclude. So Clint and June had this drive together, and June sought to comfort and to reassure him. "Now that I know what to look for," she insisted, "I'll be all right, Clint, truly."

She told him where to go. The cortège had arrived before them at the cemetery—a sodden, gloomy place, and clouds threatened rain. Clint and June stood a little to one side during the brief services; and Clint saw Mrs. Bowdon, heavily veiled, with Mrs. Taine and Rab and Asa; he saw Mrs. Taine's sharp eyes turn toward them as the services went on.

The ritual was scarce finished before she came swiftly toward them. "It is hard for me to forgive you for this, June," Aunt Evie told the girl, in her low, whispering tones. "You have added much to the burden we have all had to bear today."

Clint saw Rab guiding old Mrs. Bowdon to their car; he heard June say calmly: "This is Mr. Jervies, Aunt Evie." Her eyes met Clint's, and she added proudly: "I'm going to marry him. I'll stay with you as long as you need me, if it isn't too long; but then I'm going to him."

"That is as may be," Mrs. Taine commented. "Such matters are not decided so quickly, June."

Then Asa came up beside her. He drawled cheerfully: "Hullo, June. Hullo, Jervies. June, with a man like this one to take care of you, you'd better hang on to him."

Mrs. Taine said softly: "Asa!" The word hissed on her tongue.

Asa looked at Clint. "Why don't you keep her, Jervies?" he suggested insistently.

Clint cried: "I want to!"

But Mrs. Taine said: "Come, child." She took June's arm; Clint saw her fingers tighten cruelly. He started forward, but June freed herself, and she said calmly:

"I'm coming, Aunt Evie. You need not hold me!"

And she nodded to Clint in a deep reassurance, and led the way toward the waiting car.

TOPE had promised to meet Clint beside the road, on the way up Kenesaw Hill, as soon as it should be dark. It was still no more than dusk when Clint took the road up the hill; but at an angle the Inspector stepped out to halt him.

"Doctor Cabler's at the house," he said. "He and Mr. Taine stayed with Mr. Hurder during the funeral. I want to see him when he leaves. Go ahead, over the top of the hill."

Clint obeyed; and Tope explained: "Heale can't be here. He's laid up—a bad cold from last night. But he's lending us a couple of men."

Clint nodded; and he said slowly: "Inspector, I've been thinking. I think this was Justus Taine."

Tope looked at him curiously. "Why?" he asked. "What made you think that, Clint?"

"There's something off-color about him," Clint argued. "He sleeps too much. You know, June said he used the same drug Mrs. Leaford used." Tope nodded attentively, and Clint urged: "He must hate that whole outfit. Life must have been pretty rotten, for him. Maybe he puts on this deafness, and sleeps as much as he can, as a protection—so he can escape from it."

"And if he used the drug, he would have had some to poison Mrs. Leaford with. And if you're looking for a motive—the chances are the other two men made him trustee of their estates, in their wills. If he hates them all as much as I would in his place, he'd go a long ways to have control of all their money, to have the whip hand over them."

Tope nodded. "Some of that's all right, son," he assented. "I don't like Justus Taine. He's a turtle of a man, in his shell all the time. But I doubt if there's enough driving energy in him."

And he said, half to himself: "Here are two women killed. A man don't often kill a woman unless he loves her, or has loved her."

They passed the two houses which still stood atop the hill; but Clint scarce noticed them. "You mean Mr. Leaford?" he cried, in incredulous astonishment.

"But a woman don't mind killing another woman," said the Inspector grimly, as though finishing his thought; and Clint looked at him with wide startled eyes.

Before he could speak the question in his mind, a man appeared in their headlights, a policeman in uniform; and they stopped. Tope opened the car door.

"Hello, Rand," he said. "Doctor still there?"

The policeman nodded. "And I've got the ladder," he reported. "Hid it over in the woods."

"Good man," Tope approved, and they got out and waited, till presently Doctor Cabler in his car came down the road. He stopped at a signal, and Tope spoke to him apart in low tones. When the Doctor drove on, the Inspector returned to them, and he explained:

"Mr. Hurder is better! Tomorrow will tell the tale, whether he's going to live. The Doctor thinks he will. He's given the old man something to make him sleep."

He hesitated, as though his own words had caught and fixed his attention. "Doctor Cabler's quite a hand for sleeping-powders," he reflected; and he stood very still, but without speaking, for a moment. Then he wagged his head. "Rand, where's your buddy?" he asked.

"On the other side of the house, in the edge of the woods," the officer explained.

Tope considered for a moment.

"All right," he agreed. "You and he watch that side. Let me have your whistle, in case I need you." Rand handed it over; and Tope continued: "Mr. Jervies, here, will be at the front west corner, and I'll be around by the kitchen." He considered. "If anyone comes out, let them go," he directed. "But if anyone comes near the house, or goes in, come and let me know."

And he added: "Bring the ladder to Mr. Jervies. The front corner on this side."

Rand nodded his understanding; and Clint drove his car into the mouth of the wood-road that led down to the river, and left it in darkness there. Then they went up the hill together to begin their vigil, and separated to the posts assigned.

A thin rain had begun to fall at dusk, so that Clint huddled his coat-collar about his ears. He stood against the side of the house, under the windows of that bedroom which they expected June would occupy. Patrolman Rand came presently with the ladder, and they laid it along the ground against the foundation wall.

The house on this side all was dark, except that there was a lighted window in the kitchen. Tope was at the rear corner there. The window-blind was drawn; but by moving out a little from the house, Clint could see a rectangle of light where the window was. Some one was preparing supper—talking, probably. Tope stood just below the window, as though listening.

The rear room on the second floor, where Mr. Hurder lay between life and death, was dark. Apparently there was no watcher by that bedside; and Clint imagined a stealthy figure creeping up the stairs to come at the old man, and he began to tremble terribly and his teeth were chattering.

Inaction began to madden him, when at last there came an incident to relieve the strain: a door opened; some one came out.

Clint saw that this must be Justus Taine, a heavy figure of a man, walking with head bowed. He saw this man pause yonder by the ash-filled cellar of the Hurder house and stand for a moment beside the pit as though in some dark reverie, before he went on.

Later a light appeared in the Taine house, behind a curtained window; then nothing happened for a while.

Clint had time for thought, and he remembered his own suspicions of Justus Taine, and was glad Taine was no longer here in the house with June. But—Tope had dismissed Clint's theory, and the young man remembered this, and his nerves drew taut again. When some one touched his elbow, he leaped like a startled horse, ready to cry out, but Tope whispered:

"Hush, steady, son!"

And while Clint stood trembling, the old man explained: "I could hear what they said in the kitchen." His voice was a murmur no louder than the whisper of the falling rain. "Mrs. Taine is going home to sleep for an hour or two, then come back. She said Mr. Hurder's not likely to wake. She wouldn't let June stay with him, said Mr. Hurder didn't really need anyone for a while. June is to be in the room up above us here." And he said: "We'll put the ladder up now, quietly, before they come upstairs."

Clint nodded; he tried to speak, but his voice croaked dangerously. He lifted the ladder, Tope helping him; and they leaned it against the window-sill above them without a sound.

Clint climbed it instantly; he stopped with his head level with the sill. Since there was no light in the room, he could not see whether the shade was drawn or not; but he waited, striving to peer into the blackness behind the glass.

Once he looked down cautiously, and saw Tope's round figure huddled at the foot of the ladder, Tope's round face watchfully upturned.

Then suddenly there was light before Clint's eyes. The door had been opened; illumination came in from the hall. June and Mrs. Taine stood together in the doorway there.

Clint instinctively recoiled; then he perceived that the blind was drawn down so that it left no more than an inch-wide crack at the bottom, above the window-sash. Through this crack he was able to see the whole room, himself unseen. He watched June and Mrs. Taine come in, June with a lighted candle. Behind them he saw Rab and Asa in the hall, and Mrs. Bowdon's ample form.

And then his heart suddenly was in his throat; for Mrs. Taine had a glass of milk in her hand.

Mrs. Leaford had drunk a glass of milk that night she died; the Hurders too. There was to Clint something hideous and sinister in this innocent beverage now. He took an impulsive step higher, his hand raised to break the window in.

But Tope below him hissed a warning; and Clint leaned down to whisper desperately: "Mrs. Taine is giving her a glass of milk!"

"She won't drink it," Tope promised. "I warned her not to drink anything, or eat anything except what the others did."

Clint hesitated; then he turned to watch again. Rab and Asa said good night to June and disappeared together. Then Clint could hear Mrs. Taine's tones, chiding June, steady and relentless. June was sitting on the bed, the milk and the candles on a chair beside her. She made no reply to the reproaches.

And Mrs. Taine suddenly, still talking, withdrew.

June did not move. She watched the door. Clint waited, his pulse racing.

Then, after a long minute, Tope whispered: "Down!"

Clint was on the ground in an instant; and Tope breathed in his ear: "The door."

Clint at first did not understand. Then he heard the click of a latch, and toward the rear of the house a figure did appear—Mrs. Taine, he guessed. She walked briskly away. They saw her figure in silhouette against the light when she opened the kitchen door of her own home yonder and went in.

Then Clint started to climb the ladder again.

"Careful," the old man warned him. "Don't show yourself above the window-sill. She might see you from over there."

But Clint could not resist looking once to be sure June was unharmed. He saw her carefully propping a chair under the door-knob; saw that the milk stayed untasted. She secured the door, and then blew out the candle, and so came to the window and opened it. She leaned here above him, and he whispered:

"All right, June?"

"Yes," she said slowly. "But Aunt Evie gave me a glass of—warm milk. To make me sleep, she said. I promised to drink it when I was in bed."

"She's gone home," Clint told her reassuringly.

"Home?" the girl exclaimed. "She said she was going to stay with him. He's all alone. I'm going in—"

"No," Clint insisted. "Rab and Asa are still in the house. And she's coming back. Give me that milk, June. I want Tope to taste it."

She brought the glass and gave it to him. He said: "I'll be right here. All night."

"Poor darling!" she whispered. "In the rain."

"Near you," he told her. "I shan't feel it."

HE took the milk down to Inspector Tope. The old man dipped a finger into it, touched the finger to his lips. "Can't taste anything," he said. "But I'll send Rand to have it tested, right now." And he directed: "You stay here!"

Clint nodded, and Tope started away. He moved past the corner of the house; and suddenly, when he was six paces off, he stumbled over something lying in the uncut grass, and fell heavily. Clint heard the breath go out of him with a grunt.

The young man moved swiftly toward him; but before he could come to Tope's side, the Inspector was on his hands and knees.



Clint whispered: "Hurt?"

And Tope said gravely: "There's another ladder here. I tripped over it." He added ruefully: "Spilled the milk. That's bad!"

"Another ladder?" Clint echoed. There was a dreadful clamor in his ears, his own pulse was pounding so.

Tope stayed very still. Then he lifted one side of this ladder and felt under it. "Hasn't been here long," he decided. "The grass is wet, under it. It was put here since dark." He crawled on his hands and knees away from Clint and back again. "It's long enough to reach the window," he reported, and he stood erect. He said then grimly: "You'll have to watch yourself tonight, Clint. I wish I had a gun."

Then from the window above them, June called very softly: "Clint, dear, are you there? Are you all right?"

"Yes, sweet," he whispered.

"What happened?" she asked.

"The Inspector fell down," he said reassuringly. "Didn't hurt him!" He climbed to her window, and her arms held him fast, her lips trembling against his own. "You mustn't be afraid," he urged.

"I'm coming back to you tomorrow," she declared.

"For good and all," he agreed.

She said wistfully: "You could come in here, out of the rain." And she urged: "They've left Grandpa Hurder all alone. I want to go to him."

But he said sternly: "No. Maybe that's what they want you to do. You stay here. If anyone tries to open your door—" He kissed her again. "Good night, sweet," he said. "And sleep sound."

He descended to the ground once more. "Mr. Hurder's alone," he reported to Tope. "She wants to go to him. I wouldn't let her."

Tope nodded approvingly. A little wind began to blow, so they stood somewhat sheltered in the lee. And Clint whispered: "Tope, who put that ladder there? Do you think it could be Mrs. Taine?" His throat was dry.

Tope seemed to con his thoughts aloud. "She gave the milk to Mrs. Leaford," he assented. "And she gave milk to the Hurders. And they slept mighty sound."

Clint's imagination was racing. "Maybe she's crazy! Or maybe she couldn't bear to think that Mr. Hurder's money would go to Mrs. Leaford, and to June, instead of to her sons." And he urged: "That business with the gas, the fuse. She could do it. She did all the wiring here."

Tope said gently: "She was here in this house last night when the fire started—upstairs with Mrs. Bowdon. You remember the lights went out in the Taine house first. Whoever made that short-circuit did it over there."

"Mr. Taine was the only one there," Clint pointed out. They looked that way, and saw that the Taine house was dark now. "She's already abed," Clint said.

Then June spoke, whispering, above their heads; and Clint was up the ladder in a bound.

"Rab and Asa have gone into Grandpa's room," she explained. "Asa wants to stay with Grandpa; but Rab's arguing about it. I can hear them talking."

She turned her head at some sound in the hall, whispered, "Hush," and crossed to listen at her door. Clint, even from where he was, could hear the murmur of their voices. Then this sound receded, and June returned to him.

"They're going," she reported. "Asa said he had to go to town later tonight, and he wanted to stand his turn with Grandpa now, and let Rab and Aunt Evie sleep. But Rab insisted it was all right to leave Grandpa, insisted that they both go home."

"I'll tell Tope," Clint assured her, and looked down. But Tope had vanished.

She urged in shaken tones: "I want to see if Grandpa's all right—if they did anything to him. Please!"

Clint hesitated. "I'll come in with you," he decided then. He climbed over the sill, and with their hands entwined, they crossed the room. Very quietly she removed the chair braced under the knob and opened the door.

As she did so, they heard voices below, as Rab and Asa left the house—heard the door close behind the brothers, so that there was silence here.

And Clint stood guard in the hall, breathing carefully, while June crept into the room where the old man lay. Presently in the darkness he felt her returning, and she found his hand. In her room again, the door closed, she murmured in his ear:

"He's sleeping so peacefully, like a child."

Clint chuckled. "And it's time you did the same," he told her. He saw her door secure, kissed her. "I'll be right here," he promised again.

When he descended the ladder, Tope had not reappeared; but Clint was content in the certainty that June was safe. He stood by the foot of the ladder, tense, ready for any alarm; and minutes drifted by.

Once there was a sound, toward the Taine house, a rumbling sound as though a garage-door had been rolled back on its track. If Asa were departing for town now, then Rab, or Uncle Justus, or Aunt Evie, might presently come this way. Clint was in a sweat of tense, fearful anticipation. He began to wonder why Asa did not start the car and go.

But it must have been a quarter of an hour after he heard the garage-door roll back before he saw a light in the garage. Then he heard a starter grind, and a car backed out of the garage, its headlights swinging as it turned.

Clint stood frozen in attention. The car followed the drive around the house on this side, the lights for an instant shining almost directly toward where Clint stood. Then it went on toward the road.

So Asa was gone; Clint felt a faint relief. He wondered what had become of Inspector Tope, and he hissed a signal, but had no reply.

Then he heard the car returning! He saw no lights; but he did see, dimly, a dark moving bulk as the car rounded the corner of the house yonder. It moved fast, dangerously so. . . .

He heard a great crash, a shattering of glass, a tinny crumpling of metal—a great crash, then silence.

And then Tope's voice, yonder, in imperious summons: "Clint! Quick! Here!"

And a police whistle, shrill and long.

Chapter Fourteen

AFTER that crashing impact and Tope's cry, and the shrill blast of his whistle, silence descended. Clint took one bound toward where he guessed Tope to be; then he checked, and turned. June from the window above him spoke softly: "Clint, you all right?"

"You'd better come," he said hoarsely. It was a matter of seconds only, until she stood beside him. Her fingers caught his.

"Here, you take this!" she bade him, and pressed Tope's old revolver into his hand.

He gripped it, and then they were running past the black pit of ashes where the Hurder house had stood, on to where Tope's flashlight cast its beam here and there upon the ground.

Clint would always remember how when they came to the wrecked car, where it had smashed headlong into the great pine at the angle of the drive, he heard a little hissing sound as water touched hot metal, and then the soft tinkling murmur of water or gasoline dripping in a runnel from some broken part beneath the car.

He saw Tope kneeling beside a man who lay here on the ground. The flashlight illumined his countenance. Rab Taine! His cheek was smeared. Blood from a cut on his head had flowed out over his ear and trickled down his brow and face. He lay limp and lifeless.

"Dead?" Clint asked hoarsely.

Tope shook his head. His hand was on Rab's wrist, feeling for the faint pulse that fluttered there. "Not dead yet," he said.

He rose and turned back to the wrecked car, and his flashlight's beam caught and fixed the still figure in the driver's seat. Clint and June were at his elbow.

Somewhere in the front of the house a window scraped upward, and Aunt Evie called into the night: "Who's that? Who is there?"



But before anyone could answer her, the window scraped down again.

June pressed close to Clint, and she said miserably:

"It's Asa. Oh, what is it, Clint? What happened?"

Clint shook his head, staring at Asa Taine, who sat here under the jammed wheel of the car. Asa was unconscious; and there was something mysteriously affrighting in his posture. His hands hung down limply by his sides; and the bent steering-column pressed the wheel itself against his body, so that he seemed to bulge in the middle. His head was in a grotesque and unnatural position. Cricked to one side, it rested against the frame of the door. His head was erect, even tilted backward, but his chin seemed to be pressed down on his chest. It was as though he were frozen in the very act of a hiccough.

TOPE said reflectively, as though thinking aloud: "I guess he piled into that tree faster than he meant to. He must have seen me, and that would surprise him. I guess he lost his head, stepped on it. He didn't mean to hit so hard."

A kitchen window opened now, in the corner of the house here close beside them, and Mrs. Taine called:

"Who is that? What has happened?"

June answered her. "It's June, Aunt Evie. Asa and Rab are hurt."

Mrs. Taine, without speaking, stood frozen for a moment, a white figure in the black rectangle of the window; then she disappeared.

Rand and another policeman in uniform came panting through the rain. "What happened?" Rand gasped.

Without explanation, Tope said crisply: "One of you watch the other house. Rand, you go call Inspector Heale. If he's not too sick to move, get him up here."

Rand, without a word, went obediently toward the house. The other officer disappeared to follow Tope's instructions. Clint asked some question, but Tope in silence pointed to the car.

Since they first discovered Asa here, Inspector Tope had not left the man's side, had kept him fixed in the flashlight's beam. Now they saw that his lips began to stir and mumble. Then he blinked. The light was in his eyes.

June cried softly: "We'll get you out in a minute, Asa."

Mrs. Taine came running out of the kitchen door, brushing past Rand as he entered, drawing some wrap around her. She reached the side of the car. "Asa!" she cried, and caught at his shoulder, tugging at him.

"Oh," he whispered. It was like a whistle of pain. "My head. Neck. Don't touch—"

Mrs. Taine whirled on the Inspector. "Quick," she commanded. "Get him out of there." And she looked all about. "Where is Rab?" she cried.

Asa muttered through stiff lips; his lips were blue.

"Sorry, Mother," he said, and tried to smile. "He dodged in front of me. I ran right into him. I couldn't help it."

His lips closed and opened again. "I couldn't help it," he repeated. "We both dodged the same way."

Strength seemed to seep into him; he was visibly stronger before their eyes, though still he sat unmoving, his head cricked backward and to one side. Mrs. Taine hovered by him.

"Be still, Asa," she begged. "We'll take care of you. I'll call Doctor Cabler. Oh, do something, some one!"

But no one moved.

"I was going to town," Asa murmured. "But my headlights went out as soon as I hit the road. I came back to get a new fuse—"

His words were spaced widely; there were long pauses between them. His sentences came after tremendous intervals, with a curious parrot-like quality, as though he spoke from memory. And Tope, with a swift merciful instinct, touched Mrs. Taine's arm.

"Ma'am, you go in and call the Doctor," he said. "We'll look after him. You go along."

She started to obey, but Asa was speaking, and she paused to hear. "I came back," he muttered, "without any lights. Rab was crossing the drive, and we both dodged the same way. He jumped right in front of the car. I couldn't stop. Hit him."

Mrs. Taine did not understand. "What does he mean?" she protested. "Where is Rab?"

Tope said gently: "Rab's hurt too, ma'am. We'll need the Doctor bad. Can't you call him up?"

This time she obeyed him; she hurried away, and after a moment they heard her voice, within-doors, demanding that Rand yield to her the telephone.

Asa asked some hoarse question, indistinguishable. "My neck hurts," he complained. "Rab? He's dead? I tried to miss him."

And Tope answered him, in slow stern tones. "You didn't hit Rab, Asa," he said. "I pulled him away in time. I pulled him away from the tree, where you'd propped him up!"

His voice had in it the inexorable ring of doom.

Asa seemed to be a long time in hearing, in apprehending. They saw understanding begin to come to him. A puckering was born between his eyes. His mouth twisted. His eyes opened, staring into the flashlight's glare. His head was still tipped against the door-frame in that curious fashion, to one side, the chin forward and down.

"He's alive?" he asked slowly, carefully.

"He'll come around," said Tope. "He'll be all right by and by."

Without any movement of his head, Asa's eyes swung to seek out their countenances. He peered in the darkness, and his lips writhed so that his teeth were hideously bare. Then he moved. It was as though he leaped, as though he would have sprung to action. His lips set hard; his shoulder rose; his whole body contorted; one hand darted down. . . . It whipped up, and a gun showed in the flashlight's gleam.

Inspector Tope, leaning into the car, sought to seize the gun.

But before he could touch Asa, could grasp the weapon, the need for action passed. When the hurt man thus leaned sharply forward, his head was tardy in following his movement. It seemed to hang back, and then to be jerked aside as though by an invisible hand; and this was a strange, unnatural thing to see. Asa's head turned at a grotesque angle, as though it had slipped; and instantly Asa himself was smaller, like a pricked balloon. And quite still.

June uttered some gasping cry. Tope caught the gun, caught the dead man's arm. Then he stared; and then with the gun in his hand he stepped down off the running-board of the car.

Clint whispered: "For God's sake, Inspector! Is he dead?"

Tope nodded slowly. "Yes, dead," he said, in a low tone.

Chapter Fifteen

FOR a moment more these three stood silently by the car with a dead man at the wheel. Then Rand returned.

"Heale's coming," he reported. "Right away."

Tope nodded. "This man in the car is dead," he said. "Stay by him. Don't touch anything."

And he turned back to where Rab lay on the ground. Then Mrs. Taine came running from the house. "Doctor Cabler will be here at once," she gasped; and she cried: "Where's Asa? What have you done with him?"

June put her arms about the older woman, held her away. "Rab needs you now," she urged. "Rab, Aunt Evie."

"Asa?" the older woman demanded.

"He's dead," June told her, mercifully frank.

"Who killed him?" There was a dreadful challenge in the slow, soft tones. "He was alive a moment ago. Talking to me. Who killed my son?"

"He—just died," June told her. "Please. We must take care of Rab now."

But Mrs. Taine swung toward the car. Tope with his flashlight bent on the hurt man on the ground, heard the mother brooding over Asa, calling his name, pleading with him—then June compelling her to turn this way. There was strength in the girl's tones; she was able to command Aunt Evie at last, to fetch her here where Tope and Clint knelt beside the unconscious man.

"We'll carry Rab to the house," said the Inspector. "Out of the rain. Clint, you take his legs."

"I can help," June promised.

Inspector Tope spoke to Mrs. Taine. "Will you go ahead and open the door, ma'am?"

She obeyed, silent now, and he slipped his arms under Rab's shoulders. Clint caught one leg under each arm.

June helped as she could. They stood erect, the burden limp between them.

They moved around the wrecked car, where Rand stood guard, and along the drive to the kitchen door. Mrs. Taine ran ahead, lighted a gas jet in the kitchen. They brought Rab in and laid him at length on the floor.

Tope knelt beside him, and with careful fingers appraised his hurts. Mrs. Taine stood still as ice, watching, and June held her fast.

Tope looked up at last. "Just a bump on the head, ma'am," he told Mrs. Taine. "I can't feel that the skull's broken."

Mrs. Taine began suddenly to cry; and this was a strange thing to see in that woman of iron.

June said: "I'll make her lie down." She led Mrs. Taine, submissive, away.

When they were gone, Clint knelt by the Inspector's side, asked the question he had not dared ask before. He nodded toward the door, toward Asa outside in the rain.

"You think he—did it?" he whispered.

Tope assented gravely.

"But I liked him," Clint protested. "He was the best of them all!"

The doorbell rang; Clint went through the dark hall; lighted the gas, opened the door. Doctor Cabler.

Clint came back with the physician on his heels; and Doctor Cabler, with no more than a nod toward the Inspector, knelt beside the man on the floor.

PRESENTLY he finished, tipped back on his heels. And Tope said urgently: "I want to hear what he has to say, when he can talk."

Doctor Cabler answered, in an irascible tone: "It will be some time before he talks!"

"Fracture?"

"I think not. Concussion. But he may lie unconscious for days. I shall make a spinal puncture, try to relieve the pressure on his brain. Otherwise the young man may die without recovering consciousness."

And he directed: "Help me. Push those two tables together. Put water on to boil. Where's Mrs. Taine?"

"In the front room," said Tope. "With June." And he explained: "Asa's dead, in the car, outside. He ran into that pine tree. Mrs. Taine's crying!"

"Crying?" Doctor Cabler repeated incredulously.

He rose and stood a moment uncertain. Then he said: "I can't help it. We'll need her here." He went into the other room, brought June and Mrs. Taine back with him. He gave crisp directions.

"Mrs. Taine, if you want to save Rab, put your mind on this business, please. Put some water to boil. Fetch clean sheets. I'll work on the kitchen table. We need more light. This is immediate."

She obeyed him, moving now with a swift efficiency, and silently; she went presently to find fresh linen, June helping her.

The water had not yet boiled, and Tope suggested: "Doctor, Asa's outside. You might look at him!" The other nodded, and Tope led the older man out to the wrecked car, and he watched in silence till Doctor Cabler stepped back and wiped his hands.

"Broken neck?" Tope asked then softly.

Doctor Cabler assented. "Yes."

"He was alive at first," Tope explained. "Spoke to us. Sitting there with his head back. Then he tried to move—he moved with a jerk—and his head twisted to one side, and that was the end of him."

The physician looked at Tope. "Alive?" he protested. "With his neck broken?"

"Yes," Tope insisted.

"Well, such things have happened," the Doctor confessed, after a moment. "Some shock dislocates the vertebrae without dislodging them. Then a movement, an attempt to turn the head, and the big neck muscles drag one vertebra across the other like a pair of shears. Snip the cord."

He turned back to the house. "No one can help Asa," he said decisively. "My business is with Rab."

Doctor Cabler and Mrs. Taine, Clint and June could do all that was needful here. Tope watched them for a moment; then he went to the telephone, called Miss Moss and told her guardedly that Rab was hurt and Asa dead.

She whispered: "Asa dead?"

"Yes," he said.

"Is his wife there?" Miss Moss asked. "Lissa?" And at Tope's negative: "She would want to be. She has a right to be. I'm coming out. I'll bring her."

He was full of a deep comfort to know that she would come. "All right," he assented. "Do."

He looked at his watch and returned to the veranda. As he did so, Inspector Heale came hurriedly across the lawn from the road.

Heale exclaimed: "Tope, what's happened here?"

Tope said slowly: "Rab's hurt—got a bad crack on the head. Doctor Cabler's working on him." He added: "And Asa's out in the car with a broken neck."

"Broken neck?" Heale echoed. His voice was husky. "Is he dead?"

"Just as dead as if he'd been hanged," Tope assented. He said it with something like contentment in his tones, as though he perceived a seemliness and order in the world: "They don't hang in this State any more; but I always said it was the thing—for murderers, I mean."

Heale ejaculated: "Murderers?"

And Tope told him briefly: "Yes. He and Rab had an argument tonight, in the garage. He hit Rab with a monkey-wrench, propped him against that pine tree by the corner of the drive, got out his car. He drove to the road and turned around and came back again. He meant to run into Rab, finish him."

"But I was there. Before Asa got back, I'd dragged Rab away from the tree. Asa saw me. Seeing me must have startled him so that he stepped on the gas. Anyway, he rammed into the tree so hard it snapped his own neck."

Heale stood in an incredulous amazement, and Tope concluded: "Didn't kill him right off. He came to. He thought he'd hit Rab, and he told us it was an accident, that Rab dodged in front of the car. When I told him he hadn't hit Rab, that Rab was alive, he went for his gun."

"But when he moved, his neck snapped. Finished him!"

Heale was almost wordless. "Gun?" he repeated.

"Here it is," said Tope, and delivered Asa's weapon to the other man.

Then Doctor Cabler came out to them. "Gentlemen," he said, satisfaction in his tones, "Rab is showing signs of returning consciousness."

"He'll live?" Tope asked.

"Oh, that, certainly," the physician confidently agreed. "And I think by morning he may be able to talk to you."

He went back into the house; and Heale roused from his paralysis of surprise. "You think Asa did the rest of it?" he asked.

"I've known that, since this morning," Tope replied.

"Why didn't you tip me?"

"Knowing isn't proving," Tope reminded him; and Heale ruefully assented.

"I guess I'll call Derrie," he decided at last. "Have him up here in the morning!" And he confessed a little grudgingly: "You've made a double-barreled fool out of him, Inspector."

Chapter Sixteen

THE Inspector's call had come to Miss Moss like an expected summons. Before she dressed, she telephoned for a taxicab; and when she came out it was at the door.

"The Providence road," she directed. "I'll tell you when to stop."

She had thought of telephoning to Lissa Thayer to be dressed and ready; but she decided it were better to bring her message by word of mouth. When she rang the doorbell of the house behind the garage, it was far into the small hours; the rain still sheeted down.

A window opened above her head, and Thayer called a question.

"I must speak to Miss Thayer," Miss Moss explained.

The garage man himself came to the door with his daughter, sleepily protesting and bewildered. Miss Moss hesitated, unwilling to betray to him the girl's secret unless she must. Yet there appeared no other way. "Miss Thayer," she said. "I have bad news for you. Young Mr. Taine—"

She saw Lissa white in the dim-lit hall.

"He is—hurt," Miss Moss explained gently.

"I'll come," said the girl quickly.

Thayer put a swift protecting arm around his daughter, so that Miss Moss understood he had known the truth.

"If Lissa's going, so am I," Thayer suggested. "Send your cab away. I'll take my car."

Miss Moss assented. And presently they started up the hill, Thayer driving. In the seat behind, Miss Moss held the girl close.

"There, there, my dear," she whispered comfortingly.

"Is Rab—dead?" Lissa asked pleadingly.

"Rab?" Miss Moss echoed. "You mean Asa?"

Lissa straightened, quick hope in her eyes. "No, no," she protested. "Rab is mine! Is he all right?"

Miss Moss tried to collect her wits. "Rab is hurt, but he will get well," she said then, and she felt new life flow into this girl. "But Asa is dead."

"Oh, I'm glad! I'm glad!" Lissa cried; and she demanded to know what had happened. Miss Moss told her swiftly as much as she knew; and having done so, she ventured a question in her turn. So Lissa, clinging close to the older woman, poured out all her story.

"Rab and I were married over a year ago," she confessed. "Father and Mother knew; but we didn't tell anyone else, because Rab's people would disown him. Old Mrs. Bowdon is terrible. Rab wasn't supposed to marry without her permission, or he'd be disinherited. So we kept it secret."

"I knew Asa too, and he used to make love to me. So finally, to make him stop, I told him Rab and I were married. But it didn't do any good. He kept after me just the same, and when I threatened to tell Rab, he said if I did, he'd tell old Mrs. Bowdon we were married. So I didn't tell Rab; but last night Asa kissed me, and Rab saw him, and was furious with me, so I had to tell him. Then he was wild at Asa—"

She broke off, for they were come suddenly to the top of Kenesaw Hill, to the Taine house. Inspector Tope hurried across the lawn.

Miss Moss saw how tired he was, and held him hard for a moment. "There," she whispered, "dear man!" And she asked: "Where is Clint? Where is June?"

He pointed to the Bowdon house a little way off, where there was a lighted window on the second floor. Miss Moss looked that way; and she forgot Lissa Thayer. She and the Inspector crossed the lawn to the ladder that led up to June's window; and Tope called softly:

"Clint!"

But there was no answer; and for a moment Miss Moss knew a pang of terror. Before Tope could speak again, she had begun to climb the ladder with an awkward haste, gathering her skirts together.

He reassured her. "Clint's all right. Don't worry!"

She had come by that time to the window-ledge; she stayed there looking in. He whispered from below:

"All right, aren't they?"

She made a gesture for silence and came down again. "They're asleep," she told him, and he saw her eyes shine in the darkness. "Miss Leaford is in bed, with a blanket over her; Clint in the chair beside her, holding her hand. His head back, his mouth open, snoring a little." She smiled. "I hope he wakes first," she said. "I hope she doesn't see him so."

"June wanted to be sure Mr. Hurder was all right," he explained. "Clint brought her over, and I expect he made her lie down."

Miss Moss led him away so that their voices would not disturb these two. There was a deep exhilaration in her, a mischievous satisfaction in having discovered something which he did not know. She said: "So it was Asa? You know, I picked Rab, all the time."

Tope shook his head. "He was in Providence last night, when the fire started," he reminded her.

"I thought he might have gone down there and registered, and then come back to set the fire, raced back to Providence again. There was time."

"No, he'd put his car up for the night," Tope insisted. "He was there, all right." He added awkwardly: "I didn't tell you, but he had a girl with him. They registered as man and wife. I didn't think you needed to know."

She smiled, deeply pleased that he had meant to shield her from contact with a sordid thing; but she answered calmly: "Yes, I know!" And she remembered, suddenly, Lissa Thayer, and turned back to the car.

Lissa and her father were no longer there; so Tope and Miss Moss went toward the house. They met Doctor Cabler with Mrs. Taine in the hall. Doctor Cabler explained:

"I'm sending Mrs. Taine to bed. She must rest."

Mrs. Taine protested wearily: "Rab needs me."

"He's all right," the Doctor assured her. "His wife is with him."

And he and Mrs. Taine went on upstairs.

"His wife?" Tope echoed incredulously.

"Of course—Lissa. She was the one with him in Providence," she whispered.

They moved on tiptoe to the kitchen door. Rab lay on the improvised operating-table, and Lissa Thayer hovered over him, holding his hand in both hers; and her eyes poured strength and healing into the hurt man. Her father stood beside her, and Inspector Heale.

Tope and Miss Moss withdrew unnoticed. They went out on the front porch together, and Tope sat down. He shook his head helplessly. "Well, that's one on me," he confessed. "I guess I'm getting old. I was sure she was married to Asa all the time."

"So was I," she admitted, eager to comfort him now. "Till she told me the truth, on the way up here. . . . Now tell me about tonight."

And she listened while he recited the tale. "I blame myself," he declared at last, "for holding off, waiting to be sure." And he said in a somber tone: "Asa was mad, drunk with killing. He had a ladder ready over there. He must have meant to come back tonight, climb to June's room, kill her and old Mr. Hurder too." And he explained: "Mrs. Taine gave June milk tonight. I think

Asa had drugged that; but I spilled it, like a clumsy fool."

But she would not let him blame himself. "After all," she urged, "you saved Rab's life; and it was your being there that startled Asa into—killing himself. If you hadn't been there, he'd have killed Rab, and maybe June and Mr. Hurder too." She added proudly: "I still wonder how you can see so clearly, how you knew."

Inspector Heale appeared behind them. "Cabler says Rab can talk now, Tope," he said. "I didn't get Derrie last night. Left word for him to come when he got home, but we won't wait for him."

So Tope and Miss Moss followed him toward the kitchen where Doctor Cabler stood beside the hurt man. Rab, with Lissa near him, seemed strong enough; but Doctor Cabler would permit no questions. He explained:

"They want to know what happened between you and Asa last night, Rab; but don't talk too long, get too tired."

RAB had a twisted frown between his eyes. Lissa bent over him, and Miss Moss saw his fingers tighten on her hand.

"Why, it was about Lissa," Rab told them slowly. He asked: "Where's Mother? I don't want her to hear."

"Asleep," Doctor Cabler assured him.

The hurt man nodded. "Where's Asa?" he asked then. No one answered him, but he seemed not to notice this neglect. "It was about Lissa," he repeated. "You see, she and I were married. We kept it secret, because Asa and June and I weren't supposed to get married without permission. It was in Grandpa Bowdon's will, and Grandpa Hurder's too, that if any of us married without Grandma Bowdon's consent, we were outcasts, disinherited."

And he said: "But Asa was—making love to Lissa whenever he caught her alone. I didn't know it, till I saw him kiss her, last night. She'd been in Providence with me. We used to go away together whenever I had business out of town."

He looked up at the girl beside him with a deep fondness. "I saw him kiss her," he explained. "And she slipped away, and I found her crying, in the woods behind the barn. He'd hurt her, his hands on her arms. So she told me how he'd persecuted her for months, and I came back to—do something to him."

His eyes met Inspector Heale's. "And then you told me some one had killed Aunt Kitty, and set that fire, and I forgot about Asa for a while. But tonight I meant to have it out with him. So on the way home, I made him stop, and we went into the garage, out of the rain."



GRANDPA BOWDON

"I told him he'd got to leave Lissa alone, and he laughed at me, said if I made a row, he'd tell the folks we were married."

He hesitated, continued grimly:

"But I found out, last week, that Asa had been stealing trust-funds in the office. I told Grandpa Bowdon about it, the day he died. It upset him terribly, may have killed him. But I told Asa last night that I knew about that, and that if he didn't leave Lissa alone, I'd send him to jail."

He grinned ruefully. "Asa didn't say anything. I thought I'd stumped him; and I was fool enough to turn my back on him, and the next thing I knew, my light went out. This crack on the head. . . . That's all I remember. What does he have to say?"

Inspector Heale was about to speak, but Tope touched his arm quickly, restraining him; and Doctor Cabler said gravely:

"You've talked enough, Rab. Get some rest now."

He cleared the others briskly out of the room. Tope and Heale moved on through the hall to the front veranda; and as they emerged there, Heale shook his head.

"Well," he said, "that doesn't lead anywhere. We're no further ahead."

But Tope smiled, confidently now. "You're wrong," he insisted. "It clears up the whole thing."

Heale stared at him, and Miss Moss came quietly to join them, and Tope said briskly:

"I've had my eye on Asa ever since he produced that bottle. What reason had he to go looking for it in the cellar, in the laundry-chute? The answer is, there wasn't any reason, unless he had some other business in the cellar."

"You think he did find the bottle there?" Heale asked.

TOPE said explicitly: "Yes. Justus Taine dropped it down the chute. He left the Hurder front door unbolted that night, slipped back over there to get some of Mrs. Leaford's sleeping-tablets. There were only two in the bottle, so he took them, and dropped the bottle out of sight in the handiest place. With so few tablets in the bottle, she'd miss them in the morning; but if the whole bottle was gone, she'd just think it was mislaid." He added honestly: "Part of this is guessing; part I know."

And he went on: "So here's what we've got: Asa Taine was a thief; and he needed money. You heard what Rab said, that if any of the young ones married, they were to be disinherited. Well, Rab was married and Asa knew it; and Asa bought June new clothes, encouraged her to marry Clint. If she did, with the old gentleman dead, and Kitty Leaford dead, and June married—or dead—and Rab married and so disqualified under the will, Asa'd have all Bowdon's money, and Hurder's too."

Heale listened grimly, and Tope went on:

"There are three elements in every murder," he said: "Motive, and opportunity, and capacity."

"Money was motive enough for Asa. As for opportunity, he had plenty of chances to steal some of Kitty Leaford's pills, and he had a chance to drop some of them into her milk that night, when he went to the kitchen for a glass of water."

"And he had a chance to dope the milk the Hurdurs drank, too. He came for a cup of tea, in the kitchen, that night—got himself some milk out of the bottle, could have drugged the milk then."

"I don't know whether he did that or not. It doesn't matter. But I know he started the fire. He was alone on the ground floor of the Bowdon house, his mother and Mrs. Bowdon upstairs. He slipped out and came over here. There's an electric light above the Taines' back door. You'll find the bulb is broken and the edge of the socket is fused. Asa made a short-circuit there, and then he raced back and got into the Bowdon dining-room again before Mrs. Taine came downstairs."

THE END

"And he proved tonight that he was insanely ready to kill, that he had murder in him. He tried to kill Rab, and he'd made his plans to kill June and Mr. Hurder too."

Tope was silent for a moment, added then conclusively:

"But—here's the clincher for me, Heale: He knew we thought Mrs. Leaford was murdered, but he didn't even tell Rab, didn't tell anyone up here on the Hill what we suspected. Why did he keep still, if he was innocent?"

Heale said slowly: "Why, it sounds reasonable, Tope. But it's all guessing. You can't prove a thing!"

"We don't have to," Tope reminded him in a steady satisfaction. "Asa convicted himself tonight." He added sternly: "And—executed himself too. Saved you the trouble, Heale."

HEALÉ stood silent awhile; the day brightened, and the sun began to burn away the clouds. The man said at last: "You know, I kind of hate this. I'm sorry for these folks up here. Four of them dead, in less than a month. They've had about enough, it looks to me."

Tope smiled faintly. "Yes," he agreed; and he said gravely: "Outside of a few people who won't talk, this thing tonight might pass as an accident, Inspector. Cars have smashed into trees before."

As Heale considered this, Tope added: "You've never charged Mr. Leaford, have you? Nothing in the newspapers?"

"No, just held him," Heale replied. "He was willing to stand for that, wait till something happened."

Tope nodded; and then he looked toward the road and chuckled. A car had stopped in front of the house; young Doctor Derrie swung to the ground and came briskly toward them across the lawn.

The Medical Examiner greeted them cheerfully.

"What's wrong, Heale?" he asked. "More trouble up here?"

Heale hesitated. "Why, they had a smash-up—car piled into a tree," he explained. "Asa Taine's dead, and Rab got a crack in the head."

Derrie nodded. "Bad," he said gravely. Then he looked at Tope and grinned. "I suppose you're trying to make a murder out of this too," he suggested in amused derision.

But Tope shook his head. "Why, no, Doc," he said mildly. "No, it was an accident, I guess. Matter of fact," he added, "I've come around to your way of thinking on Mrs. Leaford too. Guess you were right. Guess it was an accident, just the way you said."

The young doctor chuckled. "Sure," he agreed triumphantly. "I told you so. You've been seeing goblins in the dark, old man." He said: "Well, I'll go in and take a look at them."

He turned into the house, and Inspector Heale looked respectfully at Tope. "I don't know as I could have done that, Tope," he said slowly. "Seems to me I'd have wanted to trim his spurs."

Tope shook his head. "It does a young man good to think he's right," he said. "The way to train a pit dog is to let him win his first fights. Derrie will grow up. He'll come along."

"What do you aim to do now?" Heale asked; and Tope hesitated, but Miss Moss said cheerfully:

"Why, I think we'll wake Clint and June, and go down and get her father out of your jail, and go home."

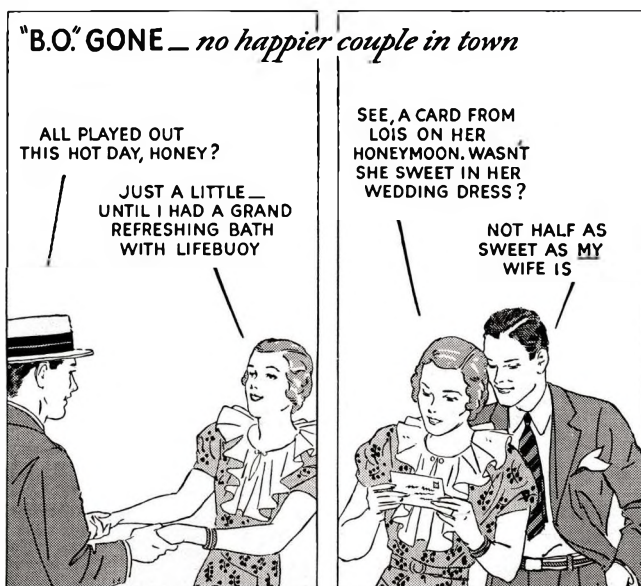
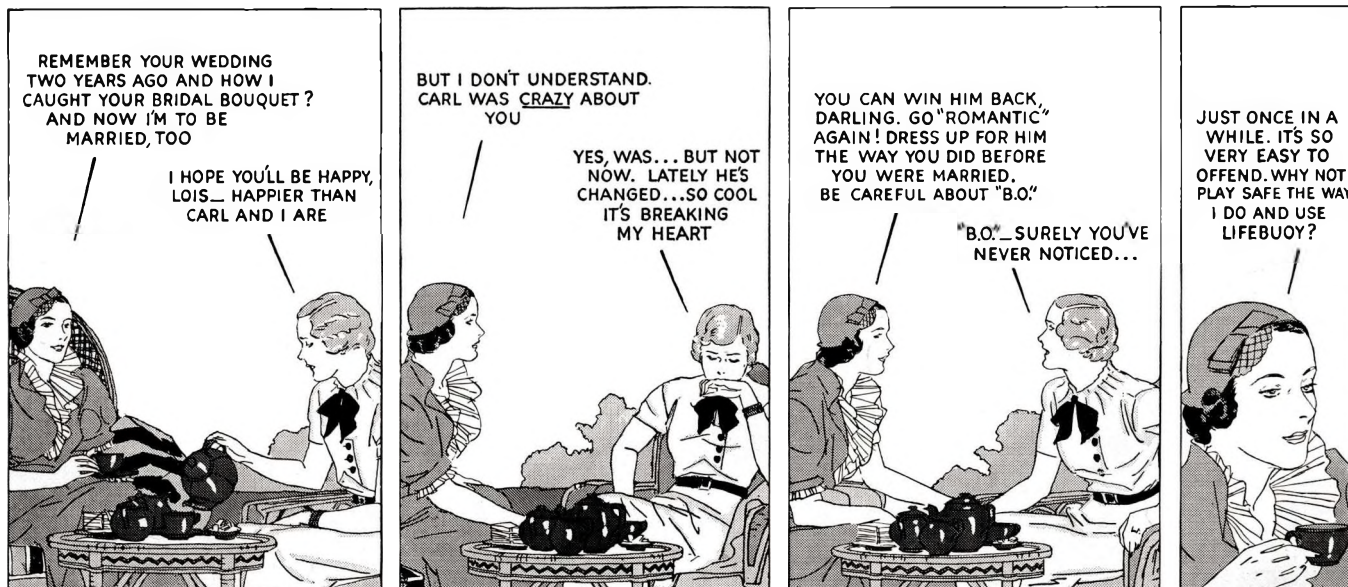
Heale chuckled. "I'll telephone down, fix that for you about Mr. Leaford," he agreed. He went into the house to do so.

Tope stood still, suddenly tired. But Miss Moss hugged tight to his arm, and she smiled proudly up at him, and her eyes were shining. "You know, my dear," she said, "you're a grand man!"

He grinned uncomfortably, wiped his mouth with his hand; and she rose on tiptoe to kiss him. Then they went together across the lawn to rouse Clint and June.

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